

Delhi offers transit, power

Dhaka discusses use of Ctg port; both countries agree to a host of issues at foreign minister level talks in India

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

In a major breakthrough in bilateral relationship, India has agreed with Bangladesh to facilitate Bangladesh's transit to Nepal and Bhutan, provide at least 100MW power on priority basis, increase trade and communication facilities and resolve other outstanding issues.

Recognising the importance of bilateral and regional connectivity, Bangladesh discussed allowing India to use Chittagong Port and designating Ashuganj as a new port of call under the Inland Water Transit and Trade Agreement, says a joint press statement of Foreign Minister Dipu Moni and Indian External Affairs Minister SM Krishna.

Both sides agreed to resolve outstanding issues relating to Dahagram and Angarpota enclaves and Tin Bigha Corridor, said the statement issued in New Delhi yesterday during Dipu Moni's September 7-10 official visit to the neighbouring country.

Both the countries recognised the need to finalise the water-sharing agreement for the Teesta and agreed to begin Joint Hydrological Observations on the river immediately.

If finalised, this will be the second

TALKS HIGHLIGHTS

Agreed to:

- Allow container cargo by rail, water
- Re-open Sabroom-Ramgarh trade point
- Start border haats at the Bangladesh-Meghalaya border
- Open land route at Demagiri-Thegamukh on the Mizoram border
- Transfer of sentenced person
- Provide India access to Ashuganj Port for power plant transportation to Tripura
- Help Bangladesh in railway, dredging
- Begin Joint Hydrological Observations for water sharing treaty of Teesta river

Discussed

- Dahagram, Angarpota & Tin Bigha Corridor issues
- Use of Chittagong port by India

water management treaty with India after the 1996 Ganges Water Treaty.

Bangladesh and India did not have any dialogue on water sharing in the last four years.

The two countries agreed to finalise three agreements on mutual legal assistance on criminal matters, transfer of sentenced persons and combating international terrorism, organised

crime and illegal drug trafficking.

They agreed on re-opening of Sabroom-Ramgarh trade point as well as a land route at Demagiri-Thegamukh on the Mizoram border for bilateral trade.

India agreed in principle to provide Bangladesh with a line of credit for railway projects and supplying locomotives, coaches and buses. It offered

to take up construction of Akhaura-Agartala railway link under Indian assistance.

India also agreed to assist Bangladesh in dredging rivers.

Both the sides agreed to start markets on the Bangladesh-Meghalaya border and allow movement of container cargos by rail and water for bilateral trade.

Bangladesh raised the issue of duty-free access for its commodities, removal of non-tariff and para-tariff barriers and improvement of infrastructure on the Indian side. India requested Bangladesh to remove barriers to Indian investments and port restrictions for specific commodities.

Foreign Minister Dipu Moni earlier discussed a range of issues with the Indian foreign minister. She also called on Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, Union Minister for Finance Pranab Mukherjee and Union Minister for Water Resources and Parliamentary Affairs Pawan Kumar Bansal.

Dipu was accompanied by her spouse Tawfique Newaz, Foreign Secretary Ambassador Mijarul Quayes, and Director General (South Asia) of foreign ministry Muhammad Imran.

The Indian premier told Dipu that

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BDR CARNAGE

SC against trial under army act

Sends its opinion to president

JULFIKAR ALI MANIK and ASHUTOSH SARKAR

The Supreme Court does not approve of applying the army act to try those accused of mutiny and carnage at the BDR Pilkhana headquarters on February 25-26, sources said.

The apex court sent its formal opinion to the Bangabhaban yesterday afternoon.

Earlier on August 17, President Zillur Rahman asked the SC for its opinion on the mode of trial for the BDR mutineers.

First, the question was if the Army Act-1952 applies to trial of the BDR personnel charged with mutiny and bloodbath at Pilkhana headquarters.

If the answer was 'no', the question would be whether the army act can be made applicable through a notification issued under section 5 of the act.

Top officials at the Bangabhaban, SC and law ministry did not say anything officially about the court's opinion.

But sources close to them confirmed the SC has indeed opined against trying the mutineers under the army act.

The offences committed during the BDR mutiny cannot be tried under the Army Act 1952, since its provisions cannot be applied to BDR personnel. Besides, the act does not pro-

vide for issuing any notification with retrospective effect, said the sources citing the SC opinion.

The full-bench Appellate Division that comprises Chief Justice MM Ruhul Amin, Justice Mohammad Fazlul Karim, Justice Md Tafazzal Islam, Justice Md Joynul Abedin, Justice Md Abdul Matin, Justice Shah Abu Nayeem Mominur Rahman, Justice Md Abdul Aziz, Justice BK Das, Justice ABM Khairul Haque, Justice Md Muzammel Hossain and Justice Surendra Kumar Sinha gave its opinion after six days' hearing on the presidential reference.

Contacted last evening, Law Minister Shafique Ahmed told The Daily Star, "I have no knowledge of the Supreme Court's opinion yet. I will know only when it will reach the ministry."

"The Supreme Court's would be the country's highest court's legal opinion, and the government will follow whatever it may be."

Meanwhile, secretary at the president's office, Shafiqul Alam, told The Daily Star that Bangabhaban received a sealed envelope from the SC soon after noon. He however said he doesn't know anything about the opinion.

"The president has read the Supreme Court's letter, and as per the procedures we

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Lion dies in Dhaka Zoo

Many other animals sick; poor healthcare blamed

PINAKI ROY

A male lion of Dhaka zoo died yesterday just three days after the death of a young giraffe, showing poor health care management for the zoo animals.

With the death of lion Ringo, a total of 20 rare animals died at the zoo in a year. While visiting the zoo yesterday it was learnt that the only rhinoceros has been suffering from illness for one year while a tiger, a horse, a sambar (Nilgai) and a kudu (a deer like mammal) are also sick.

Following the death of giraffe, the curator and deputy curator of the zoo have been suspended and a probe committee has been formed to investigate the death of giraffe. The committee is supposed to submit its report by yesterday.

Eight years and three months old Ringo was found dead in its cage No C-22 in the morning. Ringo was born in Tangail zoo and brought to Dhaka zoo in 2002. The Dhaka zoo now has 17 lions in eight small cages.

The lion had been suffering from paralysis for last one year and was unable to move, said an officer who takes care of the mammals at the zoo.

"The condition of the lion was good till 7:00 pm on Wednesday but it was found dead this morning," said the officer claiming that the lion was being provided better treatment.

The deceased lion was buried at the zoo after carrying out a post mortem examination. But whether the zoo authorities have formed any probe committee regarding the death of Ringo could not be known immediately.

Earlier, a sambar deer died in the first week of May while a

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Two of the seventeen remaining lions at the Dhaka Zoo in Mirpur. A total of 20 animals died in the zoo in one year.

PHOTO: SHAFIQU ALAM

Senakunja iftar gets Hasina, Khaleda together

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday urged Leader of the Opposition Khaleda Zia to return to parliament as the two leaders exchanged greetings at an iftar party at Senakunja in Dhaka Cantonment.

"Please come to parliament and speak," Hasina requested her and Khaleda, in response, said nothing but gave a chuckle.

Both the leaders shared the same table during the iftar. Speaker Abdul Hamid, Chief of Army and Air Staff General Md Abdul Mubeen and Air Marshal SM Ziaur Rahman sat in between the prime minister and the leader of the opposition.

Armed Forces Division organised the iftar in honour of the prime minister where the speaker, deputy speakers, ministers, advisers to the

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PHOTO ON PAGE 16

MARITIME BOUNDARY

Dhaka protests at UN against Yangon claim

Similar protest against Indian claim soon

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh has sent a 'diplomatic protest note' to the United Nations against the claims of Myanmar over the extended 'continental shelf' in the Bay of Bengal while it will register such protest against the sea boundary claims of India soon.

On behalf of Foreign Minister Dipu Moni who is now in India on an official visit, Information Minister Abul Kalam Azad yesterday informed parliament about the government's move to establish Bangladesh's claim over the maritime boundary.

Myanmar and India made their submissions

to the UN Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf (CLCS) on December 16, 2008 and May 11, 2009.

Both the countries' claims encompassed undersea basins that fall within Bangladesh's Exclusive Economic Zone, a seazone over which a state has special rights over the exploration and use of marine resources, that stretches up to 200 nautical miles (370km) from its coast.

Bangladesh, India and Myanmar have the sharing over the Bay of Bengal.

In reply to lawmakers' queries, the information minister said Bangladesh would submit its

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Another death from 'swine flu'

Authorities yet to confirm

STAR REPORT

A garment worker is suspected to have died of swine flu in Gopalganj yesterday raising the H1N1 fatality to four in the country.

Nasreen Khanam, 18, an employee of Crossline Garment Factory in Dhaka, returned to her village home Chapta under Kashiani upazila of Gopalganj last Saturday, as she was taken ill.

Kashiani Upazila Health Officer Shiddheshwar Majumder said the daughter of van driver Abul Kalam was receiving treatment from a village quack.

A correspondent from Gopalganj reports that the news of her death sparked panic in the locality and the victim's parents were forced to bury her hurriedly.

District Civil Surgeon Dr Nurunnabi visited her home, collected her throat swab and sent it to the Institute of

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Khaleda flies to KSA today for umrah

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia leaves for Saudi Arabia today to perform umrah as her party observes the day marking the first anniversary of her release from jail.

Senior party leaders will see her off at Zia International Airport. Later, they will place wreaths at the grave of late president Ziaur Rahman, founder of the party, at Sher-e-Bangla Nagar in the capital at 12:00 noon.

Khaleda's brother Shamim Iskander and his wife, daughter-in-law Sharmili Rahman, former foreign secretary

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Sugar continues to be sour

Price jumps to around Tk 60 a kg

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Sugar price hovered around Tk 60 a kg at retail level in the city market yesterday, marking about 25 percent rise in a week.

Market operators said the rise was largely fuelled by panic buying mainly by retailers and a section of consumers speculating further rise.

Operators also linked the price spiral to a seasonal factor such as rise in demand during Ramadan when families use to entertain their relatives, friends and neighbours with various sweetmeats with sugar used as a major ingredient.

"Customers are buying higher quantities of sugar. Many of them are also buying much more than their demand now to avoid further price shock," said Mohammad Ratan, a retailer at Karwan Bazar kitchen market.

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