

NEWAGE

UNESCO hails Bangladesh for achieving education gender parity

Bangladesh Sangbad Sangstha, Dhaka

IRINA Bokova, director general of United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation, has highly appreciated Bangladesh's progress in achieving gender parity in education.

The progress made by Bangladesh in achieving gender parity in education and the political will and the policies of the government of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina with regard to women's education are commendable, she said.

The UNESCO director general came up with the appreciation in a meeting with foreign minister AH Mahmood Ali in Paris on Monday.

The foreign minister arrived in Paris on Monday on a four-day official visit, a foreign ministry release said.

Irina Bokova expressed her satisfaction over the existing cooperation between Bangladesh and UNESCO.

She reiterated her invitation to prime minister Sheikh Hasina to address the high level conference titled 'Leader's Forum' that will take place at UNESCO headquarters in November 2015.

During the meeting, the foreign minister sought the UNESCO director general's

support for capacity building in the area of blue economy and for the preservation, promotion and recognition of cultural heritage of Bangladesh in the global arena.

In reply, Irina Bokova assured the foreign minister of all possible support from UNESCO in this regard.

She also informed the foreign minister about the progress of the establishment of International Mother Language Institute in Dhaka as a UNESCO category II Centre. Ali later held a meeting with Elisabeth Guigou, president of Foreign Affairs Commission of French National Assembly, and Odile Saugues, vice-president of the commission and president of the France-Bangladesh Parliamentary Friendship Group.

The foreign minister briefed them about the 'zero tolerance' policy of prime minister Sheikh Hasina against all forms of terrorism and extremism.

He referred to the message of the prime minister condemning the terrorist attack at the office of the news magazine Charlie Hebdo in Paris in January 2015.

The foreign minister also apprised them of the impressive economic growth of more than 6 per cent achieved by Bangladesh over last six years and the initiatives taken by the gov-

ernment for the prospective rapid economic development of the country.

The commission president enquired about the political situation in Bangladesh and the foreign minister gave an account of the terrorist activities of BNP-Jamiat alliance in 2013 and again earlier this year, causing loss of human lives and huge economic loss.

He sought the French government's continued support for further strengthening of the democratic system of Bangladesh and Bangladesh's efforts towards accelerated economic development.

With regard to the CoP 21, the foreign minister applauded France for hosting the Paris Climate Conference in December 2015 and conveyed Bangladesh's support in reaching a universally accepted legally binding agreement.

With regard to Bangladesh's national initiative for combating climate change as one of the most climate vulnerable countries, he informed that Bangladesh has created a national fund of about \$400 million from its own resources for adaptation and mitigation interventions.

He emphasized the importance of the exchange of parliamentary groups for promoting better coop-

eration between Bangladesh and France and requested her to send a parliamentary delegation to Bangladesh.

Ali requested the commission president to send a business delegation from MEDEF, the apex body of French business and industries to Bangladesh, which she assured him of pursuing with MEDEF.

The foreign minister laid stress on consolidating the economic cooperation between the two countries by promoting joint ventures and enhancing transfer of technology.