

Malaysia: Manpower

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study.

Malaysia, he said, could help Bangladesh in coconut and rubber plantation in the proposed Green Belt.

The Malaysian response to all these proposals has been encouraging," Rahman said.

A Malaysian spokesman also described the talks fruitful. "I'm very happy that the talks have been fruitful," said Malaysian Foreign Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi who was at the meeting.

Badawi told The Daily Star that the two countries now had "opportunities to follow up the decisions on expansion of economic cooperation." He said that the Bangladesh-Malaysia Joint Economic Commission would get guidelines from the talks.

According to Bangladesh spokesman: Begum Zia and Mahathir, aided by their respective delegation members, also discussed cooperation in the fields of culture, sports, maritime transport, tourism and youth exchange programmes.

Their talks, held in an atmosphere of cordiality, also focused on regional and international subjects of common concern.

Rahman said that trade ministers from the two countries meeting separately decided to hold a Bangladesh week in Kuala Lumpur that would feature cultural programmes, two trade exhibitions and three industrial seminars.

The Foreign Secretary said that at the start of the talks the two leaders expressed satisfaction over the existing bilateral relations "that were warm, friendly and full of goodwill."

Begum Zia pointed out her government's steps to institutionalise democracy and implement socio-economic plans. On international subjects, the South-South cooperation was high on the agenda with

both leaders underlining the need for greater cooperation among the developing countries.

The two leaders reviewed the current global scenario both being the members of several organisations including the United Nations, Commonwealth, the Organisation of Islamic Conference and the Non-Aligned Movement.

Issues relating to strengthening of Islamic ummah and the plight of the Muslims all over the world came up for discussions.

The two Prime Ministers agreed to work in concert and harmonise their positions in international forums for greater understanding to secure global peace and tranquility.

The situation in the region and the SAARC, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Palestine and the Middle East situation figured in the talks prominently.

Begum Zia was aided by Foreign Minister ASM Mostafizur Rahman, Planning Minister AM Zahiruddin Khan, Commerce Minister MK Anwar, Labour and Manpower Minister Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan, State Minister for Religious Affairs Prof Abdul Mannan, State Minister for Civil Aviation and Tourism Minister Reaz Rahman and Bangladesh High Commissioner to Malaysia Mahbubul Alam.

The Malaysian Prime Minister was assisted at the talks by Foreign Minister Abdullah Haji Ahmad Badawi, Minister of International Trade and Industry Rafidah Abdul Aziz, Deputy Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Hamid Bin Othman, Secretary General of the Ministry of Primary Industries Wong Cum Choon, Deputy Secretary General of the Foreign Ministry Abdul Halim Bin Ali and Malaysian High Commissioner to Bangladesh Ahmad Fuzi.



Malaysian Prime Minister Dr Mahathir Bin Mohamad placing wreaths at the National Mausoleum at Savar Saturday to show respect to the martyrs of War of Liberation.

-PID photo

Mahathir places wreaths at Savar

SAVAR, Feb 13: Malaysian Prime Minister Dr Mahathir Bin Mohamad this morning placed wreaths at the National Martyrs' Memorial here in memory of those, who had embraced martyrdom in the country's liberation war, reports BSS.

On arrival at the memorial, 33 kilometres north west of the city, the visiting Prime Minister was received by Works Minister Rafiqul Islam Mia and the GOC of 9th Infantry Division Major General Abdul Matin.

Dr Mahathir Mohamad stood in solemn silence after placing wreaths at the altar of the memorial while the bugle played the last post and the national flag was brought to half mast.

The Malaysian Prime Minister, while signing the visitors' book, wrote, "an appropriate monument to those, who gave their lives for this great country."

The Works Minister presented him with a crest of the memorial.

The distinguished guest planted an 'Ashoka' (saraca indica) sapling at the memorial premises and looked at the sprawling greenery in a pleasant atmosphere on the first day of Falgoun, heralding spring in Bangladesh.

20 injured in Rajendra College clash

From Our Correspondent

FARIDPUR, Feb 13: About 20 persons were injured when a section of students of Government Rajendra University College clashed with police in the town this morning.

The injured include the Thana Nirbahi Officer (TNO) Ahmedur Rahman, ASI of police Imdadul Haq and three constables of police Abdul Wahad, Dilip Bhoumik and Nurul Islam.

The injured policemen were admitted to sadar hospital.

During the nearly two-hour clash, the official jeep of the sadar thana TNO and the motorcycle of Zila Parishad secretary were damaged by the unruly students, police and witnesses said. Police also fired blank in the air and lobbed several teargas canisters to disperse the clashing students, they added.

Today's incident was a sequel to Thursday's scuffle in which Ziaul Hasan Mithu, Vice-President of Rajendra College Students Union and an employee of Faridpur Municipality, were seriously injured. The scuffle occurred between Mithu and the municipality employees over getting a licence for first class contract.

According to witnesses and police, today's trouble started when a group of students of the Rajendra College went to the municipality office in a procession to submit a memorandum to the municipal administrator regarding Thursday's alleged attack on Mithu and his friend by some employees of the municipality.

Photographers of some major dailies including The Daily Star were yesterday not invited to cover the civic reception to the visiting Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad.

Some dailies were given two cards — one for a reporter and the other for a photographer — to cover the occasion organised by the Dhaka City Corporation (DCC), journalists said.

DCC officials, however, were not available for comment.

Apex trade bodies

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The agreement also said that both the sides would examine the possibilities of co-operation in third country markets and keep each other informed about projects in this respect.

The two sides would utilize visits by members or officials from the two organisations to discuss matters of mutual interest.

Addressing the signing ceremony, the Malaysian Prime Minister expressed his hope that the joint-venture tie-ups between the two countries would increase in the future because of the policies of the two countries.

He said that Bangladesh has the "pull factor" derived from the liberalised industrial policy while Malaysia has the "push factor" derived from its reverse investment policy which would increase investments here.

Dr. Mahathir also stressed the need for seriousness and commitment of the two countries' private sectors to develop bilateral economic ties.

He also said the trade volume between the two countries must be enhanced further.

Dr Mahathir pointed out the poor trade turnover between the two countries and hinted that Malaysia was actively considering further preferential treatment for Bangladesh's export.

The Malaysian Prime Minister said that his government now encouraged its businessmen to venture out and invest overseas and added that both the Bangladeshi and Malaysian entrepreneurs should utilize this attitude to intensify joint venture efforts and commercial links.

UNB adds: Total two-way trade between Dhaka and Kuala Lumpur in 1991 amounted to \$6.8 million US dollars. Over the last five years, Bangladesh accounted for around 0.1 percent of Malaysia's total trade while Malaysia figured 0.5 percent in total trade of Bangladesh.

Furthermore, Dhaka faces a serious imbalance in trade with Kuala Lumpur. In 1991-92, Bangladesh's export to Malaysia stood at 1.8 million US dollars while its imports amounted to 32 million.

The Malaysian leader suggested strong South-South cooperation to face the economic challenges emanating from uncertainty in the Uruguay Round and formation of trade blocs — NAFTA (North American Free Trade Agreement) and Single Europe. He listed his country's step to promote economic ties with the developing countries.

The FBCCI President, in his welcome address to the Malaysian Prime Minister at the luncheon, stress the need for more effective trade and economic co-operation on a regional basis in the context of the globalisation of the world economy.

He asked for concessionary tariff and other preferential ar-

rangements for specific products like jute, tea and leather to expand bilateral trade between the two countries.

Listing the incentives being provided to foreign investors here, Rahman said Malaysian investors would find Bangladesh a better place for investment compared to others in South Asia.

He also urged the Malaysian authorities to take Bangladeshi workers to make up their labour shortfall.

Speaking on the occasion, a number of local businessmen asked for preferential treatment from the Southeast Asian nation for Bangladeshi exportables. Among them were Dhaka Chamber President M Yunus, Beximco's Salman F Rahman, Former President of Metropolitan Chamber Syed Manzur Elahi and President of BGMEA M Mosharraf Hossain.

But, in response, Malaysian minister for International Trade Rafida Aziz pointed at lack of marketing drive on the part of Bangladeshi exporters, which, according to her, is a major reason for poor export volume of Dhaka to Kuala Lumpur.

Despite preferential tariff offered by Malaysia for Bangladesh jute, its export failed to make any significant improvement, she said.

JU Chhatra Oikya clamps ban on fundamentalists

By JU Correspondent

Sarbadallo Chhatra Oikya (SCO) of Jahangirnagar University in an announcement yesterday clamped ban on all sorts of political activities of fundamentalist forces including that of the Islami Chhatra Majlish.

The announcement was made at a rally held after a silent peace procession to protest the barbaric killing of students at the Rajshahi University campus on February 6.

Palestinian

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Our fixed position is the implementation to the letter of resolution 799 which stipulates the return of all the deportees safely and immediately," Rantisi said.

"This declaration stresses a new double standard used by the Security Council which has refused compromise solutions in implementing its resolutions in other international cases," added Rantisi.

Palestinian peace negotiator Hanan Ashrawi said in a statement the plan "fails to address the central issue of the illegality of deportations."

"The Palestinian position regarding the expulsions remains unchanged: We are committed to the full implementation of UN Security Council resolution 799 as a requirement for the resumption of negotiations," she said.

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Mahathir opens trade centre

By Staff Correspondent

The visiting Prime Minister of Malaysia Dr Mahathir Mohamad yesterday inaugurated the Malaysian Trade Centre at the Concord Tower at Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue.

The trade centre will accommodate a showroom for Malaysian Proton Saga cars, the offices of the Malaysian International Shipping Corporation (MISI) and the Malaysia Airlines.

Malaysian products of different kinds will be exhibited at the trade centre while information will be provided by it to the persons interested in doing business in Malaysia.

Foreign Minister of Malaysia Abdullah Ahmed Badawi, International Trade and Industries Minister Rafidah Abdul Aziz and the Deputy Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Dr. Haji Hamid Othman were also present at the inaugural ceremony.

The trade centre is the first of its kind in Bangladesh which will be run by Malaysia-Bangladesh Venture Limited (MBV), a joint venture company set up recently by private sector entrepreneurs of the two countries.

Bangladesh Commerce Minister MK Anwar, Information Minister Barrister Nazmul Huda, Labour and Manpower Minister Abdul Mannan and a good number of industrialists and businessmen were present on the occasion.

New Education, Food Secretaries

By Staff Correspondent

The postings of new secretaries in the Food and Education ministries, along with a number of other postings were announced by the government yesterday.

According to a government handout, Planning Commission member ATM Shamsul Haq has been posted as the Secretary, Ministry of Food while the immediate past secretary of the ministry Md Ershadul Haq has been posted as the Secretary, Ministry of Education.

The additional Secretary of the Home Ministry Shafiqur Rahman, in addition to his duties, will also discharge the daily duties of the Secretary.

The immediate past secretary, Ministry of Home, Manjurul Karim went on leave preparatory to retirement recently.

Major Syed Azizur Rahman (ret'd) has been reappointed the Chief Comptroller at the President's Secretariat for a one-year term.

AFM Ziauddin, Director of BRDB, has been posted as the Joint Secretary, Home Ministry while the Director of the Crop Diversification Project Md Giasuddin Pathan, has been posted as the Joint Secretary, Industries Ministry.

The Additional Commissioner of Dhaka Division, Md Nazrul Islam, has been posted as the Joint Secretary, Primary and Mass Education Division of the Ministry of Education.

The Director (finance) of Bangladesh Steel Engineering Corporation Muhammad Muniruzzaman and Director of Bangladesh Small Industries Corporation ASH Abdul Halim has been posted on deputation as directors of the Anti-Corruption Bureau.

Betar-TV Shilpee Sangsad rally Tuesday

By Staff Correspondent

The Bangladesh Betar-Television Shilpee Sangsad plans to hold a rally Tuesday in the city to protest the distortion of history of the War of Liberation" in the TV play 'Uthan', a press release issued by the organisation said.

The rally organised by the Sangsad in collaboration with the Sammilito Sangskritik Jote, the Bangladesh Group Theatre Federation and the Abrit Samannya Parishad will also press for autonomy of the Bangladesh Radio and the BTV so that these organisation can be impartial.

The Sangsad has called upon the artists, cultural activists and the members of the public to join the rally at 3.30 pm in front of the Jatiya Press Club.

Madam Mahathir spends busy day

The wife of visiting Malaysian Prime Minister Dr Siti Hashmah Mahathir yesterday spent a busy day in the capital visiting the historic Ahsan Manjil, different projects of Jatiya Mahila Sangstha and handicrafts projects of the country, reports BSS.

In the morning she visited the Ahsan Manjil where she was received by State Minister for Cultural Affairs Prof Jahanara Begum. Dr Siti went round different parts of the building, now turned into a museum, and expressed keen interest in the socio-political and historic documents preserved there. The Director General of National Museum Sheikh Akram Ali introduced her to the relics there.

Mrs Mahathir, later, went to the Jatiya Mahila Sangstha office at New Baily Road. State Minister for Social Welfare and Women's Affairs Begum Sarwari Rahman welcomed her. Mrs Mahathir appreciated the various projects of the sangstha including adult literacy, weaving, pottery and computer. The Chairman of the sangstha Selina Rahman MP were present.

Dr Siti also visited the display centre of women's affairs department. Begum Sarwari Rahman was with her.

In the afternoon Mrs Mahathir visited Arong, a display and sales centre of country's handicrafts run by BRC. The handicrafts of the centre drew keen interest of the visiting guest.

Mrs Mahathir also attended a luncheon at Hotel Sonargaon hosted by Begum Sarwari Rahman. Prof Jahanara Begum was present.

Lady inwaiting Latifunnesa Hossain MP although accompanied Dr Siti Mahathir yesterday.

Bombs hurled at Bangla Bazar office

By Staff Correspondent

Unidentified miscreants hurled five hand bombs at the Green Road office of the Daily Bangla Bazar in the capital Saturday. None was injured in the attack made at about 9-15 pm Saturday. Bangla Bazar authority have filed a FIR with Tejgaon Thana.

Private sector

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Dr. Mahathir said the recent convening of ministerial level joint commission reflects the keen interest of the two countries to expand relations in all fields. He said steps are now being taken to strengthen the framework of cooperation to ensure early implementation of the various decisions that were agreed upon.

He expressed satisfaction over the recent increase in trade between the two countries and useful exchange of visits. He said Bangladesh has become an important source of manpower in the expansion of Malaysia's industrial and plantation sectors during the last two years.

Malaysia looks forward to its cooperation with Bangladesh in the proposed establishment of the Bangladesh Pilgrimage and Fund Board, he added.

Dr Mahathir referred to the establishment of a Malaysian Trade Centre in Dhaka and said it will provide a focal point for business transactions between the two countries. He expressed the hope that a similar centre will be established by Bangladesh in Kuala Lumpur.

Project Nazrul

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paying respect to the National Poet.

They also stressed the need for organising special training course on singing Nazrul songs perfectly.

Khan Ataur Rahman alleged that Nazrul's works were not being properly projected in the national media. Nazrul was not a mere poet of the Muslim world, he was the poet of mankind irrespective of caste and creed, Rahman said.

Khalid Hossain suggested that the Nazrul Institute should set up a modern recording studio to supply cassettes of Nazrul songs with their original tune.

Noted Nazrul song artists Fatematuzzohra, Shabnam Moshir, Khalid Hossain and Khairun Nahar rendered songs in the function.

As part of the month-long Ekushey programme organised by the Sammilito Sangskritik Jote, Narayanjan Sangskritik Jote staged a drama at the Central Shaheed Minar titled 'Projanmer Katha Bolchhi' in the afternoon.

Today's programme of Bangla Academy: Discussion on "Literary practice of the young writers in Bangladesh: The decades of 70 and 80" at 4 pm. Prof Khandaiker Ashraf Hossain, Shihab Sarker, Nasima Sultana, Nasrin Jahani and Sarker Amin will discuss.

The Midnight File

Congress observes bandh in Tripura

AGARTALA, Feb 13: Normal life was affected as the 24-hour state-wide bandh called by the Tripura Pradesh Congress-I committee (TPCC-I) began here this morning. Shops and business establishments downed their shutters, vehicles remained off the roads and Indian Airlines flight to and from Agartala was delayed. The bandh had been called in protest against the Election Commission's decision, to postpone the February 15 assembly elections to April 3, reports PTI.

Mayon may erupt again

LEGASPI, Philippines, Feb 13: Villagers were given two days to take their belongings and farm animals from a six kilometre danger zone around Mayon Volcano as officials on today warned further eruptions are possible. Social Welfare Secretary Corazon Alma De Leon said the estimated 50 residents in the area who have ignored earlier evacuation calls would have two days to leave, after which it will be declared, "a no-man's land", reports AFP.

Mahathir: Democracy

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civic reception at the North Plaza of the Sangsad Bhaban yesterday afternoon.

The reception was arranged in honour of the Malaysian Prime Minister and his wife Dato Seri Datin Paduka Dr Siti Hashmah by the City Mayor Mirza Abbas and Afroza Abbas.

Dr Mahathir said that Malaysia and Bangladesh had a common faith in democratic and representative government adding "we have evolved our own democratic systems to meet the aspiration and the ideals of our societies."

The Prime Minister mentioned that the ultimate goal of a democratic system was social and political stability for the pursuit of economic development and well-being.

Dr Mahathir maintained that legitimacy in government attained through the democratic process should lead to the promotion rather than the regular disruption of legitimate social, political and economic activities.

The Malaysian Prime Minister asserted that no developing country could be expected to practise the so-called 'perfect democracy', as was understood by the West.

"Even for the West, what is perfect today will be defective tomorrow. The basic priority should be the rapid economic development for the benefit of the people," said Mahathir pointing out that the provisions of a democratic system were no guarantee for success.

"Each democratic nation therefore, big or small, developed or developing, has still to shape its own destiny and find its own place in the international community," he added.

The Malaysian Prime Minister was critical about the donors' attitude towards recipients saying, "many a time, donors can be most patronising. Worse still, donors can sometimes be unnecessarily severe in their criticism of the policies and practices of the recipients."

Dr Mahathir said, "It is as if the ability to give is also a licence to preach and to arraign to the donors the right to shower advice that are not solicited."

The Malaysian leader added that frustration arose on the part of recipients when the sheer need for aid meant having to accept conditionalities and priorities determined by the donors.

Citing the example of Malaysia's economic development, Dr Mahathir said that his country struggled hard to free itself from economic dependence in order to make political independence gained in 1957 meaningful.

Dr Mahathir expressed the

Open market

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committed to a multi-party democracy and an open market economy.

"We are continuing our tireless efforts for economic development, consolidation of democratic institutions and for upholding human rights."

She said rise in production and exports, decreasing inflation, increasing tax and revenue collection are indeed clear yardsticks of the country's current economic progress.

Speaking on SAARC, she said this body is playing a very positive role in this region in developing bilateral relations with all South Asian neighbours.

She said Bangladesh and Malaysia are deeply committed to the principles and charters of the United Nations, Non-Aligned Movement, Organisation of Islamic Conference and the Commonwealth.

Begum Zia asked the guests to join in a toast for health and happiness of the Malaysian Prime Minister and Madam Dato Seri Datin Paduka Dr Siti Hashmah, and for continued peace and prosperity of the brotherly people of Malaysia.

Leader of the Opposition Sheikh Hasina, Deputy Leader of the Opposition Abus Samad Azad, Jamaat leader Matiur Rahman Nizami MP, Members of Parliament, Democratic Forum leader Barrister Kamal Hossain, Chiefs of the three services, elite of the city, members of the diplomatic corps and high civil and military officials were present at the banquet.

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