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Warmth flows, water not yet

Modi reassures of early Teesta deal, insists defence purchase for Bangladesh's needs; Hasina pledges to take bilateral ties to new high

PALLAB BHATTACHARYA and REZAUL KARIM

Bangladesh and India were drawn into a close strategic embrace yesterday with the two neighbours expanding their cooperation to new areas of defence and civil nuclear sectors.

While New Delhi rolled out for Dhaka a \$5 billion line of credit (LoC), including \$500 million to procure military hardware, the long pending issue of Bangladesh getting its due share of the Teesta water still remains unresolved.

After "very productive and comprehensive" talks between Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and her Indian counterpart Narendra Modi at the Hyderabad House in New Delhi yesterday, the two countries signed six agreements and 16 memorandums of understanding (MoU) that encompass a wide range of areas excluding the Teesta issue.

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, whose insistence on protecting her state's stake on the Teesta held back a nearly-reached deal in 2011, was present during the talks between the two sides.

Hasina and Modi held a one-to-one meeting, and then the two leaders were joined by full delegations comprising cabinet colleagues and senior officials.

Later, appearing before the media jointly with Hasina in Mamata's presence, Modi acknowledged that "the one that has attracted the greatest attention is the Teesta."

"I firmly believe that it is only my government and Excellency Sheikh Hasina, your government, that can and will find an early solution to Teesta water sharing," he insisted.

In her statement to the media, Hasina made just one reference to the Teesta treaty, saying, "We discussed the issues of water

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Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi address a joint media briefing at Hyderabad House in New Delhi yesterday. Hasina is currently on a four-day state visit to India.

PHOTO: PRESS INFORMATION BUREAU, INDIA

Dhaka, Delhi sign 22 deals

\$5b Indian credit announced

Bangladesh and India signed six agreements and 16 memoranda of understanding yesterday on the second day of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's four-day state visit to India.

AGREEMENTS

1. On "Cooperation in Peaceful uses of Nuclear Energy" between the governments of Bangladesh and India.

2. For the "Exchange of Technical Information and Co-operation in the Regulation of Nuclear Safety and Radiation Protection" -- between Bangladesh Atomic Energy Regulatory Authority (BAERA) and Atomic Energy Regulatory Board (AERB) of India.

3. On "Cooperation regarding Nuclear Power Plant Projects in Bangladesh" between Bangladesh Atomic Energy Commission (BAEC) and Global Centre for Nuclear Energy Partnership (GCNEP), India.

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Region to benefit from our ties

Says Hasina



"We discussed the issues of water resources management, including the sharing of water of common rivers like Teesta, the Padma-Ganges Barrage Project... I sincerely believe we shall be able to get India's support in resolving these issues expeditiously."

AGENCIES, New Delhi

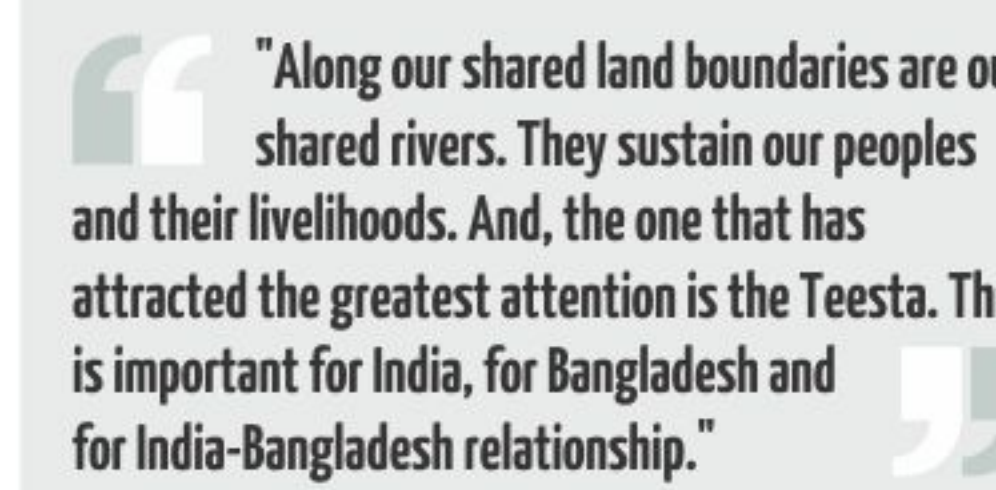
Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has said she believes Bangladesh will get India's support to resolve water resource management issues, including the sharing of water of the common rivers like the Teesta, Padma-Ganges barrage project and basin-wide management of common rivers.

She was speaking at a joint press briefing with Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi after their bilateral talks at the Hyderabad House yesterday.

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Another golden era in friendship

Modi tells of Hasina's visit



"Along our shared land boundaries are our shared rivers. They sustain our peoples and their livelihoods. And, the one that has attracted the greatest attention is the Teesta. This is important for India, for Bangladesh and for India-Bangladesh relationship."

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi said his counterpart Sheikh Hasina's visit to Delhi marked another golden era in the friendship between two people and nations, which was likely to see a quick solution to the long-standing Teesta water sharing issue.

"I firmly believe that it is only my government and Excellency Sheikh Hasina, your government, that can and will find an early solution to Teesta

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SNIPPETS

STEP DOWN

In a case of poorly chosen words, the master of ceremonies requested prime ministers Modi and Hasina to "step down [from the stage]" which led the two prime ministers to chuckle and giggle for an entire minute.

At a joint briefing after a bilateral meeting, they had a ceremonial signing on stage in front of the press.

When it was time for them to step down from the stage so that they could make their statements, the announcement came, "May I request the two prime ministers to now please step down."

VISA FOR FREEDOM FIGHTERS

Ten thousand freedom fighters would get five-year multiple entry visas for India. Prime Minister Narendra Modi, in presence of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, announced this while speaking at a function at Manekshaw Convention Centre at Delhi Cantonment organised to honour 1,661 Indian soldiers who sacrificed their lives for the independence of Bangladesh.

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Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee inaugurate a Bangladesh-India rail service through videoconferencing at the Hyderabad House in New Delhi yesterday.

PHOTO: PIB, INDIA

Teesta has no water to share

An adamant Mamata tells Hasina at the Rashtrapati Bhavan

REZAUL KARIM and PALLAB BHATTACHARYA

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has apparently failed to persuade an adamant West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee to agree to the Teesta water-sharing deal.

The two leaders had an hour-long meeting from 9:15pm BST at the Rashtrapati Bhavan in New Delhi yesterday.

Coming out of the meeting, Mamata told journalists that there was no water in the Teesta river to spare for Bangladesh and proposed the country use the waters of five common rivers -- Torsa, Dharala, Jaldhaka, Dansiri and Mansiri -- to meet its requirement.

"I always want Bangladesh to get water. But we have a problem with the

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When was he arrested?

Local police, DMP give conflicting versions of the arrest of 'ABT man'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Detectives claimed to have arrested a "Sharia Board" member of banned militant outfit Ansarullah Bangla Team (ABT) in the capital's Jatrabari area on Friday night but the media had reported that he was picked up from Mymensingh on March 16.

The family of Maksudur Rahman alias Abdullah, 31, claimed that he was picked up by law enforcers 22 days ago from Phulpur in Mymensingh and even the officer-in-charge of Phulpur Police Station had said Maksudur was picked up from there by

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'Like nowhere else'

AL-AMIN

Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) president Nazmul Hassan said on Friday that he has not seen a commotion such as the one in Bangladesh anywhere else in the world following the retirement of a player from T20 cricket. He was actually referring to the retirement of Mashrafe Bin Mortaza that has created an uproar among fans in this part of the world.

"Really I have not seen any news anywhere other than Bangladesh regarding who is retiring from T20 cricket. It is in Bangladesh we are experiencing so much noise following the departure of a captain from T20 cricket," Hassan told reporters at the Hazrat Shahjajal International Airport upon his return with the Bangladesh team from Sri Lanka, where the Tigers manfully shared the series of all the three formats.

He seemed to be heading for a strong argument when he followed up by saying: "[when] a player retires from ODI or Test it is widely focused on in other countries."

Understandably, the T20 format of the game is still not considered as a true contest of bat and ball and the performance in the shortest version of cricket does not really



Nazmul Hassan

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