

NATIONAL DAY OF THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA



Lee Myung-bak
President of the Republic of Korea

Message from the Ambassador

IT is my great honor and privilege to convey warm greetings of the people and the government of the Republic of Korea to the people and the government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh on the auspicious occasion of the Korean National Foundation Day.

The year 2009 marks the 36th anniversary of the establishment of the diplomatic relations between Korea and Bangladesh. Under the new government, Korea is poised to become a 'Global Korea', a nation that aims to contribute to global peace and development under a broader vision and a more proactive approach to interacting with the international community. For Bangladesh, the year 2009 has been a big step forward in its democracy through a free and fair election of the last year. Korea has no doubt whatsoever that the great people of Bangladesh, as in the past, are fully ready to achieve another success story in bringing about a vibrant democracy. Korea will render full support for Bangladesh in its pursuit of further advances on the path towards a thriving democracy.

Accordingly, this year, both countries are seeing the opening of new chapters in their national development and, against this backdrop, I believe that this will serve to infuse still greater dynamism into Korea-Bangladesh relations across a whole spectrum of fields.

Since the establishment of diplomatic ties in 1973, the relationship between Korea and Bangladesh has been closely developed in various fields and strong bondages between the two countries contributed to the deepening of the mutual beneficial relations not only bilaterally but also in regional and international arenas.

On the economic front, in spite of the current global financial crisis, the volume

of trade between Korea and Bangladesh has shown steady growth each year, with the highest amount recorded in 2008 at US\$ 1.26 billion and Korea's accumulated investment in Bangladesh also reached over US\$ 1 billion. From this year, the Korean government has substantially expanded the scope of duty-free and quota-free (DFQF) access for the products of the least developed countries (LDCs) including Bangladesh covering 80% of total tariff lines. It would provide more opportunity of export of the Bangladesh products onto the Korean market. Also last June, the Korea-Bangladesh Chamber of Commerce (KBCCI) was launched. The exporters and businessmen of the both countries will greatly benefit from this valuable institution, which in turn will lead to an expansion in the volume of trade between the two countries.

Korea has continued to be the largest foreign investor in the export processing zone (EPZ) in Bangladesh. So far Korean investments have been rather concentrated on textile and garment industry, but they are diversifying into such areas as power generation, energy and mineral resources, shipbuilding, and ICTs. The Korean Export Processing Zone (KEPZ) in Chittagong, which is the first private EPZ in Bangladesh, is being developed and it will serve as one of the strong points for Bangladesh in garnering greater foreign investment in the country.

On the development cooperation, Korea and Bangladesh have much to share and learn from each other. The Korean government has been redoubling efforts to enhance its official development assistance (ODA) commensurate with its economic capacity. Korea places great emphasis not only on increasing the scale of aid, but also on sharing its experiences with

developing countries, seeking to share the lessons it has drawn from its own process of development.

Development cooperation between Korea and Bangladesh continues to evolve in scale and nature. The level of Korean grant aid to Bangladesh is evidencing a rapid increase: the amount in 2008 represented a fourfold increase over the year 2003. Several meaningful projects have been implemented such as the establishment of the Bangladesh-Korea Technical Training Center, the Master Plan for Water Supply and Waste Management of Chittagong City and under way are such as the Comilla Rural Development Project, Padma Railway Link Project amongst others. The Korean aid agency, KOICA (Korea International Cooperation Agency), plays an active part for the advancement of aid activities. As for soft loan, the Korean government's Economic Development Cooperation Fund (EDCF) is being fully utilized as a useful vehicle for economic development in Bangladesh particularly in the infrastructure sectors.

Turning into international and regional fora, Korea and Bangladesh have maintained close cooperative relations on a basis of mutual respect and understanding. Korea joined SAARC as an observer country in 2006 and attended for the first time as an observer at the 14th SAARC Summit in 2007. Korea also attended the 15th Summit held in 2008, in Sri Lanka and will continue to make its efforts to forge still stronger bonds of cooperation with SAARC members, in particular with Bangladesh which initiated this meaningful regional organization.

On the cultural exchanges, "Beautiful Mind Concert" was held in Bangladesh in February, 2009. It was a charity concert and donated all the proceeds to local commu-

nity. I am pleased to note that the Embassy is going to organize another cultural event which will be performed by Korea's renowned cultural troupe "JUMP and PUPPET CITY" in October, 2009. I firmly believe such cultural exchanges will shorten the distance and enhancing cultural views between the two friendly countries.

I would like to bring my remarks to end by saying that I have great hopes and expectations of a bright future for the relations between Korea and Bangladesh. I look forward to fostering an ever thriving and lasting friendship between our two countries.

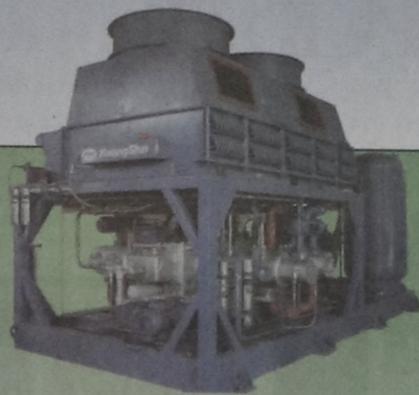
I wish all of you every success and happiness.

Dhonnobad



Suk-Bum Park
Ambassador of the Republic of Korea to Bangladesh

Our Heartiest Congratulations to the Government and Friendly People of Korea on the auspicious occasion of Korean National Day



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NGO supports development in Bangladesh



Bogra citizens watch a presentation by a female student at the Farmer's Field School.

JEONG HYEON-JI

DURING an agricultural forum held in Bogra, Bangladesh, in March 2008, local women donned colorful saris, demonstrated eco-friendly farming techniques and how to use fertilizer. The presenters were students at Bogra's Farmer's Field School, an institute sponsored by a Korean NGO.

World Vision Korea, a Seoul branch of the global charity organization, has operated area development programs in Bogra since 1993. With the sponsorship of the Korea International Cooperation Agency, World Vision established this educational program on food security and farming in 2006.

Bogra is a city 225 kilometers northwest of Dhaka, Bangladesh's capital city. Most men there make a living by pulling rickshaws or working on the streets, as the city has few industries that generate regular sources of income.

Over 60 percent of the students at Farmer's Field School are women, said Jang Moon-hee, the program offi-

cer for World Vision.

"We have been targeting women because most of the men are in the city making money during the day," she told Korea Policy Review.

Here, 400 students receive day-to-day training from 16 Bangladeshi volunteers who work for the Korean NGO. They learn about growing crops, raising cattle and new farming techniques.

Jang says the education has given the local women newfound confidence.

"When we started the program, they were shy and reluctant to step forward.

But now, they are actively involved in programs and have some power in the decision making process at home," she said.

In a culture where women are often excluded from such responsibilities, these women now are earning money and playing an important role in their children's education.

"We decide when to harvest

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Our heartiest felicitation on

The National Foundation Day of Korea

The Korean Community in Bangladesh

Dynamic Korea

Our Heartiest Felicitations to the Government and the People of Korea on the auspicious occasion of the National Day of the Republic of KOREA



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