

Imran Khan meets PM, lauds edn programme

UNB, Dhaka

Pakistan's cricketer-turned-politician Imran Khan made a courtesy call on Prime Minister Khaleda Zia at her office yesterday.

Imran, the founder chairman of Tehrik-e-Insaf (Movement for Justice), lauded the social reform measures of the former BNP government during the 1991-96 period.

He also showed keen interest in Zia's concept of "Gram Sarker" and said it was an effective tool to take democracy to the grassroots.

The prime minister, during the meeting, focussed on various measures taken by the present government for socio-economic development.

She particularly mentioned the government's programme in education sector including free education up to higher secondary level.

Appreciating the measures, Imran said Bangladesh and Pakistan have the scope of benefiting from each other's experiences of reform and development.

Gas export

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parliament, she replied, "I do not think it will affect our bilateral relations."

The US assistant secretary of state was optimistic that Bangladesh will send its troops to Afghanistan for a peacekeeping role. However, when asked whether the troops should go under UN blue helmet operations or chapter VII of UN resolution that involves combat role, she evaded a direct reply, only saying, "The matter was under discussion."

When her attention was drawn to the harassment of visa seekers here, she passed the question to the US ambassador who said no new restrictions have been imposed in Bangladesh and previous system of issuing visa is in place, only that processing requires more time.

Asked by a newsman if she had any idea about the whereabouts of Osama bin Laden, she replied: "I do not think I know the answer to that."

Rocca tells PM US businessmen keen to invest in telecom & other sectors

UNB, Dhaka

American business community is keen to invest in Bangladesh and is closely looking at the opportunity to come up with investment in different fields, including telecommunications.

This was stated by US Assistant Secretary of State for South Asian Affairs Christina Rocca when she called on Prime Minister Khaleda Zia at her office yesterday evening.

She also mentioned possibility of export of various other goods including ceramics, seafood and agricultural products from Bangladesh to her country, apart from garments.

Rocca said, "US administration has always recognised Bangladesh as a model of moderate democratic country with deeply entrenched communal harmony."

She said this perception was reinforced during her visit to a US-aided fisheries project at Kaliakoir in Gazipur district where she witnessed people of different religions living side by side incomplete harmony and working together.

Rocca described it as a "wonderful feeling" about social amity irrespective of caste or creed.

She noted with satisfaction that the sectarian violence in Gujarat, India had no repercussion in Bangladesh, which is a further proof of communal tolerance in Bangladesh.

On the question of export of readymade garments to USA, Prime Minister Khaleda Zia strongly emphasised the need for keeping the market open for Bangladesh because much of the country's economy depends on it.

Also, the industry employs the highest number of workers, especially female, she told the US emissary, reiterating Dhaka's plea for duty-and-quota-free access of apparels to US market.

In response, Rocca said US administration is happy working with Bangladesh on this and recom-

mended that detailed discussion should be held between officials of Bangladesh government and of US Trade Representative office.

On the September 11 terrorist attacks on the United States, Prime Minister Khaleda said she was then in election campaign in the interior of Bangladesh but strongly condemned the terror act.

Rocca reiterated the gratitude of her government for the support of Bangladesh to the global campaign against terrorism.

Khaleda asked Rocca to convey her best wishes to US President George W Bush.

Labour court

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report on the incident.

They are Zebol Haq, Md Musa, Md Ezzarul Haq, Mozammel Haq and Ayub Ali.

Some unruly workers of Chittagong Coaster & Hedge Sramik Dal in an attack on Saturday ransacked the labour court at Kaltalganj, fearing injunction on the election of their committee that expired in 1994.

Police took them on remand in the afternoon and started interrogation.

Mahima suicide case

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Kanthalbaria village of Puthia thana in the district was gangraped on February 15. The rapists circulated photographs of the rape scene among the local people to humiliate Mahima's family that provoked her to commit suicide.

Police recorded two cases under Section 7(9)(3)(10)(2) of Women and Children Repression Prevention Act 2000 and under Section 306 and 201 of the Bangladesh Penal Code (BPC) respectively. Four rapists - Farid, Faruk, Selim and Iqbal Hossain Uzzal - were charged in both the cases while their fathers and relatives were charged for provoking Mahima to commit suicide.

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Proshika staff

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Police said Tarek and Haq were moving towards Dhanmondi road number 32 in a motorcycle. A police team asked them to stop but they tried to speed away. The team chased them and caught them.

However, Tarek's family said he was picked up from the residence of the house tutor of Kuwaiti-Bangladesh Friendship Hall at Dhaka University without showing any warrant.

They said police seized from Tarek two vouchers of a parcel sent to a publisher in India for printing of a novel titled "Kanchongram" written by Abul Kalam Shamsuddin, and a newsletter titled "Adhiparamosh", published by Ain-o-Salish Kendro, a legal aid organisation.

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