

China, India, Russia vow to deepen cooperation

AFP, Beijing

The foreign ministers of developing giants China, India and Russia pledged yesterday to step up cooperation in trade, energy and geopolitical affairs including climate change.

The pledges were made in a joint communiqué after two days of meetings in the central Chinese city of Wuhan by Chinese Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi and his Russian and Indian counterparts Sergei Lavrov and SM Krishna.

The communiqué also said China, India and Russia had deepened cooperation on international and regional issues during the talks, but stressed that such cooperation would not target "any other country".

The foreign ministers said they supported a "multi-polar, equitable and democratic world order" and expressed their commitment to the use of "multilateral instruments" for finding solutions to global and regional issues.

China and Russia are members of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation, a

grouping of mostly central Asian states that many view as a bid by China and Russia to counter global US influence.

India is an observer country in the body.

They also pledged to further explore potential cooperation in energy, high-tech sectors, innovation, aerospace, cultural exchanges and disaster relief, the communiqué said, without providing details.

Noting that the global recovery remained "uneven, fragile and unbalanced", the three ministers called for worldwide coordinated efforts to promote "strong, sustainable and balanced" growth and oppose "all forms of protectionism".

Russia's entry to the World Trade Organisation also received backing at the foreign ministers' meeting from China and India, already members of the global trade body.

WTO chief Pascal Lamy said last month that Russia's 17-year membership bid was accelerating after significant progress in recent weeks.

3 'Lashkar'

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around 12:30pm at the directives of the home ministry.

"The jail authorities freed them following a negotiation between the foreign ministries of the two countries", he said, adding, "The Assistant

Consular of the Pakistan Embassy in Dhaka and a protocol officer received the three Pakistani men."

The three Pakistanis were shown arrested under Section 54 of the Criminal Procedure and were kept in jail in line with a detention order issued from the court, said Towhidul.

Earlier, a team of detectives arrested the three Pakistani nationals on November 13 from the city's Uttara for their alleged affiliation with LeT with a plot to attack the US Embassy and Indian High Commission in Dhaka.

Among them, Sufian is a mechanical engineering graduate from Islamic Institute of Technology in Gazipur while the other two are diploma engineers.

The DMP commissioner said the detained Pakistanis held valid passports and visas but could not show any work permit or explain source of funds for their living expenses.

Pro-BNP

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officials at a press briefing at the BNP chairperson's Gulshan office.

Meantime, Khaleda's lawyers are planning to file a contempt of court petition against the government.

They said the ISPR staged a "drama" by taking journalists on a visit to the disputed cantonment house on Sunday.

"The ISPR has made contradictory comments. It said Khaleda Zia had vacated the house voluntarily and she misbehaved with army personnel," said BNP standing committee member Rafiqul Islam Miah, also president of Jatiyatabadi Ainjibi Forum (JAF), a pro-BNP lawyers' association.

Mahbub, also member of the BNP standing committee, said the prime minister has to take all responsibilities for "the campaign" against the opposition by using the ISPR as she is also the minister for defence.

He said the role of the armed forces would come into question by the way the ISPR was used for "character assassination" and running "an indecent political campaign".

"The government is now trying to pass the buck on the army," he said.

Brig Gen (ret) ASM Hannan Shah, also member of the standing committee, said the ISPR has no right to speak against any political party or its leaders.

"Where was this ISPR on February 25 and 26 last year when army officers were getting killed in Pilkhana? We did not see them on that day," he said.

Mahbub said the so-called "objectionable" items were "planted" in the cantonment house and shown to journalists to launch a dirty campaign. It has no credibility, he said.

"We strongly protest such an indecent act using the name of the armed forces," said the former army official.

Altaf Hossain Chowdhury, Sayeed Eskander, and Shahjahan Omar, among others, were present.

Meanwhile, 26 former army officials in a statement expressed grave concern over "the use of ISPR as a weapon to launch a nasty political campaign and malign the character" of Khaleda centring the cantonment house.

MOUDUD REJECTS AG'S STATEMENT

BNP Standing Committee member Moudud Ahmed at his chamber told journalists that the attorney general's explanation on the stay order regarding the cantonment house has "no legal basis."

Attorney General Mahbub Alam on Sunday claimed that Khaleda's counsels had deliberately refrained from pleading for a stay on the High Court verdict while seeking the Appellate Division's permission to challenge it.

Moudud said, "The attorney general's remark was meant to confuse and mislead people."

Stalker jailed

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Masud was harassing Amena Begum, wife of Shaiful Islam and also mother of a child, over the cell phone for long.

At about 11:00am yesterday when Amena went to Natun Bazar for Eid shopping, Masud followed her and offered love. She informed her husband and he instantly informed the mobile court.

Push for BNP

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with the leader of the opposition," he said adding, "The chairperson will use our resignation letters when she will feel necessary."

Zainul Abidin Farroque however said, "Our entire party is very sad now. I don't know how the plan of resigning from the parliament will work out at such a moment."

Rehana Akhter Ranu, another lawmaker of the party, said, "I didn't hear about such a plan. The party can discuss the matter, if anyone suggests something like that."

Another lawmaker of the party said anyone can bring a proposal, and it can be discussed in the standing committee and the parliamentary party. "But finally it is only the chairperson who will take the decision. We are ready to implement any decision she takes," he said on condition of anonymity.

Ashraf Uddin Nizam, a BNP lawmaker from Laxmipur, told The Daily Star last evening, "If the chairperson wants, I will resign from the parliament tomorrow. But it hasn't been discussed with me."

Amzad Hossain, a party lawmaker from Meherpur-2, said they had earlier submitted their resignations to the chairperson once, and if necessary they will do it again.

A number of party leaders said low turnout of party members and supporters at Jahangir Gate of Dhaka Cantonment at the time of Khaleda's departure from the disputed house on Saturday, left the grassroots level activists and supporters

BNP slammed

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during the discussion wanted to know why BNP did not seek stay on the HC judgment," a minister told The Daily Star after the cabinet meeting.

"Many of us told her that the BNP lawyers did not do it fearing that the BNP chief might vacate the house if the Supreme Court cancelled the stay order," added the minister seeking anonymity.

Some senior ministers also told the cabinet that the main opposition was desperately looking for an issue to wage anti-government movement. But they have taken a strategy which will prove futile.

Food and Disaster Management Minister Abdur Razzaque said, "I believe that the evacuation of the house was inevitable according to the HC verdict."

He also said he did not believe the opposition leader was harassed when she was leaving her cantonment house.

"Members of the armed forces cannot misbehave with her who was prime minister of the country and is still carrying the national flag as the opposition leader," Razzaque noted.

The BNP chief stayed at the house for a long period and may be that is why she became emotional, he said. "She shed tears over losing the house, not for any misbehaviour or harassment."

Bangladesh

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Contribution to UN Operations" for identifying the position among the participating countries of the world in UN Peacekeeping Operations.

Bangladesh is trying to send more peacekeepers in Western Sahara and Darfur so that she can build-up better image of the nation, the release added.

3m Muslims

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grims' journey during the hajj, as worshippers take the steps of Prophet Muhammad.

The hajj draws millions of worshippers each year, the sheer numbers a challenge in preventing stampedes at holy sites, fires in pilgrim encampments and the spread of disease.

This year Saudi authorities have taken new measures to improve crowd management, including launching a new light-rail system to transport pilgrims between the shrines.

PM unhappy

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going well, waste management is not being done properly," she said while addressing a function at Gono Bhaban marking the handover of 100 waste collection vehicles by the government of Japan.

Hasina said the DCC mayor is not performing his duties properly. "I invited him to attend this ceremony but he did not come. It would have been better if he came and see the vehicles."

In this connection, she said that it was the sole responsibility of the DCC mayor to keep the capital city clean.

The premier expressed her dissatisfaction over the activities of the DCC and its mayor.

very demoralised.

"Field level activists and supporters expected more demonstrations on that day, but we failed," said a vice-president, wishing anonymity. "Roles of a few members of the standing committee, and of some other senior leaders also raised a lot of questions," he added.

Protest demonstrations took place only in a few districts outside the capital, and the leaders are showing the party's diminished organisational strength, due to government repression, as the reason.

BNP leader Ruhul Quddus Talukder Dulu however said that does not matter, they will do whatever is necessary to oust the Awami League-led government.

"They attacked Khaleda Zia, who is our symbol. We will respond, and none of those who unlawfully ousted the chairperson from her house will be spared," he said.

Sale, price

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"I bought a cow from Nowabpur market at Tk 32,000 which was priced at Tk 37,000 last year," said Amzad Ahmed, resident of Nowabpur.

The price of goats was, however, high. The asking price of big size goats was between Tk 20,000 and Tk 60,000.

Loton, who brought 10 big size goats from Jhenidah, said he would not sell his goats without good profit, as the demand is high this year.

"I am asking Tk 60,000 for my goat as I have already received Tk 40,000 in Jhenidah for the same size goat," he said.

The price of goat is almost double in comparison to last year's, said Tito, a resident of Mirpur, who went to the Gabtali cattle market to purchase a goat.

Buy a cow and get a goat free

Anwar Hossain, who brought a cow from Kurigram on Sunday, is offering a free goat weighing around 18 kg with a big size cow.

"I have been asking Tk 6 lakh for the cow though I did not receive any offer till 2:00 pm," he said.

Cattle market on the streets

Despite the move by mobile court under Dhaka City Corporation, leaseholders of different cattle markets allowed the traders to keep their cattle on streets blocking different roads.

Residents of Nayabazar and Babubazar experienced huge traffic congestion as many lanes in the areas were found occupied by cattle traders.

Different roads of Kamalapur, Gopibagh, Dhalpur areas were also found occupied by cattle traders.

Home Minister Sahara Khatun yesterday visited the Agargaon cattle market.

Send SMS

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operators and police department, the arrangement comes into effect by the end of this month.

A2I started working on this project in mid-2009. It was delayed due to various technical glitches, officials concerned said.

KAM Morshed, assistant country director of UNDP in Bangladesh, said, "UNDP is working with the home ministry on various concerns. This A2I initiative is one of them."

"The move is aimed at ensuring that the ordinary people get easy access to law enforcement agencies in emergency," he said.

Once the scheme opens, people will be able to file complaints with the police control room or complain desk by sending SMS to 7373. Foreigners staying in Bangladesh can also send their particulars to the same number.

All the police stations in the country will send data related to First Information Report (FIR) to the central short message service (SMS) server of the police headquarters.

Police officials will send all their necessary information to the central server by sending SMS to 7374.

Nuisance

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draft of Graffiti Writing and Poster Sticking Control Act 2009.

Since then around 16 months have gone, but the Hasina administration has yet to place a bill in parliament to that end.

In the capital, many people have long been campaigning for Dhaka City Corporation election, though the EC itself is not sure when the polls will be held.

Annoyed at the poster onslaught by the polls aspirants, the EC in December last asked the Dhaka Metropolitan Police to stop the nuisance that is ruining the look of the city.

It asked the law enforcers to take actions under Printing Presses and Publications (Declaration and Registration) Act 1973.

Under the 1973 act, not carrying the names of the printer and the press on poster is an offence punishable by a fine of up to Tk 5,000 or imprisonment for up to six months or both.

Because of lax enforcement, people violate the act at will.

Taking advantage of anonymity, some quarters paste posters to malign social image of their rivals.

When his attention was drawn to the deluge of posters and graffiti on the city walls, Election Commissioner Muhammed Sohul Hussein said, "We can't do anything as the electoral laws are not effective against wall-writing and poster-sticking. We will be able to take actions only after the election schedule is announced."

Talking to The Daily Star recently, he said during election time, the electoral laws prohibit putting up posters and writing on walls for candidates. But those laws can do nothing about those publicising products or campaigning for certain causes.

The election commissioner said had the government enacted the proposed law, actions could have been taken against the individuals disfiguring walls and fences.

PM's Japan Visit

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Emperor Akihito.

During her visit, Hasina will address a number of investment conferences and hold meetings with representatives of Japan International Cooperation Agency, Japan External Trade Organisation, and Japan Bank for International Cooperation to discuss investment, economic cooperation and development issues.

The prime minister will also address a meeting at the Peace Park in Hiroshima and lay the foundation of a Bangladesh Embassy in Tokyo.

She will leave the country on November 21 for a three-nation tour covering Russia, Belgium and Japan, official sources said. Hasina will return home on December 2.

In Russia, Hasina will attend a Tiger's Conference in St Petersburg on November 22-23.

"Hasina will have a meeting with Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin on the sidelines of the Tiger's Conference," Dipu Moni said.

From St. Petersburg she will fly to Brussels where she will hold talks with the Belgian prime minister on November 25.

Talking about labour export to Malaysia, Dipu Moni at the press briefing said Malaysia will not take new labours from Bangladesh until the country overcomes the impact of global recession.

However, she noted that a process is underway to send people under a new category.

About the recently concluded meeting of India-Bangladesh Joint Boundary Working Group (JBWG), the foreign minister said the JBWG has made "remarkable" progress at the meeting in New Delhi that ended last week. The foreign secretary level meeting between the two countries will be held soon.

Dipu Moni expressed optimism about a satisfactory settlement of the longstanding issue of demarcation of the border between the two countries and exchange of adversely possessed enclaves based on the Mujib-Indira Land Boundary Agreement, 1974.

BSF

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Mokter and four others when they were fishing in Mathabanga River at about 11:30am. Mokter died on the spot while his associates escaped unhurt.

BSF men took away the body, the sources said adding that 32 Rifles Battalion sent a letter to the BSF protesting the killing.

Suu Kyi aims

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winner, who has been locked up by Myanmar's regime for 15 of the past 21 years, gave her first political speech in seven years on Sunday, appealing to thousands of her jubilant supporters for unity.

She also told reporters she was willing to meet junta chief Than Shwe and talk through their differences.

"We have asked since the beginning for dialogue. She is always ready for dialogue," Nyan Win, a spokesman for the NLD, told AFP on Monday.

When asked whether a letter would be sent to Than Shwe to request a meeting, he said: "I don't know."

After having only limited contact with the outside world for most of the past two decades, Suu Kyi's telephone line at her crumbling lakeside mansion will be restored "soon", an unnamed Myanmar official told AFP.

Nyan Win said the mother-of-two is also hoping that her youngest son Kim Aris will be able to travel to Yangon and join her on a visit to Shwedagon temple, the site of Suu Kyi's first political speech in 1988.

Kim Aris, who lives in Britain, is currently in the Thai capital trying to arrange a visa to Myanmar. He spoke to his mother by telephone shortly after her release.

On the political front, attention is now focused on whether Suu Kyi can unite the country's deeply divided opposition and bring change to the impoverished nation.

"I want to work with all democratic forces," she told her supporters on Sunday, saying she wanted to "hear the voice of the people" before deciding her course of action.

The daughter of the nation's assassinated independence hero carries a weight of expectations among her followers for a better future after almost half a century of military dictatorship.

There was a new air of optimism on the streets of Yangon but some observers have warned that the dissident is no "miracle worker".

"She has always voluntarily tested the military authorities, has always wanted to push the red line drawn by the regime," said Renaud Egretreau, a Myanmar expert at the University of Hong Kong.

But with a powerful junta watching her every move, the situation "might make her avoid a direct confrontation for the time being," he added.

Suu Kyi said in a BBC interview that an NLD committee would investigate all complaints about the November 7 poll, after opposition parties complained of cheating and voter intimidation by the regime-backed party.

"From what I have heard there are many many questions about the fairness of the election and there are many

many allegations of vote rigging and so on," she said.

Suu Kyi's party boycotted the vote, a decision that deeply split the opposition. Some former members of her party left to stand in the poll, prompting accusations of betrayal from some of her closest associates.

The opposition leader also appeared to soften her stance on the international sanctions that have isolated Myanmar, saying she wanted to "talk to all the people concerned".

Suu Kyi swept her party to victory in a 1990 election, but it was never allowed to take power.

Her struggle for her country has come at a high personal cost: her British husband died in 1999, and in the final stages of his battle with cancer the junta refused him a visa to see his wife.

She has never met her grandchildren.

Missing boy

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her Mirpur residence.

Mother Sumi Begum brought Sami home after getting a call from Nasima yesterday morning, said Mosharraf Hossain, Sami's father.

He said Nasima tried to over-phone contact them after she found Sami on Sunday, but finding their mobile phones switched off and not knowing the way to their residence, she took Sami to her own residence.

Rozibul Islam, Investigation Officer (IO) of the case, said they conducted several drives to find Sami after the incident, and later were informed that he was taken by one of his relatives at Mirpur.

Nasima found Sami when she was passing by the area of the incident, police said.

Sami got lost on Sunday when his mother Sumi left him behind at a roadside in Shaymoli to chase the car in which four youths abducted her husband. Locals helped Sumi to free Mosharraf and to catch two of the abductors.

The other two abductors however, managed to flee taking away Tk 4 lakh from Mosharraf's possession. Later, Mosharraf filed a mugging case with Sher-e-Bangla Nagar Police Station.

Officer-in-Charge (OC) Reaz Hossain said police would further investigate on the amount that the abductors had actually mugged from Mosharraf.

He also suspects that personal enmity exists between the abductors and Mosharraf from before.

Police said to have sent the abductors at hand, Bakhtiar and Zayed, to a Dhaka court seeking a three-day remand for both.

Police also received identities of the two abductors on the run and are trying to arrest them, said the IO Rozibul.

Indian telecom

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Raja's resignation ended a standoff between the opposition and ruling Congress-led United Progressive Alliance government that paralysed the parliament for three days.

Directed by Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) Chief and Tamil Nadu State Chief Minister M Karunanidhi, Raja drove to Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's official residence and submitted his resignation.

Raja later told reporters that he was resigning so that parliament could function normally but insisted that he had done no wrong.

"In order to avoid an embarrassing situation for the government and the running of parliament, my leader (Karunanidhi) asked me to resign but that does not mean I'm accepting everything. I will prove that I did everything in accordance with the law," he said.

The entire opposition had been pressing for about a week for the resignation of Raja or his dismissal but both the DMK, to which Raja belongs, and the minister had held out maintaining that there was no question of Raja quitting the cabinet because they said "he had committed no wrong".

The story took a curious political turn on Friday when the DMK's sworn rival in Tamil Nadu and AIADMK leader J Jayalalitha offered her party's support to the Congress-led government if it sacked Raja and the DMK walked out of the process, destabilising the federal government.

In Chennai, capital of Tamil Nadu state, DMK put out a brief statement stating that

Raja had been asked to quit so as to allow parliament to resume its democratic functioning.

The statement said though Raja had only pursued a communications policy unveiled in 1999, when BJP was heading the federation coalition government, he had become the target of the opposition over the 2G Spectrum allocation.

It was the second resignation by a high-profile politician and minister in less than a week after senior Congress leader Ashok Chavan stepped down as chief minister of western state of Maharashtra in the wake of allegation of nepotism in allocating flats to his relatives in a housing society in a posh locality of Mumbai, India's financial capital.

It is understood that Congress leadership too had been trying to persuade the DMK chief to prod Raja to resign as his continuance in the ministry had become untenable after India's Comptroller and Auditor General had in its report indicted Raja for the loss of Rs 1 lakh 80 thousand crore to state exchequer in connection with the allocation of 2G spectrum to private telecom companies.

The opposition has demanded a probe by a joint parliamentary committee into the spectrum allocation.

DMK, which rules Tamil Nadu, is a key component of Congress-led government at the Centre and Congress in turn provides life and blood support from outside to minority Karunanidhi government in the southern state.

Eid travel runs

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"The bus was supposed to be here at 10:30am, now it is 1:30pm," said Moitul Islam, Raisa's father. "They say it's stuck in a traffic jam and will be here in another 30 minutes."

Sunday's hartal worsened the situation, as many passengers could not leave the city. Over a hundred passengers were seen waiting at the Seba Service bus counter for their bus.