Hasina stresses running industries under PPP

UNB, *Dhaka*

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said her government wants to run industrial units under the public-private partnership (PPP) as this process has worked effectively at the time of recent global economic meltdown.

"This is not possible on government's part to run all mills and factories alone, we want to run those under PPP," she said at a function, marking the 41st founding anniversary of Jatiya Sramik League at her official residence Ganabhaban last morning.

Sramik League President Master Matin and General Secretary Roy Ramesh Chandra also spoke.

Hasina said the recent economic crisis also proved that only the private sector is not also capable to run the economy of a country and develop it.

She said, "The economy will run in right direction when the public sector will be there in a competitive position and we're taking steps towards that direction."

The prime minister also criticised the attitude of workers and officials of the state-run mills.

"Often it was seen that the workers and officials are very much negligent to their duties. This happened because they know that their jobs are secured and they don't need to work. They'll get paid at the end of the month," she said.

Hasina alleged the previous government did not look after the state-run mills properly.

She said present government has taken initiatives two revive operation of two state-run jute mills that were closed by the BNP-led alliance government.

The two jute mills are Quwami Jute Mills in Sirajganj and People's Jute Mills in Khulna. She said five other jute mills are waiting for reopening.

Referring to decoding of genome sequencing of jute by the Bangladeshi scientist, Hasina said the demand for environment-friendly jute and jute goods is increasing globally day by day. In Bangladesh, 35 types of goods are being produced from jute.

She said the present government in line with its election manifesto has decided to run a number of closed and leased jute mills of BJMC under its management. More than Tk 2,800 crore in liabilities and debts of these mills has been waived.

The prime minister said necessary steps are underway to formulate wage board for workers of the state-owned industries, and the government would announce a time-befitting labour policy soon protecting workers' interests.

She said although the government assumed the office amid global recession and inherited a fragile domestic economy but due to some pragmatic efforts her government could maintain expected economic growth.

During the last 22 months, the government has added 1000 MW of electricity to the national grid and work orders were issued for generating another 2500 MW, Hasina said.

CANCHAM

Canada Bangladesh Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CanCham) in association with the Canadian High Commission in Dhaka organised a networking event at Baridhara in the capital recently. *From left,* Mustafizur Rahman, executive director of Centre for Policy Dialogue; Masud Rahman, CanCham president; Robert McDougall, Canadian high commissioner, Sanjay Prakash, chief executive officer of HSBC, and Khondaker A Kabir, country manager of Etihad Airways, are seen.

FILIC

Planning Minister AK Khandker, *fifth from right,* attends a conference on microinsurance, organised by Fareast Islami Life Insurance Company, at Bangabandhu International Conference Centre in Dhaka yesterday. The insurer's Chairman Md Nazrul Islam and Managing Director Md Hemayet Ullah were also present.

Sylhet chamber officials sued

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, *Sylhet*

Authorities of Sylhet Chamber of Commerce and Industry sued its former president Zunnun Mahmud Khan and four other officials yesterday accusing them of misappropriating chamber funds.

Ekhlasur Rahman, the chamber's acting secretary, filed the case against Khan, Khondaker Shipar Ahmed, senior vice president, Zubayer Ahmed Chowdhury, vice president, Enamul Quddus Chowdhury, director, and Siraj Ud Doula, secretary.

The case filed with Kotwali police station says the accused embezzled Tk 60.83 lakh.

On allegation of huge irregularities, the trade body, then headed by Khan, was dissolved by the commerce ministry on October 21 last year.

On the day, the government appointed Faruque Mahmud Chowdhury as the body's administrator.

At the instruction of the ministry, the administrator formed two committees to probe irregularities in financial affairs and in membership approval by the chamber.

On the basis of the probe reports, the commerce ministry appointed an audit firm, which detected some major flaws.

In addition, the National Board of Revenue will take punitive measures against the businessmen who had submitted fake TIN certificates to obtain the chamber's membership in recent years, as was detected by the probe bodies.

BGMEA urges govt to stabilise Ctg port

UNB, *Dhaka*

Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association President Abdus Salam Murshedy yesterday urged the government to stabilise the situation at the Chittagong port for the sake of the RMG sector.

"The BGMEA is gravely concerned at the deterioration of the situation," he said, according to a BGMEA statement.

RMG exporters had to bear an additional cost of Tk 905 crore for air shipment during May-August this year to comply with the lead-time, the statement added.

On Wednesday, workers under the banner of Dock Bandar Sramik Karmachari Federation threatened to start a fresh movement to press home their demands including recruitment of the workers scrutinised by the port authorities before giving work orders to the private berth operators.

The Chittagong port has now turned into an unskilled and expensive port due to its mismanagement, the trade body said.

The BGMEA, however, urged the government to bring those to justice who were associated with the anarchy at the port in the last five days.

It also demanded formation of a committee to identify and compensation to the exporters who incurred losses.

CITYCELL

Citycell has recently entered into a corporate agreement with Bank Asia to provide Zoom Ultra service, mobile broadband service of Citycell, to the bank. Mehboob Chowdhury, chief executive officer of the mobile operator, and Erfanuddin Ahmed, president and managing director of Bank Asia, inked the deal.

Smartphone battle in focus

REUTERS, *Helsinki/Seoul*

Cellphone vendors' views on sales during the year-end holiday season will be in focus when top handset makers report quarterly results, starting with Sony Ericsson on Friday.

The cellphone market overall is set to grow around 11 percent this year, led by smartphone sales which are expected to increase more than 50 percent as high-end focused vendors like Apple and HTC see a surge in demand.

Further increasing the rivalry at the high-end, Microsoft is starting its last-ditch attempt to stage a comeback with nine new phone models.

"We expect price erosion and margin pressures, which have characterised 2010, to intensify in the final quarter with an increased supply of high-tier devices," said Geoff Blaber, analyst with wireless research firm CCS Insight.

In the July-September quarter the cellphone market is forecast to grew 10.1 percent from a year ago, helped by recovering economies and boosted by strong growth in smartphones, a Reuters poll of 32 analysts showed.

Among top smartphone vendors, HTC and Research in Motion have already reported strong demand in the quarter.

"The big questionmark here is European consumer demand, which may have been a bit muted in the August-September period," said Tero Kuittinen, analyst at MKM Partners.

MOST PROFITABLE

Helped by good demand for its new Google phones, Sony Ericsson, the world's fifth-largest handset vendor by volume, is expected say it sold 12 million phones in the September quarter, when it reports on Oct. 15.

Google's Android phones also helped Taiwan's HTC Corp, the world's No. 4 smartphone brand, which reported a near doubling in third-quarter profit on Oct. 6.

Apple, No 6 in volume but the most profitable handset maker, is expected to unveil sales of 11.5 million iPhones when it reports on Oct. 18. Nokia, the volume leader, will report on Oct. 21, and No 7 Motorola on Oct. 28.

Nokia Chief Executive Stephen Elop will present results for the first time having taken the helm of the company last month. The group is expected to have sold 115 million phones in the quarter, growing slightly but losing some market share to Samsung Electronics and Apple.

Korean cellphone vendors Samsung and LG Electronics are due to report at the end of the month.

Samsung showed a strong recovery last quarter, driven by the success of its Galaxy S smartphone which sold more than 5 million units since its June launch. It last month raised its 2010 smartphone sales target to 25 million units from 18 million.

LG, however, is facing more challenging times ahead.

It replaced its group CEO and named a new head for its loss-making telecoms division as it battles to turn around the struggling business.

Analysts expect it to post a record loss of between 300 billion Korean won ($265.5 million) and 380 billion in the quarter on mobile phone sales.

Pfizer to buy King Pharma for $3.6b in cash

REUTERS, *New York*

Pfizer Inc, the world's biggest drugmaker, has agreed to buy King Pharmaceuticals Inc for $3.6 billion, expanding its presence in the market for pain drugs.

Pfizer said on Tuesday it will pay $14.25 a share for King -- representing a 40 percent premium over King's closing share price on Monday.

Pfizer, which faces the imminent threat of generic competition to its biggest-selling product, the cholesterol-lowering drug Lipitor, said the combination will allow it to leverage its existing commercial capabilities to create a leading portfolio of products for pain relief.

Pfizer's pain products include Lyrica and Celebrex. King will bring Avinza, the Flector Patch and the recently launched Embeda, the first approved opioid pain product intended to discourage abuse. King has other abuse-resistant pain products in development as well.

Opioids -- which include morphine, fentanyl and oxycodone -- are powerful narcotic drugs that can be highly addictive. That has led companies on the difficult mission of creating drugs that are therapeutic but which are difficult to abuse. King is a leading player in the space.

The market for pain relief and management is large and increasing. Physicians in the United States wrote about 320 million prescriptions to treat pain in 2009, Pfizer said.

CONCORD

Chittagong City Corporation Mayor M Manjur Alam attends the groundbreaking ceremony of a five-star hotel of Concord Amusement World, a concern of Concord Group, at Foy's Lake in the port city on Sunday.

Delhi to raise $3.5b from Coal India IPO

REUTERS, *New Delhi*

The Indian government will raise up to $3.5 billion from a price band of 225 rupees to 245 rupees for state-run Coal India's initial public offering, the largest in the country's corporate history.

The government is selling 631.6 million shares, or 10 percent stake in the world's largest coal miner. The share sale is part of the country's plan to divest its stakes in roughly 60 companies over the next few years.

"I think the pricing is much better than what we were expecting. We were expecting it to be 260 rupees at the upper end," said Ambareesh Baliga, vice president of Karvy Stock Broking in Mumbai.

"The response from institutional investors is expected to be very good," he added.

Priced at the top end of the band, the company would be valued at $35 billion, placing it among the top Indian firms by market value. It is the seventh-largest IPO in Asia this year.

Speaking to reporters on Tuesday, the country's coal minister said the IPO would raise more than 150 billion rupees.

Coal India, based in the eastern city of Kolkata, holds a dominant position in the fast-growing Indian market. The state monopoly produced 431 million tonnes in 2009/10 and accounts for nearly 80 percent of coal output in Asia's third-largest economy.

Coal powers 75 percent of India's electricity output, and annual demand is expected to swell at 11 percent. The country, which faces a peak-hour power deficit of nearly 14 percent, plans to triple its generation capacity over the next decade.

It reported earnings per share 15.60 rupees for the fiscal ended March 2010.

According to a Reuters poll of fund managers, potential investors in state-run Coal India's IPO had expected the issue to be priced around 250 Indian rupees ($5.63) a share, or 16 times trailing earnings.

China's Shenhua Energy, the Indian miner's closest rival, trades at 16 times earnings, while smaller Indonesian peer Adaro Energy has a price-to-earnings ratio of 20 1953066341 U.S. miner Peabody Energy trades at 25 times earnings.

The IPO opens on Oct. 18 and closes on Oct. 21. The listing on the Bombay Stock Exchange is expected by Nov 4.

Morgan Stanley, Citigroup, Kotak Mahindra Capital, Enam Securities, Deutsche Bank, and Bank of America-Merrill Lynch are the managers for the offer. ($1=44.6 rupees)