

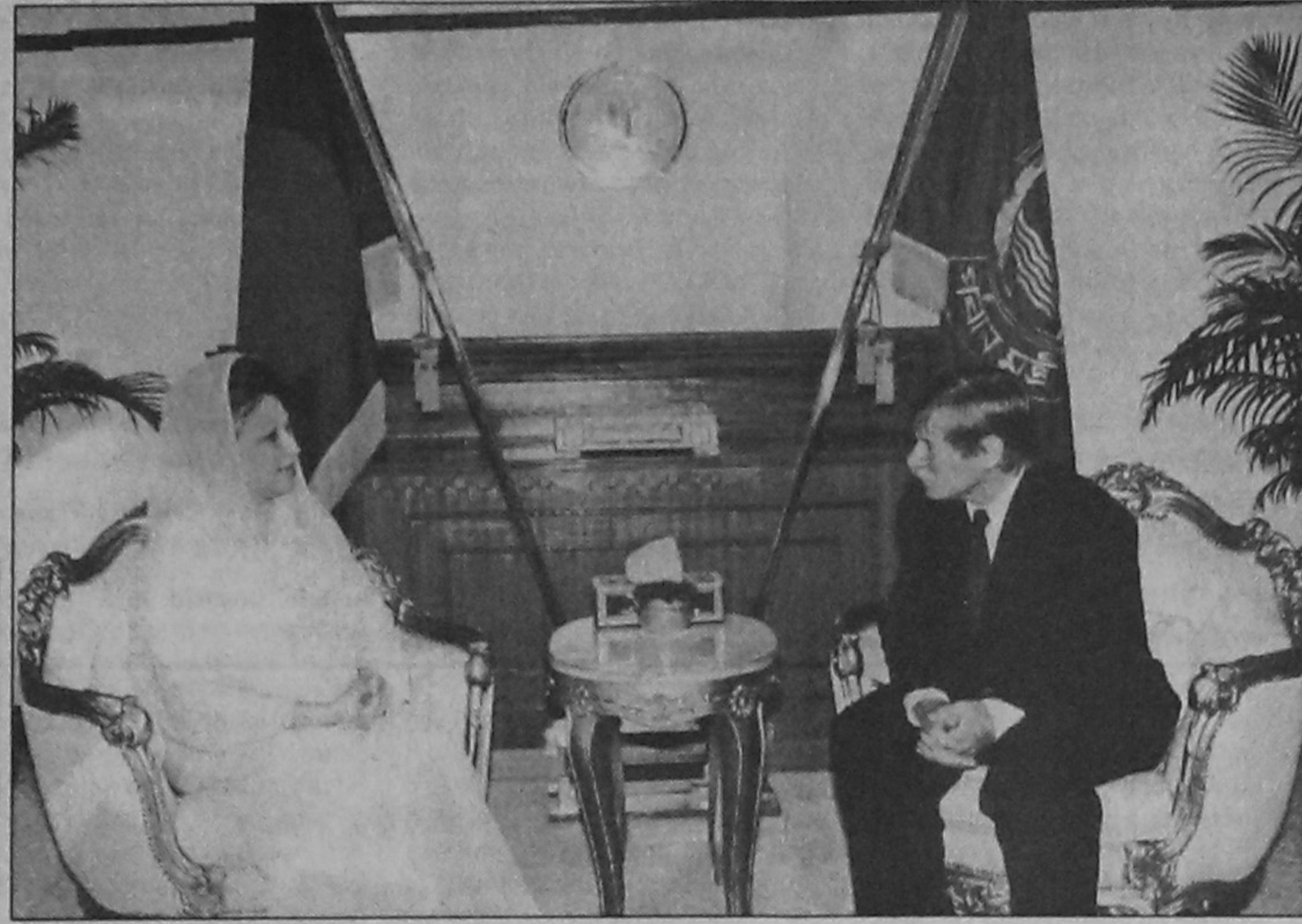
Dhaka shocked at Gujarat temple killings

BSS, Dhaka
Bangladesh yesterday expressed profound shock at the killing of worshippers in the temple attack in the Indian state of Gujarat.

The Foreign Ministry, in a statement, also condemned "the heinous attack at the Akshardham temple" that killed innocent worshippers, including women and children.

"Bangladesh feels that such mindless acts of violence in places of worship can only heighten tensions," the statement said.

It expressed the hope that all concerned will do their best to ensure communal peace and harmony.



Newly appointed Canadian High Commissioner Gerry Campbell called on Prime Minister Khaleda Zia at her office in the city yesterday.

Khaleda seeks increased Canadian investment

BSS, Dhaka
Prime Minister Khaleda Zia yesterday sought increased Canadian investment in different sectors in Bangladesh taking advantage of the facilities offered by her government.

Khaleida said this when the newly-appointed Canadian High Commissioner to Bangladesh Gerry Campbell paid a courtesy call on her at her office.

During the meeting, she said Canadian investors could also invest in joint venture projects. She urged Canada to follow student-friendly visa policy.

During the tenure of Campbell, she hoped the existing friendly relations between the two countries would further deepen and strengthen.

She was thankful to Canada for providing duty and quota free access of Bangladeshi goods particularly garments. In this regard, she recalled her meeting with the Canadian Prime Minister at Ottawa when she had requested him for duty and quota free access of Bangladeshi goods.

Canadian assistance to Bangladesh in socio-economic sectors also came up in the meeting.

Khaleida also mentioned the existing relations in different fields including trade and commerce, investment, joint venture, education, agriculture science, technology and telecommunications.

She hoped that relations between the two countries would further strengthen with the assignment of new High Commissioner while assuring him all co-operation in the discharge of his responsibility.

Gerry Campbell said large number of Bangladeshi students were studying in Canada, where the standard of education is good and less expensive.

He praised various reform measures and steps taken by her government for economic development, preservation of environment, poverty alleviation, particularly rural poverty, primary and female education.

He also praised the success in micro-credit system.

PM's Principal Secretary Dr Kamal Siddique was present.

Tk 20 crore irregularities at UGC during 1991-98

UNB, Dhaka
Financial irregularities at the University Grants Commission (UGC) cost the government Tk 20 crore during 1991-1998 period. The massive irregularities were detected in a special official audit on financial activities of the commission that monitors and regulates the country's universities.

Comptroller & Auditor General office detected the malpractice in accounts of welfare fund, adjusting interest proceeds of various funds, house rents and telephone bills of officials, appointment of officials out of organogram and spending money without permission of the ministry concerned.

The audit report placed in the just-ended autumn session of parliament revealed that irregularities involving Tk 4.97 crore took place as income from interests of various funds were not incorporated in official accounts.

About Tk 7.99 crore were found missing in the bank account after the closure of trading, which was given for development of Chittagong University, according to the audit report.

It said Tk 2.21 crore was transferred to pension fund instead of the government exchequer in violation of the rules of business and without prior permission from the authorities.

Interests came from various funds of the UGC amounting to Tk 4.97 crore was not fairly maintained and government approval was not taken for drawing interests from the funds, the report said.

Besides, interests amounting to Tk 21.58 lakh came from a bank fund of a project for construction of women hostels at Dhaka and Chittagong Universities was not deposited to the government exchequer.

The government incurred a loss of Tk 6.60 lakh as the UGC illegally appointed two persons as deputy secretaries while it spent Tk 4.78 lakh on paying the salary of a part-time physician.

The University Grants Commission spent an additional amount of Tk 5.84 lakh on paying the bills of 16 telephones provided to officials who were not entitled to phone. Water, electricity and gas bills of the residences of the chairman and other members of the commission cost the national exchequer Tk 5.31 lakh.

The report observed that such irregularities could have been averted through internal monitoring and efficient financial management.

UGC's responsibilities also include scrutinising financial demands of various universities and placing those as proposals to the government, allocating budgets for public universities, examining development plans of the universities and placing university related statistics to the government.

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IUCN's web site on bio-diversity inaugurated

BSS, Dhaka
Chairman of Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (BTRC) Syed Marghub Morshed yesterday inaugurated international conservation movement IUCN's web site on regional bio-diversity programme at National Press Club.

The uniform resource locator (URL) of the site is: www.rhp-iucn.lk

Country Director of IUCN Dr Ainun Nishat presided over the function. Chairman of the Forum of Environment Journalists of Bangladesh (FEJB) Quamrul Islam Chowdhury, Dr Zakir Hossain of IUCN Bangkok and head of the Regional Bio-diversity Programme, Asia Dr Balakrishna Pisupati and Chief Editor of Holiday Frayattullah Khan, among others, spoke at the function.

Marghub Morshed said we live in a global village envisioned by noted communication scholar Prof Marshall McLuhan. He said people are the most important part of any environmental conservation programme and this web site will assist IUCN in dissemination of messages relating to bio-safety and other aspects of bio-diversity.

Ainun Nishat said we have to take caution while accepting any GMO (genetically modified organism) for ensuring bio-diversity in its purest form.

Quamrul expressed hope that this IUCN web site would be of great help for media personnel across Asia working in the arena of environment and ecology.

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Sircar invited to visit State Duma in Russia

BSS, Dhaka
Russian Ambassador to Bangladesh Nikolay Shevchenko called on Speaker Jamiruddin Sircar at his Sangsad Bhaban office in the city yesterday.

They discussed a number of bilateral issues, a Parliament Secretariat press release said.

The Speaker showed interest in the activities of Russian Federal Assembly and State Duma and appreciated the committee system of the Duma.

He reminded his visit to Russia on way to Barcelona Olympics in 1988.

The ambassador invited Sircar to visit the State Duma and welcomed him for inviting the Duma representatives to visit Bangladesh.

He said a Russia-Bangladesh Chamber of Commerce would be launched in Bangladesh what would open up an opportunity for investment and a new horizon in friendship between the two countries.

Sircar wished the peace and prosperity of the Speaker of State Duma and all of its members. He thanked the envoy for inviting him to visit the Duma.

ARMS, Comilla reunion Sept 27

BSS, Dhaka
The annual reunion and general meeting of the Associates of Residential Model School, Comilla (ARMS, Comilla) will be held at the Institution of Engineers (IEB) auditorium in the city on September 27.

All former students and teachers of the school have been requested to attend the event along with their family members at 9:00 am, a press release of the organisation said.

5TH DEATH ANNIVERSARY

The 5th death anniversary of Prof Mofizuddin Ahmed, Professor Emeritus, Dhaka University and founding VC of Jahangirnagar University will be observed today, the 26th September 2002.

All relatives, friends and acquaintances are requested to pray for eternal peace of the departed soul.

On this occasion a Milad Mehfil will be held at his Gulshan residence at 5.00 PM.

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