

DACCA THURSDAY MARCH 9 1978

## Bangladesh-UAE Cooperation

Ever since her emergence as an independent sovereign state, Bangladesh, true to her policy of peace, is endeavouring to contribute her mite to the achievement of regional and international peace. And in so doing, while her relations with every other nation are growing stronger day-by-day, she has also identified herself with the Islamic world. Apart from supporting the Arab cause and Palestinians' legitimate rights, her efforts towards bringing closer economic cooperation among the Muslim countries in all fields are noteworthy. While President Ziaur Rahman's earlier subcontinental visits have opened the gateway for closer cooperation among the countries in the region—the cooperation so important for the achievement of normalcy and peace urgently required for the progress and prosperity of the people—his recently concluded visit to the United Arab Emirates has further strengthened the existing relations between the two countries. Enriched with the brotherly spirit, it is certain to create greater socio-economic and political impact for the benefit of the whole Islamic world.

Besides bilateral issues regional and international matters and political, economic and cultural issues, the talks between President Zia and UAE President Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al-Nahyan in Abu Dhabi also covered vital subjects like UAE financial assistance in overcoming Bangladesh's debt liabilities, prospect of joint ventures in industrial, shipping and other fields and expansion of economic cooperation between the two countries. It is heartening that the United Arab Emirates has assured to extend all possible aid to Bangladesh and indicated its willingness to participate in joint ventures in agricultural, industrial and communication sectors. And the two countries have signed an agreement on education, culture, information, arts and science. The objective of this agreement is to encourage exchange of teachers, research scholars, scientists and

other experts, artists and printed matters and documents, and necessary information in the fields of study in academic institutions and adult teaching as may be mutually agreed upon. While promotion of education in all respects has been emphasised, the agreement also provides for establishment of cultural centres etc.

Politically, having similarity of views on issues both regional and international, the two countries have agreed to cooperate in strengthening solidarity among the Islamic countries. It is in the interest of the Islamic world that they must cooperate in economic fields. What is more important in this context is that President Ziaur Rahman has aptly reiterated in unequivocal terms Bangladesh's commitment to establish peace and stability in the region and her desire to have it free from big or small power rivalries. Having close and friendly relations with brotherly peoples of the Arab world and the countries of the Gulf region, the President reaffirmed—Bangladesh is determined to rapidly consolidate these relations and thereby promote Islamic solidarity. He also said 'we believe that a just and permanent solution of the Middle East problem can only be achieved on the basis of a complete Israeli withdrawal from all occupied territories, including Jerusalem, and recognition of the rights of the Palestinians'.

And so far Bangladesh is concerned, an expose of her two-year and five-year plans and her socio-economic developments has been given. There is an enormous possibility of cooperation in the fields of trade and commerce, economic collaboration, culture and arts. Reciprocating the warm feelings and sentiment of the UAE government and people, we stress the importance of cooperation between Bangladesh and UAE for the achievement of economic development and peace so vital to the progress and prosperity of the two countries as well as to the solidarity of the Islamic world.