

SAARC experts for uplift fund

KATHMANDU, Nov 23: A SAARC panel of experts has recommended setting up of a "sub-regional development fund" for mopping up of resources and hence ensuring a sustained and accelerated economic growth in the region, reports PTI.

The SAARC Secretary-General, Ibrahim Hussain Zaki said PTI today that the panel of experts for the establishment of a "South Asia Development Fund" (SADF), felt that the region undoubtedly needed massive resources for ensuring sustained and accelerated economic growth which could uplift the SAARC countries from their chronic poverty and development inertia.

The two day meeting was held under the chairmanship of the Bhutanese Foreign Minister, Dawa Tsering here yesterday.

Zaki said mobilisation of such large-scale resources warranted the establishment of an institution like the "sub-regional development fund." However, he said, in view of the adverse global economic and financial situation at present, it would be advisable to adopt a pragmatic approach.

Zaki said the panel felt that initially, a financial mechanism might be established on a small scale which could be enlarged and expanded in future so as to meet the huge re-

source needs of the region.

The panel, he said, suggested that at the forthcoming seventh SAARC summit, scheduled to be held at the Bangladesh capital at Dhaka in December, the member-countries might be requested to signal their resolve to set up a financial institution.

This is intended to mobilise additional regional and external resources, for financing projects for accelerated socio-economic development.

The members might also be requested to authorise the panel of experts to continue with their task of preparing a feasibility study which might define the size, structure, resources and nature of opera-

tions of the proposed institution.

The SAARC Secretary-General said the panel has deliberated at length on the outcome of the preliminary consultations, carried out by the Chairman of the panel, Tsering with some of the potential contributors and financial institutions like the World Bank, Asian Development Bank, Kuwait, USA, Japan, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Executive Director of the IMF.

Quoting the Chairman, Zaki said the initial response and perceptions of the member countries and financial institutions were "generally positive."

Seminar on labour standard begins today

A week-long Asia-Pacific regional seminar on "National and international labour standard" begins in Dhaka today (Tuesday), reports BSS.

Labour and Manpower Minister Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan will inaugurate the seminar at a local hotel.

Among other issues, the procedure for adoption of conventions by ILO and the arrangement for their implementation by the member-countries will be discussed in the seminar. Dr Shah Mohammad Farid, Secretary, Ministry of Labour and Manpower will preside.

Seminar officials of labour ministries from 24 countries of Asia and the Pacific region are expected to participate in the seminar.



Foreign Minister ASM Mostafizur Rahman visiting Tamjiduddin Textile Mills Ltd at Gazipur, a spinning project financed by Bangladesh Shilpa Bank, Sunday. Mojibur Rahman, State Minister for Finance, ATM Alamgir, Chairman, Board of Directors, and Abdul Karim, MD of BSB accompanied the minister during the visit.

Local manufacturers blame smuggling for plummeting TV sale

by Staff Correspondent

Sale of locally manufactured televisions plummeted in the last two months due to a flood of smuggled foreign TVs in the markets of the country.

TVs are smuggled mainly through underdeclaration and false declaration of consignments, according to concerned sources.

Prices of foreign TVs in the electronics market of the capital were found to almost equal to price of the local TVs.

While 20 inch colour Sony TV assembled in Bangladesh is sold for Taka 26,500, a Malaysian-made Sony is sold for Taka 27,000.

Japan made 20 inch National brand TV, is sold for Taka 23,000 to Taka 25,500, while the Bangladeshi National brand, which has no connection with the Japanese Mitsubishi company, is sold at Taka 20,000 to Taka 21,500. There are at least five companies in the country which produce the National TV.

The salesmen at the capital's largest electronics market

Stadium having about 100 shops talking to the Daily Star said that since the buyers preferred foreign products which were TVs not expensive compared to the local products, buyers were picking their choices. But it did not affect the black and white TV market since foreign black and white TVs are not smuggled in.

In SKD packages, TV sets are divided in 12 components. Tax for such consignment is fixed at 50 per cent.

Tax is fixed at 100 per cent for a fully assembled foreign TV. As smugglers bring in foreign TVs in CKD and SKD consignments with the help of unscrupulous customs personnel, knowledgeable sources say, it is possible for them to supply TVs at prices equal to locally made TVs.

The traders of Stadium market reveal that foreign TVs do not necessarily bring good profit for them, rather they are always uncertain about the supply of such products.

They also reveal that while the TV companies blame for

complete knock down (CKD) and simple knock down (SKD) packages to avoid taxes. In CKD consignment, TV sets are divided into innumerable parts. Normally TV assembling companies import such consignment. The tax for CKD consignment is fixed at 25 per cent of the total cost.

In SKD packages, TV sets are divided in 12 components. Tax for such consignment is fixed at 50 per cent.

The task force which was formed to prevent sale of contraband goods had been inactive since the last two months, complains the TV manufacturers. They blame this factor for increased sale of smuggled TVs.

We think task force should be active to stop smuggling completely, not partially," said shop keepers, "but we also think, the task force should work in the port areas and ZIA instead of hunting the shops ... it creates bad impression for us and hampers our sale."

Many of the TV manufacturers blame smuggled foreign TVs for their poor sales. Knowledgeable sources said smugglers are using Chittagong port channel and Zia International Airport to bring in the foreign TVs avoiding taxes.

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as complete knock down (CKD) and simple knock down (SKD) packages to avoid taxes.

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