

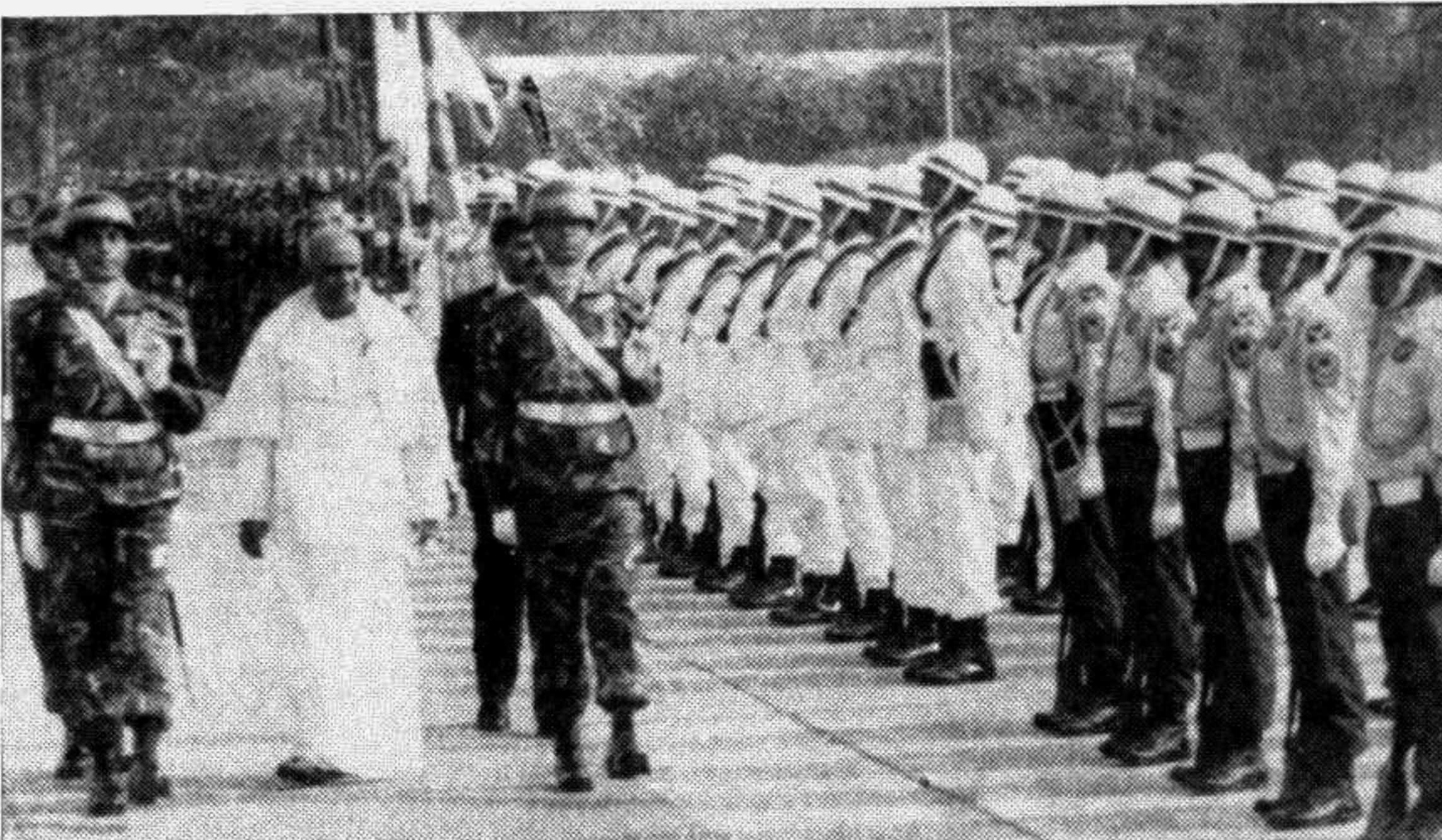
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Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and her Indian counterpart H D Deve Gowda at the Indo-Bangla official talks at the International Conference Centre in the city yesterday. — PID photo



Indian Prime Minister H D Deve Gowda inspecting the guard of honour presented by a contingent from three services at the Zia International Airport yesterday. — PID photo

**Dhaka-Delhi talks**

From Page 1  
Abdullah.  
Deve Gowda was assisted by External Affairs Minister I K Gujral and Home Minister Inderjit Gupta.  
Two Indian Members of Parliament accompanying their Prime Minister — Biplob Das Gupta and B K Handique — were also present at the talks, along with senior officials of the two countries.

India offered to Bangladesh tariff concessions on 500 items, which will be effective from March 1. India will give concessions on 200 items and 25 per cent on the remaining items.

The two countries emphasised taking immediate measures in three areas. These are activation of the Joint Rivers Commission (JRC), revival of meetings of the Joint Working Group (JWG), which is composed of senior officials of Home and Foreign Ministries to discuss bilateral problems and elimination of cross border insurgency, including that concerning Chakmas and Shantibahini.

The official talks covered elimination of insurgency and it was decided that the next meeting of the Joint Working Group (JWG) will also make detailed follow-up on eliminating the insurgencies like those of the ULFA, NSCN, Bodos in the seven eastern states of India and the Shantibahini in Chittagong Hill Tracts.

They also agreed on encouraging exchange of visits by senior officials of the two countries for solving bilateral problems and strengthening cooperation.

Both sides expressed their determination to expand cooperation in different areas.  
While discussing sub regional cooperation, the two sides felt that there was scope for greater understanding in harnessing water resources of the common rivers in the region and expanding trade.

Both sides felt that the water sharing accord signed on December 12 was a landmark agreement and opened avenues for mutually beneficial cooperation in more areas. Review of monitoring of the Ganges flow, which began on January 1, was also made at the talks.

The two sides also agreed to set an early date for holding the next meeting of the Joint Economic Commission (JEC) at the level of foreign minister to discuss and review the entire gamut of bilateral relations and identify newer areas of cooperation in economic and trading spheres.

**Garments factory gutted in city**

An export-oriented garments factory at Mirpur in the city was gutted in a fire on Sunday night, reports UNB.  
Fire Brigade sources said almost all the machinery and fabrics and other materials of Align Garments were burnt to ashes in the fire that started at about 11:45 pm on Sunday on the second floor of the six-storey garments factory at Kazipara.  
The factory was locked when the fire broke out. Fire Brigade officials said. They could not ascertain the extent of damages. Police, however, put the figure of loss on Tk 25 lakh.  
Three units of Fire Brigade and Civil Defence including pressure cars and water cars brought the fire under control after two hours of hectic operation.  
No injury was reported in the fire. A General Diary was lodged with Mirpur police yesterday.

**ULFA rebel**

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afternoon. The condition of Lakshman Singh, 24, now under treatment in the hospital was stated to be critical, while Bak Singh, 25, has been sent to the Komolganj police station from the Moulvibazar hospital for interrogation, police said.  
According to police, the three Manipuris, who intruded into the Bangladesh territory, are active members of the outlawed United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA). Four activists of the party's dissident group, KYLA entered the Bangladesh territory through the Komolganj border on Saturday. When they were fighting among themselves, police caught three of them. The other person managed to escape.  
Police also recovered a revolver.  
The government of Bangladesh has informed the Indian High Commission of the death of Thomba Singh, a police official said to night.

Editor: Mahfuz Anam

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**President asks police to build partnership with people**

President Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed yesterday called upon the members of the police force to discharge their duties with utmost honesty and sincerity for ensuring peace and security in social life, reports UNB.  
Each and every member of the police force, he said, will have to rise above personal interests and set bright examples of patriotism and dutifulness in keeping with their glorious tradition.  
The President was addressing the senior police officials at Bangabhaban in the morning on the occasion of the Police Week 97.

President Shahabuddin said all members of the police force, as symbol of state power and a helping hand of the government, have the special right to enforce law legally for the interest of the state and the people.  
Officials and members of the police would have to be highly conscious in exercising this right and they should also remain alert about the dignity and reputation of the force, he said.  
The President said the law enforcing agency would have to build a lasting partnership with the people through proper enforcement of laws formulated for the welfare of the common man.  
"It will be easier to curb crime, enhance confidence and reduce complexities if the police can build such a partnership with the people."  
He also stressed the need for people's cooperation in discharging the duties of the police.  
Police, he said, will have to boldly confront terrorism and foil all sorts of anti-social activities so that everybody men and women, children and old — can have the opportunity to live in peace, free from tension.

"Presence of police should not be the cause of panic and anxiety for the innocent people... You should work for such an atmosphere which will create genuine trust and confidence in them," the President added.  
Expressing concern at the reports of some deaths in police custody, President Shahabuddin called it "very painful" and asked the officials to properly inquire into the deaths for restoring confidence among the people.  
Home Minister Major (ret'd) Rafiqul Islam and Inspector General of Police M Azizul Haq were present on the occasion.

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priority to foster friendly and cooperative relations with our immediate neighbours, she said. "We have opened a fresh chapter in our relations."  
She said there was ample scope for greater cooperation between the countries of the region in fields of trade, tourism, development of natural and water resources, flood control and creating employment opportunity for the people.  
"We must continue to take bold and determined initiatives to find new and promising dimensions to our cooperation," she said. "We must not lag behind when the world is moving ahead."  
Emphasising on increased cooperation in the fields of trade and commerce, Hasina mentioned Bangladesh's trade imbalance with India over the years and urged immediate steps to remove the imbalance between the two countries.  
She, however, noted with satisfaction that the government of India is also aware of this and has taken steps needed to reduce tariff on a number of export items from Bangladesh.  
Welcoming the Indian Prime Minister, Hasina mentioned that the visit reflected the bonds of friendship and cooperation between the two countries bound by location, history, heritage and culture and common aspirations for development and progress.  
"We remember with gratitude the cooperation and support extended by the government and the people of India during our War of Liberation," she said. "We have to create such an environment for our peoples so that they can seek for themselves new avenues of positive interaction so as to bloom their potentials."  
She said even the most difficult issues can be solved provided there are firm determination and political will and commitment.  
Hasina further stressed that the process of cultural exchange could bring the two peoples closer to each other. There could also be extended cooperation in the fields of sports, education, pilgrimage and tourism.  
She also paid tribute to Deve Gowda's boldness as a leader and farsightedness as a statesman.  
The Bangladesh Prime Minister wished her counterpart health, happiness and long life, continued progress and prosperity of the friendly people of India and also everlasting friendship and cooperation between Bangladesh and India.  
Ministers, MPs, political leaders, diplomats, chiefs of three services, intellectuals, and high civil and military officials attended the banquet.

**Hasina: Neighbours**

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**Reception at Ganobhaban**

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina accorded a formal reception to the visiting Indian Prime Minister H D Deve Gowda at her Ganobhaban residence in the afternoon yesterday, reports UNB.  
National anthems of the two countries were played as the Indian Prime Minister arrived at Ganobhaban at 4 pm.  
Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina introduced him to ministers, MPs, politicians, elite, litterateurs, artists and top civil and military officials.  
Later, Deve Gowda exchanged pleasantries in a cordial atmosphere with the guests. Prime Minister Hasina accompanied him.  
Both singers of the country rendered patriotic Tagore and Nazrul songs in honour of the distinguished guest.

**Red carpet reception to Gowda**

Indian Prime Minister HD Deve Gowda was given a red carpet reception, including a 19-gun salute, as he arrived in Dhaka yesterday morning on a two-day official visit to Bangladesh, reports UNB.  
Gowda was greeted at the Zia International Airport by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.  
Two tiny tots presented the Indian premier with bouquet as the 63-year-old leader, wearing a typical south Indian dress — white *Dhoti*, *Kurta* and *Chadar*, alighted from 'Rajdoot', a special aircraft of the Indian Air Force.  
The Indian Prime Minister was given a guard of honour by a smartly turned out contingent drawn from the three services. He took the salute and reviewed the parade.  
Members of the cabinet, Dhaka city Mayor Mohammad Hanif, heads of diplomatic missions, chiefs of the three services, senior officials, Bangladesh High Commissioner to India CM Shafi Sami and Indian High Commissioner in Bangladesh Deb Mukharji were present at the airport.  
"It's a goodwill visit and it will create lot of goodwill," said Mukharji, the Indian high commissioner, of Gowda's visit.  
The airport formalities over, Gowda drove in a ceremonial motorcade straight to the state guest house Jamuna where he will stay during the visit.  
Hundreds of school, girls and boys lined on both sides at the gateway of the airport's VVIP lounge. They waved miniature flags of Bangladesh and India to greet the Indian Prime Minister.  
VIP roads from the airport to the state guest house Jamuna were decorated with miniature national flags of the two countries to mark the Indian Prime Minister's visit.  
Welcome arches were erected at different points of the VIP roads.  
Portraits of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, Sheikh Hasina and Deve Gowda were also placed at the important junctions of the roads.  
The Indian Prime Minister is leading a 17-member delegation, including External Affairs Minister I K Gujral, Home Minister Inderjit Gupta, Biplob Das Gupta, MP, (Rajya Sabha) and B K Handique, MP, (Lok Sabha).  
It also includes Prime Minister's Principal Secretary TR Satis Chandran, Foreign Secretary Salman Haider and Secretary (Security) B K Rao. Gowda's entourage comprises 84 members.

**RUTA polls today**

From RU Correspondent  
RAJSHAH, Jan 6: The election of the Rajshahi University Teachers' Association (RUTA) and other university bodies will be held tomorrow.  
Two panels — Yellow and Green — are contesting the polls.  
Prof M Shahidul Islam of Applied Chemistry and M Abbas All of Philosophy Department are contesting the posts of president and general secretary respectively of RUTA from the pro-Awami League Yellow Panel while Prof M Sohrah Uddin Ahmed of Islamic History and Culture and Prof M Azhar All of Chemistry are contesting from the pro-Jamaat Green Panel.  
The pro-BNP teachers have not submitted any separate panel.  
Some 560 teachers will cast their votes. The polling will be held in the Juberi International Guest House from 8 am to 1.30 pm without any break.

**2 BCP activists shot dead in Jhenidah**

JHENIDAH, Jan 6: Two people were shot dead in a village in Kumarkhali thana in Kushtia district early today, police said, reports UNB.  
The dead were identified as Mohammad Ali alias Mommo, 40, a leader of Biplobi Communist Party, (BCP) and Sakim, 35, the party's activist.  
Police recovered the bodies from a field of Adabaria village and sent to Kushtia Sadar Hospital for autopsy.  
Local people said unidentified miscreants gunned down the two while they were getting out of the residence of Mommo early today.

**Dock workers at Ctg Port continue 'go slow'**

From Staff Correspondent  
CHITTAGONG, Jan 6: The 'go-slow' programme of dock workers at Chittagong port is yet to be withdrawn though their leaders agreed to this effect in yesterday's meeting with the port authority, official sources said.  
"We would like to proceed further to strengthen relationship on various pending issues," the Indian Prime Minister said.  
He added that the joint Economic Commission, joint river commission and the joint working group would start their work "with great earnestness to further improve our relations and solve the pending problems."  
He was talking to BTW representative Rafiqul Islam Sarker at the state guest house Jamuna yesterday afternoon, soon after his arrival here on a two-day state visit to Bangladesh.  
The reaction of people of both the countries is very much responsive, Deve Gowda said replying to a question on how he would evaluate the relations between the two countries after the signing of the treaty.  
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