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President Ramos stands in solemn silence after placing wreath at the National Memorial at Savar yesterday. —PID photo

Dhaka, Manila for confce

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governments agreed to work closely "in promoting the interest and welfare of our migrant workers."

Mentioning that some 3.9 million Filipinos were working abroad, Ramos said his country was ready to convene an international conference on migration for tackling the issue.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina said that she fully supported the views of the visiting President since the issue was of immense importance to both the countries.

Bangladesh has nearly 2.5 million migrant workers in different countries.

President Ramos underlined the need for increase of two-way trade and economic flows and said that Dhaka-Manila Joint Trade Committee and Joint Economic Committee set up earlier would be asked to intensify their activities.

"From a Philippine perspective, our bilateral trade in Bangladesh is too modest. We need to increase two-way trade and other economic flows," he noted.

President Ramos said the two sides have agreed to explore new areas of joint endeavour "where our experience and expertise could be shared."

He said, "The Philippines recognises the pioneering work in microcredit undertaken by Bangladesh's famed Grameen Bank and Trust."

The visiting President said that the two countries realised the need for more people-to-people contact and agreed to more frequent exchanges between officials, legislators, business people and students "for enhancing mutual understanding."

Ramos invites President to visit Philippines

President Shahabuddin Ahmed said yesterday that the state visit of the President of the Philippines, Fidel V Ramos to Bangladesh would provide a tremendous boost to Bangladesh-Philippines relations, reports BSS.

The President said this while the visiting President of the Philippines made a courtesy call on him at Bangabhaban yesterday evening.

President Shahabuddin lauded the dynamic leadership of Ramos. He appreciated President Ramos for leading his country to new heights of development and prosperity side by side consolidating the doors of democracy in the country.

President Fidel V Ramos thanked the President for the good hospitality provided to him and the members of his entourage. He said that he had a very fruitful discussion with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday. He invited President Shahabuddin to visit the Philippines at his convenient time in future.

President Ramos presented President Shahabuddin a copy of the book titled 'Break not the Peace' written by him.

Foreign Minister of the Philippines Domingo L Slazon Jr, Trade and Industry Minister of the Philippines Cesar B Bautista, State Minister for Foreign Affairs Abul Hasan Chowdhury and senior officials of both the countries were present on the occasion.

Ramos

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President Ramos pointed out that Nur Misuari, Chairman of the Moro National Liberation Front (MLNF), who is now the elected Governor of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM), was part of the official delegation. Nur Misuari, who was present at the press conference, responded by standing up and offering a Muslim greeting.

Sheikh Hasina earlier said at the press conference that the President and the Government of Philippines had expressed deep appreciation for the consistent support given by Bangladesh as one of the members of the OIC Ministerial Committee for the solution of the problems in Southern Philippines.

The Prime Minister said that it was clear from the talks that "There is a greater potential for further development and expansion of relations in many spheres."

She said, "We are encouraged to note the presence of a number of businessmen in the delegation" and hoped these industrialists and entrepreneurs will see for themselves the very congenial climate in Bangladesh and seek to explore these opportunities for the benefit of the two countries."

The press conference was also attended by the ministers and high officials of Philippines in the delegation.

Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad and Commerce and Industries Minister Tofael Ahmed were present, among others.

Bangladesh Scouts to confer award on Ramos

Bangladesh Scouts will confer the highest Scout award, "The Silver Tiger", on the Philippines President Fidel V Ramos in recognition of his services towards the Scout Movement in the Asia-Pacific region, reports UNB.

President Ramos as a life-long Scouter inspires 2.9 million Scouts in the country and the Scouts of the Asia-Pacific region.

He became the lifelong member of the Philippines National Executive Board of the Boy Scouts in 1986, said a Bangladesh Scouts press release.

On the occasion of the 40th founding anniversary of the World Scout Bureau of the Asia-Pacific region, President Ramos was presented with the Asia-Pacific Regional Award by the Regional Scout Committee for his outstanding services.

Ramos was conferred with the highest Scout Award, "The Bronze Wolf," in 1993 by the World Organisation of the Scout Movement.

BSS adds: Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and the visiting President Fidel Ramos of the Philippines had an exclusive meeting at the Prime Minister's office.

They exchanged views on various bilateral, regional and international issues of mutual concern.

They agreed that the two countries should continue their cooperation on the international and regional plane, specifically on urgent questions of peace, security and stability.

President Ramos invited Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to visit the Philippines.

Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad, State Minister for Foreign Affairs and minister-in-waiting Abul Hasan Chowdhury were, among others, present.

UNB reports: A warm reception was accorded to President Fidel V Ramos of the Philippines when he arrived in Dhaka yesterday morning on a three-day state visit to Bangladesh.

A red carpet was rolled out at Zia International Airport to welcome the President of the ASEAN nation.

President Shahabuddin Ahmed and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina greeted the guest at the airport.

Cabinet members, Dhaka city Mayor Muhammad Hanif, dean of diplomatic corps, PLO Ambassador Mohammad Shahta Zarab, senior civil and military officials were present.

Four BAF jets escorted the aircraft carrying the VIP guest from the entry of the Bangladesh air space.

A 21-gun salute heralded the arrival of President Ramos.

Two Bangladeshi tiny tots presented him bouquet as the 68-year old President, attiring in black suit, alighted from a special aircraft of the Philippines airlines.

He was given a guard of honour by a smartly turned out contingent, drawn from the three services.

He took the salute and inspected the guard. The national anthems of the two countries were played this time.

SSC exams

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BSS, adds: The Dhaka Metropolitan Police has imposed ban on gathering and movement of more than four persons within 200 yards of 85 Secondary School Certificate (SSC) examination centres in the city from this morning.

According to a DMP press release, the ban has been imposed to ensure the holding of the examinations in a proper and peaceful atmosphere.

Stock markets

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Al-Faruq and Moniruddin Ahmed, a chartered accountant and chairman of BJMC.

But the fifth member, a nominee from Federation of Bangladesh Chamber of Commerce and Industry, failed to join as the Federation declined to put its nominee on the committee.

Mannan Bhuiyan

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desh" which was attended by both the current and the former agriculture ministers, Mannan Bhuiyan also said, "You will get our support in benefiting the farmers. After all, the interest of the country is above the interest of a party."

He was responding to Matia Chowdhury's call for cooperation of all in implementing government plans and programmes to benefit the country's farmers.

The seminar was also attended by former agriculture ministers Anjad Hossain, Maj Gen (ret'd) M A Munim, Sheikh Abdul Aziz, Dr Fasih Uddin Mahtab and former advisers to the government M Azizul Haq and A Z M Nasiruddin.

Shima's death

From Page 1

she was the victim and principal witness in the rape case.

The judicial committee was constituted with two magistrates, Parimal Chandra Shaha and Moinul Haq.

Meanwhile, the special court set up to curb repression on women and children, fixed March 10 as the date for recording deposition of witnesses involved in the rape case of Shima Chowdhury.

Top official of Philippines says Bright prospect for pvt sector cooperation

By Staff Correspondent

Manila and Dhaka have bright prospect of bilateral economic cooperation, particularly in the private sector, said Jose O Juliano, Under-Secretary of the Department of Trade and Industry of the Philippines.

"This is an excellent time for us to strengthen our trade and investment relations," he said while addressing a discussion meeting at the conference room of the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industries in the city yesterday.

Organised by the FBCCI, the function was presided over by its vice president Kazi Shaful Islam. Roberto Lesaca Garcia of Petrochemical Development Corporation (PNOC), Andres Soriano of San Miguel Corporation also spoke on the occasion.

Juliano told the FBCCI meeting that there were ample scope for joint venture projects between the two countries.

"We are offering a good package of incentives and we have well-trained manpower and better infrastructural facilities for the overseas investors," he pointed out.

He said his country was offering 'build, operate and transfer (BOT)' facilities for joint venture project in different countries.

Juliano, who is leading a 25-member delegation, also described the reforms in the Philippines towards economic liberalisation.

The delegates who attended the meeting represented the engineering, telecommunications, leather and footwear, utilities, computer training, food processing, ship-building, petro-

Minister tells JS Gias Kamal was appointed Trade Counsellor violating rules

State Minister for Information Prof Abu Sayeed said in parliament yesterday that journalist Gias Kamal Chowdhury was appointed Trade Counsellor in London, violating rules, reports UNB.

Responding to Abu Yusuf Mohammad Khalilur Rahman of the BNP, the state minister, however, said that steps were being taken so that he could resume his work in the BSS, the official news agency.

Earlier, A Y M Khalilur Rahman alleged that Gias Kamal was not allowed to work although he had joined his office on his return from London.

The BNP member described Gias Kamal as a most respected journalist who went to London on deputation, but he was called back before the expiry of his contract. Now he is not being allowed to 'use his powerful pen', he said.

3 stabbed in city

By DMCH Correspondent

At least five persons were injured in separate incidents in the city yesterday.

Sumon, 20, a student of Tejgaon College and Rana, 21, a student of Bangla College, were injured during a clash at Kachukhet under Cantonment thana in the afternoon. They were admitted to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH), hospital sources said, adding that Rana sustained serious stab injuries.

They were wounded when a group of garments workers reportedly attacked them following a conflict over a business of fabric waste of garments factory.

One Pappu, 26, received stab injuries in his head when a group of unidentified persons attacked him on Nawabpur Road in the old part of the city late afternoon.

Pappu, who set up a stall in the book fair at Bangla Academy, came under attack as he had an altercation with some youths in the fair yesterday morning, said DMCH sources quoting Pappu's friends.

Meanwhile, snatchers stabbed one Samiruddin, 28, near Shikkatul mosque in Sutrapur area and one Anis, 27, was assaulted by a group of local youths in Rupganj under Mirpur thana in the afternoon. They were admitted to the DMCH.

PSC signed

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the basis of 65 per cent to 85 per cent for oil and 70 per cent for gas in favour of Bangladesh government.

All the expenses for exploration, development and production will be borne by the UMCBC. Bangladesh government or Petro-Bangla will not incur any expense for the exploration.

ODA loans may fall

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development projects to supplement foreign aid.

In his opening remarks, leader of the eight-member Japanese team Futao Motai said ensuring transparency and accountability in the government functioning is vital and the government should ensure that.

While informing that future Japanese ODA loan may reduce significantly, he said the Japanese government had also given priority to extending ODA loans 'phase-wise' rather than the previous 'routine-wise'.

He attributed the possible fall in ODA loans on economic sluggishness back at home. "The Japanese people have become more aware as they want to know how their money is being spent abroad," he told the meeting.

In the meeting yesterday, the two sides discussed the general issues of economic policy and the progress of projects being implemented with ODA money from Japan.

The Japanese team noted that the 11 projects, supported by the Overseas Economic Co-operation Fund (OECF) of the Japanese government, were progressing well, the meeting sources said.

Today, the meeting will consult the future loan programmes and Bangladesh will place its projects seeking official loans from the government of Japan.

The projects are the Jamuna Multipurpose Bridge Access Road, the Paksey bridge project, the Area Coverage Rural Electrification Project, the Greater Chittagong Power Distribution project phase III, the Feni Gas Turbine Power Plant project, the Sylhet Gas Turbine Power Plant project, the Narayanganj-Narsingdi Irrigation project and the Container Terminal Construction project.

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Let's make things better PHILIPS

Indian HC hands over 'operational map' of Gen Niazi today

By Staff Correspondent

Indian High Commissioner in Dhaka Dev Mukharjee is scheduled to hand over a historic map to the Muktiuddho Museum (Liberation War Museum) today, said a press release by the Museum yesterday.

The huge operational map, used to plan and administer the war, was recovered from the command headquarters bunker of Lt Gen A K Niazi, chief of the then Eastern Command of the Pakistan Army, the release added.

The Indian High Commissioner will hand over the map to the museum authorities at a ceremony at 11 am and it will be preserved at the Shegun Bagicha premises of the museum.

Govt programme

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the historic facts relating to our independence and thus enable the people to learn the true history and remove the wrong impression in their minds... We're committed to acknowledge everybody's contribution to the liberation of the country..." he said.

Secretary of the Information Ministry, the DGs of BTV, Betar, DMCC and DFP and the DPIO of the PID explained the programmes of their respective organisations.

According to the programmes, a 20-day ceremonial torch procession will be brought out by the freedom fighters from the spot at Suhrawardy Uddan in the city where Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman had delivered his historic March 7 speech. The torch procession, to be inaugurated by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, will march across the country. It will pass through different important places in 28 districts, including Tangpara, the birthplace of Bangabandhu, on March 17. The procession will return to its starting point on March 26, when Sheikh Hasina will take the torch back. BTV will broadcast live the opening and closing ceremonies and also telecast the whole recorded programme.

Other BTV programmes will include those on the withdrawal of Indian forces from the country on March 16, 1971, Shishu-Kishore Dibosh on March 17, the birthday of Bangabandhu, Swadhin Banglar Potaka Dibosh on March 23, crackdown by the Pakistani occupation forces on March 25 and on the Independence Day on March 26. Besides, the BTV started a 26-day documentary show titled "Ekatturer Dinolipi" on March 1.

Bangladesh Betar's 25-day independence day programmes, that began on March 1, include Bajanaktho on March 7 and open air cultural functions in the capital and elsewhere from March 15 to 25.

JS: Misbehaviour

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staff after one of them had failed to perform his responsibility relating to issuing a press release," he said.

Demanding that the statement of the BNP legislator be expunged from the proceedings of parliament, the Chief Whip asked, "Is there anything wrong with scolding a staff if he/she makes a mistake?"

Referring to reports carried by two particular newspapers, the Chief Whip said that they exaggerated the incident as their allegiance lies with the Opposition. He himself read out a report carried by another daily which printed his version admitting that he had only scolded the officials. However, the report of the daily concerned mentioned that the officials were manhandled.

At this point, the Deputy Speaker said, "while working with the staff, sometimes it is obvious that one has to admonish the subordinates." Replying to the Chief Whip's demand for expurgating of the BNP MP's allegation, the Deputy Speaker said: "The question of expurgating does not arise as his statement was not taken into cognizance."

Speaking next, BNP legislator Joinal Abedin Feroz asserted that the Chief Whip had beaten up the officials. In a bid to substantiate his claim, the BNP legislator told the House that even a Bangla daily owned by an Awami League MP had reported the incident. He also predicted that "the government officials who had built up the Janater Mancha against the BNP government would again erect the same against the incumbent administration."

The Chief Whip took the floor for the second time to claim that Joinal Abedin Feroz had beaten the Sangsad Secretariat officials while another BNP MP Amanullah Aman did the same thing in the central Secretariat. Aman was absent from the House.

Deputy Minister for Shipping Dharendra Devnath Shambhu, MP, then took the floor to demand expungement of the BNP MP's remarks. He also claimed that Leader of the Opposition in Parliament and BNP chief Begum Khaleda Zia had slapped a BTV cameraman while she had been in power. Khaleda Zia was also absent from the House, while Ziaur Rahman Zia of the BNP demanded expungement of the Deputy Minister's remark on the ground that "the statement was absolutely untrue."

A S M Feroz of the AL claimed that a BNP MP was caught red-handed with two women in an MP hostel. He also alleged that former Law Minister Mirza Golam Hafiz grabbed huge land in Savar, while Khaleda Zia's brother wanted to grab lands of the poor people of Savar that recently led to the death of four villagers.

At this stage, Deputy Leader of the House and LGRD Minister Zillur Rahman took the floor to request the Chair to immediately stop the mudslinging. He observed that the people who had voted the MPs to parliament do not like such exchanges between the MPs.

A number of BNP legislators including the Chief Whip of the Opposition Khandaker Delwar Hossain sought the floor, and the Chair refused all but Delwar. Appreciating the sentiment of Zillur Rahman, he insisted on allowing one or two younger members of the BNP to speak before him.

Reluctant to give the floor to anyone else, the Deputy Speaker started giving his decisions about the fate of the notices.

The Deputy Speaker read out his decisions with all the BNP members on their feet protesting against the Chair's attitude. After he had finished giving the decisions on the call attention notices, the Chair gave floor to Khandaker Delwar Hossain. The Opposition Chief Whip said the statements made by the ruling party lawmakers against Khaleda Zia and others to be absolutely irrelevant and provocative as well.

Without making any comment on the reported behaviour of the Chief Whip of Parliament, Delwar made a long statement as to why the Chair should allow one or two BNP MPs to speak. As soon as he finished, the Deputy Speaker abruptly adjourned the House saying: "You are the last speaker today."

School teacher shot dead in Jessore

From Our Correspondent

JESSORE, Mar 5: A school teacher from Haibatpur of Kotwali thana was shot dead by a group of armed miscreants at his house last night. The victim Abu Hossain, 35, was the Headmaster of Subarnasara High School.

According to police, the miscreants caught hold of him while he was walking alone at 11 pm in front of his house and opened fire on him.

Police suspected that Hossain was an activist of the outlawed Biplobi Communist Party and he returned to normal life one year back.

The body was sent to Jessore Sadar Hospital morgue for autopsy.

JP discusses ways to make Mar 18 rally a success

By Staff Correspondent

A meeting of the senior leaders of the Jatiya Party (JP) with its chief H M Ershad in the chair, was held in the city yesterday to discuss ways of making the March 18 public meeting a success, party sources said.

The JP leaders also decided to hold a meeting on March 8 for presidium members. A meeting of the presidents and secretaries of various district units of greater Dhaka and Comilla will be held on the day of the rally.

Chief Whip's PRO

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sources said.

According to reports carried by some national dailies, the Chief Whip physically assaulted some of his staff following a press release, containing a sensitive information about returning of refugees from Tripura, was sent to the media without receiving final approval from the Chief Whip.

The PRO sent the press release, which was later withdrawn by the Chief Whip.

Talking to The Daily Star, the APS to the Chief Whip, who was reportedly beaten up by the Chief Whip, denied any such incident. The Private Secretary to the Chief Whip, another reported victim of the Chief Whip, refused to talk to this correspondent on the ground that he was busy. The APS could neither tell the reason behind the PRO's absence in the office nor he could say whether the PRO was on leave.

Sangsad secretariat sources said that there had been no working relations between the Chief Whip and his PRO since long. They were not even on talking terms for the last one month, the sources said.

Meat trader shot dead in N'ganj

NARAYANGANJ, Mar 5: Gunmen shot and killed a meat trader at Deegubazar Bazar in the town on Tuesday night, police and hospital sources said, reports UNB.

Police said the victim, Habibur Rahman, 33, son of one Abdur Rahman in the town, was an accused in Raju murder case.

The unknown assailants fired shots at Habib while taking tea with some of his friends at a stall near his own shop in the bazar at about 10:30 pm.

On information, police rushed to the spot and brought him to Narayanganj Sadar Hospital where the attending doctors declared him dead.

Later, police arrested three people in this connection.

Meanwhile, traders of Deegubazar Bazar today observed strike protesting the killing.

Shahabuddin

From Page 1

confidence in it.

"Our economic policies are showing signs of success with a mark of significant increase in direct foreign investment," he said.

The President said Bangladesh views the visit of President Ramos with great significance for this country and wants to learn from the successes in the Philippines.

He said Bangladesh in its path of development needed the support of its friends in the international community as much as it needed its people behind its efforts to go a long way towards the desired goal.

At the beginning of the speech, the President wished that the first ever visit of the President of the Philippines to Bangladesh would be a pleasant and fruitful one.

With a sense of gratitude, Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed recalled that the Philippines was among the first to recognise Bangladesh as early as February, 1972, only a couple of months after the victory in the War of Liberation.

Speaking on the speedy progress taking place in the Philippines under the Dynamic leadership of President Ramos, Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed said Bangladesh had followed this rapid stride with admiration.

The President said democracy and development achieved together in the Philippines was a rare accomplishment. He specially mentioned President Ramos contribution to the democratisation of political process which was recognised widely at home and abroad.

Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed said the government of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in Bangladesh from her assuming power after a free and fair elections was pursuing the same goal that was achieved in the Philippines.

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