

Japanese urged to invest more

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Local business leaders yesterday asked Japanese business representatives to take advantage of the country's export processing zones and set up a special economic zone here for their country. They also asked Japanese investors to relocate industries to Bangladesh and to tap the country's cost advantage with joint ventures.

The call came at Dhaka Sheraton Hotel at a seminar on Investment Opportunities in Bangladesh. Japan Bangladesh Development Authority organised the event for a visit by a high-level Japanese business delegation.

"Businesses in Japan are looking beyond China as their next overseas investment hub, and Bangladesh has the capability and potential to be their next preferred destination," said HT Imam, the adviser to the Prime Minister.

To realise this potential, Japanese investors must have a first look at export processing zones and industrial parks and see the facilities and opportunities offered in such areas, he added.

"For example, currently a new industrial park is under construction by the side of Jamuna river at Sirazganj, which is well connected by rail, road and river routes, and offers extensive facilities including gas and electric connection," Imam said. "The site would be an ideal place for investment from both the local and Japanese businesses."

The adviser also praised the role of Japanese aid in Bangladesh's economic development.

Japan is currently the single largest bilateral donor for Bangladesh, and the interest rates and conditions for the Japanese grants and loans are far more flexible, he said.

SA Samad, chairman of the Board of

Investment, said: "Apart from its locational advantage, cheap labour cost and investment-friendly policies, Bangladesh as an emerging economy offers distinct opportunities for foreign investments."

AK Azad, the president of Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry, asked for duty-free access for Bangladeshi products in the Japanese market.

"Currently, the volume of Bangladesh's readymade garments export to Japan is meagre, although the potential is huge," he said.

"The Japanese investors can also relocate their industries and set up special economic zones in Bangladesh like they did in China, Thailand and Indonesia."

Japanese lawmaker Akira Ishi, who is leading the delegation, and Yamaguchi Chandan, coordinator of Japan-Bangladesh Development Authority, also spoke.



HT Imam, an adviser to the prime minister, speaks at a seminar on investment opportunities in Bangladesh, at Dhaka Sheraton Hotel yesterday. Japan Bangladesh Development Authority organised the event for a visit by a high-profile Japanese business delegation.



Standard Chartered Bank has recently launched a financial kiosk on New Elephant Road in Dhaka. Jungkiu Choi, group head of strategy, and Sandeep Bose, head of consumer banking for Bangladesh, Nepal and Sri Lanka, inaugurated the kiosk.

Rawhide traders in north fear loss

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

Small traders of rawhides in Dinajpur and Joypurhat districts are facing a tough time this year due to a shortage of capital, lack of buyers and low prices.

They now fear losses although the prices of hide were higher right before Eid-ul-Azha.

The traders said the selling prices are much lower than last year's.

The sellers at a local hide market at Ramnagar village of Dinajpur salted down their hides, failing to get buyers.

Md Akter, a hide trader in Dinajpur, said: "We are buying each hide at Tk 500-Tk 2,000, depending on size. But, their selling prices are lower by Tk 500-Tk 700."

Before Eid, the cattle hides were selling at Tk 75-Tk 90 per square foot. But the situation worsened when big traders in the capital set a fixed purchase rate of cattle hide at Tk 50-Tk 60 right before the Eid festival. That reset the price of a piece of hide at Tk 1,200-Tk 1,600 on an average.

Md Shahidul Islam, a seasonal hide

trader of Akkelpur upazila of Joypurhat, said: "I bought at least 300 pieces of hide that cost me Tk 800-Tk 1,300 each. But, now I am worried about the fall in prices. Besides, there is a lack of buyers from outside the district."

Md Tayeb Uddin Chowdhury, president of Dinajpur Skin Traders Association, said they saw a few buyers from outside the district this year.

Our Correspondent from Natore adds: The wholesale and seasonal hide traders in Natore have purchased rawhide of sacrificial animals at prices higher than the rates fixed this year. The tanners association in Natore set the price of per square foot of cowhide at Tk 45 to Tk 50 and goatskin at Tk 20 to Tk 30 in the district.

However, the middlemen and seasonal traders bought hide at higher prices, neglecting the fixed rates.

Mokshed Ali, president of the tanners' association in Natore, said the district is the largest market in the northern region. "Leather from the Natore market meets more than 50 percent of our total demand in the

region," he added.

Belal Hossain, a seasonal buyer, said the wholesalers are not following the fixed rates and buying cowhides at higher rates.

Another seasonal retailer Habibullah said if the tanners do not buy hides at higher prices then the smugglers would buy those at higher rates for the Indian market.

Ali of the association in Natore also said he saw unknown traders who were not the representatives of the tannery owners in Dhaka.

The smugglers bought rawhides at higher prices through the seasonal traders and middlemen, Ali said, adding that smuggling will create a critical impact on the leather industry.

Tazul Islam, a seasonal trader, said nobody wants to sell hide at the fixed rates. "So we are compelled to buy hides at higher prices."

Wholesaler Mobarak Hossain in Chwalk Baddonath area in Natore alleged that the middlemen bought cowhides at Tk 2,100 to Tk 2,500 a piece for which he wanted to pay Tk 1,900.

City Brokerage gets new CEO



STAR BUSINESS DESK

Kh Asadul Islam has recently been appointed the chief executive officer of City Brokerage Ltd, said a statement.

Prior to the new assignment, Islam was the executive vice president and head of the bank's brokerage since July 2009.

City Brokerage is a subsidiary of City Bank.

Premier Leasing audit body's new chief



STAR BUSINESS DESK

Md Nasiruddin Choudhury, director of Premier Leasing and Finance Ltd, has been elected the audit committee chairman, said a statement.

A civil engineering graduate from Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology, Choudhury is the chairman of Holiday Travels Ltd and director of Mercantile Bank.

Users reiterate demand for raising Ctg port capacity

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

The demand to immediately enhance capacity of the country's prime seaport was raised again in a meeting between Chittagong Port Authority and the users yesterday.

The port users suggested the CPA take steps to make the port more efficient so that it can be used as transit by neighbouring countries.

Held at the CPA Board room, the regular monthly meeting was presided over by Chairman Commodore RU Ahmed.

However, the users expressed their satisfaction over restoration of normal

activities in the port on army deployment a month back.

They feared labour unrest, which brought Chittagong Port in a mess, might be in place in case the army is withdrawn.

To face such problem, the port users reiterated their demand to form a small and functional sub-committee of the port advisory committee so that it could sit with the CPA and any other groups related to the port in a short notice to identify and reach a solution to any problem.

SM Nurul Hoque, an FBCCI director who attended the meeting, told The Daily Star: "We've urged

the authority to take steps to make the Newmooring Container Terminal operational in order to up the port's capacity."

Mahub Chowdhury, director of Chittagong Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industries, Jashim U Ahmed of Bangladesh Shippers Council, representatives of Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association, Bangladesh Knitwear Manufacturers and Exporters Association, Bangladesh Inland Container Depots Association and Bangladesh Shipping Agents Association were present.

Muhith signals cutting tax on life insurance

UNB, Dhaka

Finance Minister AMA Muhith said yesterday there is scope to reduce the income tax rate on life insurance, as the prevailing rate in Bangladesh is the highest among neighbouring countries.

At present, the government charges 42.5 percent, while the rate is under 20 percent in India.

"The rate is very high and I think there is a scope to reduce it. But we

have to look into the matter carefully," he told the news agency after holding a meeting with the nine-member delegation of the Bangladesh Insurance Association (BIA) at his ministry's conference room.

BIA Chairman AKM Rafiqul Islam led the delegation.

Muhith said the government would look into the administrative expenses of the nongovernmental organisations that are engaged in micro-insurance activities.

He said the NGOs are exempted from paying taxes on the condition they provide services to the poor.

Muhith said the NGOs are not authorised to provide any sort of insurance in the name of micro-credit.

Terming the insurance sector in Bangladesh 'still immature', the finance minister assured the BIA delegation that cooperation would be extended to help it flourish. In this connection, he sought a roadmap from BIA for proper expansion of the sector.

Jute growers happy over lofty prices

BSS, Jessore

After many years of dull market, jute is selling at high prices in Narail district this season to the satisfaction of growers.

One maund of jute now sells at Tk 1,900-2,000 in the local markets. The rates were Tk 900-1,200 in the last two years.

Beaming with joy at the lofty prices of jute, the growers in three upazilas of the district said they had to sell the golden fibre below the production cost in the last several years.

Disappointed at the low prices,

they gave up its cultivation and switched over to paddy and vegetables farming.

Jute trading is going on in full swing at 14 markets in the three upazilas. Hundreds of growers now throng the big markets at Rugganj, Maizpara, Tularampur and Gobra under Sadar upazila; Lahuria, Mithapur, Lohagora, Naldi and Digholia under Lohagora upazila and Pahardanga, Mahazan, Kalia and Gazirhat under Kalia upazila to sell jute.

Big jute traders from different dis-

tricts, especially Jessore, Khulna and Faridpur are coming to these markets to buy jute.

Montaz Hossain, a jute cultivator of Kamargram village in Lohagora upazila, said he brought 4 bighas of land under jute cultivation and got a bumper production. He sold his produce for Tk 1 lakh.

Ruhul Amin, Narail Sadar upazila agriculture officer, told the news agency that jute was cultivated on 21,500 hectares of land against a target of 8,100 hectares in the district this season.

RAK Airways to resume Bangladesh flights



STAR BUSINESS REPORT

RAK Airways, a national carrier of United Arab Emirates (UAE), will resume passenger flights from Bangladesh next month after a break of nearly two years, officials said yesterday.

The airline will operate three weekly flights out of Dhaka and another three out of Chittagong to Ras Al Khaimah, UAE, from December 15, a press statement quoted RAK Airways Chief Executive Omar Jahameh.

"With the flights to the nation's capital Dhaka, the centre of economy and commerce, as well as to the coastal tourist spot of Chittagong, RAK Airways travellers can take advantage of the latent opportunities for trade and tourism that exists between UAE

and Bangladesh," said Jahameh.

The four-year-old airline that began flights from Dhaka and Chittagong in November 2007 paused operations from Bangladesh and other international destinations in 2009, battered by the global financial crisis.

Before the suspension, the airline was operating three flights a week from Dhaka and two flights from Chittagong to UAE.

The carrier looks to reopen flights from Bangladesh after its re-launch in September. SAK Ekramuzzaman, managing director of Mohammed Aviation, general sales agent for RAK Airways in Bangladesh, said they are working to begin flights by December 15.

"We are coming with better preparations," he said. "Ticket prices will also be very competitive."

ASHUGANJ POWER STATION COMPANY LIMITED
(An enterprise of Bangladesh Power Development Board)
Ashuganj, B.Baria-3402, Bangladesh.
Tel:0088 01714047037, Fax:0088 08528-74044

Memo No.APSC/Pro-29/2010/1620 Date :21/11/2010

"Amendment of APSC Tender Enquiry"

Tender Name, Enquiry No. & Date	Subject to be Amended	Existing as	Shall be Amended as
Acid/Chemical cleaning of Boiler of Unit # 4, Ashuganj Power Station Company Ltd. APSC/Pro-1/2010/1484 Dated: 27/10/2010	Last Selling date of Tender Document	24/11/2010 during Office hour	01/12/2010 during Office hour
	Tender closing date & time	25/11/2010 at 12:00 BST.	02/12/2010 at 12:00 BST.
	Tender Opening date & time	25/11/2010 at 12:15 BST	02/12/2010 at 12:15 BST

All other terms & Conditions shall remain unchanged.

Manager (Procurement)
APSC, Ashuganj, B-Baria