

Ties with India now on solid footing FM tells seminar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Foreign Minister M Morshed Khan yesterday said Bangladesh-India relations are now on a solid footing, grounded in reality and motivated by a common desire to work for the welfare of the peoples.

Referring to the recent visit of Prime Minister Khaleda Zia to India, he said the visit provided an opportunity to discuss the entire gamut of relationship in a frank and candid manner.

The foreign minister was addressing a seminar on 'Bangladesh-India Relations: The Context of Saarc and the Emerging Global Scenario' organised by the Centre for Development Research, Bangladesh (CDRB) at Cirdap auditorium in the city.

Prof Imtiaz Ahmed of international relations department of Dhaka University presented a keynote paper. Indian High Commissioner Veena Sikri, former state minister for foreign affairs Abul Hasan Chowdhury, former ambassador Masum Ahmed Chowdhury and senior journalist and columnist Zaglul Ahmed Chowdhury addressed the seminar presided over by CDRB Chairman Dr Mizanur Rahman Shelley.

Morshed Khan said the relationship between Bangladesh and India is based on many commonalities — shared history, geographical proximity, ideas, traditions and culture — and

the bonds between the two countries were indelibly cemented during the War of Liberation in 1971.

However, in subsequent years, he said, "Our relationship saw its ups and downs." But in recent times, "our efforts have been aimed at remaining engaged at all levels for the mutual benefit of our two countries."

Referring to high-level bilateral interactions in recent months, the foreign minister said the height of all those interactions was, of course, the meeting of the two prime ministers on the sidelines of the 13th Saarc summit in Dhaka. "Since our two countries were in continuous touch with each other, it helped in carrying forward the relationship to newer heights."

He said a cardinal factor that must be underlined was the recognition that the two countries deal with the government in power and eschew domestic politics.

Termining the visit of Khaleda Zia to India successful, Morshed Khan said both the prime ministers underscored the importance of making full and effective use of the institutional mechanisms and ensuring that they would meet not only regularly but also more frequently and the outcome would be monitored by the political leadership on a continuous basis.

He said there was a free and frank exchange of views during the visit of the PM, with both sides placing their major concerns on the table in a spirit

of objectivity, openness and candour. By ring-fencing their concerns, there was a tacit understanding to seek advances towards resolution even on an incremental basis, he added.

The critical issues pertaining to trade, water sharing, adverse impact of water diversion, activities of insurgent groups, militancy and counter-terrorism, border control and management, movement of people across borders and land boundary issues were all firmly placed on the table, he said.

"Both sides reaffirmed their commitment to working closely to find mutually satisfactory solutions," Morshed Khan said.

Turning to Saarc, he said the 13th summit witnessed a major leap forward for regional cooperation in South Asia and its outcome was more focused, action-oriented and time-bound, compared to the previous summits.

Morshed Khan said Saarc retains a positive potential for economic cooperation and remains a basic harmonising force for security and confidence building within the region and beyond.

Indian High Commissioner Veena Sikri said Khaleda Zia's visit to India has provided the opportunity to strengthen and consolidate the friendly relationship through discussions on all issues of mutual interest — bilateral, regional and global. "Equally, it was fruitful and most successful in understanding each

other's point of view." On the full range of bilateral issues, she said both the prime ministers directed that existing institutional mechanisms should be strengthened and meetings held more regularly. They agreed that solutions to all issues can be achieved through steady and consistent dialogue and more frequent meetings.

As part of India's commitment to early implementation of decisions taken during the visit of Khaleda Zia, India has already proposed holding of the Joint Boundary Working Group (JBWG) and the home secretary level talks this month, she added.

"We are now waiting for the response of the Bangladesh government to suggested dates," Veena Sikri said, adding that the home secretary level meetings are important in the search for common solutions to security issues, including the scourge of terrorism.

With more frequent meetings of the JBWG, she said, India hopes to receive an early response to its composite package proposal on the issue of demarcation of remaining 6.5 km border and exchange of enclaves.

Regular meeting of the Joint River Commission will surely move the nations towards greater understanding and mutually acceptable solutions, she said.

The details of Joydevpur-Sealdaha passenger train service will be finalised during the forthcoming meeting of Bangladesh-India Inter Governmental Railway Group beginning on April 16 in Dhaka, she added.

Veena Sikri also sees a revival and even rebirth of Bangladesh-India Chamber of Commerce and Industry as Memorandum of Understandings (MoUs) were signed between the chambers of commerce and industry of the two countries during the visit of Khaleda Zia.

"To meet the challenges and to benefit from globalisation, we must create a strong bond between us in the regional context, whether through Bimstec or Saarc."

Stressing the formation of a South Asian parliament to promote dialogues among regional powers, former state minister for foreign affairs Abul Hasan Chowdhury said, "I don't think any major change is possible without dialogue and consultations on the regional issues."



Sammitia Ainjibi Samannay Parishad forms a human chain in front of the High Court in the city yesterday protesting terrorism and militancy.

Seven garments workers hurt in stampede

CU CORRESPONDENT

Seven garment workers were injured in a stampede triggered by a fire scare at a garments factory at the city's Chawk Bazar area yesterday.

Sources said, the incident occurred at the factory of Pakarson Apparel Limited when a group of youths standing outside raised a false alarm at around 12:00 noon.

The panic-stricken workers tried to rush out using the staircase of the factory resulting in the stampede leaving seven injured.

The injured identified as Bilkis, 20, Hosne Ara, 22, Shathi, 20, Mazida, 20, Salma, 18, Tinku, 22 and Nasima, 24, were rushed to Chittagong Medical College Hospital.

They, however, were released after first aid, sources said.

40th anniversary of DU Rover Scout tomorrow

DU CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka University (DU) Rover Scout Group will celebrate its 40th anniversary at the Teachers Students Centre (TSC) tomorrow.

The daylong programme has been divided into three sessions: inaugural session, reminiscence session and cultural session.

DU Vice-chancellor Prof SMA Faiz will formally inaugurate the programme at 9:30am.

National University Vice-chancellor Prof Dr Waqil Ahmad and The Daily Star Editor Mahfuz Anam will be present as special guests at the inaugural session presided over by DU Pro-VC Prof AFM Yusuf Haider.

The reminiscence session will begin at the same venue at 2:30pm. University Grants Commission (UGC) Member and Scout Adviser Dr KM Mohsin will preside over the session where UGC Chairman Prof M Asaduzzaman and Director of Bishwasahitya Kendra Prof Abdullah Abu Sayeed will reminisce.

The cultural programme will begin at 5:00pm. Bangladesh Scouts President Dr Shah Mohammad Farid will attend the programme as chief guest and World Scout Organisation Member Mohammad Habibul Alam (Bir Pratik) as special guest. It will be presided over by DU Treasurer Prof Syed Abul Kalam Azad.

Former and current rover scouts along with their family members have been invited to take part in the celebration.

Fundamentalism rises as war heroes are ignored

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Fundamentalism has risen in the country as nation has failed to respect the country's real heroes and freedom fighters after the liberation war, said the speakers at a discussion yesterday.

They said the real heroes have detached themselves from the mainstream due to lack of honour while the defeated forces reunited and captured most of the government, semi-government and non-government sectors taking the opportunity.

The discussion was organised by Samaj Adhayan Kendra at the Liberation War Museum auditorium in the city to mark the 35th anniversary of 'Glorious liberation war in the diplomatic front'.

Former diplomat KM Shehabuddin who was the first to resign from the then Pakistan High Commission and cut off all relations with Pakistan government on April 6 in 1971 protesting the repression on innocent Bangalees by the occupation forces.

Following his glorious decision, diplomats Hossain Ali, RI Chowdhury, AH Mahmud Ali,

Enayet Karim, SAMS Kibria, AMA Muhiit, Mahiduddin Ahmed, AFM Abdul Fateh, KK Panni and Mostafizur Rahman resigned from their posts and supported the freedom fighters in various ways during the nine-month-long liberation war.

Barrister Amir-ul Islam, president of Supreme Court Bar Association, said fundamentalists have staged a dramatic comeback and captured all sectors under the shelter of BNP-led alliance government.

"Now the defeated forces are conspiring to distort the history of the liberation war while the real heroes of the nation are being deprived of their due rights and honour," he added.

Dr Anisuzzaman said the resignation of KM Shehabuddin was a historic decision because this protest took place before the formation of Bangladesh government on April 10 in 1971.

Awami League leader and former state minister for information Prof Abu Sayeed, former Chittagong University vice-chancellor Abdul Mannan, former secretary Mosleh Uddin Ahmed, Dr Salimullah Khan and Chittagong Samity President Abu

Alam Chowdhury also took part in the discussion.

Stolen car recovered in Khulna

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Detective Branch of Police recovered a brand new Toyota Corolla Super Saloon car on April 4 night from Srifaltala village under Rupsha upazila here.

The car was stolen recently in the capital, said Inspector Obaidul Huq of district DB.

A youth identified as Zahid Hasan, 21, was arrested on Wednesday night from Darul Ulum Madrasa at Banaragati under Sonadanga Police Station in the city in this connection. Police said Banaragati Darul Ulum Madrasa is owned by Jamaat leader Moulana Delwar Hossain Saidee MP.

Police hunt Ibrahim, a student of the same madrasa, and Solaiman in connection with the car theft. The car (Dhaka-11-0298) has been seized.



Centre for Development Research, Bangladesh (CDRB) organises a seminar on "Bangladesh-India Relations: The Context of Saarc and the Emerging Global Scenario" at the Cirdap auditorium in the city yesterday. Sitting from left are Indian High Commissioner Veena Sikri, Foreign Minister M Morshed Khan, CDRB Chairman Dr Mizanur Rahman Shelley and former state minister for foreign affairs Abul Hasan Chowdhury.

World Health Day today

UNB, Dhaka

World Health Day will be observed in the country as elsewhere in the world today with the theme "Working together for Health" to overcome global health problems.

President Iajuddin Ahmed and Prime Minister Khaleda Zia have given special messages to mark the occasion.

In his message, the president said a healthy, meritorious and efficient manpower is a must for socio-economic development of the country.

Efforts are being made to reach healthcare services to people with an aim to build able manpower by preventing and controlling diseases, Iajuddin said.

Khaleda said it is necessary to strengthen the efforts for creating skilled workers at all levels of health and family planning, improved management, congenial atmosphere and coordinated works.

She also called upon all to work with cordiality and sincerity to ensure good health for all people and stressed the need for taking initiatives by non-government organisations and at national and local levels alongside government efforts.

Obituary

BDNEWS, Chittagong

Dr Haripada Chowdhury, former chief medical officer of Chittagong Port Authority (CPA), passed away due to heart ailment at Chittagong Medical College Hospital (CMCH) yesterday at the age of 69.

He is survived by his wife and three sons to mourn his death.

Dr Diman Chowdhury, assistant professor of Neurology Department of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University, is the eldest son of late Haripada.

He will be cremated at his village Gohira of Raozan upazila.

Death anniversary

Today is the 17th death anniversary of journalist Mohammad Hussain, former vice-president of Bangladesh Federation of Journalists, says a press release.

On the occasion, a milad mahfil will be held at A-27 Century Estate Apartment, Mogbazar in the city after Asr prayers today.

Relatives, friends and admirers have been requested to attend the milad and pray for his departed soul.

KIBRIA MURDER

'Police probe partial'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Former Justice KM Sobhan has termed the ongoing investigation of the murder case of former finance minister Shah AMS Kibria as 'partial'.

Speaking at 'Blue for Peace' programme at Motijheel in the city yesterday he said, "Police is investigating the case according to their wish and we are protesting it in a peaceful way."

"We also protest all political killings in the country," he added.

Reza Kibria, son of slain finance minister, said the 'Blue for Peace' programme will continue until the real killers are arrested and brought to justice.

"We have already made an impact on the mind of people from all walks of life who are spontaneously taking part in the programme and thereby we want to put an end to all such political killings in the country," he added.

Earlier, the organisers formed a human chain at Muktagong and brought out a procession that ended at Motijheel.

Wearing blue clothes, people from all shades of opinion including Awami League leaders Tofael Ahmed, Suranjit Sengupta, Saber Hossain Chowdhury, Mofazzal Hossain Chowdhury Maya, Haji Mohammad Selim, Saifuddin Ahmed Manik, Dr Mostafa Jalal Moliuddin, Gono Forum President Dr Kamal Hossain and

General Secretary Saifuddin Ahmed Manik, leaders of Sammitia Sangskritik Jote Golam Kuddus, Organising Secretary of Bikalpa Dhara Bangladesh Mahi B Chowdhury and leaders of Muktiyoddha Sanghati Parishad joined the programme expressing their solidarity with the demand for impartial trial of the killers.

Justice Sobhan and Supreme Court Bar Association President Barrister Amir-ul Islam released pigeons as a symbol of peace at the programme at Motijheel.

Talking to The Daily Star Asma Kibria, widow of slain Kibria, said the nation would never accept the trial of the case based on the flawed and incomplete investigation.

"The soul of my husband would not rest in peace until the masterminds are brought to justice," she said.

She also demanded transparent investigation of all bomb and grenade attacks in the country.

Initiated by Asma Kibria, the 'Blue for Peace' programme is being held every Thursday to press the demand for trial of the killers of Kibria and others who were the victims of political killings.

Kibria, also an Awami League leader, was killed in a grenade attack in Habiganj on January 27 of last year.

Seminar on 'Repression on media' today

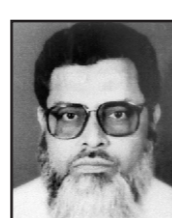
BDNEWS, Dhaka

A seminar titled 'Repression on media during coalition rule' will be held at the National Press Club at 10:30am today.

Eminent jurist and Gono Forum President Dr Kamal Hossain, vice chairman of Bangladesh Bar Council Barrister Rokonuddin Mahmud, Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA) President Barrister Amir-ul Islam, former SCBA president Advocate Mahbubey Alam, Bangladesh Federal Union of Journalists (BFUJ) President and the Bangladesh Observer Editor Iqbal Sobhan Chowdhury, former president of Dhaka University Teachers Association Prof Dr AAMS Arefin Siddique, columnist Abed Khan, columnist Shahriar Kabir and Dhaka Union of Journalist President Altaf Mahmud will address the seminar.

Former managing director of BSS and columnist Haroon Habib will present the keynote paper.

Qulkhwani



Qulkhwani of Prof Salah Uddin of Dhaka Dental College will be held after Asr prayers at West Jatrabari Wasa Jam e Mosque in the city after Asr prayers today, says a press release.

Relatives and admirers are requested to attend the qulkhwani and pray for the departed soul.

Prof Salah Uddin, youngest son of late Motahar Uddin Khan and executive director of Associate Industries (pvt) Ltd, passed away on April 3 at the age of 62.

SMA Kadir



Qulkhwani of SMA Kadir, a freedom fighter, will be held at his village home at Dattagram under Ghatal Police Station in Tangail after Juma prayers today, says a press release.

He passed away at Suhrawardy Hospital in the city on March 17 at the age of 76.

Kadir, retired controller (finance) of the land ministry, left behind his wife, three daughters and two sons to mourn his death.



Newly elected president and general secretary of Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) wave to students on the Dhaka University campus at a reception yesterday.

BCL ultimatum to CU authorities

CU CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) Chittagong University (CU) unit yesterday gave a 24-hour ultimatum to the university authorities demanding release of one of its leaders arrested on Wednesday night.

The BCL leaders at a rally yesterday threatened to enforce an indefinite student strike at the university from tomorrow if their demand is not met.

Mohammed Jahidul Islam Jewel, assistant science and technology secretary of the BCL university unit, was arrested after a case was filed by Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) on March 22.

The JCD filed the case accusing six BCL activists, including Jewel, for alleged attack on the JCD men at Sholoshahar railway station in the port city on March 21.

Award giving ceremony

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Mohammad Modabber-Hosne Ara Smriti Sangsad will arrange their sixth award giving ceremony. Venue: VIP Lounge of National Press Club. Time: 5:00pm.

Conference

The second national conference of Sammitia Samajik Andolon will be held. Venue: Tajul Auditorium, 21/2 Purana Pallan. Time: 10:00am.

Poster contest

UNFPA Bangladesh organises a poster contest for five categories on 'Gender equality and equity: Empowerment of women'. Venue: Institute of Fine Arts, Shabbagh. Time: 3:00pm.

Inauguration

The inaugural ceremony of World Health

DHAKA TODAY

Day will be held with Health Minister Dr Khandaker Mosharrif Hossain as chief guest. Venue: Osmani Memorial Auditorium. Time: 10:00am.

Golden Jubilee

The golden jubilee ceremony of Bangladesh Library Association will be held. Venue: Institution of Diploma Engineers Auditorium, Kakrail. Time: 10:30am.

Print exhibition

The opening ceremony of a print exhibition by artist A Rahman will be held. Venue: Gallery Chittrak, Dhanmondi. Time: 5:00pm.

Human chain

Bangladesh Hari Mukti Sangsad organises a human chain to protest price spiral of daily essentials and erratic supply of power. Venue: Muktagong, Ramna. Time: 4:00pm.

Reception to newly elected BCL leaders

DU CORRESPONDENT

Former leaders of Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL), student wing of the main opposition Awami League (AL), accorded a reception to its newly elected president and general secretary on the Dhaka University (DU) campus yesterday.

The BCL council held on Tuesday elected Mahmud Hasan Ripon as president and Mahfuzul Haider Roton as general secretary.

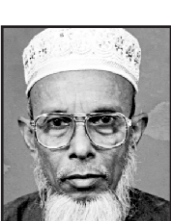
Former leaders, including Liaqat Sikdar, Nazrul Islam Babu, Rifiqul Islam Kotowal and many others garlanded Ripon and Roton at the reception in front of the DU Central Students' Union (DUCSU) building on the campus.

Immediate past president Liaqat Sikdar while talking to journalists hoped that the new leadership would work for upholding the glorious tradition and history of the organisation through establishing student rights at educational institutions.

Later, Liaqat introduced the newly elected BCL president and general secretary to the leaders of ruling Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) student front Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) at Modhu's Canteen.

JCD Dhaka University unit President Hasan Mamun and General Secretary Saiful Islam Firoz greeted Ripon and Roton at the Modhu's Canteen.

Chehlum



Chehlum of Maulana Amir Hossain, former vice-principal of Tikikata Nuria Fajil Madrasa, will be held at Mothbaria in Pirojpur today.

Maulana Amir, also a social worker and Islamic think tank, passed away on February 22 at the age of 73.

He left behind his wife, three sons and four daughters.