

# RMG, textiles to bear the brunt of political unrest

## Entrepreneurs fear

### STAR BUSINESS REPORT

The ongoing political unrest stemming from Saturday's grenade attacks on an Awami League rally in Dhaka will cast a negative impact on the country's export-oriented apparel sector, garment exporters and textile millers feared yesterday.

They said foreign buyers are now hesitating to come to Bangladesh for security reason while the buyers who are already here would not prefer to stay further and many of them feeling insecure have started going back home.

"A foreign buyer who came to me few days ago was scheduled to go tonight (yesterday night), but he

left this (yesterday) morning in a hurry," said Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers & Exporters Association (BGMEA) President Annisul Huq.

The buyers are facing uncertainty in making business trips to Bangladesh, he said while addressing the opening function of BKMEA's (Bangladesh Knitwear Manufacturers & Exporters Association) Dhaka office on Panthapath.

The BGMEA president said the political instability is creating a serious problem for the export-oriented garment sector.

"A foreign client wants to come to Bangladesh but he expressed his concern about the latest situation while talking to me over telephone

today (yesterday)," said BKMEA President Fazlul Hoque. "We are now in the middle of a chaos."

Bangladesh Textile Mills Association (BTMA) Chairman MA Awal said the grenade attack on opposition leader Sheikh Hasina's rally that killed 18 people is unexpected. "The government should take steps to prevent recurrence of such incidents in future."

Echoing the BTMA leader, Advisor to the Ministry of Commerce Barkat Ullah Bulu said the incident has created an anarchic situation in the country, which is unexpected.

Along with the government, all political parties have to come forward with a cooperative attitude for the sake of national development and its adjacent areas.

he said.

The advisor mentioned that the government has formed a one-member judicial enquiry commission to probe the grenade attack on main opposition Awami League's rally in front of party central office on Saturday afternoon.

Commerce Minister Altaf Hossain Choudhury formally inaugurated the Dhaka office of Narayanganj-based BKMEA which was set up to provide better services to the members of the association who run their units in Dhaka and its adjacent areas.

### FAILURE TO HOLD AGMs

# SEC asks 13 cos to submit accounts of defaulting yrs

### STAR BUSINESS REPORT

The Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) has directed 13 companies to submit their audited accounts to the stock exchanges concerned within seven days as the companies failed to hold annual general meetings (AGMs) regularly.

The capital market watchdog has given the directive to make the investors informed about the companies' financial positions, which will be disseminated online by the bourses, a senior official of SEC said yesterday.

Every publicly listed company has to inform its shareholders about the financial strength of the company every year through AGMs, he said.

The companies will have to submit the accounts of all the defaulting years to any of Dhaka and Chittagong stock exchanges in which they are listed, he said. "And if a company is listed with both the bourses it will have to submit the accounts to both."

The notice has been sent to managing directors (MDs) of all the defaulting companies on Sunday, another official of the Commission said. If any company fails to submit its statement within seven days, SEC will penalise the MD of that company.

The penalty amount will be Tk 1,00,000 and the MD will have to pay an additional daily fine of Tk 10,000 for failing to pay the initial fine within a

certain period.

The 13 companies are The City Bank, Pubali Bank, United Commercial Bank Limited (UCBL), Bangladesh Electricity Meter Company, Saleh Carpet Mills, Sreepur Textile Mills, Orion Infusion Ltd, Eagle Box and Carton Manufacturing Company, Bangla-desh Services Ltd, Texpic Industries, Dhaka Vegetable Oil Industries, Meghna Vegetable Oil Industries and Sonali Paper and Board Mills.

Of them, UCBL has been directed to submit its audited accounts of seven consecutive defaulting years from 1997 to 2003.

Bangladesh Services Ltd has been asked to submit financial statements for

2000 to 2003 while Meghna Vegetable from 2000-01 to 2002-03.

Texpic Industries will have to submit accounts of 2000, 2001 and 2003 as the company failed to hold AGM in those years.

The City Bank, Pubali Bank, Bangladesh Electricity Meter Company, Sreepur Textile and Eagle Box and Carton Manufacturing Company have been asked to submit their financial statements of 2002 and 2003.

The SEC has directed Dhaka Vegetable Oil and Sonali Paper to submit accounts of financial year 1999-2000 while Saleh Carpet Mills and Orion Infusion have been directed to submit accounts of the year 2002.

Bangladesh Services Ltd has been asked to submit financial statements for



PHOTO: STAR

A policeman stands guard on footpath littered with sandals on Bangabandhu Avenue, the scene of Saturday's grenade attacks on an Awami League rally that killed 18 people, in Dhaka yesterday. Shops and businesses on the avenue were yet to open as traders fear eruption of violence.

### DBBL launches counter for women clients at Uttara branch

Dutch-Bangla Bank Limited (DBBL) has launched an exclusive counter for women customers at its Uttara branch.

Managing Director of the bank Md Yeasin Ali inaugurated the counter on Sunday on the 2nd floor of the branch that has been reserved for female customers, says a press release.

All the banking services including the locker services of that floor will be rendered by female officials.

DBBL has plan to open such corner at its Banani and Gulshan branches.

# Single country trade shows can help narrow trade gap

Altaf says at Australia-Bangladesh Chamber meet

### STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Single country trade shows can help narrow the trade gap between Bangladesh and Australia, said commerce minister at a meeting in Dhaka yesterday.

A significant number of Bangladeshi companies signed business deals with Australian firms during the Bangladesh Single Country Trade Show held in Sydney between April 6 and 10 this year, said Altaf Hossain Choudhury.

The commerce minister was speaking at the first luncheon meeting of the Australian-Bangladesh Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ABCCI) at Dhaka Sheraton Hotel.

According to Export Promotion Bureau (EPB), currently the trade figure is heavily tilted in favour of Australia, which exported products worth \$220 million to Bangladesh in 2002-03 against imports valued at \$36 million.

A total of 53 companies participated in Sydney fair where they displayed readymade garments, knitwear, hand textile, leather goods, footwear, jute goods, handicrafts, sarees, jewellery, ceramic products, frozen foods, toiletries, kitchenware and software.

The Ministry of Commerce, Australian High Commission in Dhaka and the business houses dealing with Australia jointly formed the ABCCI in January this year with a view to strengthening the bilateral trade relations between the two countries.

The commerce minister also urged Bangladeshi entrepreneurs to increase their business with Australia by taking duty and quota-free facilities offered by the country.

"The rules of origin are also very much relaxed in Australia."

However, EPB statistics show that Bangladeshi entrepreneurs have failed to reap benefits from duty and quota-free facilities as export to Australia decreased by 17 percent in 2003-04.

According to EPB, Bangladesh

exported goods worth \$3,05,86,000 to Australia in 2003-04.

Taking part at the discussion, Australian High Commissioner in Dhaka Lorraine Barker hoped Bangladesh can increase its export volumes to Australia by utilising the trade facilities offered by her country.

ABCCI President Klaus Gohra said the chamber will regularly hold luncheon meetings to discuss problems and prospects of doing business in both the countries.

Garments, leather, jute goods, ceramics, handicrafts and frozen foods are the major items exported from Bangladesh to Australia while Bangladesh imports pulses, oilseeds, oil, medicine and other products from the Pacific country.

ABCCI Vice-president Obaidur Rahman also spoke at the meeting.

# Business in Dhaka badly affected

Shock wave from attacks on AL rally still persists

UNB, Dhaka

Business and commercial activities were affected badly in the capital yesterday as a psychological shock wave prevailed following Saturday's grenade attacks on an Awami League rally and a trail of unrest.

Banking transactions and commercial operations in Dhaka's commercial hub Motijheel as well as trading in the shops--from roadside kiosks to large malls--were seen a veritable stalemate due to poor turnout of customers.

"We first released our female colleagues right from 1pm and then gradually released male ones considering distance from the office to their respective homes," said a senior banker of a private commercial bank branch in Dhaka.

The bank completed the day's closing activities by 5pm deviating from normal practice to stay until 7 into the evening in most cases.

The banker reported that very few customers visited the bank. Similar situation was also seen in other banks of the area.

He indicated that the transactions during next two days' strike would

continue through backdoors, but it would be more restricted than today. "We would continue only emergency activities like exports," said one of them.

The marketplaces were also almost without crowd. "Everybody understands the reason -- and this was obvious outcome of the heinous act," a shopkeeper said, replying to a question.

However, the industrial units were running until yesterday evening, although the factory owners stated the faces of the workers looked a bit pale. "They are scared anyway--it's normal," said an industrialist.

The factory owners, mainly from RMG units, indicated that continuing production during the hartial days would be difficult this time, as the workers would not attend the factories.

Meanwhile, the Dhaka Stock Exchange recovered the up-trend of the share market to some extent yesterday, in a turnaround from an immediate shock on Sunday when the prices of stocks fell sharply amid panic selling.

But, the presence of investors in the bourse has been very low compared to other trading days, brokers and DSE officials said.

# Bangladesh tourism fair in Nepal in Oct

UNB, Dhaka

A three-day "Bangladesh Industry and Tourism Fair" is going to be held in Nepalese capital Kathmandu in October to expand bilateral trade and economic relations between the two countries.

Commerce Minister Altaf Hossain Choudhury is expected to inaugurate the fair on October 8, said a foreign ministry release.

Apart from 30 industrial units, Bangladesh Parjatan Corporation and other organisations working for flourishing tourism industry of Bangladeshi

will take part in the fair, organised by Bangladesh Embassy in Kathmandu and Export Promotion Bureau, Dhaka.

Holding of the Bangladesh fair was discussed in a meeting between Bangladesh Ambassador to Nepal M Humayun Kabir and a delegation of Nepal Federation of Chamber of Commerce and Industries in Nepal recently.

The Nepalese trade body told the Bangladesh envoy that one of its committees would work with the Bangladesh embassy to organise the fair successfully.