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DHAKA, MONDAY, NOVEMBER 11, 1996

Kibria tells BIDS seminar

Import-substitute industries no longer to enjoy high tariff protection

Finance Minister Shah AMS Kibria yesterday assured support to the import-substitute industries, side by side the export-oriented units, but said that no shield would be provided to protect them from external competition, reports UNB.

Our primary focus is to support export-oriented industries, but that does not mean we'll not pay attention to the import-substitute units. Of course, we'll do that," he told the opening session of a two-day seminar in the city.

Inaugurating the seminar at the NEC auditorium, the minister said the import-substitute industries would no longer enjoy the protection of high tariff wall as the government was gradually lowering the tariff rates.

The import-substitute industries would have to face external competition, he said of the units which once were protected by high tariff wall from competition, severely limiting their production capabilities.

In this context, the minister referred to the Indian industries

which once enjoyed protection of high tariff wall, but finally had to grapple with stiff competition from the outer world when the tariff rates had been lowered.

Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS) in collaboration with the British Council in Dhaka organised the seminar, titled "External Competitiveness of Bangladesh Industries: Review of Achievements and Towards a Policy Agenda."

Referring to increased competition in the world market, Kibria said the Bangladesh industry would not be able to maintain its competitiveness based on lower wages for long as the wages would go up with increased economic activities.

He mentioned the examples of Japan, Hong Kong and Thailand where wages were low before their industrialisation, but as manufacturing sectors got momentum, wages became much higher in those countries.

In this connection, the minister called for enhancing productivity of labour force by imparting them skill development

training and education. "We have to focus our attention to increase our productivity," he said.

He also emphasised increased investment in education and skill development schemes and said the nation would have to keep up its competitiveness in this very competitive world.

Pointing at the increased number of seminars and workshops, Kibria regretted that there had been a lack of coordination between the organisers and the respective industry that minimised objectives of such functions.

"Are the industries aware of such kind of activities," he questioned, noting that the industry was lacking interest on such activities. He said the organisers should give more attention to the respective industries.

Addressing the function, British Deputy High Commissioner Miriam McIntosh said Bangladesh's exports to the United Kingdom was growing steadily and the products quality from here needed to be im-

proved to maintain markets.

She said the political stability should be continued, the overseas image of the country enhanced and the airports and the Chittagong port developed for a striving export sector.

Moreover, a transparent and accountable administration is needed to deal with the industry and an effective body for quality assurance, the British diplomat said.

BIDS director general Abu Ahmed Abdullah, British Council director Tom Cowin, University of Strathclyde link coordinator Dr Mozammel Haq and BIDS link coordinator Dr Zaid Bakht also spoke at the inaugural session.

In the day's only working session, Prof James Love of the University of Strathclyde presented a paper on "External Competitiveness and Economic Development" an Overview of Issues.

Former Finance Adviser Dr Wahiduddin Mahmud was the lead discussant while Prof Rehman Sobhan, Executive Director of the Centre for Policy Dialogue, chaired the session.

Canadian EDC regional manager in city

The Regional Manager of Export Development Corporation (EDC) of Canada, Asia Pacific region, Anis Karim arrived here Saturday on a four-day official visit to Bangladesh, reports UNB.

During his visit Karim will call on officials of government, Bangladesh Bank, leading nationalised and foreign banks, World Bank, IFC, IMF and local buyers, says a Canadian High Commission press release yesterday.

Owned by the Canadian government, the EDC, operates on commercial principles and is financially self-sufficient. It provides financing services — including insurance, loans and guarantees to foreign buyers (banks) of Canadian goods and services.

Bangladesh, among fifty other emerging markets, has been included in the EDC's new export financing programmes, which has real potential for promoting Canada-Bangladesh trade.

Myanmar ready to join ASEAN, says Secy-Gen

YANGON, Nov 10: The Secretary General of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations said Saturday that Myanmar appeared to be well advanced in making preparations to join the regional body, reports AP.

Ajit Singh was speaking at the end of an eight-day visit to assess the country's readiness to join ASEAN, which includes Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam.

Myanmar was granted observer status in the organisation this year, and has applied to become a full member next year.

Normally, applicant countries serve at least two years as observers before being admitted as full members. Cambodia and Laos are scheduled to be admitted as full members next year after several years with observer status.

Myanmar's case is complicated because critics of its military government say granting it early membership would amount to tacit approval of its repression of the country's democratic opposition, led by Nobel peace laureate Aung San Suu Kyi.

Singh said his delegation was pleasantly surprised that Myanmar is fairly advanced in preparations for entry into ASEAN. Myanmar is almost ready and all agreements ASEAN has had, Myanmar has no difficulty acceding to them.

Myanmar is the official name given Burma by the ruling junta, which took power in 1988.

BB auction held

The 27th auction of the 90-Day Treasury Bill and 180-Day Treasury Bills were held yesterday, reports UNB.

Eight bids for a total of Tk 36.10 crores, five bids for a total of Tk 17 crores and one bid for a total of Tk 0.15 crore were offered respectively against the 30-Day, 90-Day and 180-Day Bills.

Of these, all bids against the 30-Day Bill and three bids for a total of Tk 13 crores against the 90-Day Bill were accepted. The bid offered against the 180-Day Bill was not accepted, says a Bangladesh Bank press release.

The weighted average prices against the 30-Day and 90-Day Bills were Tk 99.44 and Tk 98.29 per 100 taka respectively. The corresponding yields are 6.7 per cent and 6.94 per cent per annum.

NZ Post's courier service link up with DHL

DHL Worldwide Express (NZ) Ltd. has formed a strategic alliance with NZ Post. The link will provide the postal service's Courier Post International service with access to DHL's global network for all document and package shipments beyond New Zealand, says a press release.

Gray Edstein, DHL NZ's General Manager, says the partnership will speed up deliveries to overseas destinations for NZ Post customers through out New Zealand and increase volume and revenue for both NZ Post and DHL.

A key element in the link is the ability for NZ Post to now offer customers a greatly improved international Courier Post product, using DHL's ability to track and trace shipments, with bar-coding on each package and proof of delivery documentation.

The arrangement expands DHL's customer base in New Zealand, gaining it access to a greater range of customer segments.

The big courier company is currently reliant on commercial flights from Auckland to Asia, however DHL is capable of offering an overnight service into South Asia via its Singapore hub.

Plan to build another container terminal at Ctg port shelved

From Nurul Alam

CHITTAGONG, Nov 10: The plan for constructing another container terminal at Chittagong port plunged into uncertainty as the whole project remained shelved in the Planning Commission for a long time, concerned sources said.

The project is yet to see the light of the day as the government remained undecided about its funding arrangements.

Initially the plan was taken up for constructing another container terminal adjacent to the existing ones from the own funds of Chittagong Port Authority during the regime of past government while M K Anwar was the minister for Ports and Shipping, port sources said.

But the decision was reportedly reversed during the tenure of another minister for Ports and Shipping who asked the

concerned authorities to look for overseas fund for constructing the terminal.

On the other hand, during the tenure of the caretaker government, the decision was taken for building the terminal from port's own fund showing the reason that Chittagong Port Authority has huge idle money lying with different banks, sources added.

Now the decision has been dropped and the authorities have again started to look for foreign fund.

Japan-based Overseas Economic Cooperation Fund (OECD) has reportedly come forward to provide required funds against the project of new terminal.

But the relevant authorities of the government fell in a dilemma about taking any

clearcut decision in this regard. Port sources said rapid growth of container cargo had prompted for taking a plan to construct another terminal. At an estimated cost of Taka 800 crore.

Earlier, two container terminals known as multi-purpose berths were built at this major port of the country at a cost of Taka 400 crores to cope with the growing size of containers.

Port officials said every year there has been a growth of container cargo at the rate of 30 per cent.

In the current fiscal year, Chittagong port targeted to handle 3,50,000 TEUs containers, port sources said. In 1995-96 fiscal year Chittagong port handled 2,50,000 TEUs container, port reports said.

Barapukuria coal, Madhyapara hard rock mines

Frequent power failure, absence of telecom facilities affect dev work

By Govinda Shil

The development works of the Barapukuria coal and Madhyapara hard rock mines, the country's first underground mines are being badly affected due to frequent power failure, absence of proper telecommunication facilities and security of officials working on the sites official, sources said.

The mine developers are now freezing underground water table to sink four shafts to explore coal and rock and to allow movement of labour. This requires an uninterrupted power supply for smooth operation of the heavy equipment.

But frequent power tripping is hampering this operation, officials said. "Once we froze water in a borehole. But it melted later due to sudden electricity failure," said a mine expert of Petrobangla which is developing the mines.

He said this was adding huge cost to the execution of the projects. Petrobangla experts say valuable machines and other

equipment would be taken to the mines by drilling through the ice.

CMC, a Chinese consortium, was developing the Taka 1,000 crore coal mine project at Barapukuria while NAM/NAM, a North Korean enterprise, was developing the Taka 700 crore hard rock mine project at Madhyapara, 13 kilometers away from the former. These two mines are located in the south of Dinajpur, officials pointed out.

Petrobangla officials alleged that some 400 foreign workers were developing the mines in an insecure. There is no sufficient police force at the mine area. "We urged the Ministry of Home Affairs several times to set up police camps but no measure has been taken so far," said another official adding incidents of mugging has increased in the mine areas.

"The mines also need bonded-warehouse facilities to quicken the customs procedures," the official noted. He alleged that the customs authori-

ties were charging 40 to 50 per cent duties and VAT for the imported machinery whereas it charged only 2.5 per cent duty on imports of the same kind of machinery by another private mine developer.

The officials felt that a customs station could be set up at Parbatipur or Phulbari to clear imported equipment. The clearance is now being done in Chittagong or Dinajpur.

The mines are expected to go into initial operation by 1999. One million tons of coal would be extracted annually from Barapukuria out of its 300 million tons reserve. Some 64 million tons of coal could be extracted using the available technology.

Madhyapara mine has a vast reserve of rocks of which only 100 million tons at the rate of 1.7 million tons each year would be lifted, sources added. Meanwhile, the implementation, Monitoring and Evaluation Division (IMED) of the Planning Ministry has ex-

pressed concern about the weak coordination among the concerned ministries, informed sources said. IMED, in a meeting Wednesday gave directives to the Bangladesh Railway, Roads and Highways, Bangladesh Power Development Board (BPDB) to take necessary steps to develop infrastructures and utilities in the mine areas.

The proposed Moheshpur-Barapukuria and Madhyapara-Mithapukur roads should be constructed immediately to run the heavy trailers to carry equipments and machinery from Mongla and Chittagong ports, felt the officials.

They said they have to keep an intensive liaison with the foreign experts to properly monitor the activities through facsimiles. "But due to absence of proper telecom facilities our activities are affected," a senior official of Petrobangla said.

However, he pointed out that the government was considering allowing the mines to develop private sector telecom network.

Ninth session of Bangladesh-China JEC meet begins in Beijing

The ninth session of Bangladesh-China Joint Economic Commission begins in Beijing Tuesday for a review and expansion of cooperation between the two friendly nations, reports UNB.

A four-member delegation led by Dr Masihur Rahman, Secretary of the Economic Relations Division, leaves for the Chinese capital today to attend the four-day JEC session.

Dr Masihur Rahman and Madam Li-Guohua, Vice-Minister of the Ministry of Foreign Trade and Economic Cooperation of China, will co-chair the meeting, said an official release here yesterday.

The JEC session is being held following the recent visit of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to China September 12-16 with a view to facilitating speedy implementation of the proposals for cooperation agreed upon during the tour.

It will also review implementation of the decisions of the 8th session held in 1995 and the scope for further expansion of bilateral cooperation.

Taiwan cuts trade deficit with Japan

TAIPEI, Nov 10: Taiwan said Friday its trade deficit with Japan was down 23 per cent to 10.2 billion dollars in the first nine months of this year, reports AP.

The Economics Ministry predicted a 1996 deficit of 14 billion dollars with Japan, down from a historic high of 17.1 billion dollars of 1995.

During the first nine months this year, exports to Japan increased 8 per cent to 10.4 billion dollars while import declined 9.9 per cent to 20.6 billion dollars, the ministry said.

Exports consisted mainly of frozen food, electronics, computer parts and sporting goods. Imports were mainly semiconductors, petrochemical goods, machinery and auto parts, it said.

China to ban US imports in retaliation for textile cut

BEIJING, Nov 10: China announced a ban on US fruits, alcoholic drinks, textiles and other imports Sunday in retaliation for a cut in Chinese textile exports to the United States, reports AP.

The ban will go into effect from December 6, the Foreign Trade Ministry and Chinese customs said in a joint statement issued through the state-run Xinhua News Agency.

The statement called the ban

temporary but did not say how long it would last or give a monetary value of the imports to be suspended.

A detailed list of US imports to be suspended will be drawn up before the December 6 deadline, Xinhua said. Imports targeted include some US textiles, agricultural and animal husbandry products, fruits and alcoholic drinks and beverages, it said.

The ban is in response to

Washington's decision on September 6 to cut import quotas of Chinese textiles because of suspicions that Chinese enterprises illegally transhipped textiles, Xinhua said.

Chinese officials repeatedly protested the quota cut, which Xinhua said was made without fully consulting China and without clear evidence to back it up, seriously violating a Chinese-US textile agreement.

It said China had warned the Office of the US Trade Representative it would be forced to retaliate if the quota cut was not canceled. "Up to now, the US side has not withdrawn its quota decision," it added.

China wants the dispute settled according to a signed textile agreement and "opposes any practice intended to impose the will of one side upon others in trade dealings," the announcement said.

"We wish to urge the United States to handle trade disputes in the spirit of advancing bilateral trade and refrain from taking any actions harmful to bilateral trade in the future," it added.

Tk 5 lakh loan to be distributed in Madaripur

MADARIPUR, Nov 10: A programme to disburse interest free loan worth Tk 5 lakh for improving the socio-economic condition of 180 distressed people of six unions in Sadar thana has been undertaken by the Social Welfare Department, reports UNB.

Madaripur thana welfare officer Abdul Matin on Saturday said the loan will be disbursed for poultry and dairy farming, small business and rice husking to make them self-reliant.

A function was arranged in Sadar thana office of the department in this connection with Deputy Director of Social Welfare Department Ahmad Ali Chowdhury in the chair. Deputy Commissioner Sharif Tayebur Rahman and Thana Nirbahi Officer Abdul Khalek were present as chief and special guests respectively.



Dano Soft Pack powdered milk was formally launched Saturday by M D Foods Ingredients Milco at a local hotel. Seen in the picture are MA Kashem, Vigo Madsor of Dano Denmark and Azimuddin Ahmed.



High Commissioner of Australia in Bangladesh M Charles Stuart (Second from left) and Associate Director, Indian Ocean (Centre), Rob Meehan (Extreme left) called on Absar Karim Chowdhury (Centre) Acting President of the Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry (DCCI) yesterday at the DCCI office. They discussed various issues relating to trade promotion between Bangladesh and Australia and also possibilities of joint venture investment and economic cooperations between the two countries. DCCI Director A S M Quasem (second from right) and former DCCI president R. Maksud Khan (extreme right) were also present during the discussion.

Road Division, Gaibandha Notice Inviting Tender

- Sealed tenders in Bangladesh Form No 2911 are hereby invited.
- Tender Notice No : 04-EE/GRD/1996-97.
 - Name of work : Earth work at Diff KM of Diff Roads under Road Division, Gaibandha during the year 1996-97 (In 03 (three) Groups).
 - Name of offices where tender documents will be available for sale : A) Executive Engineer (RHD), Road Division, Rangpur/Bogra/Kurigram/Gaibandha (Old DC's Office), Planning Division (Roads & Bridges), Dhaka/Planning & Design Division, Rangpur. B) Sub-Divisional Engineer (RHD), Road Sub-Division, Palashbari/Gaibandha.
 - Name of office where tender will be received : A) Addl Chief Engineer (RHD), Rangpur Zone, Rangpur. B) Superintending Engineer (RHD), Rangpur Road Circle, Rangpur/Monitoring & Evaluation Circle, Sarak Bhaban, Ramna, Dhaka. C) Executive Engineer (RHD), Road Division, Rangpur/Bogra/Kurigram/Gaibandha (Old DC's Office).
 - Head of accounts (for all groups) : 266 Dev.
 - Last date of selling tender (for all groups) : Up to 19-11-1996 during office hours.
 - Last date & time for receiving tender (for all groups) : On 20-11-1996 up to 12-30 PM.
 - Date & time for opening of tender box (for all groups) by other receiving officers : On 20-11-1996 at 12-45 PM.
 - Date & time for opening of all tender by this office (for all groups) : On 23-11-1996 at 12-30 PM.
 - Date & time of lottery (if required) : At 12.30 PM on 25-11-1996.

Group No	Name of work with location	Estimated cost (In Tk)	Earnest money (In Tk)	Time allowed for completion of work	Eligibility of contractor	Remarks
01 (one)	Earth work at 20th(p) & 21st (p) KM of Gaibandha-Fulchhari-Bharatkhal-Sagatha Road under Road Divn, Gaibandha during the year 1996-97.	Tk 9,27,493/-	Tk 18,550/-	45 (forty-five) days from the date of issue of work order	"A" to "D" class contractor under general category of RHD	The contractors shall have to submit separate tender with separate earnest money of each group.
02 (two)	Earth work at 12th(p), 13th(p), 14th(p) & 15th(p) KM of Gaibandha-Nakaihat-Gobindaganj Road under Road Divn, Gaibandha during the year 1996-97.	Tk 2,40,688/-	Tk 4,814/-	25 (twenty-five) days from the date of issue of work order	"A" to "E" class contractor under general category of RHD	
03 (three)	Earth work at 16th & 17th(p) KM of Gaibandha-Nakaihat-Gobindaganj Road under Road Division, Gaibandha during the year 1996-97.	Tk 2,65,273/-	Tk 5,306/-	25 (twenty-five) days from the date of issue of work order	"A" to "E" class contractor under general category of RHD	

N.B. Group No : 02 (Two) & 03 (Three) will not be received in the Office of the Addl. Chief Engineer (RHD), Rangpur Zone, Rangpur/Superintending Engineer (RHD), Monitoring & Evaluation Circle, Sarak Bhaban, Ramna, Dhaka. The above group will be sold in the Office of the Executive Engineer (RHD), Planning & Design Division, Rangpur/Planning Division (Roads & Bridges), Sarak Bhaban, Ramna, Dhaka.

Biswajit Dey
Executive Engineer (RHD)
Current Charge
Road Division, Gaibandha

DFP-25310-6/11/96
G-1489