

PM criticises

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Secretariat.

The prime minister directed intelligence agencies to gather details of the organisers of the sit-in, said a cabinet minister after the meeting. "She was very unhappy over the use of children as a tool of protest on Eid day and the act of hanging placards around their necks," the minister said.

"They could have staged the demonstration on any other day," he said quoting Sheikh Hasina assaying.

He said the PM wanted to know whether those among the programme organisers, who drive their own cars, had their driving licence issued following proper procedure and whether their drivers are educated and have valid driving licence.

Writer and columnist Syed Abul Maksud is leading a movement to press home a seven-point demand on road safety and resignation of the communications minister. Many members, leaders and activists of civil society, different political, social and cultural organisations expressed solidarity with the move and joined the sit-in programme at the Central Shaheed Minar on Eid day.

After yesterday's cabinet meeting, another minister told the press, "The PM in her 30-minute speech on the issue, also instructed the intelligence agencies to collect information about the houses and cars the protesters own."

"Find out whether they pay taxes and how lavish their houses are," the minister quoted Hasina assaying.

She also wanted to know whether any of the demonstrators tried to go to their villages on Eid vacation but failed due to bad road condition, the minister added.

Stop criticism

In the cabinet meeting, some ministers told the prime minister that the government is mainly being criticised by the people within the government and the leaders and workers of ruling Awami League.

They also requested the PM to take measures in this regard as the practice is tarnishing image of the government and the party.

Hasina agreed with them and asked all to highlight the achievements and developmental activities of the government.

"Instead of criticising, talk about our positive sides so that people can learn about our development initiatives," the PM asked her party colleagues.

Transit

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signed, which will mention what Bangladesh will do to make transit facilities effective.

The finance minister said the letter of exchange will mention that transit deal will be signed but defining the routes is not possible at this moment. This will be decided mutually, he added.

Muhith said the letter will also mention the dates by which some specific work can be completed.

Formulation of rules and regulations for use of Chittagong and Mongla ports is required, he added.

The letter will also contain the mode of realising the charges, which may be on the basis of per tonne per km, Muhith said.

At present, there are fixed fees for use of river and rail routes but these will be reviewed and charged on the basis of goods and mileage. "Our endeavour will be to sustain and build upon this positive momentum," he said.

In Dhaka, Manmohan will have a brief private meeting with Hasina without their aides before going into formal talks joined by members of the two delegations.

The leaders will recall their summit meeting in New Delhi in January last year when the two countries pledged to increase cooperation in combating terrorism, promoting regional connectivity, bilateral trade, sharing waters of the Teesta and Feni rivers, demarcation of a tiny part of the boundary and exchange of enclaves and adversely-possessed lands.

Since then, Hasina's government has cracked

Teesta treaty

DEALS FOR NOW

3. a. Demarcation of 6.5 miles of land boundary

b. Exchange of enclaves and adversely possessed land

c. 24-hour access to Dahagram, Angorpota enclaves through Tin Bigha corridor

4. Protection of Sundarbans tigers

5. Cooperation of railways of two countries

6. Exchange of programmes by BTV and Doordarshan

7. Cooperation between Dhaka University and Jawaharlal Nehru University

8. Preservation of Sundarbans biodiversity

9. Cooperation on renewable energy

10. Cooperation on fisheries

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the last-moment shuttle diplomacy conducted by Indian PM's National Security Adviser Shiv Shankar Menon to persuade Bangladesh to agree to a Teesta water deal after reportedly giving it a fair share.

New Delhi's apparent pullout from the Teesta deal was also an unexpected setback for Dhaka, especially for Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina who the opponents allege is conceding too much to India.

After the bad news about Teesta reached Dhaka through Indian media, top government leaders huddled with the prime minister in emergency consultations at the Ganobhaban.

Coming out of the meeting, Foreign Minister Dipu Moni said, "Till now we know the agreement on sharing of the Teesta water will be signed tomorrow [today]."

"We are in constant touch with the Indian side. We have not received any formal statement from Indian government that the Teesta agreement is not going to be signed."

The Teesta originates in Sikkim and flows through northern part of West Bengal before entering Bangladesh at Gajal Doba, where the river water is released for Bangladesh during the lean season.

Mamata reportedly agreed to share up to 33,000 cusecs of water, but the final draft mentions sharing of 50,000 cusecs, an arrangement she finds harmful to West Bengal state.

In spite of the Teesta setback, Dhaka is keeping the spirit high and going ahead to make Manmohan's visit successful.

"It is a matter of satisfaction that we have made concrete progress in several areas such as security, boundary issues, water resources, power connectivity, improvement of border infrastructure, trade facilitation and economic cooperation," Manmohan said in a statement on the eve of his departure for Bangladesh.

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down on the separatist groups from India's north-eastern states, especially United Liberation Front of Asom (ULFA) of Assam. Hasina has kept her promise to drive the separatists out of Bangladesh territory, arresting some key leaders and handing them over to India.

Hasina has also taken steps, often risking criticism at home, to offer Chittagong and Mongla ports for use by India to transport goods to its land-locked northeastern states, known as seven sisters. Besides, Bangladesh has burned midnight oil to find how it can provide road and rail transit to India and expand the river route services.

In doing so, Dhaka has responded to two of New Delhi's key concerns -- security threat from the northeastern separatists and road and rail transit facilities through Bangladesh.

The two countries are not signing any formal deal on transit, but they have no disagreement on the issue, and officials from both the countries are working to thrash out the differences.

The Indian media and policy analysts are already praising Hasina for the bold steps. Her initiative has significantly changed public opinion in India and created a momentum, among Indian policymakers, to improve relations with Bangladesh.

India, on its part, has started disbursing the \$1 billion credit it pledged to Bangladesh mainly in building infrastructure. New Delhi has also offered to open its market for another 61 Bangladesh products free of duty.

Bangladeshi businessmen, however, are still unhappy as they insist that India must reduce its tariff and non-tariff barriers to products from Bangladesh, a major unresolved irritant between the two countries.

India has agreed to sell 250MW electricity to power-starved Bangladesh, and a deal is likely during Manmohan's visit.

Dhaka and New Delhi have made progress in their plan to exchange the enclaves in accordance with the 1974 Mujib-Indira treaty. This has raised hopes of about 51,000 Bangladeshis and Indians trapped in the 162 enclaves -- 111 belonging to India within Bangladesh territory and 51 of Bangladesh in Indian land.

The two countries bask in the success of preparing strip maps of their frontiers and signing thousands of pages. The maps will help better border management and combat cross-border crimes.

Another issue that the two countries will need to resolve is their maritime boundary, the dispute already being heard by the United Nations.

Skipper Shakib

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vice-captain will be announced soon. Wicketkeeper-batsman Mushfiqur Rahim is a likely candidate to take the hot job while Mahmudullah Riyad may be made his deputy.

Explaining the reasons behind the surprise decision, Yunus said: "Shakib and Tamim have been removed from their posts as they failed to lead the team properly in Zimbabwe. The board members discussed the reports from the members of the team management and unanimously gave their votes in favour of removing captain and vice-captain.

"There was lot of allegations against them since taking the jobs but we took a soft stance as we thought they would improve their behaviour, but now we have no choice other than taking a hardline. There are reports of indiscipline against them. In certain areas, one breached discipline is the argument with the head coach [Stuart Law] and we will definitely take further action against them," he added.

There had been lot of issues discussed after Bangladesh's miserable tour in Zimbabwe where the Tigers lost the one-off Test and five-match one-day series, but the board finally held captain and vice-captain responsible for the disaster.

"The board members also discussed whether there was any negligence from anyone in the board and we will also take action against them if found anything wrong," said Yunus.

Shakib was thrust into the job in the middle of a Test match in West Indies in June 2009 when Mashrafe Bin Mortaza got injured. The young all-rounder successfully led the team on that tour against a depleted home side, and after that he continued with the job on a series-by-series basis and single-handedly guided his side to record a memorable 4-0 one-day series victory against New Zealand last year.

With the uncertainty of injured Mashrafe, BCB has decided to appoint Shakib as captain on a long-term basis and he was due to lead the team until Bangladesh's home series against Pakistan in December.

But the Zimbabwe debacle put an end to the tenure prematurely.

BNP

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Khaleda sits with her party policymakers tonight to decide on the issues to be discussed during her meeting with Manmohan, BNP sources said.

Former water resources minister Hafizuddin Ahmed, former commerce minister Amir Khasru Mahmud Chowdhury, former state minister for foreign affairs Reaz Rahman, former foreign secretary Shamsheer Mobin Chowdhury, former ambassador Sabiuddin Ahmed, among others, are expected to join the meeting at Gulshan office.

Hafizuddin, also a vice chairman of the party, said they doubt whether Bangladesh will get anything from Manmohan's visit, as India has "never showed cooperative attitude" towards its neighbours.

Khasru said the country will not benefit from transit if it is done only with India.

In November last year, Khaleda Zia categorically said her party will not allow any foreign vehicle in Bangladesh in the name of transit. She also opposed the government plan to set up a power plant jointly with India in Bagerhat.

Vegetarian

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came up in course of an interview ahead of his Dhaka tour. "I am vegetarian... (but) I am willing to make that exception (about my vegetarian status)," he added.

The 79-year old Indian premier made the comment as asked what he thought about the hilsa despite being a vegetarian as it is very popular in India.

Road crash

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Kadamtoli of Rayerbagh, was an account officer of Sonali Bank, Motijheel branch. He was returning home after office.

Witnesses said the minibus knocked Rafiqul down when he was hiring a rickshaw around 6:45pm.

He was rushed to Dhaka Medical College Hospital where the duty doctors declared him dead.

Will Indian PM make

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great shock to the people and government of Bangladesh, and raise the vexed question that are we going to miss another opportunity to mend our bilateral relationship. It has undoubtedly cast a shadow over the trip. However, we are still hopeful that a last moment understanding may still be reached and the trip will produce some historic results.

It is perhaps not the occasion to look into the past, but it is definitely the moment to learn from it.

The lesson on our side is that having made Bangladesh-India relations a near compelling domestic issue, our politics, more or less, became defined by it. While a section of our leaders found India-bashing a cheap political ploy to mask their failure to address development challenges, their opponents became much too afraid to call the bluff of a mythical vote-bank politics that corroded our secular traditions and fanned a latent fundamentalism. Thus our vital bilateral relations with India became a prisoner of domestic politics that fed on myopia and threatened to jeopardise our economic growth prospect.

The Indian failure has been both generic and specific. It has been generic to the extent that in India's Pakistan centric approach to the region it has ignored all its smaller neighbours. The specific fault was India's failure to comprehend the negative impact of Farakka Dam on our relations that mainstreamed anti-Indianism in the 1980s, till then a peripheral phenomenon in Bangladesh. For about two decades the economic and ecological devastation that Farakka wrought on large parts of Bangladesh remained unnoticed in India. Unbelievably, no mainstream Indian newspaper, magazine or TV station bothered to cover this great human tragedy occurring just next door.

Thankfully, Sheikh Hasina had both the cour-

age and the vision to take considerable political risk and bring us out of a relationship frozen in suspicion and prejudice. The question is, will the Indian prime minister show the same courage and vision? There is no question that the moment is now for a historic breakthrough in Bangladesh-India relations. Public opinion here is far more open to regional connectivity than it has been for a long time. In India also, there is a new and healthy interest in Bangladesh, and a desire to help us move forward.

As we understand, India's overwhelming concern is insurgency and security in the northeastern states, and their economic development.

On the insurgency issue, Sheikh Hasina's government has taken sternest of measures against Bangladesh's land being used in any way for that purpose. In a dramatic confidence building measure Bangladesh has responded to the full litany of Indian concerns. This we have done at considerable risk of exposing ourselves to the insurgents' wrath. All their clandestine outposts have been destroyed and their local links unearthed. As for good neighbourly relations on insurgency, India really could not have asked for more.

On the related issue of tackling extremism within Bangladesh, once again Sheikh Hasina's government has been extremely proactive. Here our prime minister has moved more from Bangladesh's own future perspective rather than from India's concern, yet the importance and relevance of this move cannot be lost on her policy makers.

With significant progress on transit, India's development concerns for these backward states have also been largely addressed. With details being worked out and gradually put into practice, transit will provide India the connectivity it has been desiring ever since the birth of Bangladesh. However, India must see connectivity not only from

the perspective of its north-eastern states, but also in the context of greater linkages with Nepal and Bhutan.

As for Bangladesh's issues, we feel that the ball is in India's court. In contrast to Bangladesh having already delivered on India's demands, namely security and transit, India's delivery remains in the realm of the future. A treaty on Teesta water sharing, which was promised since Sheikh Hasina's visit 20 months ago, is now up in the air. Let us make it clear that no unfair treaty will be acceptable to our people. I cannot overemphasize the setback that Teesta may bring on our relationship if it is not solved at the earliest. India cannot make it a part of its domestic politics.

Work on an overall agreement on sharing all common river waters must be completed in the shortest possible time. Worry over Tipaimukh Dam remains. Here the Indian PM's earlier assurance that nothing will be done to harm Bangladesh's interest must be adhered to in both letter and spirit. However, we are aware that contending interests and conflicting viewpoints will remain on this increasingly scarce resource. As long as a win-win formula guides our every action, we can solve all problems that may confront us.

It is in the area of trade that India can really open its door to us, and go the extra mile that we expect it to. The one step that will do wonders is to give duty-free access to all Bangladesh's exports which amounted to a mere US\$ 305 million and US\$ 512 million in the year before last and the last year respectively.

According to 2007-2008 estimates by the Centre for Policy Dialogue, the premier think tank of Bangladesh, if India gave duty-free access to all the 480 items on its present negative list, loss of revenue would be approximately US\$ 5 million which is equivalent to 0.023 percent of total customs revenue, and 0.004 percent of India's total revenue for that year.

The way US viewed Khaleda

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It said it was good news that the US government has productive relationships with 12 of the 17 insiders and is trying to strengthen the relationships with Mosaddek Ali Falu, Syed Iskander, Khondaker Mosharraf Hossain, Mir Nasiruddin and Matiu Rahman Nizami. All of them, except for perhaps Jamaat-e-Islami leader Nizami, could be described as fundamentally hostile to the US. Very few of the 17 have the ability or interest to pressure Zia's basic outlook on politics or governance.

WHAT THE CABLE SAID

**Tarique Rahman:** Son of Khaleda Zia. He reportedly sold up to one-third of the 60 cabinet slots in the 2001 elections. Critics say he is ruthless, exceptionally corrupt, inexperienced in politics or business, poorly educated and unworlthy.

**Kamaluddin Siddiqui:** Influence of Kamaluddin stemmed from his role as Khaleda's gatekeeper and bureaucratic ability to get things done. The principal secretary to the then prime minister viewed Tarique as uncouth and dangerous.

**Saifur Rahman:** The former finance minister had influence on economic, development and some political issues. He was respected for his competence and experience. But he seemed to do nothing to control his son, a BNP lawmaker who was the most corrupt after Tarique.

**Khandaker Mosharraf Hossain:** The former health minister was loyal to Khaleda, but corrupt and involved with coal mining deals with the Chinese. In 2002, he held up a USAID-financed

accused of committing war crimes in 1971, rapist, arms smuggler and killer. His influence is reflected by his ability to survive his defeat in the election for the post of OIC secretary general, his vulgar attack on Sheikh Hasina afterwards and speculation on his involvement with the Chittagong arms haul shipment.

**Syed Iskander:** Khaleda Zia's brother exerts great influence on military procurement contracts and on senior military appointments. He has good links with the military and tied by business to Tarique Rahman.

**Lutfuzzaman Babar:** Known as smuggler, ally of Tarique Rahman, and a pro-Jamaat leader, the former state minister for home grew influential as his ministry became more active in the run-up to the 2008 general elections.

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condoms shipment for months looking for a payoff.

**Reaz Rahman:** Under the middle circle group, Khaleda Zia's foreign policy adviser was at the top. An old-time BNP stalwart, he was close to Tarique and Babar and was articulate and direct.

**Mosaddek Ali Falu:** The PM's former private secretary was her intimate companion. He won in the controversial "festival of fraud" Dhaka-10 by-election in July 2004.

**Brig Mohammed Haider:** The former director general of National Security Intelligence (NSI) became a key player in Tarique's orbit soon after his appointment in January. He was deputized to deal with important ambassadors, for example, the "Tuesday Group's" proposed conference in November.

**Mir Nasiruddin:** The then state minister for civil aviation enjoyed Khaleda Zia's favour partly because as a former ambassador to Saudi Arabia he drew on his contacts to ensure Khaleda Zia is well treated when she goes to Mecca. Kamal Siddiqui said Nasiruddin was holding up the sale to Bangladesh of Boeing 777 jets because he wanted bribes.

**Matiu Rahman Nizami:** The former industries minister had access and stature as BNP's key coalition partner, but he did not exert major influence on policy. One of his sons in Manchester reportedly channelled local contributions via the NGO Muslim Aid to Bangladeshi madrasas.

**Moudud Ahmed:** The former law minister was

Do we need to argue any further?

Can losing US\$ 5 million be that important? How big a dent will it cause on India's national exchequer? By contrast this will dramatically impact on Bangladesh's growth. With the prospect of duty-free access to the Indian market, Bangladeshi entrepreneurs and non-resident Bangladeshis will expand their domestic investment spurring growth and employment.

Indian companies can also be persuaded to invest in Bangladesh for entry into Indian market, greatly expanding our economy, and also helping to reduce our trade deficit. Indian companies will also feel more confident in investing in Bangladesh if they have an assured market in mind. Investment in infrastructure of Bangladesh will receive a great boost, leading to greater connectivity both in Bangladesh and beyond.

In the case of all developing economies the fundamental spur to growth has been and continues to be, market access. India can give us that vital access. Will it?

Indian leaders never tire of saying, especially Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, that India cannot grow in isolation. Without her neighbours participating in Indian advancement, her growth will not be sustainable, speeches reiterate. If India truly believes this to be true then there is no better way of proving it than giving Bangladesh duty-free access to its market. This can even be thought of as investment in human security as economic migration is a well known phenomenon of present day world, especially of our region.

Bangladesh provides India a genuine opportunity to be the "Caring India" that can be its destiny. Will Manmohan Singh, for that matter, the Indian leadership as a whole, have the vision to go for it? The moment is now.

[The article is simultaneously being published in all editions of the Indian Express.]

the first in the outer circle. The politically opportunistic lawyer was counted on to promote the government line from defending extrajudicial killings.

**Mannan Bhuiyan:** The former minister and BNP secretary general was marginalised by Tarique's ascendancy and viewed with suspicion by the Prime Minister's Office since BNP dissident MPs mooted his name as a leader alternative to Khaleda.

**Morshed Khan:** The then foreign minister owes his position largely to his business wealth and generosity to BNP coffers.

**Lt Gen Hasan Mashhud Chowdhury:** The former chief of army staff had no sign of political ambition or independence. Awami League claims he is pro-Islamist but he comes across as just unobtrusively pious.

Ex-booters

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(Gulshan division), said they held Emeka when he was entering Hotel Westin in Gulshan where Nigerian players were staying for today's friendly match against Argentina.

He said they found a revolver with bullets in his bag around 12:30am.

Later, police detained Kaiser Hamid at Bangladesh Football Federation office as Emeka said the revolver belonged to Hamid.

Hamid, also former captain of Mohammedan, told police that the firearm is licensed and it somehow ended up in Emeka's bag when the Nigerian was at the federation office early in the evening.

Police were interrogating the two till the filing of the report at 1:40am.