

Joint Communiqué issued on the occasion of the visit to India of Her Excellency Sheikh Hasina, Prime Minister of Bangladesh

12/01/2010

(ONLY POINTS PERTAINING TO NORTH EAST REGION)

22. It was agreed that Ashuganj in Bangladesh and Silghat in India shall be declared ports of call. The IWTT Protocol shall be amended through exchange of letters. A joint team will assess the improvement of infrastructure and the cost for one-time or longer term transportation of ODCs (Over Dimensional Cargo) from Ashuganj. India will make the necessary investment. Both Governments agreed to expedite implementation. Contractors from both countries shall be eligible for the work.

23. It was agreed that Bangladesh will allow use of Mongla and Chittagong sea ports for movement of goods to and from India through road and rail. Bangladesh also conveyed their intention to give Nepal and Bhutan access to Mongla and Chittagong ports.

24. It was agreed that the construction of the proposed Akhaura – Agartala railway link be financed by grant from India. A joint team of the railway authorities of the two countries will identify the alignment for connectivity.

25. They welcomed the starting of “Maitree Express” between Kolkata and Dhaka and called for resumption of road and rail links between the two countries.

27. Recognizing the sufferings of the people of both sides in the face of scarcity of lean season flows of the Teesta River, the Prime Ministers expressed that the discussions on the sharing of the Teesta waters between India and Bangladesh should be concluded expeditiously. The two Prime Ministers directed their respective Water Resources Ministers to convene the Ministerial-level meeting of the Joint Rivers Commission in this quarter of 2010. The Joint Rivers Commission will also discuss issues relating to Feni, Manu, Muhuri, Khowai, Gumti, Dharla and Dudhkumar.

28. They also agreed that the following actions be taken:

- a. Dredging of Ichhamati; and
- b. River protection at Mahananda, Karatoa, Nagar, Kulik, Atrai, Dharla, and Feni

29. The Prime Minister of India agreed to support implementation of strategy of Government of Bangladesh to dredge rivers for flood control, navigation and

access to ports. In this context, India agreed to provide, inter alia, dredgers to Bangladesh on an urgent basis. Bangladesh indicated the need for 9 (nine) dredgers.

30. The Prime Minister of India reiterated the assurance that India would not take steps on the Tipaimukh project that would adversely impact Bangladesh.

31. The Prime Minister of India agreed to supply to Bangladesh 250 MW electricity from its grid. In this context, both Prime Ministers emphasized the need to expedite inter-grid connectivity. They also agreed that the two countries shall cooperate in development and exchange of electricity, including generation from renewable sources, and may set up joint projects or corporate entities for that purpose.

32. With a view to encouraging imports from Bangladesh, both countries agreed to address removal of tariff and non-tariff barriers and port restrictions and facilitate movement of containerized cargo by rail and water. In this context, Bangladesh welcomed India's initiative to provide duty-free access to SAARC LDCs to the Indian market. Bangladesh also welcomed the reduction of the number of items from India's negative list that were of direct interest to Bangladesh and requested for further reduction in the list.

33. The Prime Minister of India agreed to support the upgradation of the Bangladesh Standard Testing Institute with a view to building capacity on certification.

34. The Prime Ministers agreed that investments, including joint investment and joint ventures, shall be encouraged by both countries. They agreed that the participation of the private sector in both countries will give an added fillip to economic engagement between the two countries.

35. The Prime Ministers agreed to operationalize land customs stations at Sabroom-Ramgarh and Demagiri-Thegamukh, including putting in place necessary infrastructure and issue necessary notifications. Further, with respect to existing land custom stations, it was agreed to take measures for strengthening infrastructure.

36. It was agreed that border haats shall be established on a pilot basis at selected areas, including on the Meghalaya border, to allow trade in specified produces and products and in accordance with the regulations agreed and notified by both Governments.

38. The Prime Minister of India announced a line of credit of US\$ 1 billion for a range of projects, including railway infrastructure, supply of BG locomotives and passenger coaches, rehabilitation of Saidpur workshop, procurement of buses including articulate buses and dredging projects.

40. Recalling the shared legacy of the great poet laureate Rabindranath Tagore, the Prime Ministers agreed to oversee the joint celebrations of the 150th Birth Anniversary of Rabindranath Tagore in 2011 in a manner befitting his vision and spirit.

48. The two Prime Ministers witnessed the signing in their presence of the following accords:

- a. Agreement on Mutual Legal Assistance on Criminal Matters
- b. Agreement on the Transfer of Sentenced Persons
- c. Agreement on Combating International Terrorism, Organized Crime and Illicit Drug Trafficking
- d. Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation in Power Sector
- e. Cultural Exchange Programme

The Prime Ministers also expressed the desire that Line of Credit and the comprehensive framework of cooperation for development be operationalized at the earliest.

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