

Rao - Khaleda talks

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might quickly respond to her invitation any time.

Begum Zia arrived here today on a three-day state visit at the invitation of Narasimha Rao.

Begum Zia was accorded a ceremonial reception as Rao received her at the Forecourt of the majestic Rastrapati Bhawan.

Begum Zia was escorted by the mounted police from the entrance of the Rastrapati Bhawan as she arrived in a ceremonial motorcade from the Indira Gandhi Airport.

Attired in an off-white sari, Begum Zia was conducted to the tastefully decorated rostrum. The national anthems of both the countries were played on the contingents drawn from three services presented the Bangladesh Prime Minister a guard of honour.

Begum Zia also inspected the guard.

The Indian Prime Minister then introduced his colleagues to Begum Zia, senior officials and diplomats were present on the occasion.

Bangladesh delegation which included Foreign Minister A S M Mostafizur Rahman, members of parliament Akbar Hossain and Rozi Kabir, and Foreign Secretary Reaz Rahman, were introduced to the Indian Prime Minister.

The brief ceremony over, Begum Zia went to Dwarika suite of the Rastrapati Bhawan where she will be staying during her visit.

Earlier, on arrival at the Indira Gandhi International Airport, the Prime Minister was received by Eduard Fekrio, Minister of State for External Affairs, Foreign Secretary J N Dixit, senior Indian officials and Bangladesh High Commissioner to New Delhi Farooq Sobhan were also present.

The airport was beautifully decorated with flags of the two countries. Portraits of Begum Khaleda Zia were hung at important points on the 17-kilometre road from the airport to the Rastrapati Bhawan.

Begum Zia would have a brief stopover at Calcutta Airport on her way back to Dhaka on May 28, official sources in Calcutta said.

Begum Zia would be received at the airport by the West Bengal Chief Minister, Jyoti Basu.

Begum Zia left Dhaka this morning for New Delhi.

Ministers, chiefs of Air force and Navy, high civil and military officials and Indian Deputy High Commission in Bangladesh saw her off at the Zia International Airport.

She was given a guard of honour by a contingent of three services before her departure.



Bangladesh Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia being greeted by the Leader of the Opposition L K Advani yesterday in a traditional manner at the South Drawing Room of Rastrapati Bhawan in New Delhi. —AFP photo

Banquet speech

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bound to have some differences. The essence of good neighbourliness is to address them with objectivity and sincerity," after the creation of such a framework "the task would be much easier," she said.

The Prime Minister said SAARC was an ideal framework for solving the problems of South Asia. She said late President Ziaur Rahman had a vision which he had felt SAARC could transform into reality, the amity and stability in the region.

Begum Zia said it would be her privilege to chair the next SAARC summit. She hoped with the wise counsel and vast experience of the Indian Prime Minister, South Asian nations together would transform SAARC into a platform to launch a new age of South Asian consciousness. She said South Asia must not only learn, but must lead the way too.

Begum Zia said democracy which had swept Bangladesh a year ago placed its people on the forefront of decision making. The democracies in Bangladesh and India were dedicated to common purpose of providing the peoples with a better quality of life.

The Prime Minister pointed out that both the countries espoused free economy and principles of private initiative. She said in Bangladesh the progress of India was viewed with satisfaction.

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India wants good ties, Advani tells Khaleda

NEW DELHI, May 26: Leader of the opposition in the Indian Parliament L K Advani today called on Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia at the south drawing room of Rastrapati Bhawan, reports BSS.

Advani told Begum Zia that India wanted to build up friendly and good relationship with Bangladesh.

The Prime Minister, while highlighting some bilateral problems, said Bangladesh wants to solve these problems through discussions.

Advani welcomed the Prime Minister's visit to India.

The Indian State Minister for External Affairs, Eduard Fekrio also called on Begum Zia at the Rastrapati Bhawan.

The State Minister said the present visit of Begum Zia was historical and it would help to increase relations between the two countries.

He said SAARC was playing an important role in the field of cooperation of the region.

Former Foreign Minister I K Gujral also yesterday called on Begum Zia at the South drawing room of Rastrapati Bhawan.

Gujral paid rich tributes to the role of Begum Zia in the democratic movement of Bangladesh.

Saudi help for development programme assured

RİYADH, May 26: Bangladesh ambassador to Saudi Arabia Abdul Momen Choudhury today met the Saudi Finance Minister Mohammad Aba-al-Khail at his office here, reports BSS.

They reviewed Saudi-Bangladesh bilateral cooperation in various fields particularly programmes and projects under Saudi economic assistance.

The Saudi Finance Minister lauded the dynamic leadership of the democratically elected Prime Minister of Bangladesh Begum Khaleda Zia and expressed high appreciation particularly for the recent policy changes reflecting top priority on the actual development issues facing the country.

He also expressed satisfaction that a number of projects under Saudi assistance programme had already been commissioned. In this respect, he mentioned the Saudi assisted railway workshop project recently inaugurated by the Bangladesh Prime Minister.

The Saudi minister assured of continuous and active cooperation from the government of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for Bangladesh's development programme.

The Bangladesh ambassador expressed deep appreciation for continuous Saudi participation in economic development and also for prompt and generous relief and assistance after every major natural disaster in Bangladesh.

In this connection, the ongoing relief and rehabilitation programme under SR 400 million Saudi grant assistance for 1991 cyclone in Bangladesh was also reviewed.

Both the sides expressed confidence that the coming seventh session of the Saudi-Bangladesh joint economic commission to be held in Dhaka would be able to bolster the economic and technical cooperation between the two brotherly countries.

Dr Jobarah Al Soratsary, Deputy Minister for Finance and National Economy and Dr Atiz Al Orayer, Deputy Minister and Finance Adviser of Ministry of Finance and National Economy and the Chairman of Saudi Bangladesh Industrial and Agricultural Investment Company (SABINCO) and KMSA Kaiser, Economic Counsellor, Bangladesh embassy were also present during the meeting.

The Midnight File

Strike paralyses Assam

NEW DELHI, May 26: Normal life was disrupted in the Indian state of Assam today by a strike called by opposition parties to protest alleged atrocities by army troops fighting separatist guerrillas, reports AFP.

IAEA inspectors in DPRK

TOKYO, May 26: Inspectors of the International Atomic Energy Agency have arrived in North Korea for the first time, an official report said Tuesday. The North's official Korean Central News Agency, monitored in Tokyo, said only that an inspection group had arrived on Monday. It gave no further details, reports AP.

Russia to try CP

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Valentin Martinyanov, another communist deputy, had a different view. He said the court's decision to subpoena Gorbachev was a mistake because the interests of Gorbachev and the party had long ago diverged.

Gorbachev was a traitor to the party, Martinyanov said.

Shortly before announcing the resolution to subpoena Gorbachev, the court said it would examine the historic illegality of the Communist Party, opening the way for a Nuremberg-like trial of the body that built and controlled the Soviet Union.

But despite an aura of sensation surrounding the court's decision — Itar-Tass News Agency said it would "without doubt go down in history" — it was uncertain whether the ruling would translate into legal action against former party officials.

"It would be dangerous to transform this trial into another 20th century Nuremberg Trial because it could cause a split in society," Oleg Rumantsev, Chairman of the Russian Parliament's Constitutional Committee, said.

On Monday however Sergei Shakhrai, Yeltsin's top legal advisor, said at a news conference that a decision by the court to study the constitutionality of the Soviet Communist Party would amount to a "Nuremberg Trial" of the party.

Tuesday's court decision, fraught with legal complexity but clearly notable in a historic context, was more immediately marked by a calculated counter-attack by Yeltsin's top aides on hardliners who had demanded an examination of the President's decrees on the party.

While the court also agreed to study the constitutionality of Yeltsin's decrees, it would do so only after a lengthy examination of the party itself — a decision which effectively killed the latest opposition effort to undermine the administration, political sources said.

Oleg Rumantsev said in Tuesday edition of Nezavisimaya Gazeta that the party has been accused of "usurpation of state power" and "endangering the sovereignty of the country."

Distortion of history

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that the author of the six-point mands in '66, Sheikh Hasina said that the history of the country's Liberation War was not a mere radio announcement of a Major on March 26, 1971.

It was rather a long history of struggle against the Pakistani ruling circle that began immediately after 1947, she said adding that Mujib was virtually the chief leader in the country's long struggle for independence.

The Awami League chief felt that the nation had to get united to resist the tendency of distorting history and make the new generations aware of the war of independence for the further advancement of the country.

Presided over by Professor Zillur Rahman, the seminar was addressed by Abdul Kader Siddiki, AL leader Abdur Razzak MP, Chairman of the Mujibjoddha Sanghati Parisad and co-accused in the Agartala Conspiracy Case with Ruhul Kuddus, Colonel (ret'd) Shaukat Ali MP, another co-accused K M Shamsur Rahman Khan and the son of late Ruhul Kuddus Ehsanul Alam.

Ehsanul Alam urged Sheikh Hasina to demand of the government the naming of any government establishment after his father.

He also said that the departed soul of his father would not be satisfied unless trial of Mujib's killers was held on the soil of Bangladesh.

Abdur Razzak while paying tributes to Ruhul Kuddus said that he (Ruhul) had actively cooperated with Mujib in formulating the historic six-point charter of demands adding

that the author of the six-point was Mujib himself.

K M Shamsur Rahman publicly contesting the view said that the six-point was basically Ruhul Kuddus's work although some discussions were held among Mujib, Ruhul and a few other people before it was presented at a round-table conference in Pakistan. It was originally a seven-point demand, Shamsur Rahman added.

Kader Siddiki of the Awami League thanked late Ruhul Kuddus for his (Ruhul's) strong sympathy towards the Kader Siddiki-led armed struggle against the Bangladesh governments in the late seventies. In this connection Siddiki read out two letters of Ruhul Kuddus sent to him from London in 1976.

On the question of the trial of the killers of Mujib, Siddiki said, "Trial was impossible unless we got rid of those who were directly or indirectly connected with the killers".

Professor Zillur Rahman in his presidential speech urged Sheikh Hasina to think deeply about the 'failure of bureaucracy to attract talents'.

He said, 'Sheikh Hasina whom we love to think as the next prime minister of the country has to think about the problem for the sake of the nation'.

A smiling Sheikh Hasina at this moment, however, was moving her head in disapproval with her hands joined.

Barrister K Z Alam, member secretary of the Ruhul Kuddus birthday celebration committee gave the welcome address at the function.

Drugs seized, 11 held

Police yesterday seized huge quantity of drugs from Babupara sium near Dhaka University and arrested 11 people, reports UNB.

Acting on a tip, detective police raided the sium and recovered 10 grams of heroin, 1 kilogram of ganja and 1 kilogram of 'choros'.

Those arrested were: Raja (35), Iqbal (26), Munna (27), Rustam Ali (32), Jahangir (20), Jamman (22), Hakim (22), Shahin (25), Nur Mohammad (23), Abdur Rab (23) and Mohammad Akhter Hossain (20).

Police said they have been carrying on anti-social activities for a long time.

One killed, 28 hurt in road mishaps

By Staff Correspondent

At least one person was killed and 28 others were injured, nine of them seriously, in two separate road accidents in Narayanganj and Tongi Tuesday.

Our Narayanganj Correspondent reports: One person was killed and three others were injured as an auto-rickshaw and a truck collided at Gabtoli area on the Dhaka-Narayanganj Highway at around 3-15 pm yesterday.

Of the victims, Motahar Hossain (38) succumbed to his injuries on way to Narayanganj Natun Hospital while three others, Nurul Jamal (18), the auto-rickshaw driver, Mustakin Masud (28) and Abdur Rashid (35) were admitted there. Their conditions were said to be critical.

The truck driver managed to escape, a case was registered with Fatullah Police.

Our Gazipur Correspondent reports: At least 25 people were injured when a passenger minibus and a truck collided near Board Bazar at Tongi at around 4 pm yesterday.

Of the injured, minibus driver Suruj Mia, Sikandar Ali (40), Abdur Rashid (30), Sayeeda Begum (40) and a 30-year-old unidentified person were admitted to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

Two injured minibus passengers were admitted to Dhaka Pangu Hospital while nine others were admitted to Tongi Sedar Hospital.

The minibus bearing number Dhaka Metro Ja-5277 was going to Dhaka from Sripur and the truck was on its way to Gazipur from Tongi.

The truck driver managed to escape.



Finance Minister M Snifur Rahman addressing a seminar on 'National Budget and Consumers' Interest organised by Consumers Association of Bangladesh (CAB) at National Press Club yesterday. —Star photo

India-US joint naval exercise begins tomorrow

NEW DELHI, May 26: India and the United States will hold their first joint naval exercise in the Indian Ocean on Thursday and Friday, the Press Trust of India (PTI) and diplomats said, reports AFP.

The low-key, 24-hour exercise will involve two US ships, the destroyer David Ray and the frigate Vandegrift, and a destroyer and a frigate from the Indian side, along with some 500 officers, they said today.

It will mark an abrupt switch from decades of hostility between the two navies, long distanced by US military support for New Delhi's regional rival Pakistan and India's former pro-Soviet tilt.

But the exercise also comes at a time of renewed strain in Washington-New Delhi relations over the US attempt to stop a Soviet firm from exporting rocket technology to India.

PTI quoted Indian naval captain Uday Bhaskar today as calling the exercise in the Indian Ocean "most natural and suitable," given the convergence of interest in maintaining the security and stability of sea lanes from the Persian Gulf to the Asia-Pacific region.

The agency also quoted unnamed military experts here as saying the exercise could help dispel apprehensions about the intentions of the Indian Navy in the region.

Santiago ends fast, leaves hospital

MANILA, May 26: Philippine presidential candidate Miriam Santiago walked briskly out of a Manila hospital on Tuesday after ending a three-day fast in protest against alleged election fraud, reports Reuter.

Santiago, who her family said had lost nine pounds (four kg) during her protest, broke her fast on Monday night after appeals from church leaders for her to start eating.

She had earlier threatened to starve herself to death.

Santiago, a 46-year-old former judge, launched her fast in an air-conditioned hospital suite on Saturday to protest against alleged vote-rigging by the government in favour of former Defence chief Fidel Ramos, who appears to be heading for victory in the seven-cornered presidential election race.

With nearly 70 per cent of the estimated 25 million votes cast in the May 11 polls counted by a private poll body, Ramos has built a seemingly insurmountable lead of more than one million votes over Santiago and industrialist Eduardo Cojuangco.

"I have submitted myself to the wisdom of our Christian fathers, today I end my observance of protest against the evil of widespread election fraud in this country," Santiago said.

Dohas' passports

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Earlier, the passports of A R S Doha, a former foreign minister, and that of his son were impounded under an order of the Home Ministry on May 19. Two separate writ petitions were filed on their behalf.

Barrister Mahmud argued that the passport of a citizen can not be impounded without giving the petitioner an opportunity of being heard. He further argued that "the order is ex-facie, illegal and without any justification and without any valid or lawful reason and as such is mala fide and untenable in law".

Arguing for the petitioners he also submitted that the rights of the petitioners "to leave and re-enter Bangladesh" guaranteed under Article 36 of the Constitution has been violated by the impounding of their passports.

Besides, Barrister Mahmud contended, such a power to impound a passport is void and illegal because it gives the passport authority arbitrary and unfettered power to impound a passport without defining and regulating how and in what situation such power can be exercised by such authority. "This arbitrary and unfettered power is illegal and violative of Articles 27, 31, 32 and 36 of the Constitution."

"The impugned order is mala fide for collateral purpose and has been issued at the instance of interested persons who wanted to humiliate, disgrace and defame the petitioners before the public out of ill will," he added.

No increase in ferry fare from July 1

The proposal for increasing ferry fare by further 28 per cent from July 1 would remain suspended and a decision in this regard would be taken in consultation with the Bus-Coaches Owners' Association, according to a BIWTC press release in Dhaka Tuesday night, reports BSS.

However, ferry fare increased on April 30 by 30 per cent would remain in force.

This unanimous decision was taken at a meeting on implementation of increased ferry fare of BIWTC with State Minister for Shipping Harunal-Rashid in the chair.

The meeting was also attended by State Minister for Communication Fazur Rahman Patal, Shipping Secretary, Chairman of BIWTC, Chairman of BWTA, Chairman of Bus and Truck Owners' Association and its General Secretary.

The meeting discussed thredbare the increased ferry fare, following objection to it by the bus and coach owners' association.

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China frees 3 pro-democracy activists

HONG KONG, May 26: China has released three political activists who were jailed for supporting the 1989 democracy movement, Hong Kong news reports said Tuesday, says AP.

The government-owned Radio Hong Kong reported that Peng Kong, a 24-year-old Beijing University student, and Hong Kong residents Li Long-ching and Lai Pui-shing all were freed on Tuesday.

The releases had been expected for weeks, said John Kamm, a Hong Kong-based businessman and human rights activist who has won the release of several Chinese dissidents over the past year.

Last week, Chinese authorities released three elderly Catholic clerics who had been jailed on and off for more than 20 years each for "counterrevolutionary" activities.

It was not immediately clear whether the recent releases indicated a softening in the Communist leadership's attitude toward political and religious dissidents.

Hong Kong news reports said Chinese authorities released Li and Lai for health reasons from the Huang Prison near the southern Chinese city of Canton. The reports said the two would be deported soon to Hong Kong.

Indo-Pak talks postponed

NEW DELHI, May 26: India today decided to postpone the foreign secretary-level talks with Pakistan early next month in an apparent retaliation to the brutal treatment and torture of an Indian diplomat in Islamabad whose condition was stated to be serious, reports PTI.

An External Affairs, Ministry spokesman said here that a special aircraft was being sent to Islamabad to bring back Rajesh Mittal, counsellor in the Indian High Commission,

Nazrul's birthday

From Our Correspondent

COMILLA, May 26: Comilla, the town which nurtures the sweet memories of the National Poet Kazi Nazrul Islam, wore a festive look Tuesday, the second day of the three-day celebration of the poet's birth anniversary.

Thousands of people braving inclement weather attended the scheduled functions organised at several places in the town to mark the day.

The highlights of the day include seminars, musical, recital and dance programmes.

A discussion on "the influence of Comilla on the rebellious attitude of Nazrul" was held Tuesday at 10 am at the local stadium.

Noted Nazrul scholar Mohammad Mahfuzullah presented the key noted paper in the discussion which was participated by Prof Ali Newaz, Principal Abdur Rauf, Prof Shantanu Kaiser and Prof Abdul Wahab. Prof Anisuzzaman chaired the discussion.

In a separate discussion chaired by eminent Nazrul singer Firoza Begum was held in the afternoon. Dr Karunamoy Goswami presented the key-note paper on "problems of distortion in Nazrul's lyrics and music." Prof Laila Noor, Prof Amir Ali Chowdhury and a local poet Ziaul Huq Dulal took part in the discussion.

The day's programme also included cultural soires presented by Comilla Cultural Complex, Agni Beena Sangeet Academy, Nazrul Parishad and Hindol Sangeet Academy.

A recital session also took place in the evening participated by leading reciters. Shilpakala Academy presented a dance-drama function titled "Shunno-e-Bookey" in the evening.

The concluding function will be held at Daulatpur in the district tomorrow.

UNB Adds: A cultural programme will be held at Daulatpur, 30 miles off the town, in Muradnagar upazila. It is the home village of Nargis, the first wife of the poet. A discussion meeting will follow in the afternoon.

Works Minister Rafiqul Islam Mia will attend the meeting as chief guest.

Local Shilpakala Academy and Shishu Academy will perform in the concluding function at Comilla today.

Comilla wears festive look

From Our Correspondent

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Retrenchment

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government would be retrenched, he informed.

Speaking at the press conference the BWF president demanded that the present government fulfil its pre-polls pledges and implement the Wage Board award for the workers.

He resented the large-scale promotion to the bureaucrats and pension and tax-free car facilities to the members of the parliament saying that "the problems in the industries sector can not be solved by retrenching or privatisation."

Muttalib called for a single platform of the trade unions for launching a united movement.

BWF General Secretary Kutubuddin Ahmed and leaders of seven trade unions were present at the press conference.