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Two accords signed, restrictions on jamdani quota lifted Indo-Bangla water-sharing talks in three months

NEW DELHI, May 27: A ministerial meeting between Bangladesh and India will be held within the next three months in quest of solution to the water-sharing problem, the main irritant in relations between the two closest neighbours.

This was decided at the final round of formal talks between Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia and Indian Premier Narasimha Rao today, a source close to the meeting told UNB.

The Indian side agreed to meet "as soon as possible", the source said, aiming to find a mutually acceptable solution to the longstanding problem.

There has been no water-sharing accord between the two countries since the last Memorandum of Understand-

ing on the Ganges water sharing expired in December 1988.

Since then, Bangladesh, a lower-riparian country, has been facing serious water crisis in dry seasons mainly because of what is said to be dehydrational impact of the Farakka barrage constructed by India over the Ganges.

The Ganges flow was recorded at an all-time low, at about 13,000 cusecs at the Harding Bridge point, during the recent drought situation that hit severely Bangladesh's northern and southwestern regions.

The last MOU had given Bangladesh 33,000 cusecs of the Ganges flow in dry seasons.

Foreign Secretary Reaz Rahman told newsmen that the hour-long meeting was held in an atmosphere of warmth and cordiality, reports BSS.

The meeting, he said, was a sort of wrap-up and officials of the two sides were working on the details for the finalisation of the joint communique.

He said the two leaders had an exclusive tete-a-tete for more than half-an-hour.

The Indian Prime Minister had agreed to lift quota restrictions and duty on the import of Jamdani sari to India from Bangladesh.

Foreign Minister Mostafizur Rahman, members of parliament Akbar Hossain and Rozi Kabir, Foreign Secretary Reaz Rahman and High Commissioner Faruq Sobhan represented the Bangladesh side, while the Indian State Minister for External Affairs, E.

Awami League council may be deferred

By Nurul Kabir

The central council session of the Awami League (AL) scheduled for June 1 and 2 is likely to be deferred to the last week of the same month, party Working Committee sources say.

The Working Committee meeting beginning today will finalise the schedule after reviewing the latest situation of the party's preparations for the council session to be held on the dates fixed earlier.

According to sources, distribution of the posters printed earlier for the council session bearing dates June 1 and 2 has been postponed pending today's decision of the Working Committee.

AL General Secretary Sajeda Chowdhury and the leaders sharing her views have reportedly been persuading party chief Sheikh Hasina to change the dates of the council session.

According to sources, Sajeda and most of the working committee members believe that the council session should not be held before the completion of the district-level conferences and the resolution of disputes arising out of elections of leaders in some of the party district units.

Sources close to the party General Secretary told The Daily Star that more than 10 district units of the party are yet to hold their conferences while severe leadership conflicts have been surfaced in

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Police recover bodies of 2 brothers from Buriganga

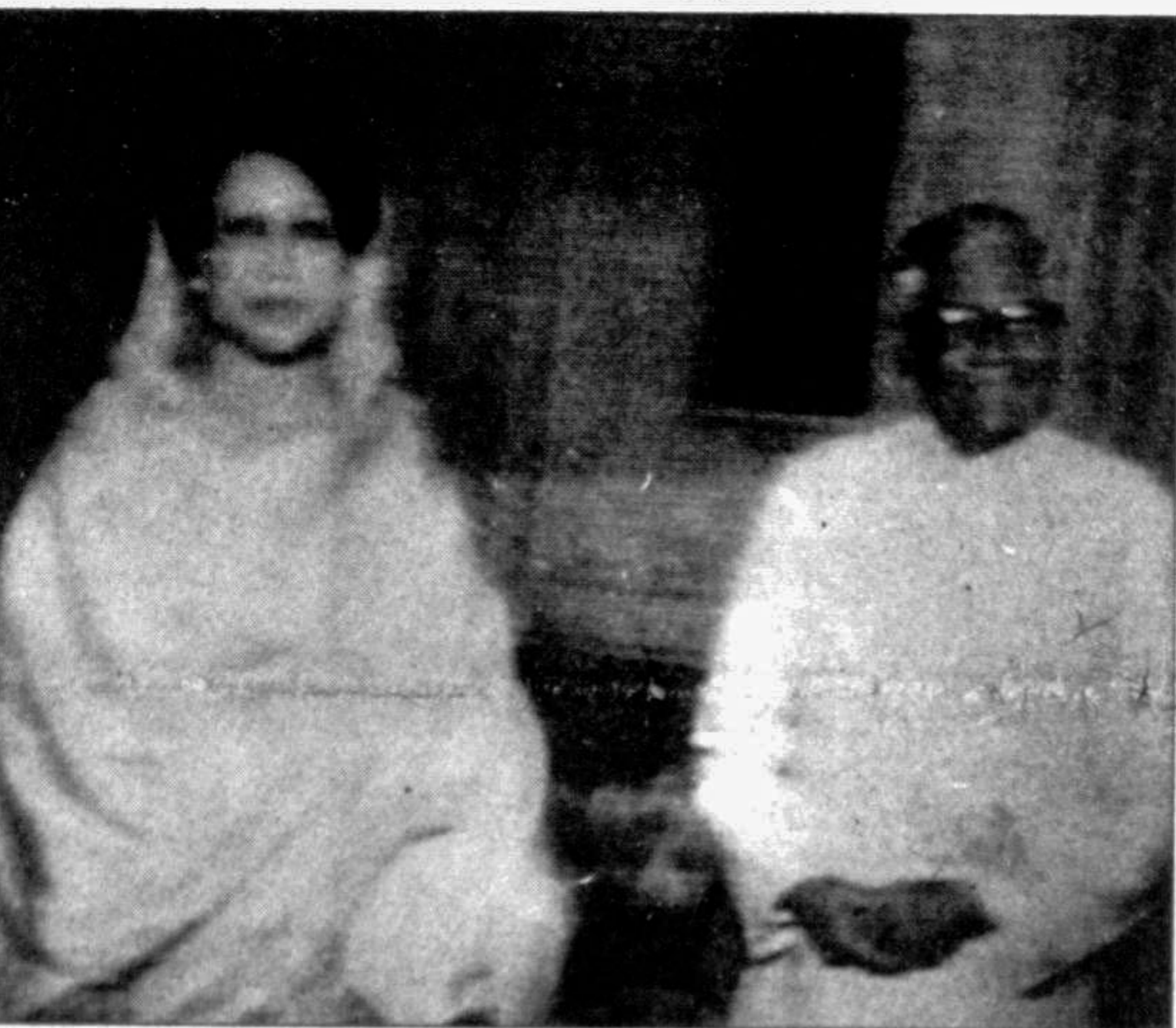
Two bodies, recovered by police from the Buriganga river near Jhawchar in Keraniganj upazila, were brought to Mitford Hospital Wednesday, reports UNB.

Siddiqui Rahman (35) and his brother Lal Miah (20) were drowned in the river at Palpara near Shaheed Intellectuals' graveyard at Mirpur Friday night.

Police said five miscreants dropped them into the river tying their hands and legs with rope while they were asleep in an engine boat. They fled away with the boat.

The miscreants were later arrested from Singair in Manikganj district while they were trying to sell the boat at Tk 5,000 only.

A UP chairman had informed the police suspecting at the attempt by the miscreants to sell the boat for a throw-away price.



Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia called on the Indian President R Venkataraman at Rastrapati Bhavan in Delhi yesterday. —PID photo

Khaleda meets Venkatraman

NEW DELHI, May 27: Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia called on Indian President R Venkataraman at the morning room of Rastrapati Bhavan here today, reports BSS.

They discussed matters of common interest.

Foreign Minister A S M Mostafizur Rahman, members of parliament Akbar Hossain and Rozi Kabir and Foreign Secretary Reaz Rahman were present on the occasion.

The Prime Minister later attended a luncheon hosted by the Indian President in her honour at the grey dining room of the Rastrapati Bhavan.

She also planted a sapling at the samadhi.

From the Rajghat Begum Khaleda Zia went to Shanti Vana to pay her respects to Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru by placing a wreath at his samadhi.

Begum Zia signed visitors book on both the occasions.

Pays homage to Gandhi, Nehru

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia placed a wreath at the samadhi of Mahatma Gandhi at Rajghat this morning.

She also planted a sapling at the samadhi.

From the Rajghat Begum Khaleda Zia went to Shanti Vana to pay her respects to Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru by placing a wreath at his samadhi.

Begum Zia signed visitors book on both the occasions.

Over 200 pc hike in 12 years KNM grapples with production cost

Munir U Ahmed

KHULNA, May 27: Despite enhancing newsprint prices by more than 200 per cent over the last 12 years the Khulna Newsprint Mill's (KNM) continues to operate at a huge financial loss failing to check the rising cost of production.

The production capacity of the mills has also increased following the implementation of a Taka 45 crore BMR (Balancing, Modernisation and Rehabilitation) project.

According to official sources, the cumulative loss of the newsprint mills stands at over Tk 100 crore apart from the outstanding loans and advances received from the financial institutions.

In the past three financial years from 1988-89 to 1990-91 the total loss was estimated at over Taka 35 crore.

Wages and salary increases, rise in prices of inputs, prevailing efficiency and over-staffing of the newsprint mills are among the reasons for continued increase in cost of newsprint production, the sources disclosed.

The sources also pointed out that the mills produces only one grade of paper without recourse to cushion off the loss by producing other profitable varieties of papers.

The KNM has been officially prohibited from manufacturing other grades of paper since 1985-86.

The KNM started functioning in 1959 with the installation capacity of 50,000 tons of newsprint annually. Since 1970-71 the production in the mills started falling and came to its lowest at 16,000 tons in 1976-77. It was only in 1988-89 that the mills achieved the production level of 48,000 tons.

The price of the newsprint has been raised five times since 1968-69 when it was

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Wrong policy disturbing CHT peace, says Hasina

BANDARBAN, May 27: Awami League President and Leader of the Opposition in parliament Sheikh Hasina today called for a political solution to the problems in the Chittagong Hill Tracts, reports UNB.

"Government's wrong policy and outlook disturb peace and hinder development in the region", she told a public meeting at Rajarmath here in the afternoon.

Hasina suggested that the hill tracts problems should be resolved immediately through discussion, saying conflicts have been increasingly threatening people's life and property in the hill tracts.

"Democracy can flourish only through understanding and tolerance", she reminded.

Presided over by Bandarban district Awami League President Mahbubur Rahman, the meeting was addressed by Begum Matia Chowdhury, MP, Ataur Rahman Khan Kaiser, Ivy Rahman, Obaidul Qader, Mohi-

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Khaleda tells Indian Journalists Action not words can build trust

NEW DELHI, May 27: Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia today called for greater trust and confidence among the people of Bangladesh and India to pave the way for solution to bilateral problems, reports UNB.

"Both sides need to demonstrate their sincerity and willingness to be helpful and accommodative in finding solution to our bilateral problems and difficulties", she said.

Begum Zia also specified cooperation in tackling issues in "sensitive areas". She said, "How you project and interpret events significantly moulds public attitudes and perceptions."

She observed that peace and stability in South Asia were essential prerequisite for success of liberalisation programmes being perceived by both the countries.

The Prime Minister also urged for creating a healthy regional environment for unitedly solving the "Dal Bhat" problem and poverty alleviation of South Asian people within the SAARC framework.

Top columnists and editors

cooperation of the media in building better ties between the two neighbours.

"We politicians need your cooperation, support and understanding in our efforts to posture a more harmonious relationship between our two countries", she said.

Answering questions from them, the Prime Minister said the issue of water sharing, particularly those of the Ganges, came up for discussion at her talks with the Indian leader Narasimha Rao.

She said the water sharing issue would be discussed in detail at the ministerial level meeting to be held soon. Begum Zia told a questioner that if necessary, Nepal might be included in the water talks afterwards. "It's now confined bilaterally."

Begum Zia said Bangladesh underlined the need for further strengthening economic

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Mantu group drives out rivals from DU hall

Activists of a faction of Chhatra League, known as 'Mantu group' stormed the Zahurul Huq Hall of Dhaka University Wednesday ousting their rival colleagues, reports UNB.

Panic gripped the entire varsity area as the evicted BCL men massed their supporters apparently for a counter-offensive and went on a rampage on the campus as police lath-charged and fired tear-gas on them.

Gunshots and blasts were heard from different areas during the rampage.

Witnesses said a strong band of activists, followers of the rebel Awami League leader Mostafa Mohsin Mantu, rushed into the hall from the west gate at about 12 noon brandishing firearms.

The rivals, also reportedly well equipped, ran out through another gate amidst the sudden onset.

Sources said the attackers,

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Rival AL groups clash in Comilla: 50 injured

From Our Correspondent

COMILLA, May 27: At least 50 people were injured when two rival groups clashed at the District Awami League council session at Town Hall today.

Police resorted to baton charge and fired eight rounds of teargas shells to bring the situation under control, witnesses said.

The clash ensued between the two rival groups when the subject committee meeting was being held during the afternoon session of the council and the issue of nominating the District Awami League General Secretary came up.

As the name of local AL leader, Afzal Khan, was proposed, it was protested by the group led by the current acting General Secretary AKM Bahauddin Bahar, a former pourashava commissioner, witnesses added.

Soon, the clash spread panic among the people

See Page 12 Col 6

Shishu Park turns risky

By Masud Hasan Khan

Watch out! Keep an eye on the small cabins in which your kids go up on the Ferris wheel.

Some of the fun rides at the country's only recreation park for children — the Shishu Park in the capital — have become obsolete and dangerous.

Officials of the Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) said that all the 11 recreational machines at the park were running two years after expiry of the safety warranty. The 10-year warranty ended in 1990, they said.

Any accident because of the worn-out machines would involve lives of innocent children, they warned.

Sources at the park said on condition of anonymity that machines of at least six of these fun rides badly needed thorough overhauling and their

steel structures replaced.

Besides the most precarious Ferris wheel, there are flying saucer, chair tower, electric train, merry-go-round, roller skates, trampoline, electric cars, baby bicycles, archery and flower cups at the 15-acre Shishu Park.

Park sources said except for a few changes in 1990, no major maintenance job was done since opening of the park in 1979.

They said plastic covers, metal ropes, nuts, bolts were replaced on many occasions but the metal structure of these rides were not changed.

The foot-boards of some cabins on the Ferris wheel became worn-out and were replaced, the sources said, but not the steel rims, the main axle or the bearings on it.

According to sources, the DCC spends nearly Taka 12 lakh every year for maintenance of the machines at the park which, they said, was too inadequate.

"Almost all the machines here rotates or moves involving friction... and it is very likely that these will wear and tear in time," one source at the park said, adding that it was the high time these were replaced. "An unfortunate incident occurred."

A maintenance worker at the park, who requested not to be named, said that apparently all the machines looked well.

"But we do not know what the condition is inside the metal structures of these

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Police dispersing unruly students during yesterday's incident on the DU campus. —Star photo

Drama artiste commits suicide

By Staff Correspondent

Dalia Ferdous, a noted stage performer and TV drama artiste succumbed to burn injuries at the Combined Military Hospital (CMH) Wednesday morning.

Dalia, wife of Major Akter Ferdous, was 25. She stayed with her husband at Kachukhet, Dhaka Cantonment.

With serious burns, Dalia was admitted to the CMH late Tuesday night where she succumbed at around 9 am yesterday.

Cantonment police said, in an unnatural death (UD) case with them it was reported that Dalia committed suicide by burning herself at her Kachukhet residence.

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