



Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi spends some time with blind children after inaugurating the construction of the third floor of Blind Education and Rehabilitation Development Organisation of Mirpur, which is partly funded by his government, from Indian High Commission's new chancery complex in Dhaka yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

Dhaka keeps Modi busy

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi started the concluding day of his two-day visit to Bangladesh by offering prayers at the 12th-century Dhakeshwari temple in Dhaka yesterday.

The sebayeta (chief executive) of the temple, Pradeep Chakraborty, took Modi to the main idol around 8:45am. Modi spent around 15 minutes at the temple, which was closed for nearly an hour to the public.

"An early morning temple visit. PM @narendramodi worships at the Sree Sree Dhakeshwari Temple in Dhaka," External Affairs Ministry Spokesperson Vikas Swarup tweeted.

The PM was given a replica of Goddess Dhakeshwari and a shawl besides other memorabilia. The 800-year-old temple in Lalbagh is state-owned, giving it the distinction of being Bangladesh's "national temple".

Liberation War Sector Commander Maj Gen (ret'd) CR Dutta adorned Modi with a white-red sash, while the Puja committee gave him a crest. Modi also visited the adja-

cent temple of Shiva and offered prayers.

The Indian premier then headed to the Ramkrishna Mission at Gopibagh and was greeted by the monks there.

"Paying my respects to Ramkrishna Paramhansa at Dhaka's Ramkrishna Mission," Modi tweeted.

Ramakrishna Mission Headquarters (Kolkata) Chief Swami Suhitananda and Dhaka Mission Principal Swami Dhruveshananda welcomed Modi at the mission at 9:25am. Modi took part in a chorus and was adorned with a saffron sash.

The mission presented the Indian PM with two "commemoratives" and a biography of Swami Vivekananda.

Modi then went to Baridhara at 9:45am and inaugurated Indian High Commission's newly constructed Chancery Complex where he unveiled seven foundation plaques of New Delhi-funded projects.

Indian High Commissioner in Dhaka Pankaj Saran, Dhaka University Vice Chancellor AAMS Arefin Siddique and top officials of the related projects were present.

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The projects are India-Bangladesh Maitri Girls Hostel at Government Victoria College at Narail, construction of the third floor of Blind Education and Rehabilitation Development Organisation at Mirpur in Dhaka, sewage treatment plant and waste water treatment plant at Kumudini Hospital in Mirzapur, Tangail, and establishment of the Hindi department at the Institute of Modern Languages, recording studio for the music department and grant assistance for the dance department of

DUI. He also donated two ambulances to freedom fighters.

The Indian premier then moved to Bangabhaban at 12:40pm and talked to President Abdul Hamid for about 15 minutes, hoping that all pending bilateral issues would be settled like the land boundary issue.

"Had a wonderful meeting with President Abdul Hamid at Bangabhaban," Modi tweeted.

Modi also received the Bangladesh Liberation War Honour award from President Hamid on behalf of former Indian premier Atal

Bihari Vajpayee.

In the afternoon, he met political and business leaders at Sonargaon hotel.

"Full spectrum outreach concludes with PM @narendramodi's meeting with Begum Khaleda Zia, former PM of Bangladesh," the Indian spokesperson, Vikas, tweeted.

Modi also met opposition leader Raushan Ershad, and delivered a lecture at a public gathering at Bangabandhu International Conference Centre.

He left Dhaka at 8:20pm.