

Trade analysts stress solid preparation for next WTO talks



Commerce Adviser Hossain Zillur Rahman, CPD Chairman Rehman Sobhan and Ambassador and Permanent Representative to the WTO and UN Offices in Geneva Debapriya Bhattacharya are seen at the launching of Training Manual on WTO and Bangladesh Trade Policy, published by the Centre for Policy Dialogue yesterday.

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Trade analysts at a dialogue yesterday stressed the need to solidly prepare and form an alliance among stakeholders prior to the next round of WTO negotiations.

"After the collapse of the Doha Development Round mini-ministerial held at Geneva last month, we have ample time to revise and further update our text on duty and quota free market access (DFQF)," Moshataf Abid Khan, research fellow of Bangladesh Foreign Trade Institute, said.

Duty free and quota free market access under WTO is a much better option for Bangladesh than any other bilateral agreement, such as the NPDA Act, he added.

The Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD), a private think-tank, organised the dialogue on 'Collapse of Recent WTO Talks and Bangladesh Experience and Options' at the CIRAP auditorium.

CPD Chairman Rehman Sobhan moderated the dialogue while Debapriya Bhattacharya, Ambassador

and Permanent Representative to the WTO and UN Offices in Geneva, presented keynote speech.

Commerce Adviser Hossain Zillur Rahman, Commerce Secretary Feroz Ahmed, CPD Executive Director Mustafizur Rahman, Bangladesh Enterprise Institute President Farooq Sobhan, Bangladesh Garments Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA) President Anwar-ul-Alam Chowdhury Parvez, were among the discussants of the dialogue.

The commerce adviser called to form greater partnerships among trade bodies, government officials, think tank, NGOs and the media to help the national negotiation team to prepare for next round of negotiations.

"Despite a collapse of the mini-ministerial, Bangladesh has a chance to prepare for the next round of negotiations and to forge an alliance among the nations which share common interests," Zillur Rahman said.

He said Bangladesh should continue its efforts to solicit support from African LDCs as

they were continuously against Bangladesh's interest in the WTO.

"We were successful in the recent mini-ministerial because we attracted support from South Africa and Mauritius and we should continue forging such alliances even with our neighbouring countries," said the adviser.

Bhattacharya, in his keynote speech, identified several challenges for Bangladesh. The country needs to ensure products of key export interest and of high export potential in the list of DFQF as a new clause was added, 'Meaningfully enhanced market access for all LDC'.

Bangladesh needs to receive early information regarding the products coverage under DFQF and needs to get a starting date for DFQF implementation, he said.

He concluded by stating that Bangladesh needs to remain committed to an open, transparent rule based multilateral trading system and maximise synergy between trade and other development components.

TCB fair price shop from first day of Ramadan

UNB, Dhaka

The Trading Corporation of Bangladesh (TCB) will start its fair price sale for commoners from the beginning of the holy month Ramadan.

Some 12 trucks will roam in four cities carrying items under the TCB scheme while five cut-price points will be set up for selling essential items including onion, edible oil and chick-pea.

Of the 12 trucks eight will be assigned for the capital city, two in Chittagong, one each in Rajshahi and Khulna.

Two points for selling the essentials will be set up in Dhaka, one in Gulistan and another at TCB main office, while one each in Chittagong, Rajshahi and Khulna.

Additional Commerce Secretary Golam Mostakim unveiled the plan while talking to reporters after an inter-ministerial meeting at his office yesterday.

He said that the government has allowed the TCB to import 3,000 tonnes of lentil.

Meanwhile, Mostakim said some 6,698 dealers fanning out across the country will start selling 243,016 tonnes of rice from August 20 at a rate of Tk 28 per kg. The sales campaign will last until October 29.

The officials said that the Bangladesh Rifles has already

started selling some 22 items including rice, edible oil and gram from its 210 cut-price outlets in 32 districts.

Of the 210 outlets, 100 have been installed in the capital city while the rests are outside Dhaka.

Responding to a question, he said that at present till date the government has a stock of 12 lakh tonnes of food grains including 10,15,925 tonnes of rice and 1,58,000 tonnes of wheat in its godowns.

The amount in the previous year was 7,11,000 tonnes including 5,96,000 tonnes of rice and 1,05,000 tonnes of wheat.

About the stock of onion, he said, this year's domestic production was 13,83,832 tonnes while another 3,75,189 tonnes have been imported.

The official ruled out any possibility of hike in onion prices.

About the outcome of yesterday's meeting in which representatives from 20 ministries and departments were present, he said, joint forces, RAB and BDR will monitor the market throughout Ramadan.

He referred to the statement by the Commerce Adviser Hossain Zillur Rahman and said there would be no price hike of most commodities during Ramadan.



Customers visit a furniture stall at the Asian Trade Show yesterday, but demand for electronic goods soars high.

ASIAN TRADE SHOW

Electronic goods on high demand list

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

High sales of electronic goods and gadgets lead the 10-day exhibition on Asian products and services, Asian International Trade Expo 2008, said the participants of the fair.

The companies taking part in the fair said that they have received a good response from the visitors, especially at the stalls of electronic goods and gadgets.

The brisk sale of instant power supply (IPS) units rank top on the sales of the fair due to regular electricity failure in the capital.

Farhana Sayem, a housewife, said she came to the fair to buy a 300-watt IPS unit, which is capable of running two lights and two fans.

"The load shedding affects the academic life of my children, which influenced me to purchase an IPS for my family," she added.

Hasan Ahmed, a sales executive at the Rahimafrooz IPS stall, said most of the visitors have been showing interest on medium capacity IPS units ranging from 300 watt to 600 watt.

"Many of them have instantly ordered IPS units while other visitors come to inquire about the prices and capabilities of IPS

units", he added.

Sales of electronic gadgets that are necessary for daily use, such as iron, blender, television and refrigerator are also very high, followed by an increasing demand for procuring washing machine.

Abdullah Mamun, sales executive of Panasonic, said people are coming to the fair to get an idea about their Eid shopping.

The exhibition, inaugurated on August 11, will conclude tomorrow.

Pak date show begins

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

A two-day Pakistani date show began at Dhaka Sheraton Hotel yesterday.

A total of 11 date traders are participating in the show, organised by Pakistan High Commission in association with its Trade Development Authority, where they will showcase different types of dates and date processed foods.

At the fair different varieties of dates are sold at prices ranging from Tk 200 to Tk 350, which, according to displays, are below the retail market price.



Agriculture Adviser Dr CS Karim along with Pakistani High Commissioner to Bangladesh Alamgir Babar goes round a stall at the Pakistan Date Show at Dhaka Sheraton Hotel after its inauguration yesterday.

Bangladesh may lose Romanian job market

Fears local recruiting agency

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Bangladesh might lose its manpower market in Romania if its authority concerned immediately takes no step to check the expatriates in the east European country from migrating to other neighbouring countries illegally, said speakers at a meeting in Dhaka yesterday.

They said in every weekend Bangladeshi workers in Romania migrate to other countries comparatively developed than Romania in Europe leaving the job market at stake after Romania started hiring workers from Bangladesh for the first time.

Recruiting agent Al-Abbas International organised the meeting with the guardians of Bangladeshi workers working in Romania at Party House Community Centre in the capital.

Mujibur Rahman Murad, owner of Al-Abbas International, the lone recruiting agent sending workers to Romania, said his

agency for the first time expanded job market for Bangladeshi workers in Romania by sending workers to that country on February 12 last.

He said, "As performance of Bangladeshi workers in Romania is satisfactory, they are in great demand but fleeing tendency of some workers have tarnished the country's image and it faces a closure of the opportunity."

"While our migrant workers are facing troubles and even deported from Gulf countries, the largest recruiter of Bangladeshi workers, it is a very positive sign that a job market in Europe has been created," he said, adding that the government cannot allow some expatriate workers to destroy the job market through illegal migration to other countries.

The speakers opined that punitive measures can check such fleeing tendency.

They suggested the government bring these expatriate workers back to the country

and make them face trial on charge of being illegal migrants.

Al-Abbas International claimed that about 700 skilled workers have so far been sent by it to Romania for garment and construction sectors. The agency owner said Tk 2 lakh was taken from each of these overseas job seekers, whose remuneration varies from Tk 20 thousand to over Tk 50 thousand, as service charge.

During the meeting, the guardians of the expatriates working in Romania were requested to ask their men for not being illegal through migrating to other countries.

Chaired by Manabendra Bhoumik, deputy secretary at the Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment, the meeting was also addressed by Golam Mostafa, president of Bangladesh Association of International Recruiting Agencies (BAIRA), and over hundred guardians of the expatriate workers.



Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation

BSC Bhaban, Saltgola Road
Chittagong, Bangladesh

Ref No. 23.02/(1/2008)LBO-68

Date: 11 August, 2008

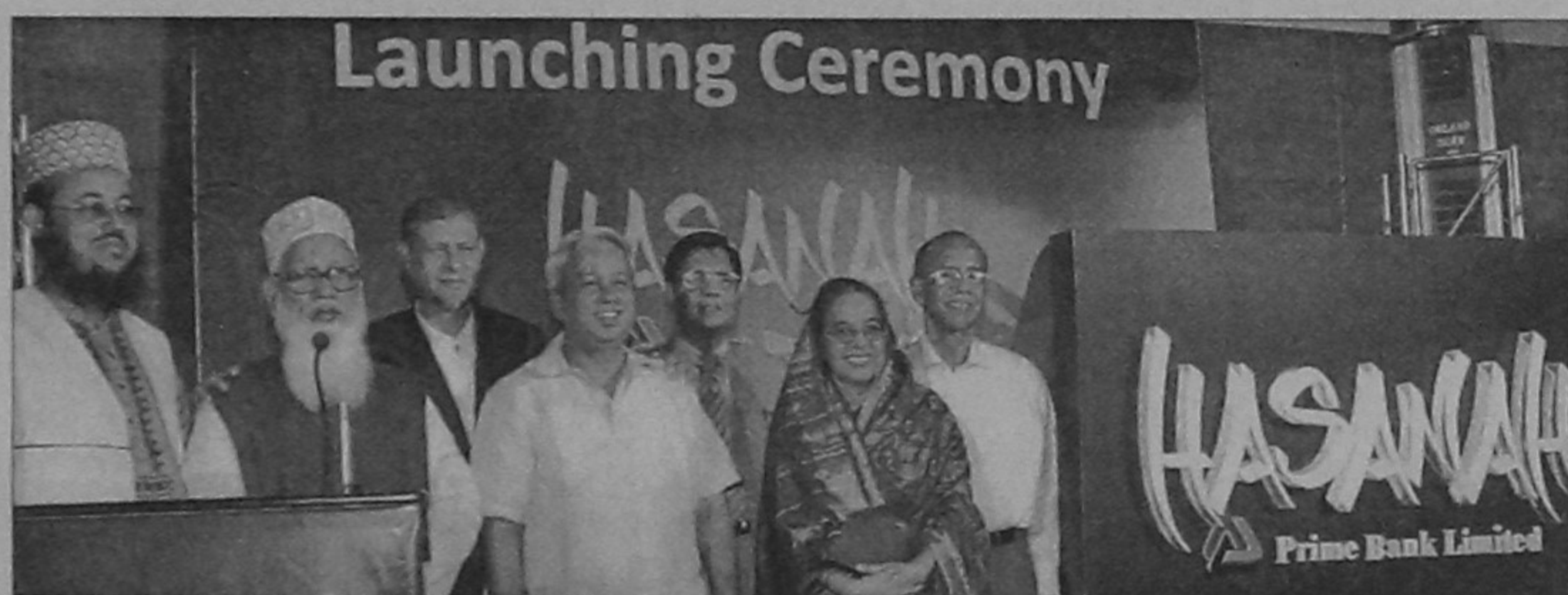
International Re-Tender Notice for Supply of Lubricating Base Oil

Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation (BPC) hereby invites offers from reputed suppliers for supply of Lubricating Base Oil in accordance with the terms & conditions set out hereinafter:

| | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|-----------------------------------|---|--|-------|------------------|--------------------------|------------|--------------------------|-------------|--------------------------------|-------------|--|-------------|
| 1 | Ministry/Division | Energy and Mineral Resources Division. | | | | | | | | | | |
| 2 | Agency | Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation (BPC). | | | | | | | | | | |
| 3 | Procuring entity name | Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation (BPC). | | | | | | | | | | |
| 4 | Procuring entity district | Chittagong. | | | | | | | | | | |
| 5 | Invitation for | Supply of Lubricating Base Oil. | | | | | | | | | | |
| 6 | Invitation Ref No and date | Ref No. 23.02/(1/2008) LBO-68 Date: 11 August, 2008. | | | | | | | | | | |
| 7 | Delivery schedule and place | Delivery: 19-21 October, 2008, C&F Chittagong basis. The supply of product is to be made in one shipment. | | | | | | | | | | |
| 8 | Price | Price shall be in US dollar/M. Ton on C&F Chittagong basis on the average of mid point of last two weeks quotes of SN-150, SN-500 & SBS-150 FOB Asia Export Spot Prices published in the ICIS-LOR Base Oils (Asia Pacific) Report, Singapore immediately prior to B/L date plus/minus a premium/discount. | | | | | | | | | | |
| 9 | Procurement method | Open tendering method. | | | | | | | | | | |
| 10 | Budget and source of funds | BPC Revenue Budget. | | | | | | | | | | |
| 11 | Tender package name | International tender for supply of Lubricating Base Oil. | | | | | | | | | | |
| 12 | Tender publication date | 14 August, 2008. | | | | | | | | | | |
| 13 | Tender last selling date | 09 September, 2008. | | | | | | | | | | |
| 14 | Tender closing date and time | Date: 11 September, 2008 Time: 1200 hours (BST). | | | | | | | | | | |
| 15 | Tender opening date and time | Date: 11 September, 2008 Time: 1205 hours (BST). | | | | | | | | | | |
| 16 | Offer validity time | Date: 08 October, 2008 Time: 1800 hours (BST). | | | | | | | | | | |
| Name and address of the office(s) | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 17 | Selling tender document (principal) | Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation, BSC Bhaban, 1 st Floor, Saltgola Road, Chittagong, Bangladesh. | | | | | | | | | | |
| 18 | Selling tender document (others) | (a) BPC Dhaka Liaison Office, 1 Pioneer Road, Kakrail, Dhaka and (b) Bangladesh Missions in India, Singapore, Thailand, Indonesia, Malaysia, South Korea, Iran, Abu Dhabi, Kuwait, Qatar, KSA, UK and USA. | | | | | | | | | | |
| 19 | Name and address of the office receiving offers | Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation, BSC Bhaban, 1 st Floor, Saltgola Road, Chittagong, Bangladesh. | | | | | | | | | | |
| 20 | Name and address of the office opening offers | -Do- (in presence of the bidders or their authorised agents who would wish to be present). | | | | | | | | | | |
| 21 | Qualification of the suppliers | Necessary papers to be submitted complying the conditions mentioned in the tender document. | | | | | | | | | | |
| 22 | brief description of goods/items | Lubricating Base Oil <table><tr><td>Grade</td><td>Quantity (+/-5%)</td></tr><tr><td>Solvent Neutral (SN-150)</td><td>750 M. Ton</td></tr><tr><td>Solvent Neutral (SN-500)</td><td>2750 M. Ton</td></tr><tr><td>Solvent Bright Stock (SBS-150)</td><td>1500 M. Ton</td></tr><tr><td></td><td>5000 M. Ton</td></tr></table> | Grade | Quantity (+/-5%) | Solvent Neutral (SN-150) | 750 M. Ton | Solvent Neutral (SN-500) | 2750 M. Ton | Solvent Bright Stock (SBS-150) | 1500 M. Ton | | 5000 M. Ton |
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| Solvent Bright Stock (SBS-150) | 1500 M. Ton | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 5000 M. Ton | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 23 | Tender document price | Tk. 2,000/- or US\$ 30.00 per set. | | | | | | | | | | |
| 24 | Bid bond/bank guarantee | All offers must be accompanied by a bid bond amounting to Taka 10 lac or US dollar 17,000.00 and must have validity of 40 days from the date of tender opening. | | | | | | | | | | |
| Procuring entity details | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 25 | Name of official inviting tender | Mr. Mizanur Rahman | | | | | | | | | | |
| 26 | Designation of official inviting tender | Sr. General Manager (Com. & Ops). | | | | | | | | | | |
| 27 | Address of official inviting tender | Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation, BSC Bhaban, 1 st Floor, Saltgola Road, Chittagong, Bangladesh. | | | | | | | | | | |
| 28 | Contact details of official inviting tender | Phone: +88031-716121, Fax: +880031-720147/724910 | | | | | | | | | | |
| 29 | Bidder(s) must submit along with their offer the original money receipt for tender document purchased in Bangladesh and original/photocopy of money receipt for those who purchased tender document outside Bangladesh. | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 30 | Other terms and conditions will be as per BPC's tender document for supply of Lubricating Base Oil (Ref. No. 23.02/(1/2008) LBO-69 Date: 11 August, 2008). The procuring entity reserves the right to accept or reject any or all offers in part or in full without assigning any reason. | | | | | | | | | | | |

GD-3747

GD-3747



Azam J Chowdhury, chairman of Prime Bank Ltd, launches the bank's re-branded Islamic Banking products and services under the name 'Hasanah' in Dhaka on Thursday. Prof Maulana Salahuddin, chairman of the Shariah Council, Quazi Sirazul Islam, vice chairman of the Executive Committee, and Firoza Amin, former director, among others, were present.

Maize growers call for price boost

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Maize growers yesterday urged the government to readjust the retail prices of local maize, now lower than the production cost.

The government on August 5 fixed the prices of maize at Tk 13 per kg whereas the cost of production is Tk 16, which means farmers will have to incur a loss of Tk 3 per kg.

The farmers also asked the government to withdraw the price ceiling and give incentives to boost maize exports.

The government in the first week of this month fixed the minimum maize export price

at \$600 per tonne, a move meant to restrict the exports of locally produced maize.

"Unless the government resets the retail prices of maize by 30 percent higher than the production cost, the maize industry will face a shutdown," said Mizanul Haque, secretary general of Maize Association of Bangladesh, at a press conference at the National Press Club.

Haque said the retail prices of maize per kg on the international market hover around Tk 24.

Demand for maize has come down to 13 lakh tonnes this year, driven by Cyclone Sidr

and the attacks of bird flu in the poultry industry last year. The production rose to 18 lakh tonnes, said Haque, referring to available statistics.

"It has opened a great opportunity for maize traders to export a surplus of 5 lakh tonnes. If exported, the surplus maize will earn around Tk 1,000 crore," Haque said.

However, the government has fixed the export prices after reviewing local requirements and demand following the poultry feed producers' demand for banning the exports of maize.

Two trading houses have already exported about 430 tonnes of maize to Malaysia and Indonesia for more than Tk 18,000 (about \$270) per tonne.

According to the maize growers association, around five lakh farmers produced around 18 lakh tonnes of maize on three lakh hectares of land in 2008.

People familiar with the industry said the country's Tk 10,000 crore poultry industry is the main consumer of maize, one of the basic ingredients of poultry feed.



Maize Association of Bangladesh yesterday organised a press briefing in Dhaka.