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editorials across the political spectrum generally applauded Obama's selection, Nicholas quoted parts of the editorials in his cable.

The whistle-blowing website WikiLeaks published the cable, along with thousands of other US diplomatic cables, on August 30 this year.

Highlighting The Daily Star editorial headlined "President Obama and the Nobel Prize; The award is a challenge to America's leader" published on October 10 that year, the American diplomat termed the paper a "generally neutral English newspaper".

For Prothom Alo, he used the term "generally neutral and pro-US highestcirculated vernacular daily". He found The

Independent and Ittefaq to

be "pro-US" and New Age to be an "anti-US" newspaper. The cable labelled Amar Desh and New Nation "BNPleaning" and Naya Diganta as "Jamaat-and BNP-leaning vernacular" daily.

Inquilab is a "generally anti-West Bangla vernacular daily," the cable added.

Nicholas Dean labelled Samakal as "Awami Leagueleaning and pro-West", Janakantha as "Awami League-leaning and generally pro-West" and Jaijaidin as a "government-leaning" vernacular daily.

Duty-free

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"It won't be easy to enter the Indian market, which is highly competitive. They have their own yarn and raw materials, and also the energy required," said Rahman.

Another analyst Ahsan H Mansur said it is a small start for tapping into a huge potential.

"It will help us become part of the production chain of a major economy," said Mansur, executive director of Policy Research Institute (PRI) and a former top official of International Monetary Fund.

Bangladesh is a major apparel exporter in the world and apparel exports accounted for nearly \$18 billion or more than 80 percent of the country's total export of \$22.92 billion in fiscal 2010-11.

Bangladesh enjoys dutyfree access of its apparel products to the European Union, Canada, Australia and some Asian countries including Japan, Korea and China. It, however, could not reap the full benefit in some countries such as Canada, Japan and Australia.

But exporters believe that things would be different with India, as it is a nextdoor neighbour with a population of 120 crore. India's annual retail apparel market is estimated at \$25 billion.

"We are competitive enough to enter the Indian market. We will be able to reduce the trade gap in three years," said Abdus Salam Murshedy, former president of Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association.

According to him, India could be Bangladesh's third biggest export destination after Europe and the USA.

"We can easily raise apparel export to 100 million pieces in the next year from present 10 million pieces," said Mansur, executive director of the PRI.

He said it is a big opportunity to diversify Bangladesh's export markets and will help get more foreign investments in the

Housemaid dies

Saidul Huq, a caretaker

of a nearby building, said

the road.

autopsy.

ROM PAGE 20 Munmun said she was aking a bath while her husband and daughter were away from home when the accident happened.

The security guards of the building informed her he said. about the accident over the phone.

Imtiaz, however, said having no deal signed on Teesta does not mean that Bangladesh should not sign he heard a sound first and any accord on transit. Two are very separate issues, he later found the girl lying on said expressing hope that the transit treaty will be

Cantonment police sent signed. her body to Dhaka Medical College Hospital for an

Star dubbed Mamata faces

Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's entourage during the Dhaka visit came as a huge embarrassment for India and was being viewed as a major dampener, reported NDTV.

NDTV online said Indian Foreign Secretary Ranjan Mathai told the channel that the presence of four chief ministers underlines the importance of the prime minister's visit and one more chief minister would have been useful.

Mamata's 11th-hour opposition to the Teesta water deal has stunned diplomats and experts on both sides of the border and threatens to scupper Manmohan's first-ever visit to Bangladesh, said Indian daily The Hindu.

Quoting highly placed Indian officials The Hindu said this could jeopardise the remaining "second generation" river water sharing agreements that were to ride on the back of the Teesta accord.

"Frankly, what Paschimbanga is saying makes no sense to me. This has been discussed for years now, and every concern of theirs had been addressed," said a senior Indian water resources ministry official in New Delhi.

Manmohan, who tried to persuade Chief Minister Mamata over the phone Monday to show flexibility on the Teesta water deal, is "disappointed" that his tour of Bangladesh has suffered an embarrassing hitch, reported The Telegraph.

M Shahiduzzaman, international relations professor at Dhaka University, said, "Mamata's refusal to come to Bangladesh is a big blow to Hasina who is dealing with the worst crisis of her political career at the moment."

Mamata's stance is cer-

tain to complicate matters for Hasina, he said, adding, "She will lose face either way. If she doesn't sign the deal, the opposition will pounce on her and if she accepts a lower share, the opposition will pounce on her too. Also, New Delhi would never want to show Hasina as a loser, they want Hasina to look good for their own benefits. With Mamata refusing to accompany Singh at the last moment, the prime minister himself has cut a very weak figure.'

Former Bangladeshi diplomat Muhammad Zamir said, "By not being proactive to the existing problems of Bangladesh, India is giving opportunity to the opposition in Bangladesh to bash the government, which is so unfortunate.'

It is very disappointing that the Paschimbanga chief minister has not come to Bangladesh along with Manmohan Singh. If she had anything to say, she could explain it in Dhaka, he said, adding that Mamata must have understood the bilateral relationship and put it above a regional issue.

Zamir, a former foreign secretary, told The Daily Star that he still hopes that Manmohan Singh will be courageous enough in dealing with the issue as Bangladesh has always been courageous in resolving India's issues. Things should be reciprocal, he

noted. Imtiaz Ahmed, professor of International Relations at Dhaka University, said not signing the Teesta water sharing deal will have serious repercussions.

India may talk of people's concerns in Paschimbanga but the fact is that there was a lot of hype about the matter and the last minute decision can in no way be reasoned. "This is a sort of political tactic, I would say."

Public trust in both governments would nosedive,

Meanwhile, Mamata's opposition Communist

Party of India (Marxist) was

also critical about her deci-

sions. "Her sudden decision not to join the prime minister to go to Bangladesh one day before the visit has not only brought embarrassment to our country but also tarnished its image in the international arena,' party leader Sitaram Yechury said.

He, however, said the issue of Teesta water sharing, on which Mamata raised objections, was "serious and very important", adding that CPI-M's objection was to the manner in which the chief minister decided not to go to Bangladesh.

He said, "Such major international agreements are not drafted overnight. She could have raised her objections much earlier.

Kolkata-based Anandabazar Patrika reported Mamata's objection to the water treaty and the pullout was a political technique that will improve her image in West Bengal. "According to Trinamool

Congress, it is the right technique and moment through which she brought the total situation under her control," said the report supporting Mamata's stance and blaming New Delhi for not consulting the issue with Mamata even though Indian media reported New Delhi had earlier discussed the Teesta water sharing issue.

Indian paper The Asian Age in its editorial yesterday said it is a pity that Manmohan Singh's twoday visit to Bangladesh may just get marred on account of insufficient domestic political sensitivity shown by New Delhi, unless lastminute repair work by the centre can meet the justified concerns of West Bengal chief minister Mamata Banerjee.

The Indian Express in its editorial remarked, "...West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee's lastminute threat to refuse to accompany the prime minister to Dhaka, over the very issue of water-sharing, is disappointing."

It said "Banerjee has the right to disagree on river water as water-sharing is after all only one issue, albeit very important for both Bangladesh and West Bengal, but to haggle over a few cusecs of water therein is to miss the larger picture, which is precisely what Banerjee's latest tantrum amounts to".

Mamata's absence may cloud the visit given that the India-Bangladesh story is overwhelmingly a West Bengal-Bangladesh story: from the management of border disputes to the exchange of enclaves, railway and road links, volume of trade through land routes, human trafficking and trans-border crime, it said.

Myanmar announces human rights commission

AFP, Yangon

Myanmar has formed a National Human Rights Commission in response to an appeal by a UN envoy for the new government to investigate alleged abuses,

an official said yesterday. State media reported that the panel would be made up of 15 former ambassadors, government officials and

academics. It comes less than two weeks after the visiting UN special envoy on human rights in Myanmar, Tomas Ojea Quintana, said that "serious human rights issues remain" under the country's new nominally civilian government.

"The commission was formed to focus on Quintana's report," said a government official who did not want to be named, without providing further details about its mandate.

The Myanmar regime has shown signs recently that it is seeking to improve its image by reaching out to critics such as opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi, who met President Thein Sein for the first time last month.

AL men clash

FROM PAGE 20 Yesterday was the last day to

drop tender documents for a Tk 7 crore construction project of Lalmonirhat town protection dam.

The clash sparked around 1:00pm when a group led by Shahinur Rahman Sohel, joint secretary of AL city unit, tried to obstruct other aspiring contractors from submitting their tenders at the WDB office, said Altaf Hossain, officer-in-charge of Kotwali Police Station in Rangpur.

The AL activists then chased the contractors out of the WDB office premises.

A team of Kotwali police reached the scene but the violent AL activists also chased them away, forcing the law enforcers to call in additional police forces to help bring the situation under control.

The arrestees include Shahinur Rahman Sohel, joint secretary of AL city unit; Sazzad Hossain, assistant personal secretary of the state minister for primary and mass education, and four members of the party unit-- Sahadat Hossain, Mohsin Alam, Ashraful Alam and Masud Parvez.

JS body

FROM PAGE 20 at its meeting held at Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban also called upon the authorities concerned to take lawful action against Khaleda if she fails to withdraw her statement and beg unconditional apology to the nation for her malicious remarks.

Suranjit Sengupta, the committee chairman, chaired the meeting.

The recent verdicts of Justice Khairul will remain as a milestone before the nation with regard to maintaining dignity of the constitution and establishing solemnity of the judiciary, the committee members observed.

Besides, the meeting finalised the Legal Aid (Amendment) Bill-2011 for passage in the Jatiya Sangsad.

State Minister for Law Md Qamrul Islam, Md Fazley Rabbi Mia, Fazle Noor Taposh, among other committee members, were present in the meeting.

3 workers

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The deceased were identified as Mohammad Ali, Mohammad Milon, 30, and Shahin Miah, 16, of Dakkhin Belaid village under Shibganj upazila of Bogra district.

Sirajul Islam, officer-incharge (OC) of Ashulia Police Station, told The Daily Star that the accident occurred around 3:30am.

The three died on the spot while the others got first aid from Gonoshasthaya Medical College and Hospital at Savar, the OC

When asked about the driver, the OC said, although the police seized the truck, the driver managed to flee from the scene immediately after the accident.

Kidney trade

along with Bagerhat Detective Branch of police arrested Saiful at Mollabari village shortly after midnight, said Fazlur Karim, officer-in-charge of Kalai Police Station.

Four people arrested earlier in this connection had told police about the

whereabouts of Saiful. On August 28, police arrested three people--Abdus Sattar, 40, Golam Mostafa, 28, and Abdul Karim, 32, from Kalai upazila of Joypurhat on the same charge.

extracted from the arrestees, Mosarraf Hossain was arrested on September 5 in the same upazila. Police said a gang of 10

Based on the information

members, including the five arrestees, were involved in illegal kidney trade. Joypurhat Superintendent of Police Mozammel Haque said the

police.

from the visit. gang had sold at least 37 kidneys acquired from the upazila and its adjacent areas to different countries remains uncertain," says including India and Faisal Imtiaz from Tejgaon. Singapore. At least 42 people in the

Postponing the Teesta area sold their kidneys, said agreement at the very last minute was "shocking", and

Transit sinks in Teesta waters

city

FROM PAGE 1

Happy with the draft, Bangladesh was eagerly waiting for the deal to be signed as this was a key prize Hasina's government wanted most from Manmohan's visit. The Teesta dispute has rendered Bangladesh's multi-million taka Teesta irrigation project almost idle for decades.

It was West Bengal's newly-elected Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee who torpedoed the Teesta deal saying it goes against her state's interests. After she exited from Manmohan's Dhaka entourage, the Indian government backed out from the deal dealing a blow to Hasina's hopes.

The Teesta failure blocked the hoped-for deal on sharing the Feni river waters and signing a "letter of exchange" containing Dhaka's consent to let India use Chittagong and Mongla ports to carry goods through Bangladesh territory.

talks, Manmohan asked not to overplay the water disputes.

"Our common rivers need not be sources of discord... We have decided to continue discussions to reach a mutually acceptable, fair and amicable arrangement for the sharing of Teesta and Feni river waters," Manmohan said in a written statement.

In a separate media statement, Hasina said, "I am happy to announce that we have moved closer to resolving long pending issues of common concern. This has been done in a spirit of warmth and cordiality and understanding." Both the leaders

expressed satisfaction over India's decision to give dutyfree access to 46 products from Bangladesh. Hasina was glad that India agreed to

provide 24-hour access to Tin Bigha corridor for the residents of Bangladesh enclaves of Dhagram and Angorpota.

They also pointed to the signing of the protocol to the Land Boundary Agreement of 1974.

"With this, both our countries have now demarcated the entire land boundary as well as resolved the status of enclaves and adversely possessed areas," Manmohan said. He also said the

Framework Agreement on

Cooperation for

Development signed by the

two sides "is a contemporary

blueprint designed to encompass on all forms and sectors of cooperation." Earlier, Manmohan was given a 19-gun military salute at the airport, where he reviewed a parade and got introduced to ministers and

high officials.

After the airport ceremony, the Indian premier placed floral wreath at the In a statement after the National Memorial at Savar. Foreign Minister Dipu Moni and Finance Minister AMA Muhith separately called on him at Pan Pacific Sonargaon Hotel where he was staying.

Manmohan arrived at the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) at 5:05pm and held Tete-a-Tete with Hasina that lasted about 45 minutes. Originally, it was scheduled for half an hour. After the exclusive talks,

the two prime ministers joined the official talks which began at 6:00pm at the International Conference Centre of the PMO and lasted less than half an hour. Hasina led a 21-member delegation while her Indian

member team at the talks. But the two premiers met again one-to-one first and then aided by their respective

it created more confusion,

counterpart led a 19-

DEALS MADE

corridor

- 1. Comprehensive framework on cooperation
- **2.** *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

- 3. Protection of Sundarbans tigers
- 4. Cooperation of railways on transit traffic for Nepal
- 5. Exchange of programmes by BTV and Doordarshan
- and Jawaharlal Nehru University

6. Cooperation between Dhaka University

7. Preservation of Sundarbans bio-diversity 8. Cooperation on renewable energy

10. Cooperation on fashion technology

- Cooperation on fisheries

foreign ministers for about half an hour, and all of a sudden an official of the foreign ministry took the file of "Protocol to the 1974 Land Boundary Agreement" which was not in the list.

Highly placed sources said the two leaders took the bold step to sign the agreement to

address the legacy issues -- (i) undemarcated land boundary (ii) enclaves; and (iii) adverse possessions.

Officials said it was due to be signed by the home ministers, but Foreign Minister Dipu Moni and her Indian counterpart SM Krishna signed it.

Public reaction

FROM PAGE 1

staff.

and expectation. "The visit is of course very significant for Bangladesh,' said Ahsanul Islam Chanchal, a garment factory

But the "hiccups" such as the Teesta water-sharing deal not being signed and Paschimbanga Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee's last-minute refusal to accompany Manmohan was "shocking", he said.

Among those interviewed ing to Mridul Chowdhury, a were professionals, businessmen, labourers, students, teachers and house-

"Frankly, I don't see anything good happening for Bangladesh from this visit,' said Mahfuz Islam, an accountant. "India has been exploiting Bangladesh for years, and this visit is an effort to continue that exploitation."

Abul Kalam, a shop owner at Green Road, believes India's motive behind the visit is to "push" Bangladesh for transit.

"Yes, Bangladesh does have much to gain, but it all depends on India," said the 37-year-old, who was seen reading a newspaper in his

Pointing to a news article on Mamata's refusal to join Manmohan, he said, "They don't seem to be very enthusiastic about the treaties."

Some of those interviewed appeared indifferent or ignorant about the visit.

Shahjahan Mia, a tea vendor at Green Road, said he heard that "some Indian ministers were coming," but does not know why. "Brother, these are the

matters of the prime ministers. Will it give me a day's meal for free? No, it won't," says Bachchu Mia, a CNGrun auto-rickshaw driver. 'So I have no interest in Firoz, another auto-

believes that both the countries will try to protect their interests. But some think there is a lack of clarity on what

Bangladesh stands to gain Locals rescued the three "It is clear what India will get from Bangladesh. But what Bangladesh will get

> Nanak's Dhaka home told The Daily Star that Sayem was an undergraduate in business school.

he said. "If they can cancel the Teesta agreement because of the unwillingness of a chief minister, then Bangladesh should cancel the transit

Farid Uddin Ahmed, a businessman. Mamata's last-minute refusal to come to Bangladesh was nothing but a "political drama," accord-

agreements considering the

interest of the people," said

"They [the Indian delegation] are here only to secure their interest, not ours."

Dhaka University student.

Akkas Ali, an army person, believes that the Teesta agreement was very important for Bangladesh. "This deal was essential,"

he said, adding that the

canals and rivers of

Bangladesh are drying. "We should be careful about what we are going to give India and what we are getting in return," he added. However, expectations

are high too. "Many longstanding issues between India and Bangladesh, which are harmful for both the peoples, could be resolved during the visit," said Shahrier Jewel, a

student. According to Pankaj Roy, a businessman, Bangladesh has much to gain from the

'The water in all the rivers in Bangladesh comes flowing through India from the Himalayas. India has some 500 dams on its rivers to restrict the water flow into Bangladesh," said Pankaj.

"If India opens even a few of those, it will be a big help for Bangladesh," he adds. But there are many scep

Rakib Hasan, a security guard, says, "In the light of what is happening, I don't think much will happen in this visit." rickshaw driver, however, Rakib spends much of his

days reading newspapers.

Nanak's son **FROM PAGE 20**

car, he said.

and took them to Chakoria Hospital where doctors declared Sayem dead. Contacted, a person in

Teesta water most during the dry season--December to March. At times, water flow comes down to less than 1,000 cusecs from 5,000

Upended by U-turn

FROM PAGE 1

districts in Bangladesh. New Delhi's about-face on the Teesta deal, envisis implementing a hydroaged in the joint communielectric project spread over qué issued during Prime eight sites along the Teesta Minister Sheikh Hasina's visit to India in January last year, comes as a blow to the Awami League-led government, which the opponents

much to the neighbouring country. Visibly irate that the Teesta deal did not come off, Dhaka has opted not to sign the 'Letters of Consent' that India needs to use Chittagong and Mongla ports. Besides, it seems to have made giving transit to

allege is conceding too

fair share of the Teesta water. Also in the fallout from the debacle, the agreement on the Feni water sharing has been called off.

The Feni is important to India as it supplies drinking water (treated) to its localities from this river with the consent of Bangladesh.

India has 14 irrigation projects that depend on the Feni. In 2003, it stopped withdrawing water from the river after objections from Bangladesh. This led to adverse impact on irrigation on the Indian side, reported Down to Earth, an Indian fortnightly on environment.

Water resources experts say New Delhi's tendency to hold back water of the common rivers goes against the "no-harm principle" enshrined in the UN Watercourses Convention 1997, a global legal framework that establishes basic standards and rules regarding the use and conservation of all waters that cross international boundaries.

The Indian practice of withdrawing water has long been contributing to degradation of riverine ecosystems in Bangladesh.

For want of water, farmers in the northern districts have taken to growing tobacco, which poses serious hazard to human health and environment Cultivating tobacco instead of rice also affects food production.

safety," a local police official said without elaborating further. As police, firefighters and self-defence force troops continued their painstaking search for the missing, local authorities were planning to air-drop more food and water to those isolated by

local official. In Totsukawa village in Nara prefecture, more than

400 people were stranded in Bangladesh needs the evacuation shelters as access routes have mostly been cut off and phone lines were down in most parts of the village, a local official said.

cusecs as India shuts all It leaves big question marks gates of its Gajaldoba barhanging on the fate of the rage in the upstream to store water-starved northern water, said agriculture officials. Besides Gajaldoba, India

from north Sikkim to Sevoke in West Bengal. It all stands to worsen the drought-like situation in Bangladesh's northern region. Over 750,000 hectares of farmland in the foodsurplus Rangpur Division is

supplementary irrigation. Out of the 54 common rivers between them, Bangladesh and India have water-sharing agreement only on the Ganges.

dependent on the Teesta for

Typhoon Talas India conditional on getting in Japan Death toll rises to 42

AFP, Tokyo Thousands of people

remained stranded in western Japan yesterday as the death toll from a fierce typhoon rose to 42, heaping more misery on a nation recovering from the March earthquake and tsunami. More than 50 people were

still missing, local authorities told AFP, while Japanese media reported another 100 or so could not be contacted in hard-hit Wakayama prefecture. In Shingu city and

Nachikatsuura town in Wakayama prefecture, "a considerable number of people have yet to be reached for confirmation of

the disaster. In severely affected

Wakayama, about 4,500

people remained stranded

in communities that could

not be reached due to col-

lapsed roads, according to a