

NEW AGE Report 23 August 2010

Netherlands keen to help in water management

United News of Bangladesh . Dhaka

help Bangladesh in ensuring proper water management as well as attaining the Millennium Development Goals.

The North-Western European country expressed their keen interest in these areas when its ambassador in Dhaka, Alphons Hennekens, paid a courtesy call on the prime minister, Sheikh Hasina, at the Prime Minister's Office on Sunday morning.

Water management has emerged as one of the major challenges for Bangladesh in recent years, as the country is exposed to serious threats from climate change.

Some studies indicate that the sea level will rise by at least three metres due to global warming within 2050, sending the existing coastal embankments under water if they are not raised by 4-6 metres.

The ambassador of the Netherlands, which itself is a low-lying country, also briefed the prime minister of his government's willingness to assist Bangladesh in the fields of poverty alleviation and primary education.

Besides, the Dutch ambassador also said his government could help develop the ship-building industry in Bangladesh. Regarding that, the prime minister laid emphasis on safeguarding the environment and the people from the hazardous aspects of the ship-building industry.

The prime minister said the Netherlands could be benefited by importing small and medium-sized ships from Bangladesh. The prime minister thanked the Netherlands for being a dependable development partner in supporting socio-economic development in Bangladesh.

She appreciated Dutch support for Bangladesh and the LDCs in general, as it is the fifth largest destination for Bangladeshi exports within the European Union.

The prime minister also urged ambassador Hennekens to import more Bangladesh's ceramics, pharmaceuticals, leather goods and computer software.

As the Dutch ambassador hailed the prime minister for her 'Vision 2021' initiative to turn Bangladesh into a modern, digitalised country, the issue of a previous agreement between Bangladesh and Dutch company 'Tulip Computers' came up for discussion.

During the previous Awami League tenure, Tulip Computers started a project in Bangladesh, coordinated by the Dutch ministry of development aid. The aim was to train 7,700 teachers in IT.

'However, we have taken steps again to implement the project as we are pledge-bound to create a digital and modern Bangladesh,' the prime minister said.

Principal secretary to the prime minister MA Karim and Prime Minister's Office secretary Mollah Waheeduzzaman were also present.