



Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi greets Bangladesh President Abdul Hamid after the latter reached Rashtrapati Bhavan in New Delhi yesterday.

PHOTO:
BANGABHABAN

Keen to solve Teesta issue

FROM PAGE 1
sidelines of the International Solar Alliance (ISA) Summit at the Rashtrapati Bhavan in New Delhi yesterday afternoon, according to Hamid's Press Secretary Joynal Abedin.

Modi made the comments after Hamid told him that the water of Teesta is essential for the economic and social well-being of a large segment of Bangladesh's population, and the river has an important role in the socioeconomic development of his country.

Mamata has been dourly resisting the Teesta treaty ever since she opted out of a trip to Dhaka along with former Indian PM Manmohan Singh in September 2011. There had been no change in her stance even after Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina had met her in New Delhi in April last year.

On the Rohingya issue, Modi told Hamid that India was very eager to help Bangladesh in speedy repatriation of the refugees and cope with the burden of taking care of the refugees sheltered in camps in Bangladesh, said Joynal.

The Indian PM pointed out that there is the issue of poverty in Rakhine where the socioeconomic development problem has to be addressed, Joynal said.

Modi also commended PM Hasina for honouring the Indian soldiers who fought in the Liberation War of Bangladesh, he added.

Modi paid tribute to Hamid for being a freedom fighter and said he was very happy that Hamid visited Balat and Balam in Meghalaya state three days ago where he had spent several months undergoing arms

training and organising refugee camps during the Liberation War.

Spokesperson for Indian External Affairs Ministry Raveesh Kumar tweeted that Modi and Hamid had discussed connectivity and development cooperation among other issues.

"Cementing our bonds with a close friend and a neighbour! PM @narendramodi met President of Bangladesh, Md. Abdul Hamid on the sidelines of the #ISA. Leaders discussed connectivity, developmental cooperation, among other issues," he tweeted.

Mushy's template for excellence

FROM PAGE 1
in the Bangladesh top order and it is not just because he is a joy to watch in full flow, but more importantly because the studious batsman is a shining example of learning from past mistakes.

Mushfiqur led the way in constructing the ideal T20 innings, both individually and from the team's perspective. Ideally, to maximise runs over 20 overs, one batsman is needed to bat through and cash in on his familiarity with the bowling and the pitch while two or three other batsmen need to chip in with fast-paced contributions. Above all, when faced with a gargantuan chase, it is imperative that the target is broken down into segments, such as a target score after every over or every five overs. Mushfiqur had a leading hand in both these approaches.

Tamim Iqbal's 29-ball 47 and the 19-ball 43 from the right-handed Liton Das -- whose promotion to the top of the order to counter Sri Lanka's ploy of opening with an off-spinner

proved a masterstroke from the team management -- were crucial and glittering contributions, but they are also of the kind that Bangladesh fans have seen before, only for the hope created to be dashed by a failure to carry on the momentum by the other batsmen.

Even with all of these things falling into place, no one would have complained much if Bangladesh -- whose previous highest T20I score was 193 for five against the same opponents in Dhaka a month ago -- had fallen just short of a mammoth target as they had never before shown the ability to score over 200 in the format. But there was an X-factor looming in the Bangladesh dressing room, and he strode out at the fall of Tamim's wicket in the 10th over with the score on 100. More than half the work was left to be done.

An unbeaten 72 off 35 hardly does Mushfiqur justice because, while it was not the best bowling display from Sri Lanka, the home bowlers threw everything and the kitchen sink at the slightly

built Mushfiqur and he threw the lot back with interest each time. In the 12th over, he backed away to the leg side and medium-pace Dasun Shanaka was smart enough to bowl it wide outside off stump. Most batsmen around the world would not have been able to reach it, much less someone who stands five feet and loose change above ground level. But ever light on his feet, Mushfiqur arrested his momentum mid-delivery and, with the stillest of heads maintaining his equilibrium, smashed the ball over point for six. In the very next ball he moved to the other side and this time Shanaka, smartly once more, bowled a near yorker at Mushfiqur's feet at least four feet outside off stump and was scooped to the fine leg fence for his trouble.

If these shots -- and the dug-out sixes he hit off spinners Danushka Gunathilaka and Jeevan Mendis -- showcased his high skill, the last two shots were proof that inside his small frame beats the heart of a Tiger. In the 19th over, when 16 runs were needed

from eight balls and with the familiar story of dashed hopes unfolding, Mushfiqur hit a Nuwan Pradeep full toss not just over midwicket but into the third tier of the stand behind the ropes.

Minutes later, he had not only won the match but gifted his team the template to score big in T20 matches. 44 of his runs had come from five fours and four sixes, but the 28 others came from 22 balls shrewdly manoeuvred into gaps to keep the scoreboard moving when boundaries were hard to come by. That is one more lesson learned by the keen student from the 55 balls Bangladesh had wasted in the first match against India. Mushfiqur played only four dot balls in a 35-ball stay, and the last of them came off the third ball of the 14th over.

Admittedly the template depends a lot on Mushfiqur's rarefied excellence of skill and spirit, but the real value of this innings is that it will remain as an example for his teammates to follow in the days to come.

'Cries of joy'

FROM PAGE 16
work to care for Julius just after the boy's mother died.

Julius was just three years old when he was diagnosed with leukaemia early last year, and Graf, 36, used all his annual leave from the design company where he worked to be at his son's hospital bedside.

But when the boy was well enough to return to the family's home in Fronhausen, in Hessen, Germany, his mother suddenly died of heart dis-

ease.

With no holiday allowance left, Graf was worried he would lose his job as an assembly worker, and was struggling to cope with both his son's illness and his wife's death.

But Pia Meier, the company's human resources manager, appealed to the factory's workers to donate their overtime -- and all 650 signed up, even those who had never met Graf.

Within two weeks, at an average of

five hours for each employee, they had raised 3,264.5 hours, which the company allowed him to take as paid leave.

The total was equal to 81.6 weeks -- or more than 18 months.

"Without this tremendous help, I would've been out of a job by now," Graf said, adding that he would be eternally grateful to his colleagues and the company.

Recalling when he was first told about colleagues' generosity he said: "At first I was speechless, could not

say anything. I cried in front of friends and was completely overwhelmed."

He has cooperated with media publicity about his case out of gratitude to colleagues, he said.

And he has since also been touched by offers from strangers to donate towards Julius's care.

"Recently, an 89-year-old wanted to donate 20 euros. But we did not have the heart to accept that. That's overwhelming," he said.

Of an alleged rape, settlement attempt and revenge attack

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Thakurgaon

The stabbing of the brother of a "rape victim" brought to light an alarming story.

Police sources said it began in 2017. Ram Proshad, 50, would go to the house of a mentally challenged girl at Keshurbari village in Thakurgaon sadar upazila, when her parents, both labourers, would have to leave her home to go to work.

Family members of the victim claimed that the vulnerable girl aged around 18 would be raped almost every day by Ram. He was married and had three children.

Around December 2017, she told her mother about the matter. Soon after that, the mother realised that her daughter was pregnant. She contacted Ram, who had told her not to tell anyone of the incident and suggested the girl has an abortion, the family claimed.

When the girl was taken to hospital, they were told that she was too far into her pregnancy to abort.

Her family members further added that the girl's father was told about the incident on February 18 when she was 33 weeks pregnant.

The girl's parents spoke to Ram's family again. Ram's family told them not to make the matter public and that a marriage would be arranged between them.

But a week later, they learnt that Ram went on the run and his family refused to speak about the matter.

The girl's father filed a case with Thakurgaon Police Station on Saturday night, accusing four people -- Ram Proshad, his brother Sagor Devnath, 55, and his nephews Haridas Devnath, 30, and Sabur Devnath, 43.

The incident came to light when a brother of the rape victim, aged 14, was stabbed that same night allegedly by Bakul Devnath, Ram's brother, when the former was on his way back home around 10:00pm.

The information on the entire incident was provided by police sources and the victim's family members.

SEE PAGE 11 COL 1

President for life

FROM PAGE 1
delegates filled in their ballot papers, but allowed in to see them placing the papers, one by one, into large red ballot boxes around the room.

Xi cast his vote first, on the podium at the front of the hall, followed in turn by the other six members of the party's elite Standing Committee, which runs China.

The room erupted into loud applause when the result of the vote was passed, though Xi did not address parliament.

The limit of two five-year presidential terms was written into China's constitution in 1982 after Mao's death six years earlier by Deng Xiaoping, who recognised the dangers of one-man rule and the cult of personality after the chaos of the Cultural Revolution and instead espoused collective leadership.

Speaking later to reporters, Shen Chunyao, chairman of the Legislative Affairs Commission of parliament's standing committee, dismissed concerns the move could risk a return to strongman rule or lead to political turmoil or infighting.

"As for the assumptions, conjecture and stretched situations in your question, I think that does not exist," Shen said.

In the past nine decades of the party's history it has overcome hardships and resolved major problems, including orderly leadership transitions and keeping the party and country's vitality and long-term stability, he added.

"In the nearly 40 years of reform and opening up, we have successfully established, upheld and expanded the political development road of socialism with Chinese characteristics," Shen said.

"So, going forward the road we are on will definitely be longer and wider, and the future brighter and brighter."

CULT OF PERSONALITY
Xi, 64, swiftly consolidated power after taking over as party chief in late 2012, and the move to lift the presidential term limits is not unexpected.

In the run up to the vote, critics on Chinese social media attacked the move and drew parallels to North Korea or suggested a Mao-type cult of personality was forming. But the government quickly mounted a propaganda push, blocking some comments and publishing pieces praising the

proposal.

The party loyalists who attend the annual session of parliament have said the decision is popular with ordinary Chinese people and asserted that China was lucky to have a leader of Xi's calibre.

"Protecting the country's long-term stability is an extremely good thing," Cheng Bingqiang from Sichuan province told Reuters shortly ahead of the vote, when asked if he worried about Xi being in office forever.

He Guangliang from the southwestern province of Guizhou said it wasn't fair to draw comparisons with North Korea.

"China has its own national characteristics," He said. "There's no one system that suits all countries."

However the question was too sensitive for several legislators, who scurried away when asked about Xi being in office forever.

"You can't ask me that," said one lady, laughing nervously and declining to give her name.

In a further measure of Xi's strength, a key Xi ally, former top graft-buster Wang Qishan, could be elected vice president on Saturday, having stepped down from the Standing Committee in October.

He cast his vote right after the seven members of the Standing Committee. The amendment also lifts term limits for the vice presidency.

"We've not got around to discussing that yet," Chen Yunying, a senior defector from self-ruled Taiwan who is married to Justin Yifu Lin, the World Bank's former chief economist.

"We'll get it in the next few days," she told Reuters, referring to the candidate list for vice president, and adding "everyone has been saying" it will be Wang for the position.

CONSOLIDATING POWER

Xi began his second five-year term as party chief in October and at the end of the week will be formally appointed by parliament to his second term as president.

The government has said lifting the term limits is about protecting the authority of the party with Xi at its centre. The party's official People's Daily has said this does not mean life-long terms.

The party gave Xi the title of "core" leader in 2016, a significant strengthening of his position at the time.

MYANMAR BORDER BGB, BGP start joint patrols

SANJOY KUMAR BARUI, Bandarban

Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) and Border Guard Police (BGP) of Myanmar have jointly conducted a patrol along the Bangladesh-Myanmar border yesterday morning.

Lt Col Manjurul Ahsan Khan, commanding officer of Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) 34 Battalion, said the drive was a part of border management and started in Bandarban's Ghumdhum area.

It will continue over the next few days, he said.

"The joint patrol will improve the relation of the border forces of the two countries and strengthen their policies," he added.

Rohingya leader Dil Mohammad said, "We hope the joint patrol will be able to bring peace to the people on no man's land."

On March 6, the border forces of the two countries conducted another



Bangladesh Border Guard (BGB) and Myanmar's Border Guard Police conduct a joint patrol along the border near Ghumdhum in Naikhyangchhari of Bandarban yesterday.

PHOTO:
BGB

One-minute blackout on Black Night

BSS, Dhaka

Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal yesterday said the country would observe a one-minute blackout on the night of March 25 in memory of the brutality of Pakistani Army on the Black Night of March 25, 1971.

"The government has taken a decision to observe a one-minute blackout programme on March 25 from 9:00pm to 9:01 pm," he told reporters after a meeting at the home ministry.

The minister said the meeting was held to discuss various issues as to how the Genocide Day would be observed on March 25 and the Independence Day on March 26.

To observe the blackout, he said the power supply would be suspended from 9:00 pm to 9:01 pm across the country.

"We will observe this blackout programme only to recall the horror of the night of March 25, unleashed by

SEE PAGE 11 COL 3