

Govt keen to open closed industries under PPP

Barua tells SME seminar

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

The government wants to make sick and closed state-owned industrial units operational under public-private partnership (PPP), said Industries Minister Dilip Barua yesterday.

"It needs to be made clear that we will not hand over fully functioning SoEs (state-owned enterprises) to private sector, but we want to make sick and sleeping SoEs operational under PPP," said Barua at a seminar on SME Development: Status and Strategies on the sidelines of a four-day SME fair that began on Sunday.

His statement came as he offered a clarification of one of his previous announcements regarding privatisation of SoEs.

"We should not get bogged down to the issue that we will not privatise SoEs," he told the seminar organised by the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI).

More than 80 companies,



Industries Minister Dilip Barua speaks at a seminar on SME development, organised by the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry, on the sidelines of an SME fair at Bangladesh-China Friendship Conference Centre in Dhaka yesterday.

including 30 banks and financial institutions, are displaying their products ranging from textile, foods, leather goods, plastic, electrical instruments, agromachinery, generators, ceramic and melamine, herbal medicines, software, cosmetics, furniture and jewellery.

Discussants suggested a uniform definition of SME

(small and medium enterprise), and stressed launching a database on the sector's status and contribution to the national economy. Issues like infrastructure development, industrial estate and reduction of bank interest rate were also discussed at the seminar.

Barua referred to higher price of edible oil on the domestic market and said it

could have been kept at a tolerable level if state-owned vegetable oil mill had been functional. "We should think everything dialectically. We should not see everything through one-way traffic," he said.

The minister said introduction of PPP in making sick state-owned industrial units operational would start after framing a policy.

"But we will go for such move after consultation with stakeholders concerned," he said.

He also said the government has given top priority to the development of SMEs in order to attain the goal of becoming a middle-income country by 2021. "We are considering SME as engine of growth as the sector helps generate employments and reduce poverty," he said.

The minister said the SMEs face such problems as a lack of access to finance, high bank interest rate, higher duty on imports, and complex banking formalities.

"We have already suggested bringing down bank interest rate to a single digit to boost industrialisation. I personally think that high interest rate is one of the major obstacles to industrialisation," he said.

"In order to ensure backup support for the local enterprises, we have recommended necessary adjustment and readjustment in our national revenue policy," he said.

India to loosen grip on rice export

PALLAB BHATTACHARYA, New Delhi

India could ease curbs on the export of rice in view of bumper production and record procurement of the grain and as global prices are higher than in domestic market.

Rice exports are currently undertaken only by government agencies under stringent conditions and the Food and Civil Supplies Ministry is preparing a note for consideration by the federal cabinet to soften the restrictions on exports, ministry sources said today.

The decision to ban export of rice was taken

more than a year ago when the stock position at home was low and the government was wary of allowing the price of rice going up in view of general elections.

However, with rice procurement at a record 285 lakh tonnes in 2008-9 and weathermen predicting normal monsoon this year, which could lead to another bumper crop, the ministry is considering it necessary to ease curbs on the export of rice.

Sources said it would be profitable to export rice now because international prices are ruling higher than domestic prices.

Indian rice is relatively

cheaper than rice from Thailand or Vietnam, which are the world's leading rice exporters accounting for 70 percent of global output.

While Indian rice costs about \$340 a tonne early this month, the benchmark Thai rice price for export fell to \$530 a tonne.

In mid-May, the government extended the deadline for State Trading Corporation of India to export 55,000 tonnes of non-Basmati rice to four African countries as a special case, after the commerce ministry permitted the export of a million tonnes of rice to 21 other African countries.

RMG makers urged to stop use of harmful chemical

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Garment manufacturers in the country must stop the use of carbon tetrachloride in production to safeguard international markets for their goods, as its use will be banned from the world soon, speakers said at a training workshop in Dhaka yesterday.

Speakers said the organic compound is a solvent widely used by garment factories in Bangladesh as a 'spot cleaner'.

As per the Montreal Protocol 1987, the import and use of carbon tetrachloride will be banned worldwide by January 2010, as it is ozone depleting and a greenhouse gas.

The training workshop was organised by the Department of Environment (DoE) in cooperation with Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA), as part of the 'National ODS (Ozone Depleting Substances) Phase-out Plan' supported by United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), at BGMEA in the capital.

The workshop aimed at finding out a cost effective alternative to carbon tetrachloride and sensitising stakeholders about the issue. Garment factory owners and DoE officials participated in the programme.

Shirin Kamal Sayeed, assistant country director of UNDP said although the use of this solvent in Bangladesh is limited, the garment



Md Billal Hossain, acting director general of Department of Environment (DoE), speaks at a training workshop on a cost-effective alternative to carbon tetrachloride, co-organised by DoE and Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association in Dhaka yesterday.

industry might be affected in a different way.

Shirin explained that foreign buyers might place a special embargo after 2010 on countries that use the chemical, which will hurt the export-oriented industry. To protect the export market, owners have to stop its use, she said.

There are around 4,000 garment factories in Bangladesh. The industry exports apparels worth about \$10 billion to many countries around the world. Around 1 tonne of carbon tetrachloride is used every year by these industries. The solvent also has adverse health effects.

Md Billal Hossain, acting

director general of DoE, said use of carbon tetrachloride would gradually be phased out from Bangladesh, a signatory to the Montreal Protocol.

Abdus Salam Murshedi, president of BGMEA, said the worldwide production of carbon tetrachloride is also being reduced, so it will not be available for use in future. Garment factories in Bangladesh must find an alternative agent within this short time, he said.

He called for help from the government to address the challenge.

Md Shahjahan, director (technical) of DoE, Dr Sham Prashad, adviser to UNDP, also spoke.

Ctg laptop fair ends on a high note

CU CORRESPONDENT

A three-day laptop fair that ended in Chittagong on Sunday received an overwhelming response, satisfying both participants and organisers.

An astounding number of visitors thronged the venue over the three days and many bought their desired laptops, choosing from a huge array of options.

Maker Communication, an event management company, organised the second laptop fair titled 'Laptop Fair Chittagong-2009' at the Institution of Engineers Bangladesh (IEB) Chittagong Centre. It was the first time buyers got the opportunity to purchase laptops with a loan.

Bank Asia who offered loans to purchase laptops received a good response on the fair premises. Around 383 buyers purchased laptops availing of the bank loans, organisers said.

A huge number of visitors were seen at the Asus brand stall and staff were seen responding to customer queries even at the last hour of the three-day fair.

The prices of brand laptops ranged from Tk 20,000 to Tk 1.13 lakh.

Mohammad Shahadat Alam, brand group leader (corporate sale and marketing) of Asus, said the number of visitors was satisfactory and sales were close to optimum level.

"We sold over 80 laptops. The prices of the sold laptops ranged between Tk 40,000 and Tk 50,000," he said. "Most buyers were students and officials."

"Though the turnout was comparatively lower than a fair in Dhaka, the overall response was good. We sold over 200 laptops in three days in a fair in Dhaka," an official said.

Benq Laptop marketing firm Com Valley Ltd Manager Golam Sarwar Shamim termed the fair "100 percent successful" and said business is good this year, amid financial downturn worldwide.

He said a Tk 1,000 special concession was offered on the concluding day.

The Dell brand also participated in the fair to promote their products, prices of which ranged from Tk 55,000 to Tk 1.35 lakh.

The company's Deputy Product Manager Tanveer Hossain said they were just displaying their products at the fair, while authorised dealers were selling the units.

Maker Communication Strategic Planner Mohammad Khan told The Daily Star that visitor turnout was greater than the previous year.

Dhaka wants continuation of GSP two-stage transformation criteria

Parleys with EU soon

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

The government will sit with European Union (EU) leaders soon to continue the existing two-stage transformation criteria for the Generalised System of Preferences (GSP) for Bangladeshi apparel products to the EU, said Commerce Minister Faruk Khan yesterday.

The existing two-stage transformation system will expire in 2010 and the EU sought changes in rules and introduction of single transformation criteria to gain duty-free and quota free facilities to the EU nations.

The two-stage transformation criteria means the fabric must be made by the apparel manufacturing country, but under single transformation the source of the fabric would not be questioned to receive the duty-free and quota-free market access to the EU.

The minister said he would arrange a seminar in

Dhaka in July or August to convince the EU ambassadors here on continuation of the GSP facility up to 2015.

"If necessary, we would go to Brussels, headquarters of the EU, to convince the EU leaders," Khan told reporters after a meeting with the Bangladesh Textile Mills Association (BTMA) leaders at his secretariat office.

He said he would soon write to the EU ambassadors and other concerned officials to convince them in this regard, as the country's apparel industry would suffer without such a facility.

At the meeting, Abdul Hai Sarker, BTMA president, said his organisation is lobbying with the EU for continuation of the two stage transformation GSP criteria up to 2015 for the growth of Primary Textile Sector (PTS).

The EU has extended the GSP facility to Bangladesh over the last three decades, as it is a least developed country

(LDC), Sarker said.

"If the single transformation criteria is introduced, in place of the existing facility, the total investment of Tk 40,000 crore in the PTS would be under threat. This is why we are demanding continuation of the two stage transformation system in GSP attainment," Sarker said.

Local manufacturers would import fabric through back-to-back LCs from competing countries to manufacture the final products. "As a result, local investment in the PTS would face a threat and workers would lose their jobs," he said.

The BTMA chief said until now, investment in the PTS was made following the existing two-stage transformation system in the Rules of Origin (RoO) of the EU. If the single transformation is introduced after 2010, the sector would not see any new investment, he said.

Medvedev urges 'tough' measures to weather crisis

AFP, Moscow

Russian President Dmitry Medvedev on Monday called for "tough" measures to economise during the next three years as he warned of a worsening outlook for his heavily oil-dependent country.

"We all understand what a difficult situation the country (and) the economy are in," Medvedev said as he opened a meeting with top officials to lay out budget policy through 2012.

In a speech that hinted he wanted to have more say in economic matters, Medvedev urged a "shift to a regime of tough economising of budget funds."

Medvedev, who has mostly left day-to-day economic issues to Prime Minister Vladimir Putin, also took aim at corrupt officials who he said were "sucking" funds from the budget.

Warning of the need for belt-tightening, he noted the budget deficit this year would be at least seven percent of gross domestic product (GDP).

UAE still in talks to buy Rafale planes from France

AFP, Abu Dhabi

The United Arab Emirates and France are continuing negotiations on the Gulf Arab state's potential purchase of French Rafale fighter planes, the UAE's foreign minister said on Monday.

"It will take a bit more time" to complete the talks, Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed al-Nahayan told AFP ahead of French President Nicolas Sarkozy's visit to the Gulf state for talks on bilateral military ties.

A deal would be a major boost for the plane's maker Dassault Aviation, which has yet to sell any Rafales for export.

A Dassault spokesman told AFP on Saturday that "a deal is unlikely in the next few days."

The UAE said in June 2008 that it was "seriously" considering replacing its fleet of 60 Mirage 2000 combat planes with Rafale.

Asked about progress in the talks, Sheikh Abdullah said on the sidelines of the conference that the private sector "would also be involved", in reference to Dassault.



Tarikul Hasan, head of consumer business, and Anand Rajasingham, head of marketing of Citycell, launch the Samsung Absolute F309 "One", a new CDMA handset, on Sunday. The Zoom-enabled handset comes with a 1.3mega pixel video camera, Bluetooth, FM radio, multimedia player and a free 1gigabyte external memory card.

Office of Executive Engineer
Drainage (O&M) Division-1, Dhaka WASA
Segunbagicha, Dhaka-1000

Memo No: 1691/Dra(O&M)D-1 Date: 24.05.2009

Invitation for Tenders

1.	Ministry/Division	Local Government Rural Development and Co-operative.			
2.	Agency	Dhaka WASA.			
3.	Procuring entity name	MD, Dhaka WASA.			
4.	Invitation for	Manufacturing & supplying of 600x600mm & 500x500mm (Square) size 600mm dia & 550mm dia Composite Manhole Cover.			
5.	Invitation Ref No.	1691/Dra(O&M)D-1.			
6.	Date	24.05.2009.			
KEY INFORMATION					
7.	Procurement method	National open tendering method (NOTM).			
FUNDING INFORMATION					
8.	Budget and source of fund	GOB & DWASA.			
PARTICULAR INFORMATION					
9.	Project/programme code	-			
10.	Project/programme name	Dhaka WASA, Revenue/Recurring Budget.			
11.	Tender publication date	-			
12.	Tender last selling date	During office hours from 01.06.2009 to 14.06.2009. No tender document will be sold in the day of opening of tender.			
13.	Tender closing date & time	Date 15.06.2009 Time: 12:00 noon.			
14.	Tender opening date & time	Date: 15.06.2009 Time: 1:00pm.			
15.	Name & address of the offices				
Selling tender document					
Receiving tender document					
Opening tender document					
INFORMATION FOR TENDERER					
16.	Eligibility of tenderers	1. Prior permission from the concerned Executive Engineer is required to purchase the bid document. 2. During purchasing the document bidder must show the manufacturer document/consent letter/distributorship certificate from manufacturer. 3. Bidder must have an experience to supply materials not less than BDT 40 lac in one single contract.			
17.	Brief description of works	Manufacturing & supplying of 600x600mm & 500x500mm (Square) size 600mm dia & 550mm dia Composite Manhole Cover.			
18.	Brief description of related services	N/A.			
SI	Name of tender	Location	Tender document price (Tk.)	Tender security (Tk)	Completion time (days)
(A)	Manufacturing & supplying of 600x600mm & 500x500mm (Square) size 600mm dia & 550mm dia Composite Manhole Cover.	Drainage (O&M) Division-1 Area.	1000/- (one thousand)	Tk. 2,10,000/-	60 days
PROCURING ENTITY DETAILS					
19.	Name of official inviting tender	Md Firoz Alam.			
20.	Designation of official inviting tender	Executive Engineer, Drainage (O&M) Division 1, Dhaka WASA, Segunbagicha, Dhaka-1000.			
21.	Address of official inviting tender	Office of the Executive Engineer, Drainage (O&M) Division 1, Dhaka WASA, Segunbagicha, Dhaka-1000.			
22.	Contact details of official inviting tender	Telephone: 9556652			
23.	The procuring entity reserves the right to reject or accept all tenders.				

Md Firoz Alam
Executive Engineer (Add. Charge)
Drainage (O&M) Division-1
Dhaka WASA, Dhaka.