

# Transit sinks in Teesta waters

*Dhaka, Delhi shelve major deals, sign minor ones as Mamata's U-turn on river sharing changes course of talks*

REZAUL KARIM

Bangladesh and India have failed to sign agreements on transit and Teesta and Feni rivers, the most sought after takeaways from Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's visit to Bangladesh, striking a blow to their bilateral ties.

Manmohan began his two-day official visit yesterday as the first Indian prime minister to come to Bangladesh in more than a decade and raising high hopes both in Dhaka and New Delhi of making a new beginning.

He was accorded a red carpet reception at Shahjalal International Airport, greeted by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on a sunny autumn day.

Manmohan's visit and his official talks with Hasina yesterday were overshadowed by New Delhi's last-moment dramatic decision against signing the Teesta water-sharing treaty in the face of stiff opposition from West Bengal Chief Minister

River sharing	X
Transit	X
Power	X
Land	✓

## Details of the deals

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

The agreements and MoUs signed between Bangladesh and India yesterday:

- 1. Framework Agreement on Cooperation for Development**  
A framework agreement between India and Bangladesh

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Mamata Banerjee.

The gloom persisted even though the talks produced the signing of 10 Memorandums of Understanding and protocols covering land boundary to preservation of Sundarbans, and a framework agreement on cooperation for development.

Hours before Manmohan's arrival in Dhaka, Bangladesh Foreign Secretary Mijarul Quayes summoned Indian High Commissioner Rajeev Mitter to the foreign Office demanding an explanation why New Delhi backed out from an earlier commitment to sign the Teesta accord.

Quayes expressed Dhaka's displeasure over the Teesta debacle.

New Delhi reportedly agreed to share with Dhaka 50 percent of the Teesta waters in a draft treaty agreed by the two countries during Indian PM's National Security Adviser Shiv Shankar Menon's whirlwind visit to Bangladesh last week.

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## Mamata faces music

*Media, experts of both countries slam her for torpedoing talks*

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Paschimbanga Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee's last moment objection to the Teesta water sharing deal has drawn widespread criticisms from Indian newspapers, TV channels and experts of both countries.

The experts say that this will affect the relations between the two neighbours and created scopes for the opposition in Bangladesh to bash the Awami League-led government, which is perceived friendly and warm-hearted towards India.

The deal that reportedly provided each country with almost 50-50 share of the river water met protest from Mamata. The Teesta issue has been a lingering pain for the neighbours and Mamata pulling out from Indian

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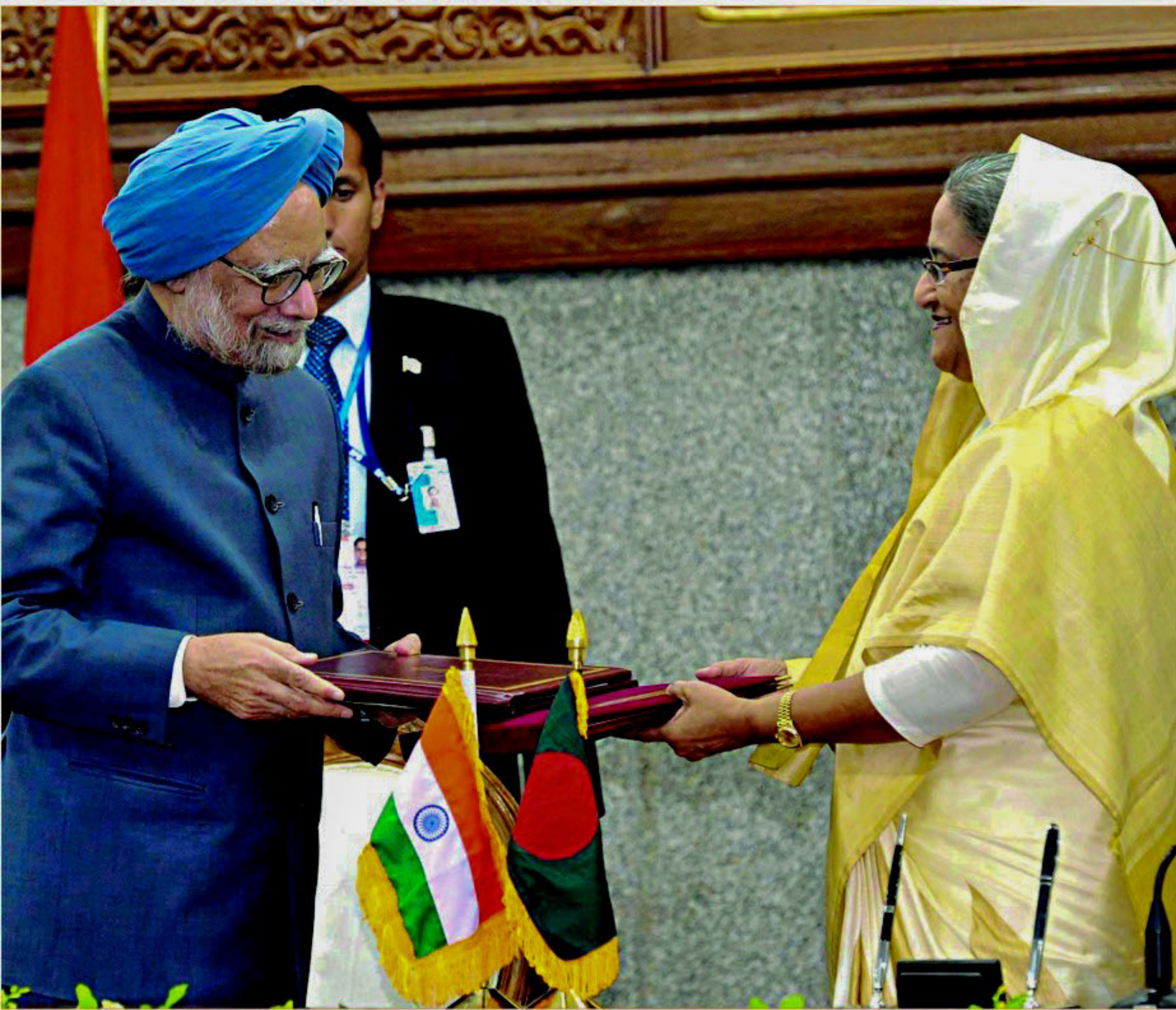


PHOTO: PMO

Visiting Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and his Bangladesh counterpart Sheikh Hasina exchange documents at the International Conference Centre of the Prime Minister's Office after signing the framework agreement on cooperation and development yesterday. Manmohan's visit to Bangladesh ends today. More photos on page 2 and 5.

## Roadmap holds out hopes

REJAUL KARIM BYRON

Bangladesh and India yesterday signed a framework agreement on bilateral cooperation for an indefinite period, where commitment is made for future cooperation in various fields including trade, connectivity, and water resources.

The treaty was signed

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## Upended by U-turn

PINAKI ROY

The postponement of the Teesta water-sharing deal has rendered the Indian prime minister's much-anticipated visit to Dhaka a damp squib.

The deal, which was expected to be the mainstay of Manmohan's trip, fell through after Paschimbanga (West Bengal) Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee objected to it at the last minute.

The setback puts a dark shadow over the prospect of warmer Indo-Bangla ties, which experts on both sides believed would reach new heights with the signing of treaties on the Teesta and Feni water sharing.

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## PUBLIC REACTION What's the gain of Bangladesh?

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The general public are confused and sceptical about Bangladesh's gain from Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's visit.

However, to many of the 50 Dhaka residents interviewed by The Daily Star yesterday, the visit holds forth a lot of hope

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## Together, we could sail

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said Bangladesh and India would be able to overcome all the challenges and uncertainties if they continue to work in close cooperation.

"...if our two nations, as the best of friends, continue to work in close cooperation in the



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## We've done better

UNB, Dhaka

Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh last night said his country wants to see a stable, secure and self-reliant Bangladesh.

"India will remain at your disposal in every sphere of your nation building efforts," Manmohan said in his banquet speech.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina hosted the banquet in

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## India for speeding up Chetia's extradition

ANI, Dhaka

New Delhi has requested the Bangladesh government to expedite the extradition of Ulfa leader Anup Chetia, Indian officials accompanying the Indian prime minister in Dhaka said yesterday.

Speaking on condition of anonymity, the officials said a request was made to Bangladeshi counterparts: "They (Bangladesh) have a legal process. We have made a request. Let us see."

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## Apparels get duty-free entry to India

*Delhi waives tariff on 46 items; analysts point at non-tariff barriers*

SAJJADUR RAHMAN

India has finally given Bangladesh an opportunity to reduce the trade deficit of more than \$4.5 billion by allowing 46 Bangladeshi apparel items duty-free access to the Indian market.

The decision came after a summit of the prime ministers of the two countries in Dhaka yesterday.

"Our export to India will double in a few years, if it resolves the issue of non-tariff barriers," Commerce

Minister Faruk Khan told reporters.

Bangladesh, which presently enjoys duty-free access for exporting 10 million pieces of garments to India a year, had sought duty-free entry of 61 items, including 47 apparel products, from India.

The items that got excluded are mostly fruits and vegetables. With this, India's negative list of products will come down to 434 from 480.

Analysts and exporters predict that this would expand Bangladesh's

export beyond the traditional western market. They also believe the non-tariff barriers imposed by India could deprive Bangladesh of its potential exports.

Prof Mustafizur Rahman, executive director of Centre for Policy Dialogue, said Bangladesh could cash in on the duty-free access of its products to India provided that the supply-side capacity is increased and the non-tariff barriers are removed.

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Bilkees Nasiruddin

## Obituary

Mrs Bilkees Nasiruddin, 87, a well-known exponent of Rabindra Sangeet, a social activist and educationist died of old age complications accelerated by acute diabetes. She died at 3:13 PM on 1st September at the United Hospital. She was buried at the new Azimpur graveyard that same evening.

Mrs Nasiruddin was one of the foremost singers of Tagore songs in the 50s, 60s and 70s. She was an alumni of Sakhawat Memorial Girls School, Lady Brabourne College in Calcutta and also Loreto Convent in Darjeeling. Mrs Nasiruddin studied and taught in Dhaka University (M.A. in Political Science and M.A. in Education) and was a Teacher by profession besides being a singer. She also studied at the University of Leeds and obtained a postgraduate degree.

A 'Dua Mehfil' will be held after Asr prayers on Friday September 9th 2011 at the Banani Central Mosque, next to the market where separate arrangements have been made for ladies. Friends and well-wishers of Mrs Nasiruddin are invited to come and pray for the departed soul.