

Manmohan's wife visits Gurdwara Nanak Shahi

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Gursharan Kaur, wife of Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, visited Gurdwara Nanak Shahi, a Sikh temple, on Dhaka University campus yesterday and participated in a special prayer session.

Reaching the temple around 5:12pm, Kaur spent around 30 minutes in prayers. "She (Kaur) offered her prayer and completed other rituals after joining the special prayer session," said Narayan Robi Das Pappu, general secretary of Gurdwara Management Committee.

The special prayer song was sung and verses from the Guru Granth Sahib, the holy scripture of Sikh religion, were recited during the prayer session while *Prasad* were distributed amongst worshippers afterward.

During Kaur's visit to the temple, the management committee presented her a "Sarpa" (a special scarf). She then inaugurated a VIP guesthouse for overseas visitors inside the temple.

DU Proctor Prof KM Saiful Islam Khan, seven members of the committee, four donors of the temple and two priests were also present during Kaur's visit.

The committee General Secretary Pappu said Kaur visited the temple on an invitation by the Dhaka University administrators.

Kaur left the temple around 6:15pm. She arrived in Dhaka with Manmohan, who is now on a two-day visit in Bangladesh.

Gurdwara Nanak Shahi is the biggest and oldest temple in Dhaka where the Sikh community pray and pay their respect to Guru Nanak Dev, founder of the religion Sikhism.

Sikhism made its debut in Dhaka when Guru Nanak Dev came on a visit in 1504. During his brief stay, he left his ideals in the minds of many. The temple was established to commemorate his visit.

The temple is believed to have been built at the initiative of a Sikh priest, Bhai Nathan, sent by the sixth Sikh Guru Har Gobind Ji (1606-1645) during the reign of Mughal emperor Jahangir. Bhai Nathan laid the foundation stone and the construction was finished in 1830.

Housewife allegedly takes her life

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A housewife allegedly committed suicide early hours yesterday at her residence in the city's Basabo.

The deceased is Shahida Akhter Irin, 24, wife of Kamrul Hasan Shuvo, a security-in-charge of a shopping complex at Shantinagar.

Police said they detained Kamrul for interrogation.

Kamrul said they had dinner around midnight and Irin asked him to buy her a soft drink from a local shop.

When Kamrul returned within a few minutes, he found Irin hanging by the neck with a scarf from a ceiling fan, police said.

Irin was rushed to Dhaka Medical College Hospital around 12:45am where doctors declared her dead.

Irin's mother Rowshon Ara told reporters that the couple got married two years back and they did not keep contact with her as she married without their consent.

Police sent the body to Dhaka Medical College morgue for autopsy. Morgue sources said they found no marks of injury on the body.

Police said an unnatural death case was filed with Sabujbagh Police Station in this connection.



PHOTO: PID
Gursharan Kaur, wife of Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, visits Gurdwara Nanak Shahi, a Sikh temple, on Dhaka University campus yesterday.

Framework agreement a visionary document, says Hasina

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said Bangladesh and India which signed a framework agreement on cooperation is a visionary document that looks not only the realities today, but also the potentials of tomorrow.

Making press statement after her one-to-one meeting with visiting Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, delegation level official talks and signing of deals with India at her office, she said, "We have been working on a new matrix charting our path for our common prosperity for the future."

"We have come a long way towards successfully materialising our common vision into reality. But we still have a long way to go," she added.

Hasina said at the discussion

they have been able to make considerable progress. "I am happy to announce that we have moved closer to resolve long pending issues of common concern. This has been done in a spirit of warmth and cordiality and understanding, she said.

"I would like to announce that from now on, our people in Dahagram and Angarpota will have 24-hour unfettered movement through Tin Bigha corridor," said Hasina.

"I am happy to say that Prime Minister Manmohan Singh as announced during our discussion today that India would allow duty-free access of 46 items from Bangladesh to the Indian market that were in the sensitive list of India," she said.

On signing of MoUs and protocols on cooperation in areas of mutual interest, Hasina said she

believes that those will further strengthen the bilateral relations and "We also have understanding on several others, which we hope will be signed soon."

On India-Bangladesh ties, Hasina said the bilateral relations are reflective of a common civilisational heritage, shared history, culture and language, a multifaceted and multidimensional relationship with strong and secular and democratic foundations.

"Today's realities, more than ever before, have taught us the value of interdependence of cooperation. For neighbours, border cannot have walls, but windows for collaboration and exchange. This is why relations with our neighbours require special focus. That is why the need for connectivity," she said.



PHOTO: PID
Foreign Minister Dipu Moni speaks to Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh at Sonargaon Hotel in the city yesterday.

Chamber judge refuses to hear Milan's petition

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Supreme Court's chamber judge yesterday refused to hear a petition filed by former BNP state minister ANM Ehsanul Hoque Milan seeking stay on a High Court order summoning him for a contempt of court petition against him.

Ruling Awami League lawmaker Mohiuddin Khan Alamgir filed the contempt of court petition, saying Milan submitted a writ petition to another High Court (HC) bench, challenging Alamgir's holding of office as a parliament member, but concealing a stay order.

Election Commission on September 22, 2010 issued a gazette notification vacating the parliamentary membership of Alamgir.

Following a writ petition filed by Alamgir, an HC bench led by Justice AHM Shamsuddin Chowdhury Manik on September 26 stayed operation of the gazette.

Alamgir, in his contempt of court petition, said Milan concealed this stay order in his writ petition, amounting to contempt of court.

The HC order on August 25 directed Milan to appear before it on October 16 to explain whether he suppressed its order while submitting the writ petition.

Attorney General Mahbubey Alam yesterday argued that there is no urgency to hear Milan's petition.

The judge yesterday also advised Milan's lawyer to move the petition before another chamber judge of the apex court later on.

Milan's lawyer SM Munir, however, told The Daily Star that the Chamber Judge of the Appellate Division Justice Md Shamsul Huda felt embarrassed to hear the petition, considering it a "delicate" matter.

"We will move the petition before another chamber judge next week," Munir said.

DoE asked to intensify anti-polybag drive

UNB, Dhaka

State Minister for Environment and Forests Dr Hasan Mahmud yesterday directed the Department of Environment (DoE) to strengthen its anti-polybag drive to help minimise the environmental degradation.

He made the directive when DoE Director General Monwar Islam met him at his ministry office.

During the meeting, Hasan said the previous BNP-Jamaat government had conducted anti-polythene drive for just 75 days during their 2002-2006 term and realised only Tk 10 lakh.

But the present government has already conducted anti-polythene drives for 221 days from January 2009 to July 2011, and realised Tk 70.40 lakh in fine and seized around 136,587kg of polythene, he said.

The junior minister urged the authorities concerned to be more sincere in conducting the anti-polythene drive to help protect the environment.

Kidnapped girl rescued from Chandpur

UNB, Narayanganj

Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) on Monday rescued a minor girl from Nargaon Bazar in Matlab upazila in Chandpur district, five days after she was kidnapped from Savar upazila in Dhaka.

The abductors Idris Ali, 35, and his wife Masuda Begum, 25, were also arrested.

Acting on a tip off, a Rab team conducted a drive on B a b u r h a t - P e n n a i - Chandpur road at Nargaon and rescued Nirjona, 5, daughter of Khahir Uddin of Goalbari of Savar.

Police said Idris and Masuda, members of an organised gang of kidnapers, went to Khahir's house on August 31, abducted Nirjona in the evening and demanded Tk 50,000 as ransom.

Red carpet welcome to Manmohan

BSS, Dhaka

Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh was given a red carpet welcome on his arrival at Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport here yesterday.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina received the Indian premier and his wife Gursharan Kaur when they alighted from a special aircraft at 12:05 pm, while two children presented bouquets to them.

A 19-gun salute heralded the arrival of Manmohan. Later, he was given a guard of honour by a smartly turned out contingent drawn from three services of the armed forces.

The Indian premier is leading a 136-member official delegation during his two-day state visit.

The delegation includes the chief ministers of Assam, Tripura, Meghalaya and Mizoram, External Affairs Minister SM Krishna, National Security Adviser Shiv Shankar Menon, Media Adviser Harish Khare, Principal Secretary to PM TKA Nair; Foreign Secretary Ranjan Mathai, a 49-member security team and a 42-member media team.

Hasina introduced her cabinet colleagues and other dignitaries to the Indian premier at the airport.

After a warm welcome at the airport, Manmohan started for National Mausoleum in Savar and paid rich tributes to the Liberation War martyrs by laying wreaths there.

"I pay homage to all the brave heroes whose fearless struggle and sacrifice led to the birth of a great nation, Bangladesh," Manmohan wrote in the visitors' book at the memorial. He also planted a sapling there.

Talks on Teesta water to continue for acceptable solution: Manmohan

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Amid frustration over leaving the Teesta water sharing agreement unsigned, visiting Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh yesterday assured that both the countries continue discussion towards an acceptable solution.

"We have decided to continue discussions to reach a mutually acceptable, fair, and amicable arrangement for the water sharing of the Teesta and Feni rivers", he said, making a press statement upon official talks with her Bangladesh counterpart Sheikh Hasina at Prime Minister's Office last evening.

Recognising the problem of trade imbalance between India and Bangladesh, he announced duty-free access of Bangladesh's 46 apparel products to Indian market.

He said India has embarked on a series of measures to improve border infrastructure, which will facilitate Bangladesh's exports to India and provide it greater opening to India and other neighbouring countries. "We are addressing issues relating to non-tariff barriers together with Bangladesh".

India is committed to assisting Bangladesh in its development efforts and thus will supply bulk power to Bangladesh by connecting the national grids, he said. "We will assist in the setting up of a joint venture power plant of 1,320 megawatts in Khulna".

He also informed that projects worth over US\$ 750 million under the US\$ 1 billion credit line announced last year have been identified for implementation.

On longstanding issue of Tin Bigha corridor, Dr Singh said steps have been taken for ensuring 24-

hour access to the enclaves of Dahagram-Angarpota through the Tin Bigha Corridor.

The Indian PM said by signing of a protocol to the Land Boundary Agreement of 1974, both our countries have now demarcated the entire land boundary as well as resolving the status of enclaves and adversely possessed areas.

He termed the framework agreement signed by him and Hasina as a contemporary blueprint designed to encompass all forms and sectors of cooperation.

Manmohan Singh also lauded Bangladesh's advancement and said he is deeply impressed by the changes that have taken place since his first visit as PM in 2005. "Bangladesh economy is doing well, and the socio-economic transformation of Bangladesh is proceeding rapidly".

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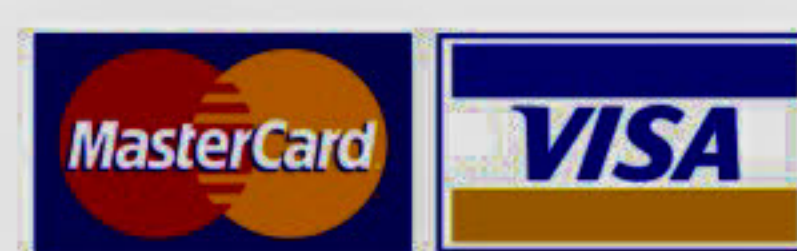
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