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## Govt mulls allowing budget carriers at ZIA

SOHEL PARVEZ

The government is considering allowing low-cost carriers to operate from Zia International Airport (ZIA) in response to demands from airlines to open up the capital's airport for competition.

According to experts, such a move would benefit passengers as it would bring down ticket prices and improve services.

"We are working on it. We have asked the stakeholders, especially representatives from the private sector to submit their opinions," a senior official of the Ministry of Civil Aviation and Tourism said.

Market players said the 20 or so carriers in operation from Dhaka at the moment are what are called 'legacy carriers'. These are the carriers that include business class, lounges, frequent flyer programmes, alliances and in-flight services such as food and beverages.

At present, there is no airline offering low-cost travel from Dhaka, the official said.

However the low cost airliner Air Arabia has been operating out of Chittagong's Shah Amanat International Airport since June 2007. Air Arabia is now asking to start flights out of Dhaka.

"We are now operating from Chittagong offering cheaper fares to travellers. If we are allowed to operate from Dhaka, we could help save foreign currencies earned by



A view of Zia International Airport (ZIA) in Dhaka. The government is considering allowing low-cost carriers to operate from ZIA in response to demands from airlines to open up the capital's airport for competition.

Bangladeshis working in the Middle East," said Abdul Rahim of One World Aviation, Bangladesh, the sales agent of Air Arabia here.

Zia International Airport, according to the national encyclopedia of Bangladesh-BANGLAPEDIA, witnesses the bulk of passenger arrivals and departures. Chittagong airport, the second largest one, handles only around 17 percent of passengers.

Air transport demand will grow at about 7.5 percent a year on an average till 2010, it said.

Imran Asif, an aviation industry consultant, said the government should permit any type of airline to operate from Dhaka to encourage competition and improve services provided by the airlines.

"As a customer, we have the right to choose. Low cost carriers are operating across the globe. Why not in our country? Those who want to travel at cheaper prices, they will go," he said.

"Competition will definitely improve the standard of services being offered," he said, adding that

the government should treat both local and international carriers equally.

MA Muhaimin Saleh, president of the Association of Travel Agents of Bangladesh, however, said: "If the existing airlines cut their fares, there is no need for low-cost carriers here."

"The only merit is its cheaper price," he said, "It has no in-flight services and it doesn't offer any commission to travel agents."

He however suggested facilitating local airlines to save foreign currencies.

## National logo brings no smile to CA's office

KAWSAR KHAN

The government has asked for changes to a newly designed national tourist logo for Bangladesh claiming the slogan, 'Smiling Bangladesh', fails to capture the majesty of the tiger pictured in the logo.

Bangladesh Parjatan Corporation (BPC), the country's tourism promotional body, drafted a national logo for promoting Bangladesh abroad. The logo features a cartoon image of a grinning tiger with the words 'Smiling Bangladesh' underneath.

"After preparing the draft, we sent it to the Chief Adviser's Office, however the authorities concerned said the slogan did not match with the picture of a Royal Bengal Tiger, selected as the logo image," said an official of Bangladesh Parjatan Corporation (BPC).

"They said the slogan does not match with the majesty and awesome nature of a tiger," he added.

Instead the CA Office sent the logo back for changes, however BPC officials claim there is no money allocated to improve the current design.

Authorities hope that country branding will help Bangladesh increase tourism, foreign investment and build a positive image of Bangladesh in the world.

BPC started developing the

logo in 2004. At that time it ran an advertisement in newspapers, asking people to send possible slogans for the country.

Following the advertisement, BPC selected a shortlist of three: 'Indomitable Bangladesh', 'Enchanting Bangladesh' and 'Smiling Bangladesh'.

"We preferred 'Smiling Bangladesh' as many tourists told us that the people of the country are smiling. Another reason is that we have nothing common across the country. We have the longest beach of the world and the largest mangrove forest but neither represent the whole country," the BPC official said.

In the logo the image of the tiger is accompanied by a wave of water, representing the world heritage site, the Sundarbans, and the riverine nature of Bangladesh.

"We are now thinking about involving front line artists, but the BPC has no allocation for this," said a BPC official.

"Previously we engaged a private advertisement firm that agreed to do a prestigious job like national branding without any cost. Now, it may require huge amounts of money if we want to engage any other firms," he added.

Earlier BPC planned to launch the country brand by the end of 2007 but is now looking at March this year if it can find a way to finance the changes.



Country, province and city have their own branding to represent them positively and to attract tourists and investment. Bangladesh is trying to develop its own brand but not everyone is happy with the results so far.

"A logo of Bangladesh will increase the image of the country, attracting more tourists and businessmen," said Hasan Mansur, president of Tour Operators Association of Bangladesh.

Aftab Mahmud Khurshid, a brand strategist, said, "It is very much needed for Bangladesh to build a country image. It is very required to involve specialists in the process to make a logo more attractive."

Many countries, local states

and cities have their own branding to represent them positively and to attract tourists and investment.

The slogan for China is 'factory of the world, India's 'Incredible India', Hong Kong's 'Asia's World City', Indonesia 'The Ultimate in Diversity', Sri Lanka 'Pearl of the Indian Ocean', Dubai 'The Jewel of the Desert', Maldives 'Sunny Side of Life', Kerala of India 'God's own country', while Denmark's capital describes itself as 'Wonderful Copenhagen'.

## Indian onion exports may dip 30pc

ANN/ THE STATESMAN

The country's onion exports are likely to fall by almost a third to about eight lakh tons in the financial year 2007-08 due to curbs on overseas sales during the festival season and congestion at ports.

"We have exported about six lakh tons till December and the final export figure for the entire fiscal is likely to be around eight lakh tons," a senior government official said.

This would account for a decline of 31 per cent from exports of 11.61 lakh tons in the previous financial year.

The official said despite a substantial cut in minimum export price (MEP), exports over the next three months would not be more than two lakh tons due to congestion at ports.

## World's largest electronics carnival opens in Las Vegas

AFP, Las Vegas

The world's largest consumer electronics trade show opened Monday with a rallying cry for the United States to shun protectionism and throw its borders open wide to trade and immigration.

Consumer Electronics Association (CEA) chief executive Gary Shapiro said fear of terrorism and concerns about losing jobs or business to overseas competitors have created an ominous political climate.

"Never before have I been as concerned that some in our country may hurt our leadership in the digital revolution," Shapiro told a packed ballroom as he kicked off the Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas.

"Storm clouds are gathering. We hear thunderous voices in the media, Congress and even the presidency to build a wall around our nation -- trade barriers which if followed will lead to disaster."

Shapiro joined the heads of the Recording Industry Association of America and the Motion Picture Association of America in asking Congress to back free trade agreements and the president's authority to negotiate such pacts.

"Those that fear free trade don't understand the facts," Shapiro said. "Technology is a shining star of the economy. High tech is America's largest export sector."

The CEA predicts that consumer electronics sales will top 170 billion dollars this year, up from 161 billion in 2007.

Allowing talented immigrants to come work for US technology firms is vital to keeping the industry vibrant and innovative, Shapiro said.

## LIFTING OF BAN ON BANGLADESH INVESTMENT IN INDIA

# Delhi expects Dhaka's nod for \$3b Tata plans

PALLAB BHATTACHARYA, New Delhi

The lifting of the ban on Bangladesh investment in India should pave the way for Tata's three billion dollar investment proposal in Bangladesh's steel, power and fertilizer sectors, India Commerce Ministry Officials said yesterday.

They said the investment proposal from Tata, one of India's biggest conglomerates, had been hanging fire for three years possibly because of India's ban on foreign direct investment from Bangladesh.

But now that the government has issued a notification withdrawing the ban, the expectation is here that Tata's mega project will receive a green signal from Dhaka, the

officials said.

Bangladesh had contended that the ban on FDI was unfair, especially when Indian firms had been asking to invest in Bangladesh.

Union Minister of State for Commerce Jai Ram Ramesh is on record as saying that India cannot possibly hope that its companies' investment would be allowed in any country if there remains a ban on investment from that country in India.

Indian commerce ministry officials point out how the lifting of the ban on investment from Sri Lanka has helped Indian companies' in putting their money in the island nation.

They said the decision to with-

draw the ban on FDI from Bangladesh was taken at the highest level of Indian government.

Meanwhile, Ramesh, during an interaction with journalists of 'The Hindu' newspaper in Chennai, said, "It is unfortunate that we have not been able to develop our relationship to the level of making it (Bangladesh) our gateway to South East Asia."

For this reason, India's decision to rebuild the Sitwe port in Myanmar at a cost of 120 million dollars on Build-Transfer-Use basis assumes significance as it will help provide trade connectivity for north eastern Indian states and provide an alternative route to link with South East Asia without transiting through Bangladesh, he said.



Steve Banner, chief executive officer of HSBC Bangladesh, speaks at a press conference in the capital yesterday to launch 'Young Entrepreneurs Award (YES) 2008'. Senior officials of the bank are also seen.

## HSBC business plan contest

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

The Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corporation (HSBC) launched a business plan writing contest styled 'Young Entrepreneurs Award (YES) 2008' for the under graduate level students of the country.

Under the competition, a team of two or three students up to the age 25 years will have to submit an innovative or creative business plan before February 8, HSBC officials said at a press conference in Dhaka yesterday.

The word limit for the submis-

sion is 1,000 words.

Initially, 30 best teams will be short listed based on the idea of the plan and finally three teams will win the race.

The three winning teams (gold, silver and bronze) will be given Tk 50,000, Tk 25,000 and Tk 10,000 respectively. The gold team will also compete at a regional YES competition.

Besides Bangladesh, Hong Kong, Malaysia, Philippines, Thailand, Vietnam and Brunei will participate in the competition.

Bangladesh participated in the regional competition last year and

achieved the 'best of the best' award with a prize money of around Tk 9 lakh.

"Last year, more than 250 plans were submitted and we hope this year the number of participants will increase," Steve Banner, chief executive officer of HSBC, told the press conference.

YES has been organised for several years now to encourage innovation and creativity among the potential young entrepreneurs.

Detail information about the competition is available on www.asiayea.com.

## BEI organises Corporate Governance Week from Jan 13

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Bangladesh Enterprise Institute (BEI) is organising 'Corporate Governance Week 2008' to ensure transparency and accountability in the private sector, especially in the country's banks and NGOs.

"Without practicing Corporate Governance, Bangladesh will fail to achieve sustainable development", Farooq Sobhan, president of BEI, said yesterday.

The programme aims to create awareness and propose new strategies on governance within the banking and NGO sectors, focusing on the roles of senior management and top level officials, Farooq Sobhan added.

"Corporate Governance Week 2008' will consist of a range of seminars in Dhaka from January 13 to January 17. Among the topics to be covered are corporate regulations, the role of honorary members on management boards and the level of senior management's accountability, he said.

BEI was established in October 2002 to advocate policy for the private sector in Bangladesh. Lopa Rahman, project director of BEI, and Yawer Sayeed, trustee member of BEI, were also present at the programme.

Sayeed said the country needs to prepare new codes of conduct for the corporate sector.

## Inflation in top industrialised countries jumps to 3.3pc

AFP, Paris

Annual inflation in some of the world's leading industrialised nations jumped to 3.3 percent in November from 2.8 percent in the 12 months to October, fuelled by increases in food and energy prices, the OECD said on Tuesday.

Excluding food and energy, consumer prices were up 2.0 percent in the year to November from 1.9 percent in October, according to the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, which groups 30 of the world's most influential economies.

Consumer prices for energy rose an annual 13.3 percent in November after 8.5 percent in October, while those for food were up 4.6 percent compared with 4.1 percent in October.

Twelve-month inflation came to 3.1 percent in November in the eurozone after 2.6 percent in October, 4.3 percent after 3.5 percent in October in the United States and 0.6 percent after 0.3 percent in Japan.

## Malaysia freezes intake of Indian workers

AFP, Kuala Lumpur

Malaysia has frozen the intake of workers from India, an official said Tuesday, amid a government crackdown on dissent by the multi-cultural nation's ethnic Indian community.

A home ministry spokesman refused to confirm whether the move, which is certain to anger India, was linked to unprecedented protests by ethnic Indian Malaysians and the jailing of prominent activists.

"There is a freeze in the intake of Indian foreign workers effective December 18," the official told AFP,

adding that the move relates mostly to unskilled labourers, not Indian professionals.

"This is a government decision, no reasons were given," he added.

He confirmed the curbs also extend to three other groups of workers from India -- priests, sculptors and musicians -- a decision which religious leaders condemned earlier Tuesday.

The Malaysian Council of Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Sikhism and Taoism said foreign priests already in the country have only been given six-month visa renewals and told they must leave after expiry.

The council's president A. Vaithilingam said the restrictions affected 200 Hindu priests in Malaysia, and that there would now not be enough to conduct prayers at important temples.

"We are shocked by the announcement," Vaithilingam told AFP. "We want an explanation from the prime minister and the government on this."

A row over race and religion has gripped Malaysia in recent months, triggered by a mass rally last November when protesters alleged ethnic Indians faced discrimination at the hands of majority Muslim Malays.

## Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Directorate of Government Transport  
Ministry of Establishment  
Secretariat Link Road, Dhaka-1000

## Invitation for Tender (Cabin Speed Boat with 55HP 2xOBM Engine)

1.	Ministry/Division	Ministry of Establishment.
2.	Agency	Directorate of Government Transport.
3.	Procuring entity name	Directorate of Government Transport.
4.	Procuring entity district	Dhaka, Bangladesh.
5.	Invitation for	Tender for procurement of Govt. Cabin Speed Boat with 55HP 2xOBM Engine.
6.	Invitation Ref. No.	DGRT/03
7.	Date	03.01.2008
8.	Procurement method	Open tendering method.
9.	Budget and source of funds	Revenue Budget of 2007-2008; GOB.
10.	Tender Package No.	1 (One)
11.	Tender package name	Purchase of Government Cabin Speed Boat with 55HP 2xOBM Engine.
12.	Tender schedule last selling date	03.02.2008 (office hour).
13.	Tender closing date and time	04.02.2008 (1.00pm).
14.	Tender opening date and time	04.02.2008 (2.00pm)
15.	Name & address of the office(s)	1. Director (Marine), Government Transport Directorate. 2. Accounts Officer, Government Transport Directorate. Director (Marine), Directorate of Government Transport. Tender Evaluation Committee of Government Transport Directorate. Optional (if necessary notice will be served)
16.	- Selling tender document (principal) - Receiving tender document - Opening tender document Place/date/time of pre-tender meeting (Optional)	
17.	Eligibility of tenderer	Well reputed and financially solvent tenderers with govt. approved (authorised agents/distributors) having office establishment, repairing workshop, manpower, logistic support, stock position, good performance, qualification and past experience of supplying new and good quality vessels in government sectors within assigned time.
18.	Brief description of goods or works	New hard top cabin type speed boat with wide screen, both side sliding glass, mechanical steering with cable & console box, mooring hooks, battery 10 nos. Passenger capacity 10-12 persons with life saving appliances, requisite navigational aid. Boat size will be minimum 21'x6'8"x2.4" with standard thickness and fitted modern amenities. With brand new OBM Engine made in Japan/EU/USA with fuel tank & line, tools kits, starting rope, foundation nut-bolt, supported with detail specification by owners catalog.
19.	Lot No.	Identification of Lot
19(i).	Special instructions (if any)	
20.	Name of official inviting tender	Mohammad Shahed Sabur
21.	Designation of official inviting tender	Director (Marine)
22.	Address of official inviting tender	Directorate of Government Transport Secretariat Link Road, Dhaka-1000
23.	Contact details of official inviting tender	Tel. No. 9560394 Fax No. 9566623 E-mail: panpool@dhaka.net
24.	The procuring entity reserves the right to accept or reject all or any tender.	

GD-115