

Belarus keen to expand trade

Envoy tells prime minister

BSS, Dhaka

Belarus Ambassador Uladzimir A Sakalouski yesterday expressed his country's keen interest to increase trade and expand cooperation in other areas with Bangladesh.

Sakalouski, resident in Delhi, underscored the need for further enhancing cooperation and expressed the hope that Bangladesh and Belarus would soon have full-fledged missions in their respective capitals — Minsk and Dhaka.

He said the friendly ties should be made more active and successful through expanding areas of cooperation and development.

The envoy extended Belarus President Alyaksandr Luka Shenka's invitation to Khaleda Zia to

more garments, tea, ceramics, pharmaceuticals, jute and leather products from Bangladesh.

Laying importance on the visit of Khaleda Sakalouski said any such top level visit would open the areas of cooperation and development.

Khaleda accepted the invitation and also urged the envoy to convey her invitation to Belarus President to visit Bangladesh.

The Belarus ambassador said a trade fair would be held in Minsk and invited Bangladesh to participate in the trade fair.

Sakalouski, who is visiting here for the third time, praised the present development trend in Bangladesh and wished its success.

Prime Minister's Principal Secretary Dr Kamaluddin Siddiqui was present.

The ambassador also called on Foreign Minister Mosharraf Khan at his office.

The foreign minister appreciated the commitment of support of Belarus to Bangladesh for its candidature for the ECOSOC membership this year, a foreign office press release said.

Sakalouski sought the support of Bangladesh for his country's candidature for the ECOSOC. In this regard, the foreign minister also gave assurance to support Belarus.

The ambassador extended an invitation to the foreign minister to visit his country at a convenient time. The minister accepted the invitation and the visit might take place in May or June next year.

The foreign minister emphasised on frequent visits of the high-powered business and investment delegations to both the countries to explore greater areas of cooperation in trade and economy. Bilateral trade between the two countries is nearly 7 million US dollar which is very insignificant, he added.

Bangladesh imports surgical equipment, machinery, furniture, tractors and tractor spares from Belarus and possible exportable items from Bangladesh are tobacco, pharmaceuticals, knit apparels, hides and skin, ceramic products, cotton yarn fabrics, jute and jute goods, tea and leather bags.

They hoped that bilateral cooperation between the two countries especially in the field of trade and investment would grow further in the days ahead.



PHOTO: PID

Belarus Ambassador Uladzimir A Sakalouski called on Prime Minister Khaleda Zia at her office yesterday afternoon.

61 more dists to be brought under irrigation, flood-control systems

UNB, Dhaka

A donor-funded small-scale water resource development project entered into its second phase of work to develop small irrigation and flood-control systems in 61 districts.

During this phase, 300 sub-projects will be undertaken to bring 180,000 to 200,000 hectares of arable land under integrated water resource management structures meant for preserving water for irrigation as well as controlling

floods and waterlogging.

These structures will have canals, embankments, sluice gates, regulators, flap-gates and box-sluisers, suiting the needs of an area.

Project officials hoped that about 280,000 families of farmers would reap the benefits on implementation of this phase by December 2009.

The second-phase work would cost Tk 425 crore, with funds expected from Asian Development

Bank and the governments of the Netherlands and Bangladesh.

Local Government Engineering Department (LGED) has been implementing the project with support from the ADB, the Netherlands and International Fund for Agriculture Development (IFAD). The first phase was implemented between 1996 and 2002 at a cost of Tk 300 crore.

A total of 280 sub-projects were implemented in the first phase, covering about 165,000 hectares

of land and benefiting 142,300 families, project officials told a group of journalists at LGED Bhaban recently.

The second phase would be extended to all districts, excepting three hill districts. Letters have been sent to union parishad offices across the country, inviting sub-projects, which will be scrutinised on the basis of set criteria.

Community participation and ownership in implementation and maintenance of every sub-project made the project different from many other ventures under government auspices.

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