

# BLUE DART

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TO INDIA

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina called on her Indian counterpart H D Deve Gowda at his official residence in New Delhi on Saturday. Indian External Affairs Minister I K Gujral (C) also seen in the picture.

## Hasina: CHT peace

From Page 1

ing her meetings with Indian President Shankar Dayal Sharma and Prime Minister Deve Gowda. She had also talks with Namibian President Sam Nujoma, Indian External Affairs Minister I K Gujral and Deputy Chairman of Rajya Sabha Nagma Heptullah.

Referring to her government's effort to restore peace in the CHT, Sheikh Hasina said that some vested quarters were engaged in destabilising the situation there. "Those who do smuggling, involve in illegal trade of drugs and arms worth crores of Taka are the beneficiaries of this insurgency and they don't like to see peace restored."

"But, we want an overall socio-economic development in the vast hilly region of the country. We will take special care for development of the CHT. The youth force in the CHT needs proper education and job opportunities," the Prime Minister said.

When her attention was drawn to the alleged rape and death of a young girl, Seema, under safe custody, the Prime Minister said, "We have already taken steps. We will enact stringent laws to bring rapists to book." She pondered, "Why should women in my country suffer like this, why we have to see an incident like this after the Yasmin case?"

Replies to a question whether she would take any initiative to mediate the Indo-Pakistan dispute over Kashmir, Sheikh Hasina said, "We like to see a bilateral solution to come out. But it's a fact that as members of SAARC, such dispute between two member countries leaves some sort of psychological disturbance on others."

"We earnestly like to see bilateral discussion between the

two to solve the problem. Still, if there is any scope, we will, of course, extend our helping hands."

Replies to a question on realising Bangladesh's assets from Pakistan, Sheikh Hasina said, "It's not an easy task but our efforts will be on. We will also try for repatriation of the stranded Pakistanis to their home." The Prime Minister is scheduled to visit Pakistan next month.

Earlier, speaking on the Inter-Parliamentary Union conference that she addressed, the Prime Minister said, "The topic of this conference is very important, particularly for us. We want more participation of women in politics and other fields of social life."

"We have 11 per cent representation of women both in the Jatiya Sangsad and in the Cabinet. But our target should be 50 per cent representation. We have to remove barriers to equal participation of men and women in socio-economic uplift."

Asked about the possibility of tabling bills on independence of the judiciary and local government structure in the current session of the Jatiya Sangsad, the Prime Minister said, "We shall try".

When her attention was drawn to BNP's allegation that the ruling party was violating the recently signed four-point accord, the Prime Minister brushed it aside and said, "We are implementing all those four points."

Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad, LGRD and Cooperatives Minister Zillur Rahman, Finance Minister Shah A M S Kibria, Minister of State for Information Prof Abu Sayeed and Dhaka city mayor Mohammad Hanif were also present.

### BJSA demands Withdraw 'peak hour rate' for electricity

By Staff Correspondent

Bangladesh Jute Spinners Association (BJSA) has

demanded early implementation

of a government decision to give

the spinners a 10 per cent 'mar-

ket' assistance and to lower

bank interest to within 10 per

cent, instead of nine to 15 per

cent.

This would enable the jute

spinning sector to enhance its

competitiveness in the world

market, it said.

The BJSA, at its 18th Annual

General Meeting in the city

yesterday, also demanded with-

drawal of 'peak hour rate' for

electricity for the export-ori-

ented industries.

Chairman of the Associa-

tion Sabir Yusuf said at the

meeting that due to frequent

power failure, 25 spinning

mills incurred a loss of about

Tk 8.75 crore last month.

He also alleged that due to

power supply disruption, ship-

ment of jute goods was also be-

ing affected badly.

During the first six months

of fiscal 1996-97, produc-

tion and export recorded a down-

ward trend in jute yarn and

twine sectors.

The Krishak Dal meeting de-

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