



James F Moriarty (3-L), US ambassador to Bangladesh, speaks at the monthly luncheon meeting of American Chamber of Commerce in Bangladesh (AmCham), at Dhaka Sheraton Hotel yesterday. Aftab-ul Islam (3-R), president of AmCham, and Rokia A Rahman (2-L), former caretaker government adviser, are also seen.

Better infrastructure to boost entrepreneurship

Former adviser urges govt at AmCham meet

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

The government needs to better the country's infrastructure, including power and communications, to involve more entrepreneurs in business, said a former adviser to the caretaker government yesterday.

"The country's small and medium entrepreneurs have proven their capabilities and efficiencies whenever they get opportunities. So the government should facilitate proper infrastructure," Rokia A Rahman told a discussion in Dhaka yesterday.

She also pointed out that local entrepreneurs are strongly in need of policy support as well as an improved infrastructure to march the country's economic growth ahead.

The American Chamber of Commerce (AmCham) in Bangladesh organised the roundtable on 'Entrepreneurship and Entrepreneurship Development' at a city hotel.

The discussion has been arranged at a time when President Barack Obama called to deepen US ties with business leaders, business foundations and social entrepreneurs in the Muslim communities around the globe.

"Islam doesn't restrict women to do business and it's only the country's culture that bars women from joining business," she said.

However, Rokia pointed out whatever the chances the society offers to the women to start business -- be it export-import trade, or others -- should be utilised for entrepreneurship.

Citing several success stories of the small entrepreneurs, she suggested the government ensure women's better access to finance and information about business.

Rokia also pointed her finger at institutional bottlenecks and stressed their removal to attract young genera-

tion to business, which would help generate more employments.

The garment sector, the workforce of which mainly constitutes women, has completely change the social structure against taboo about women's contribution to the society, which also gave a boost to the national economy.

US Ambassador James F Moriarty said the US government would extend support in developing entrepreneurship in Bangladesh with providing educational assistance and encouraging investments from his country.

"Besides an enhanced trade ties with Dhaka, we also want to know about entrepreneurship problems here. We're also eager to find new ways to inspire your entrepreneurship," he said.

Asif Ibrahim, vice chairman of Newage Group of Industries, and Aftab-ul Islam, president of AmCham, also spoke at the roundtable.

UN dialogue suggests green policy for LDCs

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Least developed countries (LDCs) can take green growth policy to ensure environmentally-sustainable progress and mitigate the impacts of climate change that threatens lives, livelihoods and erodes gains in poverty alleviation, experts said yesterday.

The adoption of a strategy by the LDCs will benefit all, as it will reduce greenhouse gas emissions, they said at a high-level UN dialogue.

Green growth steps, such as investment in sustainable agriculture, creation of green jobs, investment in energy efficiency and stimulus to promote eco-efficient products and services and eco-efficient agriculture, are also likely to facilitate LDCs to get support from developed countries through technology transfer and finance.

"This is a win-win situation, as such efforts are now pledged to be supported by the developed countries through technology transfer and finance," said the paper presented by Losefa Maiava,

head of Pacific Office of United Nations ESCAP.

The paper was presented at the UN dialogue at Sonargaon Hotel on protection of the environment and reduction of vulnerability of LDCs. Natan Teewe, finance and economic development minister for Kiribati, moderated the session.

According to the discussion paper, each country will develop country-specific green development strategies.

"Yet a few elements may be common, given that several types of environmental problems are common in these countries, all of which in one way or other are likely to be exacerbated by climate change," it said.

Green growth is a policy focus for the Asia and Pacific region that emphasises environmentally sustainable economic progress to foster low-carbon, socially inclusive development.

The idea of green growth, according to ESCAP, emphasises environmentally sustainable economic progress to foster low-carbon, socially

inclusive development.

The concept, adopted in 2005, has been receiving attention in the wake of combined threats of food, fuel and global economic crises as well as climate change, an important aspect of which, as observed so far, is the erratic behaviour of rainfall or snowfall.

Floods and an increased frequency and severity of cyclonic storms have also become phenomenal in countries such as Bangladesh.

According to the paper, all sectors of the economies of LDCs as well as the consequent livelihoods of their people are likely to be affected adversely by climate change in various degrees and increase poverty.

To deal with the impacts, Maiava said a national body should be set up by each country to coordinate economic and social development planning and practice, to ensure climate-proof and climate smart policies, programmes and projects.

"Funds are no doubt very critical for vulnerable countries such as the Maldives to

undertake urgent adaptation projects and programmes and in reorienting itself toward a low-carbon future," said Ahmed Sareer, high commissioner-designate of Maldives to Bangladesh.

Prof Pushkar Bajracharya, member of Nepal's National Planning Commission, said commitments to extend finance made by the developed countries should be met.

Syeda Rizwana Hasan, chief executive of Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association (BELA), said governments should develop adaptation and mitigation mechanisms for climate change in consultation with people.

"We have seen sometimes that the government tries to solve problems in an isolated manner without including people," she said. "Rules and laws need to be changed to make government efforts participatory, inclusive and transparent."

Referring to promotion for the green growth initiative, the BELA chief said governance is important to attain green growth.

Opec sticks to 2010 oil demand forecast, sees price volatility

AFP, Vienna

The Opec oil producers' cartel left unchanged on Tuesday its forecast for modest growth in world oil demand this year but warned that prices are likely to remain volatile in the coming months.

"World oil demand in 2010 is forecast to grow by 0.8 million barrels per day (bpd) to average 85.1 million bpd, representing no major change from last month," the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries said in its January report.

Nevertheless, prices "are likely to be particularly vulnerable to economic developments during the

upcoming low-demand second quarter," the report said.

"The persisting stock overhang, low seasonal demand and start of refining maintenance point to the need for continued caution over the coming months as market volatility is expected to remain."

Oil prices had been moving higher since the beginning of the year, the cartel noted.

While that "can be partially attributed to a global cold snap, it cannot fully explain such a sharp increase, especially as inventories remain high enough to cope with any sudden jump in winter demand," Opec said, insist-

ing that fundamentals were "not behind" the surge.

In the coming months, price developments would largely depend on a continuation of the current relatively positive outlook for the global economy, especially in key countries such as the United States and China.

"Should developments turn out to be less positive than expected, market attention will revert back to weak oil fundamentals."

The outlook for the global economy this year was "semi-rosy ... following two years of devastating financial crisis," the report said.

A recovery would help reduce the loss in the oil demand in advanced econo-

mies "to only 0.12 million bpd year-on-year in 2010."

Most of the recovery was anticipated in the United States, which accounts for nearly 25 percent of total oil consumed worldwide.

But an improvement was forecast in all developed economies, Opec said.

On top of that, developing countries "are forecast to experience some recovery in all economic activities leading to smooth growth in oil demand estimated at 1.0 million bpd."

In addition, cold weather was affecting the northern hemisphere which has led to additional demand for winter petroleum products, Opec said.



Syeda Rizwana Hasan (left), chief executive of Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association, speaks at a high-level United Nations dialogue on protection of the environment and reduction of vulnerability of LDCs, at Sonargaon Hotel in Dhaka yesterday.

Analysts call for revamp in social sectors

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Adequate public investment in social sectors such as education, health and services sectors can be a major way for least developed countries (LDCs) to improve human and institutional capacities for sustainable development, said discussants at a policy dialogue yesterday.

For the lack of institutional and human resources, the LDCs -- mostly belonging to the medium and low human development group, are facing problems achieving the targeted growth in development.

They also stressed south-south cooperation in capacity building, governance behind services delivery system and policies towards developing human resource and institutional capacities.

They were speaking at a high-profile Asia Pacific dialogue on the Brussels Programme of Action for LDCs at Sonargaon Hotel in Dhaka. The topic of discussion was "developing human and institutional capacities to support inclusive and sustainable development for the LDCs".

"A knowledge-based society can

lead to development and higher education is the most important thing to be a knowledge-based society," said Mohammed Farashuddin Ahmed, former governor of Bangladesh Bank.

However, he said, primary and secondary education should be ensured first prior to higher education. "Many LDCs including Bangladesh achieved higher percentage in primary education enrolment, but the retention percentage is not so high," he said.

"Dropouts should be protected." He also emphasised promotional and technological transfer for higher growth in primary and secondary education.

Anis Ud Dowla, president of Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry, said most LDCs face difficulties in institutional and human resource development due to lack of updated information and database, and absence of effective evaluation and monitoring system.

Building human and institutional capacities depend on improving quality of education, training and health services, strengthening IT training, and reducing high infant and maternal mor-

tality rates and malnutrition, he said.

Dr Omar Noman, chief of policies and programme for UNDP (regional centre in Colombo), said lack of investment in education and health sectors not only hinders the institutional and human resource development, but also creates a political vacuum.

Summarising the discussion, Stefan Priesner, country director of UNDP, Dhaka, said lack of governance system has been identified as one of the bottleneck in developing human and institutional capacities.

Apart from investment in social sectors, skilled training, technological transfer and proper policies, incentives can be provided to professional staffs so that they are encouraged to move into remote areas to reduce the divide between rural and urban areas, he said.

Representatives from Afghanistan, Lao PDR, Yemen and Timor-Leste highlighted their positions, successes, problems and future plans in institutional and human resource development.

Rushidan Islam Rahman, research director of Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies, presented a keynote paper on the discussion.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
 Directorate General of Health Services
National AIDS/STD Programme (NASP)
 Mohakhali, Dhaka-1212
Vacancy Announcement

Memo No. NASP/RCC/Recruitment/2010/_____ Date: Jan 18, 2010

National AIDS/STD Programme (NASP), Directorate General of Health Services, Mohakhali, Dhaka-1212 is seeking applications from qualified Bangladeshi nationals to support and strengthening of the National AIDS/STD Programme (NASP) under the financial assistance of RCC Program: Expanding HIV/AIDS Prevention in Bangladesh, Grant Number: BAN-202-G11-H-00 for the following posts:

- 1. Financial Management Specialist:**
Qualification required:
 - Preferably FCA
 - M.Com in Finance/ Accounting or MBA (Finance).
 - Seven years experience in Financial Management
 - Work experience in public sector is desirable
 - Familiarity with the requirements of Global Fund or other donors will be an asset
 - Excellent communication, networking and coordination skills, including high-level report-writing skills.
 - Work experience in development sector will be an added value
 - Computer skills in excel, spreadsheet and other computer based programme related to financial management
- 2. Procurement Specialist:**
Qualification required:
 - Preferably MBA (Supply Chain Management, PSM)
 - M.Com in Finance / Accounting.
 - At least seven years experience in Procurement Management
 - Previous work experience in public sector is preferred
 - Familiarity with the requirements of Global Fund or other donors will be an asset
 - Must be well conversant with PPR 2008 and PPA 2006
 - Previous experience in development sector
 - Excellent communication, networking and coordination skills, including high-level report-writing skills.
 - Computer skills in excel, spreadsheet and other computer based programme related to financial management

Remuneration: Tk. 150,000 / month with yearly inflationary compensation inclusive of applicable Income Tax to be deducted at source.
Contract Period: One year contract with provision of renewal.
 Applications from qualified applicants must include detail CV including two references with contact address, telephone number and e-address. Applications need to be sent to undersigned through post or e-mail (stdaids2008@gmail.com). Please mention the name of the post at the top of the envelope or in the subject of the e-mail. Only short listed candidates will be notified. Detail ToR will be available at www.bdnasp.net or undersigned's office. The authority reserves the right to accept or reject all the applications.

Closing Date: January 31st 2010

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FDI set for 'modest' rebound: UN think tank

AFP, Geneva

Annual foreign direct investment (FDI) flows in the world dropped by 39 percent in 2009, with a "modest" rebound forecast this year, a UN trade and development think tank said Tuesday.

The UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) said in a report that cross border direct investment by companies worldwide reached one trillion dollars (697 billion euros), against 1.7 trillion dollars in 2008.

"The decline in FDI was widespread across all major groups of economies," in both industrialised and developing economies, the report said.

While the decline experienced with the onset of the financial crisis in 2008 continued during the first quarter of 2009, FDI later slightly rebounded and stayed stable through the third quarter and showed no sign of picking up afterwards, UNCTAD said.



Muhammad A (Rumee) Ali, chairman of BRAC Bank, inaugurates the bank's Upashahor branch in Sylhet yesterday. AEA Muhaimen, managing director and chief executive officer of the bank, is also seen.