

Luncheon Hosted by President Lee Myung-bak Cheong Wa Dae

Remarks by

H.E Sheikh Hasina

Prime Minister

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Seoul, Korea, Tuesday, 18 May 2010

Bismillahir Rahmanir Rahim

Your Excellency President Lee Myung-bak,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

A very good afternoon to you all.

I am grateful to you, Excellency, for the kind words you have addressed to me and my country. I am also grateful to you for hosting this wonderful luncheon for me and my delegation.

Korea and its friendly people, Excellency, have always had a special place in our hearts from the time when Bengali Nobel Laureate Rabindranath Tagore termed Korea as the "Lamp of the East" in a poem he dedicated to your beautiful country in 1929. Allow me to quote a few lines from the poem:

" In the golden age of Asia,
Korea was one of its lamp-bearers,
And that lamp is waiting to be lighted once again
For the illumination in the East."

Thus, the lamp lit nearly a century ago today illuminates much of Asia and beyond.

For me, this is my first visit to the Republic of Korea. I am overwhelmed truly by the beauty of your country. I also see a country which has creatively woven a social tapestry finely blending traditional culture with modernism. Your warmth and hospitality retains its traditional character, and imbues me with the feeling of being at home in Seoul.

The Republic of Korea is a special friend of Bangladesh deeply involved in our socio-economic development. The Korean International Cooperation Agency has been providing sustained financial and technical assistance to our poverty alleviation efforts, infrastructure and other areas of development. Your invaluable support since the establishment of diplomatic ties has raised our countries' relations to an enviable level.

In recent years, our relations have translated in enhanced bilateral trade, and investment in Bangladesh. Our meeting today was fruitful particularly in identifying new areas of cooperation. Our agreement to upgrade our relationship to the level of comprehensive partnership would assuredly deepen our friendship and cooperation. I am convinced the people and the Republic of Korea will be with Bangladesh in her quest for progress.

Excellency, I foresee today a beautiful future in our two countries' relations and this makes me happy. Indeed, the years of our mutually beneficial efforts have come to fruition beckoning a future of prosperity and peace for our countries and peoples.

Excellencies and Distinguished Guests,

May I now invite you to join me in a toast to:

Good Health, Long life and happiness of President Lee Myung-bak; and

Peace, progress and prosperity to the people of the Republic of Korea.

Long live Bangladesh-Korea friendship.

I conclude by wishing President Lee Myung-bak and his family, good health, long life and happiness and the warm friendly people of the Republic of Korea, peace, progress and prosperity. May Bangladesh and Korea enjoy friendship forever!

Khoda Hafez

Joi Bangla, Joi Bangabandhu

May Bangladesh Live Forever

Long Live Bangladesh-Korea Friendship.

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