

S Korea to implement all agreements

Says ambassador

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

In a move to further strengthen bilateral relations, South Korea will implement all agreements signed with Bangladesh and the commitments reflected in the joint communiqué issued during Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's visit earlier this month.

"The Korean government strongly feels the PM's visit on May 16-18 as a real success and her presence at the summit fruitful and amicable," said Taiyoung Cho, ambassador of Republic of Korea (RoK) while addressing a press conference at the embassy yesterday afternoon.

The press conference, included issues such as Sheikh Hasina's visit, North Korean torpedo attack on RoK's warship on March 26 and a speech delivered by President Lee Myung-Bak, on Monday.

Reviewing PM's visit, he said the bilateral ties between the two countries have gained momentum in many spheres and joint efforts should materialise for the greater good of the people.

Taiyoung Cho said Hasina met with senior ministers of RoK and its corporate leaders. He found "her each and every meeting extremely fruitful" which may make significant impacts in near future.

He termed the sinking of warship

"Cheonan" an act of vengeance and a military provocation causing death of 46 innocent sailors as his government halted trade with North Korea.

Besides, no North Korean ship will be allowed to pass through any of the shipping lanes in the waters under RoK's control, which has been permitted by the Inter-Korean Agreement on Maritime Transportation, he said.

However, South Korea will continue to provide assistance for the children in North Korea, he added.

The Ambassador said, "From now on, Korea will not tolerate any provocative act by the North and will maintain the principle of proactive deterrence. South Korea will immediately exercise its right of self-defence if water, airspace or land within its territory is violated, he added.

He said North Korea's attack on the warship violated the Charter of the United Nations and breached the existing agreements made for the sake of peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula, including the Korean War Armistice Agreement and the Basic Agreement between South and North Korea.

The Korean Ambassador urged all to raise their voices against North Korea's offensive acts so that they refrain from further heinous attacks which may destabilise peace.



A manhole without cover in the middle of old airport road in the city poses danger to passengers, but the authorities concerned remain indifferent. Local people put up a bamboo pole to warn motorists of the danger. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

Women health workers change makers of society: Study

BSS, Dhaka

Findings from a study yesterday revealed that women health workers have been found to be acting as change makers of society at the community level since the sixties of last century.

The study conducted over community health programmes of the government, ICDDR,B, BRAC and Gonoswasthya Kendra in Matlab, Savar and Jamalpur said that the recruitment of women in health and family planning operations have contributed to female empowerment in the country.

"Women community health workers were pioneers in bringing rural women to outside formal paid works and breaking conservative norms and females' seclusion," Simeen Mahmud, lead researcher of the quantitative study, said at a function at International Centre for Diarrhoeal Disease and Research, Bangladesh (ICDDR,B) in the city.

ICDDR,B Executive Director Alejandro Cravioto, Director of Family Planning Dr Jafar Ahmed Hakim, senior scientist of ICDDR,B Dr Mohammad

Yunus, Dr Jalal Uddin of BRAC, Dr Manzur Kadir Ahmed of Gonoswasthya Kendra and co-investigator of the study Maheen Sultan spoke on the occasion.

Simeen said women health workers said that their job has enhanced their status in society, helped find better life partners, enhanced family economic conditions, instilled self esteem and confidence and gave more power in family decision making.

The study also found that the employment of girls as community health workers has influenced many fathers in last 50 years to educate their daughters and changed social outlook about women.

"From a situation of outright hostility in the early 1960s, women health workers are now welcome everywhere and their employment has gained social acceptability and even status," Savar Upazila Family Planning Officer was quoted as saying in the study.

A husband of a health worker has identical view as he said, "If she did not do this job she would not know what's going on in society. Now she knows what

is happening around her and understands what is good and bad."

But not all the men who were interviewed have the same perception about their wives' job as some people possess mixed feelings about it.

During in-depth interviews and focus group discussions, the female health workers claimed that their work has contributed to decline in birthrate, maternal mortality and child mortality rate in the country since 1960s.

They also believe, according to the study, that the job has given them greater mobility and visibility in conservative society.

"After I got married I could not go anywhere. After I got the job I can now go anywhere," said a health worker of ICDDR,B operation in Matlab, while six, out of her 10 colleagues, believed that now parents are inspired to educate their daughters because they see women get employed.

A health worker of ICDDR,B in Matlab said when she visits from house to house in the field many fathers tell their daughters "Look, your health worker sisters have studied and now have a job."



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina speaks at a meeting of the National Economic Council at its conference room at Sher-e-Bangla Nagar in the city yesterday.

PHOTO: PID

Saline water eats their lives away

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It also set up a water tank that contains 5,000 liters of water. One gets maximum five liters of water every other day but has to wait on the queue for hours.

"That water is also salty. It is long that I did not have a good bath or drink a glass of fresh-water," said Safat Gazi, who returned to his makeshift home two months ago from the embankment where he was living with his family since the cyclone.

Analysis says salinity rate of this water is 800 ppm (parts per million).

However, there is no alternative to using water of shallow tube-wells of that village for having bath and washing

clothes and utensils. The salinity rate in the water of shallow tube-wells is very high.

"We have no respite unless there is rain. We always look up at the skies," Safat told this correspondent during a recent visit to Shyamnagar located on the fringe of the Sundarbans.

It is very normal for the affected to starve or remain half-fed, but water crisis has intensified their sufferings, said Aklima Khatun, an elderly woman.

"We can pass a day without meals but not without water," she said, adding that 2.5 liters of drinking water provided by an NGO is too little. She said her hairs remain tangled all

the time and body never gets really fresh due to high salinity.

Deep tube-wells can extract less salty water, which is manageable, in 40 percent areas in Gabura, said Akram Hossain, sub-assistant engineer of the Department of Public Health Engineering (DPHE).

The DPHE supplies only 13,000 liters of deep tube-well water, while some NGOs supply 1.3 lakh liters in various parts of Shyamnagar, home to some 4.5 lakh people, he said.

"But total demand is over 22 lakh liters."

The water scenario is almost the same in Shyamnagar and Ashashuni

upazilas in Satkhira and Dakope and Koira upazilas in Khulna, the worst-hit areas where the cyclone caused more salinity in the rivers.

In a test in Khulna and Satkhira, DPHE found salinity in the rivers up to 10,000 ppm. The rate was not less than 4,000 ppm in the rivers and ponds last November. Average salinity before Aila in the southwestern region was 1,000 ppm, which is 200 ppm in other parts of the country.

Once there is rain in this monsoon, saline water in the ponds would decrease and rainwater will take its place, said Akram Hossain. "That would ease the water crisis much," he noted.

Expand ties in areas of energy, agriculture, transportation

Speakers urge Bangladesh, Russia

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The bilateral relationship between Bangladesh and Russia can deepen in the areas of energy, agriculture and transportation, speakers said yesterday during a lecture in the capital.

Bangladesh Enterprise Institute organised the lecture on Russian Foreign Policy in the 21st Century at its premises at Gulshan in the capital.

Trade, ICT, energy and power are the areas where Bangladesh-Russia relationship can move further, said Gennady P Trotsenko, ambassador of the Russian Federation to Bangladesh.

The relationship has good prospects for cooperation in the field of atomic energy, exploration and production of gas, agriculture and mutual supplies of food, said Dr Andrey V Vorobev, deputy

head of the department of press and information, ministry of foreign affairs of the Russian Federation.

"Energy, agriculture and transportation sectors in Bangladesh are the areas for long-term joint venture investment," said Vorobev, who delivered the lecture.

Apart from recent Bangladesh-Russia treaty on nuclear power plant, the two countries have an active relationship, said Mohamed Mijarul Quayes, foreign secretary, as the chief guest.

Barrister Harun ur Rashid, a former ambassador, said that Russia needs to engage itself more in South Asia in the present context of international relationship.

Focusing on the nature of Russian foreign policy in the West, US, Middle East and South Asia, Vorobev said that it is

extremely important to agree on the common rules of the game that are understandable to all.

"We dislike the ambition of North Atlantic Treaty Organisation to act as a substitute for the United Nations," said Vorobev.

Responding to the criticism on Russia's contacts with the Hamas and the Middle East policy, he said Russia believes that a sustainable and united Palestine is never possible without this organisation.

Barrister Rashid also said, "Russia should pursue a nuclear-weapon free zone in the Middle East in its foreign policy."

Dr Akmal Hossain of Dhaka University among others spoke while Mostafa Faruque Mohammed MP, a former ambassador to the Russian Federation, chaired the event.

Mohiuddin, Manjur continue to exchange views

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Returning Officer (RO) of Chittagong City Corporation (CCC) poll yesterday issued a notice against Awami League backed mayoral candidate ABM Mohiuddin Chowdhury asking him to remove his election posters from the city's Nasirabad area.

In the posters, one Rabeya Sikder Lucky, sought votes for Mohiuddin in the mayoral election, said Assistant Returning Officer, Farhad Hossain.

She also asked votes for herself as a councillor candidate from Shulakbahar Ward, Farhad added.

But, no one by the name Rabeya Sikder had got any nomination from the ward, the RO said.

Meanwhile, both Mohiuddin and BNP backed candidate Mohammad Manjur Alam are holding view exchange meetings, as formal electioneering is not allowed till allocation of electoral symbols due on June 02.

Manjur Alam held talks with some members of Chittagong chambers of commerce when the latter went to his North Kattoli residence yesterday morning.

In the afternoon he visited Baitus Sharaf Mazar and Madhyam Halishahar to exchange views with the people.

On the other hand, Mohiuddin traded greetings with the people at his Chasma Hill city residence in the morning.

Mohiuddin, a candidate of Nagorik Committee, attended an assembly with its Bakolia ward unit in the afternoon.

ACC to probe scam

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zakat scam case by July 11. Metropolitan Magistrate Dilara Alo Chandana passed the order after Sher-e-Bangla Nagar police sent the case to the court.

The police also forwarded the case to deputy commissioner of DMP, Tejgaon Zone for sending it to ACC for further investigation yesterday.

The case was forwarded to the DC, DMP and from there, it will be sent to the ACC as the task falls under their jurisdiction, said Aatur Rahman, sub-inspector of the police station, last evening.

However, sources in the ACC said that they did not receive the case till yesterday.

ACC Chairman Ghulam Rahman told The Daily Star the commission would investigate the allegation if it falls within its schedule.

The other two accused in the case are Lutful Haque, former finance and accounting director of the Islamic Foundation; and Chairman of Masjid Council for Community Advancement in Manikganj Maulana Abul Kalam Azad.

and Accounting Director Aiyub Ali Chowdhury filed the case against the accused for committing the offences.

The case statement said the accused misappropriated the fund during fiscal years 2004-06, through abuse of power.

In the first information report (FIR), the complainant said there are zakat committees in every district for distribution of the Zakat Fund, but the accused distributed the fund themselves among their "party people", ignoring the committees.

The accused used their clot over the Zakat Board, and got the fund released for their own organisations operating in four districts, while the fund was supposed to be distributed among the destitutes of 64 districts, the FIR added.

The case was filed following an enquiry of the alleged misappropriation, by a three-member investigation committee formed by the foundation.

The enquiry found that fake signatures and fingerprints were used, and identities of destitute people were fabricated for the misappropriation of fund, the FIR said.



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