

# Public investment a must to drive growth

Says WB official at AmCham meeting

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Boosting public sector investment is necessary to help the economy grow 8 percent and reduce poverty, said the World Bank (WB) country director yesterday.

"You have to increase investment, particularly by the public sector, for resource mobilisation," Ellen Goldstein said.

She was speaking as the guest of honour at the regular luncheon meeting of the American Chamber of Commerce in Bangladesh (AmCham) at Dhaka Sheraton Hotel.

Goldstein suggested the government increase investment in infrastructure, because weak infrastructure is considered one of the biggest threats to growth.

Bangladesh will be able to attain an 8 percent rate of growth if the government can improve the investment climate, alleviate urban congestion,

strengthen governance, reduce vulnerability and improve health and nutrition, she said.

Goldstein said public investment is also required to take the country to a middle-income status by 2021.

According to her, a lack of transparency in public procurement is a worrisome factor.

On the Investment Climate Assessment (2007), Goldstein said Bangladesh is in the bottom half on the global ranking (119th out of 180 countries) on ease of doing business and in the bottom half in seven of 10 other categories.

The report finds that an access to land is the biggest limiting factor for business, followed by power supply and corruption, she said.

According to her, the power situation is the biggest constraint to growth. Demand for power increases 8-10 percent annually, with no increases in

the supply, she added.

Goldstein said the sovereign credit ratings by Standard and Poor's and Moody's, a stable currency, ample foreign reserves, abundant remittance, strong demographics, low labour costs, dynamic entrepreneurs and emerging middle class, were some of the positives for the country.

On export growth and diversification, she said if Bangladesh can get 10 percent of the Chinese market, it will more than double its total export of labor intensive goods and create millions of jobs.

AmCham President Aftab-ul-Islam suggested the government take steps to efficiently manage Chittagong port and construct four lanes on Dhaka-Chittagong Highway.

He asked the government to make clear legal provisions in the proposed public-private partnership projects for more transparency.



Ellen Goldstein, middle, country director of World Bank, attends the monthly luncheon meeting of American Chamber of Commerce in Bangladesh (AmCham), at Dhaka Sheraton Hotel yesterday. Aftab-ul-Islam, second from right, AmCham president, and David J Keegan, second from left, director for the office of Regional Affairs of Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs of US Department of State, are also seen.



Rokia A Rahman, president of Bangladesh Employers Federation, speaks at a meeting on "Gender Equality at the Workplace", at the organisation's conference hall in Dhaka yesterday.

## GP unveils new package for rural people

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Grameenphone Ltd yesterday launched a new package in an effort to connect rural customers to its network at affordable costs.

The package -- Baadhon -- will be available for Tk 1,499. The connection will include a handset, and customers will also get free talk time worth Tk 120 and a welcome tune on activation.

The handset -- enabled with both Bangla and English languages -- will also be available without a connection for Tk 1,350.

Grameenphone, the country's largest mobile operator, introduced the package at a time when other operators are in a fix as rural customers provide a poor business case.

"We believe actual mobile penetration is much lower than what we calculate, in terms of connection sales. So a big segment remains untapped in mostly the rural areas," said Arild Kaale, chief marketing officer of the company.

"Our aim is to ensure equality between

the urban and rural customers. We believe everyone can talk at affordable prices with our new package," said Kaale.

Raihan Shamsi, deputy chief executive officer and chief financial officer of Grameenphone, unveiled the package at a programme in Sonargaon Hotel. Kazi Monirul Kabir, chief communication officer, was also present.

The six mobile operators added 5.63 crore customers to their networks as of April. The mobile penetration rate is about 33 percent. Grameenphone is the market leader with 2.5 crore customers, followed by Banglalink with 1.49 crore and Robi with 1.08 crore.

Grameenphone's focus on the rural areas is not new. The company started its Village Phone Programme in 1997, the year the company began operations. Under the programme, the company has more than 2.1 lakh customers. The Village Phone Programme is a unique initiative to provide universal access to telecommunications service in remote, rural areas.

## Toshiba buys stake in USEC

AFP, Tokyo

Electronics giant Toshiba said Tuesday it would buy a 100-million-dollar stake in US nuclear fuel producer USEC as the Japanese firm seeks a greater presence in the growing market for nuclear power plants.

The electronics maker, which also builds industrial components and nuclear power plants, will invest in United States Enrichment Corporation along with US-based Babcock & Wilcox Investment Company. The latter will match Toshiba's investment.

USEC supplies more than half of the US market and more than a quarter of the world market.

The funding represents a welcome vote of confidence for USEC.

## Budgetary allocation for coastal region demanded

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The coastal people have demanded special budgetary allocation to improve their lifestyle besides ensuring security and rehabilitation.

They said they become the most vulnerable to natural disasters and they have to suffer much compared to the people of other parts of the country, that is why the government should ensure special allocation in the next budget for their security and rehabilitation.

The demand was raised at a press conference, organised by the Upakuliyio Samannoy Parishad, a plat-

form of the people living in the coastal region, in association with Community Development Centre (CODEC) at the National Press Club yesterday.

Parishad President Altf Hossain Mamun, CODEC Director Afsar Habib, Chittagong Samannoy Parishad Representative Harilal Jaldas spoke on the occasion.

Absar Habib urged the government to introduce separate coastal affairs ministry for the development of the region.

Presenting the keynote paper Harilal Jaldas placed a 24-point demand, which

includes ensuring food security, communication development, increasing the number of cyclone shelters, creating alternative employment opportunities for them, establishing fish processing and preserving industries, construction of embankments, permanent rehabilitation of river erosion-affected people, arrangement of special security to protect them from robbers, introduction of community radio service, reforms in fish policy and law, insurance for them in easy instalment and taking initiative for ensuring quality education.



Muklesur Rahman, deputy managing director of Eastern Bank Ltd (EBL), and Mahfuzur Rahman, general manager for the anti-money laundering department of Bangladesh Bank, attend a workshop on prevention of money laundering, organised by EBL in Gazipur recently.

## Make pro-people budget

Nagorik Morcha urges govt

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

The national budget should reflect the demands of all segments of people, said speakers at a press conference yesterday. They also opposed the practice of making a more centralised budget.

Nagorik Morcha, an alliance of 12 outfits, organised the conference at Dhaka Reporters Unity.

"The budget should be laid out to protect the interest of the masses, not only favouring the unproductive sectors," said KGM Farooq, executive committee member of Campaign for Good Governance or Supro, a nongovernmental organisation.

The budget must protect the interests of workers, farmers, the disabled and ethnic people who are marginalised and underprivileged, he added.

Nagorik Morcha rolled out a set of recommendations, including an employment scheme and individual allocations in the budget for landless people and a quota for Dalit students in educational institutions.

Providing jobs to the educated and qualified Dalit people was also among the recommendations.

Farooq said 10 percent of the education budget should be allotted for the disabled people and there must be an individual budgetary allocation also for the ethnic community for education and employment.

## Roundtable suggests ICT-friendly budget

JS body chief presses cuts in bandwidth cost

STAR BUSINESS DESK

Speakers at a roundtable have urged the government to formulate an ICT-friendly budget for the coming fiscal year.

NeoSTAR Alliance organised the discussion on 'ICT budget' at BRAC Inn in Dhaka on Friday, according to a press release.

The discussion, with Governor of Bangladesh Bank Atiur Rahman in the chair, was to accumulate feedback of all stakeholders of the ICT industry and convey it to the government to prepare an ICT positive budget to spur growth of the hi-tech industry.

"The present government has identified ICT as one of the major thrust sectors for rapid economic development, unemployment and poverty alleviation. As part of it, the government has made ample allocations for ICT in the national budget and has already met the target set for FY 2009-10," said Atiur Rahman.

Chairman of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Posts and Telecommunications Ministry Hasanul Haq Inu MP was present as special guest.

Underscoring the necessity to provide proper incentives for the ICT sector, Inu said, "When more people come under the telecommunication service it will create a positive impact on our entire economic system. We can revisit the existing tax structure to make the telecom and IT services affordable to all. A further reduction of bandwidth cost is also an important consideration."

"We also need to focus on effective content development in order to make internet more usable and at the same time utilise the existing capacity of submarine cable. We also need a roadmap for the synchronisation of all processes in order to implement Digital Bangladesh," he added.

IT industry leaders, activists, academicians and journalists also participated in the roundtable.

Huawei Technologies (Bangladesh) Ltd, Augere Wireless Broadband Bangladesh Ltd, BRAC Net, BDCOM Online Ltd, Fiber@Home and E-generation were the event partners.

## Carlson Hotels announces big plans for Asia

AFP, Beijing

US hotel group Carlson said Tuesday it is planning a major global expansion over the next five years, boosting its network by 50 percent to 1,500 properties, with the focus on Asia.

The group has already signed agreements to open 75 hotels in the region by 2013, 18 of them this year, under its Radisson, Country Inns & Suites by Carlson, Park Inn and Park Plaza brands, the company said in a statement.

Carlson currently has 51 properties in the Asia-Pacific. "Accelerated development in the Asia-Pacific is a key priority of our 'Ambition 2015' growth strategy," president and chairman Hubert Joly was quoted as saying.

"This market is a key focus area in our plans to increase Carlson Hotels' portfolio by at least 50 percent to more than 1,500 hotels in operation by 2015."

Carlson said it had signed four hotel management agreements in China, where it now has just nine properties in operation and 11 in development, as compared with 28 in operation and 55 in development in India.

One of the hotels will open in Chengdu, the capital of the southwestern province of Sichuan, by year's end. The other three will open in the first half of 2012, the Minneapolis-based company said.

**রূপালী ব্যাংক লিমিটেড**  
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প্রধান কার্যালয়  
৩৪, দিলকুশা বাণিজ্যিক এলাকা, ঢাকা-১০০০।

### অফিসার পদের লিখিত পরীক্ষা-২০১০-এর সিট প্লান

রূপালী ব্যাংক লিমিটেড-এ "অফিসার" পদে নিয়োগের জন্য আবেদনপত্র জমাদানকারী প্রার্থীদের অবগতির জন্য জানানো যাচ্ছে যে, আগামী ২৮-০৫-২০১০ তারিখ রোজ শুক্রবার বেলা ৩-৩০ মিনিটে অনুষ্ঠিতব্য লিখিত পরীক্ষার সিট প্লান ২৩-০৫-২০১০ তারিখ থেকে রূপালী ব্যাংক লিমিটেড এর ওয়েবসাইট-এ প্রদর্শিত হচ্ছে। এফক্ষে কেন্দ্রওয়ারী ও কক্ষওয়ারী সিট প্লান রূপালী ব্যাংক লিমিটেড-এর [www.rupalibank.org](http://www.rupalibank.org)-এ পাওয়া যাবে।  
(এস, এম, শফিউল্লাহ)  
উপ-মহাব্যবস্থাপক  
টেলিফোন : ৯৫৫২৫৯০

**গাছে পাকা আম ও লিচুর আশ্বাদ নিতে চলুন যাই রাজশাহী ও দিনাজপুরে**

নীতাতপ নিয়ন্ত্রিত পরিবহণে পর্যটনের অতিথি হয়ে বেড়িয়ে আসুন রাজশাহী ও দিনাজপুরের আম ও লিচু বাগানে, সাথে পর্যটনের দর্শনীয় আকর্ষণীয় স্থানসমূহে। উপভোগ করুন ৩ দিন ২ রাতের আনন্দময়ন দলবদ্ধ ভ্রমণ।  
রাজশাহী ভ্রমণের তারিখ : (ক) ১০-১২ জুন, ২০১০  
(খ) ১৭-১৯ জুন, ২০১০  
(গ) ২৪-২৬ জুন, ২০১০  
দিনাজপুর ভ্রমণের তারিখ : (ক) ০৩-০৫ জুন, ২০১০  
(খ) ০৬-০৮ জুন, ২০১০  
অন্তর্ভুক্ত সেবা : এসি পরিবহণে যাতায়াত, স্নৈত শয্যার এসি রুমে আবাসিক ব্যবস্থা, খাবার, দর্শনীয় স্থানসমূহ পরিদর্শন ও গাইড। \* শর্ত প্রযোজ্য

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\*\* হোটেল অবকাশ, ৮৩-৮৮, মহাখালী বা/এ, ঢাকা - ১২১২। ফোন : ৮৮১১১০৯  
\*\* সেন্ট্রাল রিজার্ভেশন, ফোন : ৯৮৯৩৭১০, ৯৮৯৯২৮৮-৯১ এক্স - ১৪৩  
\*\* রেন্ট-এ-কার ইউনিট, ফোন : ০১৭১২-৫১৮৪৬৮, ০১৭২০-১১৮৩৩৩, ০১৭১৮-১৬২৪১২

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