

Feni water given

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working with all Indian stakeholders for conclusion of the agreement at the soonest possible time.

At the bilateral meeting, India expressed readiness to extend duty-free and quota-free access of Bangladesh's exports to the Indian market.

The Bangladesh side raised the issue of anti-dumping/anti-circumvention duties imposed by India on multiple products exported by Bangladesh, including jute products, and wanted them to be addressed.

In response, the Indian side mentioned that trade remedial investigations are carried out in accordance with existing Indian laws.

Hasina and Modi directed their officials to expedite the establishment of framework of cooperation in the area of trade remedial measures.

Meanwhile, water expert Dr Ainun Nishat yesterday said Bangladesh can agree to the withdrawal of 1.82 cusec water from the Feni river, but it needs to see when the water is withdrawn and how much water is left in the river during the lean season.

"It's important to see if the communities on the basin of the Feni river in Bangladesh are affected," he told The Daily Star.

In Feni district, there is an irrigation project on the Feni river, which originates in South Tripura district and flows through Sabroom town before entering Bangladesh.

Sharing water of 54 common rivers between India and Bangladesh is crucial. However, a treaty on water sharing of only one river, the Ganges, was signed in 1996.

India and Bangladesh held a water secretary-level meeting of Joint Rivers Commission in Dhaka early August when both sides agreed to collect data on seven rivers - the Manu, Muhuri, Khowai, Gumti, Dharla, Dudhkumar, and Feni -- and prepare a framework agreement on water sharing. A joint technical committee was also formed during the meeting.

Hasina and Modi, who held one-to-one talks following the delegation-level discussions at the Hyderabad House yesterday, asked the committee to exchange updated data and information fast and prepare the draft

neighbours in other parts of the world to follow.

The Indian PM termed the LPG supply from Bangladesh to India a win-win situation for both the countries as it would generate income and jobs in Bangladesh. The Bangladesh premier said the initiative would help energy security of India's northeastern states. An MoU in this regard was signed yesterday.

Hasina said Bangladesh-India cooperation in various conventional sectors has recorded "remarkable" progress in the last 10 years and the two countries are now extending their collaboration in newer areas like peaceful use of nuclear energy, blue economy, cyber security, space research, and export of internet bandwidth.

She thanked Modi for India's commitment to simplify travel requirements for Bangladeshis traveling by road or rail to India and asked for lifting all restrictions for Bangladeshi travellers using the existing land ports.

The two sides agreed that the remaining restrictions on entry/exit from land ports in India for citizens of Bangladesh travelling on valid documents would be removed in phases, beginning with checkpoints at Akhaura (Tripura) and Chokdanga (West Bengal), the joint statement said.

Both sides agreed to expedite commissioning of a joint study on the prospects of entering into a bilateral Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA).

Appreciating the positive impact of the border haats on the lives and livelihoods of the people living along remote border areas, the two PMs directed their officials to expedite establishment of 12 Border Haats.

Both leaders agreed on early operationalisation of the BBIN Motor Vehicles Agreement for movement of goods and passengers, between the member countries who are willing and ready, or to work towards a bilateral Motor Vehicles Agreement as appropriate.

DEFENCE COOPERATION

The two leaders recognised the need for increased cooperation in defence for a more integrated and secure neighbourhood, taking into



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina receiving the Tagore Peace Award 2018 from the Asiatic Society, Kolkata, at a function at the Taj Mahal Hotel in New Delhi yesterday.

PHOTO: PID

PM receives 'Tagore Peace Award 2018'

UNB, New Delhi

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday received 'Tagore Peace Award 2018' in New Delhi in recognition of her contribution to maintaining regional peace and prosperity.

The Asiatic Society, Kolkata conferred the award on the prime minister at a function at the Taj Mahal Hotel in New Delhi.

President of the Asiatic Society, Kolkata, Prof Isha Mahammad handed over the award to Hasina. Its General Secretary Satyabrata Chakrabarti delivered the welcome address at the function.

In the past, noted world leader Nelson Mandela and eminent economist Amarta Sen, among others, received the award.

A citation was read out at the function in honour of the prime minister.

"The Asiatic Society is honoured to confer the 'Tagore Peace Award' 2018" to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina ...", the citation said.

After receiving the award, Hasina dedicated it to the people of Bangladesh.

At the invitation of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Hasina is now on an official visit to India.

Apart from her official engagements in New Delhi, Hasina was also invited as the chief guest at the India Economic Summit organised by The World Economic Forum on October 3-4.

Eight killed, 18 wounded in Rwanda attack

AFP, Kigali

Unidentified gunmen killed eight people and injured 18 during an overnight attack in northern Rwanda near the border with DR Congo, police said yesterday.

The attack took place in Musanze district which attracts tourists because of its Volcanoes National Park and its mountain gorillas, they said.

Six people were killed with machetes or knives and the others were shot dead, a police statement said.

"Security forces were quick to provide emergency services to the residents of the area and investigations are still ongoing to find these terrorists," it added.

The area has repeatedly been targeted by Rwandan rebels operating from the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Dhaka, Delhi sign

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(SOP) on the use of Chattogram and Mongla ports for movement of goods to and from India, MoU on withdrawal of 1.82 cusec water from the Feni River by India for drinking a water supply scheme in Sabroom town, Tripura, agreement on implementation of the lines of credit (LoC) committed by India to Bangladesh, MoU between the University of Hyderabad and the University of Dhaka, MoU on cooperation in youth affairs and renewal of a cultural exchange programme.

The two premiers also jointly inaugurated three bilateral development partnership projects -- import of bulk LPG from Bangladesh, Vivekananda Bhaban (student hostel) at Ramakrishna Mission in Dhaka and Bangladesh-India Professional Skill Development Institute in Bangladesh.

Hasina said cooperation between

the two countries in traditional sectors has enhanced significantly over the past decade. They also extended their helping hands in the areas of blue economy and maritime affairs, peaceful use of nuclear power, space research, export of internet bandwidth and cyber security.

The PM had a tete-a-tete with Modi before the meeting.

The Indian external affairs ministry said the two leaders met for the second time in 10 days exemplifying the strength of Bangladesh-India ties.

The meeting between the two leaders was followed by lunch at the same venue.

Hasina reached New Delhi on Thursday morning and joined the World Economic Forum (WEF) Summit.

She is scheduled to return home today.



framework of interim water-sharing agreements on the seven rivers.

Quoting Bangladesh Foreign Secretary Shahidul Haque, The Hindu reported that the Indian National Register of Citizens came up for discussion and Modi reassured Hasina of it being an internal matter of India.

He said Dhaka would keep an eye on the developments regarding the issue.

ROHINGYA REPATRIATION

A major agenda of Bangladesh at the meeting was seeking India's assistance for the repatriation of 1.1 million Rohingyas.

India, however, didn't say anything concrete on the repatriation.

"The two prime ministers agreed on the need to expedite safe, speedy, and sustainable repatriation of the displaced persons to their homes in the Rakhine State of Myanmar," says the joint statement.

They agreed on the need for greater efforts to be made to facilitate the Rohingyas' return, including by improving security situation and socio-economic conditions in Rakhine.

TERRORISM, BORDER KILLINGS

Modi appreciated Bangladesh's "zero tolerance" policy against terrorism and commended Hasina for her resolute efforts to ensure peace, security, and stability in the region.

The two premiers reiterated their strong commitment to eliminate terrorism in all its forms and manifestations. They agreed on a closer cooperation against extremists and radical groups, terrorists, smugglers, smuggling of fake currency, and organised crime.

Both sides emphasised simplifying "people-people" movement between the two countries and effective border management.

Hasina and Modi directed their respective border forces to complete border fencing at all pending sectors on the border between the countries at the earliest.

On the issue of border killings, the two leaders agreed that the loss of civilian lives at the border was a matter of concern. They directed the border forces concerned to enhance coordinated measures to work towards bringing such incidents down to zero.

TRADE, CONNECTIVITY

Hasina and Modi projected the development partnership between the two countries as a model for

account the cooperation from the joint operation of both forces during Bangladesh's Liberation War in December 1971.

Hasina and Modi welcomed the initiatives for development of closer Maritime Security Partnership, and noted the progress made in finalisation of an MoU on Establishment of Coastal Surveillance Radar System in Bangladesh.

According to the Times of India, India has provided such coastal surveillance systems to Mauritius, Seychelles, the Maldives and was planning to provide one to Myanmar. It will be useful amid growing terror threats via seas and growing presence of China in the Bay of Bengal region.

Both leaders also agreed to expedite work towards drawing upon a \$500 million Defence Line of Credit extended by India to Bangladesh, for which implementation arrangements have been finalised in April, according to the joint statement.

Modi accepted Hasina's invitation to join a programme marking the birth centenary of Bangabandhu next year.

Meanwhile, Indian Foreign Minister S Jaishankar made a courtesy call on Hasina yesterday.

Hasina later met Indian President Ram Nath Kovind at his residence.

The PM is scheduled to return home today after completing her four-day official tour there.

NHRC a 'retirement home for bureaucrats'

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Mizanur Rahman was the commission's chairman.

Another former secretary Nazrul Islam also served as a full-time member during Reazul's tenure as chairman.

Rights organisations alleged that the commission had not been vocal enough against rights violations by law enforcers ever since Prof Mizanur, the only non-bureaucrat chairman, left the post.

There has been much discussion about the independence and effectiveness of the commission, they said.

In yesterday's programme,

Shahdeen expressed his concerns over the incidents of enforced disappearance and extra-judicial killings and hoped that the perpetrators, including members of the law enforcers who were involved in those incidents, would be brought under trial someday.

All the institutions of a society that wants to curb crime rates through incidents of enforced disappearance or extra-judicial killings will certainly fail, he opined.

Asif Nazrul, professor of Dhaka University's law department, alleged that the government and the law enforcers are behind most of the incidents of enforced disappearance

in the country.

"If the government and law enforcers are not involved, why do the eyewitnesses, family members and neighbours name law enforcers?... Why don't the law enforcers register cases after the incidents? Some missing people fortunately return, but why don't they speak out?" he asked.

CR Abrar, professor of DU's international relations department, demanded the formation of an independent commission to investigate the incidents of enforced disappearance and extra-judicial killings.

Trump to block immigrants unable to pay for healthcare

AFP, Washington

The US will block the entry of immigrants without health insurance or the ability to pay for medical bills, President Donald Trump revealed Friday.

Consular officers will only be allowed to issue visas to prospective immigrants who can prove they "will not impose a substantial burden" on the US health care system, according to a proclamation authored by Trump.

"Lawful immigrants are about three times more likely than United States citizens to lack health insurance," Trump said in the proclamation.

"Immigrants who enter this country should not further saddle our healthcare system, and subsequently American taxpayers, with higher costs."

The measure will go into effect on November 3.

Trump made cracking down on immigration a key part of his 2016 presidential campaign platform.

16 killed in jihadist attacks in Nigeria

AFP, Kano

At least 16 people, including 11 soldiers, have been killed in jihadist attacks in Nigeria's northeastern Borno state, military and militia sources said yesterday.

Rival factions of Boko Haram launched the attacks on military and civilian targets between Thursday and Saturday, they said.

On Thursday, fighters from the IS-aligned Islamic State West Africa Province ambushed a military convoy near Mauro village in Benisheikh district, a military source told AFP.

"Our men on patrol fell into a terrorist ambush... which claimed 11 soldiers and wounded 16 others. Two other soldiers are still missing," said the officer, who asked not to be identified.

Doctors at Shaheed Suhrawardy Medical College and Hospital said they treated at least 13 people with pellet injuries yesterday.

GG Biswas, officer-in-charge of Mohammadpur Police Station, said a case was filed with the police station against 27 people over attack on police and vandalising their pickup.

Six people were arrested in the case, he said.

"TK 33 CRORE DUE"

Anisur Rahman, deputy commissioner (Tejgaon division) of the Dhaka Metropolitan Police, said yesterday's clashes left at least 50 people injured and 15 of them were law enforcers.

He said the camp residents did not pay electricity bills worth Tk 33 crore to Dhaka Power Distribution Company (DPDC).

The Biharis had been experiencing frequent load shedding for the last 20 days.

The camp residents said different international agencies used to provide funds to the Bangladesh Ministry of Disaster Management

Geneva Camp erupts

Police again lobbed tear gas canisters at the protesters.

Thick smoke engulfed the area and the demonstrators ran into the alleys.

Around 2:45pm, policemen entered the alleys and baton-charged many camp residents.

The Biharis alleged that the police action at the camp, where many go to have kebab and biriyani, was aided by some ruling party men.

The pitched battles continued for nearly three hours.

Those injured included 23-year-old technician Mohammad Rocky. A rubber bullet hit his right eye.

He was admitted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital and then shifted to National Institute of Ophthalmology & Hospital.

Rocky's sister July Akhter claimed that her brother was passing through the area and had nothing to do with the demonstration.

Doctors at Shaheed Suhrawardy

and Relief for paying the electricity bills.

Councillor Mizan said those organisations stopped giving the funds after the Biharis were given national identity cards.

On November 20 last year, the ministry wrote to the Power Development Board (PDB), saying the funds were not coming anymore.

He said they sat with superintendent engineers of the PDB, police members and Bihar leaders five days ago to discuss the issue.

"At the meeting, PDB officials said the camp dwellers need to have electricity metres and must pay Tk 33 crore which became due in the last two years," he said.

Bihari leaders said they could not afford to pay the bills and that they wanted electricity without payment.

They said they were suffering badly due to power disruptions.

The leaders then blamed the ward councillor for the situation. They alleged some shops at the market in the camp got illegal power supply

after the shop owners bribed the councillor.

A month ago, the authorities disconnected the lines and the load shedding has only worsened after that.

"We believe the councillor is behind everything," said a Bihar leader, wishing not to be named.

Asked, the councillor refuted the allegation.

He also said, "They are my voters. I went there to calm them down."

The Biharis are Urdu-speaking people. They had migrated to the then East Pakistan from the Indian state of Bihar during the 1947 Partition.

The Urdu-speaking people have been living in the camp since the end of the 1971 War of Liberation.

The camp, also known as Bihar Camp, is a densely-populated settlement of more than 40,000 Biharis where each family with eight to 10 members on average live in one room, and around 90 people share a latrine.



Law enforcers gather in front of Mohammadpur Govt High School in the capital yesterday after their clash with protesting residents of Geneva Camp. A woman, top right, tries to help a man who was caught up in the police truncheon charge. Protesters burn rubbish on a street after vandalising a police pickup, bottom right.



PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON/COLLECTED