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JOURNEY together just begins

Reiterates Modi, heads home after his tour of hopes to Dhaka

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi yesterday said his country would always stand by Bangladesh and move ahead taking Bangladesh along.

"I feel that the real journey, the yatra, has just begun," he said in a public address at Bangabandhu International Convention Centre, wrapping up his 34-hour maiden visit to Bangladesh.

Vowing to maintain close ties with Bangladesh, Modi said, "People thought we were paas-paas [close to each other], now the world must acknowledge that we are not just paas-paas but also saath-saath [together]."

Touching upon the water-sharing issue, he said, "I have come to take Bangladesh along, but I must also take the states along. I have come to Bangladesh, and discussions have taken place on Teesta."

Water cannot be used for "political reasons" since it is a "human issue", he said.

"A path will emerge. The efforts must continue. There should be no SEE ONLINE FOR JOINT DECLARATION SEE PAGE 11 COL 5



President Abdul Hamid handing over the Bangladesh Liberation War Honour crest for BJP leader Atal Bihari Vajpayee to Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi at the Bangabhaban yesterday, while PM Sheikh Hasina looks on. Story on page 16.

Hard to get info from ministries

Indian sources are all the media had

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

It is a tale of two governments and the media. One was seen making all sorts of efforts to help the press and the other, not so much.

The just-concluded state visit of Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi made the media realise how old school Bangladesh government still is.

Even though it claims of establishing Digital Bangladesh, the ministries of foreign affairs and information are not used to utilising modern information technology and social media in dissemination information.

Indian officials were seen meeting journalists of their country, briefing them about developments both SEE PAGE 2 COL 4

TOP QUOTE

"A path will emerge. The efforts must continue. There should be no faltering in faith. The results will be

INDIAN PRIME MINISTER **NARENDRA MODI**
ABOUT TEESTA WATER-SHARING ISSUE

COMMENTARY

Modi, hopefully, is no Manmohan

Time for India to reciprocate the 'leap of faith' that Bangladesh took in 2010

MAHFUZ ANAM

When former Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh concluded his tour of Bangladesh in September 2011, this paper headlined its lead story: "No Teesta, no transit". This time, too, there is nothing on Teesta, yet we have agreed on all forms of transit in the name of connectivity. This outcome is not an evidence of the persuasive power of the Indian PM Narendra Modi but more an expression of our faith in him to deliver on all the promises that his predecessor so miserably failed to keep. To be fair to Mr Singh, he did most of the preparatory work.

Water sharing remains, and will remain, a very serious concern for Bangladesh to which the Indian response remains a promise and a promise only. All Mr Modi could say was: "I am confident that with the support of the state governments in India, we can reach a fair solution on Teesta and Feni rivers." The Indian PM's conditional assurance became all the more striking to the people of Bangladesh as not a word came from West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, whose original refusal to be part of the Modi delegation and her subsequent change of mind raised serious hopes that, if not a deal, at least some gesture firmer than

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

'No democracy in Bangladesh'

Khaleda tells Modi

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia yesterday told Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi that "there is no democracy in Bangladesh".

Khaleda said this at a meeting with the Indian PM at Hotel Sonargaon that began around 4:10pm, according to Dr Moyeen Khan, BNP Standing Committee member, who was among the six-member BNP delegation that accompanied her.

Before leaving the hotel venue, the BNP chief told reporters that her meeting with Modi was "very fruitful" and held in a "very cordial atmosphere."

Briefing reporters about the outcome of the meeting, BNP standing committee member Dr Moyeen Khan said, "We have discussed the current situation of the country with the Indian prime minister. We've told him that democracy is absent in Bangladesh at present and there is no rule of law in the country as well. All institutions work as per the government's wish and thousands of opposition leaders and activists from the top to grassroots PHOTO ON PAGE 16



SEE PAGE 2 COL 4

MAMATA BANERJEE Teesta behind her silence

PARTHA PRATIM BHATTACHARJEE

Although West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee usually speaks to the media, whenever approached, on different issues, it was different during her latest Bangladesh tour.

Not even for once during her 25-hour stay in Dhaka did she speak before any forum or journalists.

And Kolkata-based media outlets and journalists believe the Teesta deal, which could not be signed in four years due to her opposition, was the reason behind her silence.

The pressmen, who accompanied Mamata during the visit, said she looked happy on her way back to Kolkata. With a broad smile on her face, she boarded off her SEE PAGE 2 COL 4

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