

Unido chief suggests more focus on industrial output

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Bangladesh needs to focus on more industrial output with higher value addition to come out of poverty and achieve millennium development goals, said Dr Kandeh K. Yumkella, director general of the United Nations Industrial Development Organisation.

The visiting Unido chief further suggested yesterday that the country could gain better market access through improving quality of its products to international standard.

"Without value addition at higher level you cannot succeed in coming out of poverty. And, if you want to fulfill your MDGs, you have to raise industrial output and export more," Yumkella added.

He was speaking as special guest at

the launching of the National Metrology Laboratory of Bangladesh Standard and Testing Institute (BSTI).

Dilip Barua, industries minister, Tofael Ahmed, chairman of the parliamentary standing committee on industries ministry, Arne Haug, charge de affaires of the Royal Norwegian Embassy in Dhaka, Dewan Zakir Hussain, industries secretary, and AK Fazlul Ahad, BSTI director general, also spoke on the occasion.

Yumkella also pointed out that the overall trade for commodity across the world is only ten percent of the commodities produced, so no country can develop its economic base and come out of poverty by concentrating merely on commodity.

He said donors are ready to provide

adequate fund in testing, quality control and above all capacity building, but Bangladesh needs to tap potentials.

Dilip Barua sought Unido assistance in human resource development, technology transfer, rise in productivity and knowledge sharing.

He said Bangladesh is working on strengthening BSTI, Bangladesh Accreditation Board and other related bodies to promote standard, metrology, quality and accreditation.

The establishment of the state-of-art National Metrology Laboratory has been a vital part of Unido's efforts in contributing the growth and poverty reduction through strengthening and diversifying Bangladesh's production and export base.



Engr Mosharrar Hossain, chairman of the parliamentary standing committee on civil aviation and tourism ministry, speaks at the launch of a rent-a-car service of Global Motors in association with Bangladesh Parjatan Corporation, at Radisson Hotel in Dhaka on Saturday. As per the partnership, tourists can hire Global Motors' vehicles to reach their destinations from airport. A Rouf Chowdhury, chairman of Rangs Group, the parent organisation of Global Motors, is also seen.

Global Motors ties up with Parjatan over tourist transport

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Global Motors Ltd has launched car rental services in association with Bangladesh Parjatan Corporation to provide transportation to inbound tourists.

Under the partnership, tourists can rent cars from Global Motors at Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport to their destinations inside Dhaka.

Tourists will be able to rent cars, including new Mitsubishi Lancer Ex 2010, Toyota HiAce, Noah, Mitsubishi L200 and Pajero Sports 2010 model.

Within Dhaka City Corporation, rents will range between Tk 1,000 and Tk 1,500 for a one-way trip, depending on destination.

Global Motors, a new concern of

Rangs Group, will focus on car rental services, said Romo Rouf Chowdhury, managing director of Rangs Group.

"Our rental services will expand within a short time. It will include buses to facilitate transportation of tourists across Bangladesh," he said. He was speaking at the company's launching ceremony at Radisson Water Garden Hotel in Dhaka on Saturday.

"It is a milestone for Bangladesh's tourism sector," said Mosharrar Hossain, chairman of parliamentary standing committee on civil aviation and tourism.

Speaking as chief guest, he said rent-a-car services are completely absent in the tourism sector. Tourism in countries like Dubai and Maldives has

developed because of the developing services.

"We have a chance to add at least 15 percent to national revenue from tourism if we just change our mindset to develop the sector," Hossain said.

He said the government decided to construct an international airport at Cox's Bazar at a cost of Tk 350 crore.

He asked stakeholders from the private sector to come forward and invest in the tourism sector.

A Rouf Chowdhury, chairman of Rangs Group, said this is a public private partnership between the government and Global Motors.

"Global Motors is committed to uplifting the rental car industry by providing world-class services," he said.



Hasina Khan, vice chairperson of Prime Bank executive committee, inaugurates the bank's sixth SME branch at Bhujpur in Fatikchhari on Wednesday. M Ehsanul Haque, managing director, is also seen.

Call for easy loans to women

Sylhet Women Business Forum elects office bearers



Anwara Khatun

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Speakers stressed the need for widening scope for loans to women entrepreneurs to bring them into mainstream business.

They were speaking at the installation of Sylhet Women Business Forum's new office bearers at Sylhet Zila Parishad in the district town on Saturday.

They also said the women entrepreneurs face difficulties in taking loans from banks and other financial institutions although they play an important role in economic growth.

"We have started providing special loans on easy terms for women entrepreneurs in Sylhet," said Hafiz Ahmed Mazumder, chair-



Swarnalata Roy

man of Pubali Bank.

"We are also taking other regions such as Barisal, Bogra and Rajshahi into the scheme," he added.

Pubali Bank will extend assistance to the Women Business Forum for the development of women entrepreneurs, added Mazumder.

Bangladesh Bank is keen to bring a major change to women entrepreneurship and has already taken steps to achieve the goal, said Golam Haider, general manager of Bangladesh Bank.

"We want more people to join business."

Helal Ahmed Chowdhury, managing director of Pubali Bank, said women entrepreneurs would be given maximum assistance. Pubali



Runa Begum

Bank has already sanctioned Tk 5 crore.

"We are planning to reduce the lending rate for women entrepreneurs in small and medium enterprises," he added.

The Sylhet Women Business Forum elected a 17-member committee with Anwara Khatun as president, Swarnalata Roy vice-president and Runa Begum general secretary.

Faruque Mahmud Chowdhury, administrator of the Sylhet Chamber of Commerce and Industry, administered the oath of office to the forum's new office-bearers.

Asia Foundation is providing technical assistance to the forum activities.

Local govt bodies demand increased allocation in budget

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Leaders of Bangladesh Union Parishad Forum (BUPF) yesterday urged the government to increase allocation in the upcoming budget for the development of the 5,747 local government institutes including six city corporations.

They also put forward some budget recommendations at a press conference at Dhaka Reporter's Unity auditorium.

The recommendations include increased allowance for aged people, widows, disabled and the poor pregnant.

The leaders also demanded increased honorarium for the UP chairmen and members, and special budgetary allocation for the Monga-prone, hilly and haor areas.

President of the forum Mahbubur Rahman Tulu and General Secretary Ataharul Islam Bulbul spoke at the press conference.



Muhammed Aziz Khan, chairman of Summit Group, shakes hands with Tai Terk Lin, chief executive officer of ICB Financial Group Holdings Ltd, after signing a sale and purchase deal in Dhaka recently. Under the deal, Summit takes over the charge of ICB Islamic Bank from ICB Financial Group Holdings AG.

Declare overseas jobs a thrust sector

Migrant rights activists urge govt

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Migrant rights activists yesterday demanded that the government immediately declare overseas employment a thrust sector.

They also urged the government to take effective steps to ensure Bangladeshi expatriates' rights. An estimated seven million migrants sent home \$10.74 billion in remittance in 2009, but the government lacks efforts to protect them, they said.

As its first step, the government should increase budgetary allocation to strengthen the expatriates' welfare ministry and the labour wings abroad to better train the migrants, explore markets, strongly monitor labour recruitment and check fraudulences.

The remarks come at a seminar on 'Budget for migrant workers and legal rights', organised by National Alliance for Migrants' Rights, Bangladesh, at Brac Centre Inn in Dhaka.

"The government is not as enthusiastic about ensuring migrant workers' rights, as it is for remittance," said Dr CR Abrar, executive director of Refugee and Migratory Movements' Research Unit (RMMRU).

He said the structure of the expatriates' welfare and overseas employment ministry does not facilitate effective regulation of the sector.

Abrar said the expatriates' welfare ministry should have different wings for research and policy, skill building for migrants, monitoring of recruitment, rights and welfare and training of labour attaché to better equip it.

"The government should form a task-force with representatives from the civil society to look into why labour markets for Bangladesh are closing gradually," Abrar added.

In his keynote speech, Warbe Development Foundation Chairman Syed Saiful Haque said the ministry did not have development budgets in recent years. Besides, the revenue budget was also inadequate, he added.

Over 600 posts are vacant at the Bureau of Manpower Employment and Training (BMET) because of a shortage of funds, Haque said.

Brac Advocacy Programme Manager SK Mojibul Huq said arbitration by BMET regarding migrants' complaints is not trustworthy; and the village courts also are not effective in migrants' cases.

"In fact, there is a lack of exclusive migration laws," he said, suggesting either elimination of middlemen from the recruiting industry or bringing them under a legal framework to make them accountable.

Expatriates' Welfare Ministry Secretary Zafar Ahmed Khan said complexities in bureaucracy are hurdles to advancing forward with new things.

He said he doubts if the ministry or its other organs could effectively use the money, if it is allocated in greater amounts. However, Khan said the government is working to enhance capacity to better manage migration.

Sheepa Hafiza of Brac moderated the seminar. BMET Additional Director General Nazma Begum, and migrants' activists Sumaia Islam and Anisur Rahman also spoke.



Panache Managing Director Majed Hossain Khan and Director Munira Khan pose at a photo exhibition to promote the art of hand crochet of Bangladesh at Radius Centre in Gulshan in the capital recently. The show that portrayed the lives and works of the women in Chonpara was an initiative of Panache.

Workshop on budget at Brac University

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Dr Akbar Ali Khan, former caretaker government adviser, said every penny of the budget should be utilised properly so that the country can reach its goal.

Khan was speaking as the guest of honour at a daylong workshop on the national budget and accountability. The programme was hosted by Brac University on Saturday.

Oikos Dhaka, a student body of the university, organised the workshop to enhance awareness on the budget formulation process, with emphasis on the role of parliament, among students of various universities, said press release.

Ishfaq Ilahi Chowdhury, registrar of the university, inaugurated the workshop.



Anis A Khan, managing director of Mutual Trust Bank Ltd, and Adeeb Ahamad, chief executive officer of LULU International Exchange, exchange documents after signing a deal in Dhaka yesterday. Bangladeshi expatriates in United Arab Emirates can now send remittance easily through LULU International to Bangladesh.