

FBCCI proposes special Japanese EPZ

Tokyo keen to invest in RMG, food processing

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Bangladesh's business leaders have proposed that Japanese put all efforts to have a separate export processing zone of their own here, which could help raise bilateral trade.

"Japan had set up special Japanese EPZ in China, Thailand and Indonesia. It could also set up such special EPZ in Chittagong and establish direct air link between Tokyo and Bangladesh's prime port city or via Myanmar or Thailand," Mostofa Azad Chowdhury Babu, vice president of Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry, told a visiting Japanese business delegation yesterday.

Babu also pointed to Bangladesh's \$330.55 million exports to the Asian economic giant last fiscal year against \$1.04 billion imports.

Foreign investors have ample scope to invest in the export-oriented industries that make high technology products, the FBCCI leader said. He also pointed out that these industrial units in a special zone could diversify the usage of native natural resources.

Bangladesh needs Japanese support to produce quality product with new technology and competitive price. Woven and knit garment, leather and footwear, shrimps, jute yarn and jute



FBCCI Vice President Mostofa Azad Chowdhury Babu speaks at a discussion with a Japanese delegation of Osaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry, led by its international business committee Chairman Yutaka Ienaga, at FBCCI boardroom in Dhaka yesterday.

goods are the main products that the country exports to Japan, Babu said.

"In our export trade with Japan, we're facing stiff competition from China, Korea, Vietnam and Indonesia who have advantage of proximity to Japan," he said.

During the meeting with Bangladesh's

apex trade body, Yutaka Ienaga, leader of the nine-member delegation that wrapped up its 3-day Dhaka visit last night, expressed their keenness to invest in some sectors such as readymade garment (RMG), manufacture of machinery and food processing.

"We want to invest in Bangladesh. Some of us are in talks with the local partners," said Ienaga, pointing to Bangladesh's scope to up RMG exports to Japan as the rules of origin have recently been proposed to be relaxed.

Ienaga is chairman of International Business Committee of Japan's Osaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

The Japanese government will bring down the three-stage formulation to a two-stage one in the case of imports of knitwear to award least developed countries a duty-free access.

Bangladesh, an LDC, is supposed to reap greater benefit from the proposed changes in line with generalised system of preferences (GSP). The relaxed RoO might come into force in April for the LDCs.

Once the new formula is in place, knitwear makers will be able to export to Japan, even if the item is made of imported yarn.

Under the current three-stage formulation, knitwear exporters have to make garments from the fabrics manufactured from locally spun yarn, although raw cotton is imported.

A 17 percent duty on the imports of knitwear items from the countries beyond the LDC category is now in place to protect the age-old Japanese knitwear industry. But the LDCs have long been enjoying zero tariff in woven exports to the Japan market.

Ctg SME fair kicks off today

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

The Small and Medium Enterprise (SME) Financing Fair-2011 begins today at the Engineers' Institute, Chittagong.

The fair, organised by SME Foundation in association with Bangladesh Bank, is expected to be opened by Dr Atiur Rahman, the central bank governor.

The people interested in SME entrepreneurship will benefit from this exposition, as it has been arranged to make them aware of such SME system, organizers told yesterday a

press conference on the eve of the fair.

Held at the Chittagong office of Bangladesh Bank (BB), the conference was addressed among others by Mohammad Nowshad Ali Chowdhury, general manager of BB, Chittagong, Syed Rezwatul Kabir, managing director of SME Foundation, and Zishan Kingshuk Haque, head of Corporate Affairs of BRAC Bank.

Thirty two banks and non-banking financial institutions will take part in the two-day fair to provide counseling for possible entrepreneurs.



Mohammad Nowshad Ali Chowdhury, general manager for Chittagong of Bangladesh Bank, and Syed Rezwatul Kabir, managing director of SME Foundation, attend a press meet to announce the SME Financing Fair-2011, at the central bank's Chittagong office yesterday.

NRBs dream own business at home

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

A majority of the expatriate Bangladeshis living in the Gulf countries such as United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Bahrain want to start their own business upon returning home, a study revealed.

A recent survey by Western Union on what the expatriates will do with 100,000 dirhams (Tk 20 lakh), if they win the prize of its 'Send Money & Win Big' promotion revealed the ambition of the non-resident Bangladeshis (NRBs), the leading money transfer company said in a statement.

The Gulf countries are home to about 80 percent of Bangladesh's total expatriate workers of over 60 lakh, with Saudi Arabia topping the list with over 22 lakh workers, contributing about 10 percent to the country's national economic growth.

More than two-thirds or 74 percent of the NRBs want to start their own business, while 26 percent wished to buy a home and 19 percent wished to donate to charity, according to the survey.

Ratheesh Kumar, Western Union's regional vice president for South Asia and South East Asia, said: "The Western Union's survey holds true to

what all global workers aspire towards and that is building a better life for their families and loved ones."

He said the consumer survey helped the company draw out the true desires of the NRB customers working in the Gulf. "Leaving home to create a better future back home is entrepreneurial itself, the study clearly indicates this passion and focus is still strong as ever."

Kumar said in spite of migrating to the Gulf in search of better employment opportunities, NRBs have not lost out on their entrepreneurial spirit. "The results of the Western Union survey corroborate

this statement, illustrating that NRBs are an enterprising, adventurous, risk-taking and a business-minded lot."

Zaan e Alam, a Bangladeshi who works at a restaurant in Saudi Arabia, said, "If I win 100,000 dirhams, I will start my own restaurant back home. I will save the rest of the money for my future use."

The second most important thing people said they wished to do is buying a house, the survey said.

The research also showed that 9 percent of the respondents would like to spend money on family, 6 percent would like to save, whereas 4

percent would like to buy either land or car.

Gyasuddin, another NRB who works at a grocery store in the UAE, said: "I will go back to Bangladesh and build a home for my family as well as build a mosque in my village. I would also like to use the money by donating to the poor and needy."

Bangladeshi expatriates sent home around \$11 billion worth of remittances in 2010.

Western Union operates a network of over 7,500 agent locations in Bangladesh, taking remittances to the beneficiaries.



Bangladesh Bank Governor Atiur Rahman, Agrani Bank Chairman Khondoker Bazlul Hoque and Managing Director Syed Abul Hamid attend the launch of "TEMENOS T24", an online banking solution of Agrani Bank, at the Westin Dhaka on Sunday.

New MD for BDBL

STAR BUSINESS DESK

Md Zillur Rahman joined Bangladesh Development Bank Ltd (BDBL) as managing director on Sunday, the bank said in a statement yesterday.

A postgraduate in management from Dhaka University, Rahman was the deputy managing director of Janata Bank prior to joining BDBL. He also obtained a PhD degree in credit management.

In his banking career of 30 years, he also served Bangladesh Krishi Bank and Rupali Bank.



Green Delta signs 'indemnity' insurance policy with Bank of Ceylon

STAR BUSINESS DESK

Green Delta Insurance Company Limited has recently signed a bankers' indemnity insurance policy with Commercial Bank of Ceylon in Dhaka, the insurer said in a statement.

The single policy is designed to cover five different risks of bankers: cash in transit, infidelity of employees, forgery on customer accounts, counterfeited currency and security items of intrinsic value.

The deal of its kind is the first in Bangladesh, according to the statement.

Green Delta's Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer Nasir A Choudhury handed over the policy to the Sri Lankan bank's Country Manager

Malaysia's Petronas finds new offshore oilfields

AFP, Kuala Lumpur

Malaysia's state-owned energy giant Petronas Monday said it has discovered new offshore oil and gas reserves in eastern Sarawak state.

Successful drilling of a well last March and a subsequent appraisal well brought a significant discovery for Petronas with early estimates showing there are 2.6 trillion standard cubic feet of net gas in place, it said.

The firm added that another well was drilled last December and a preliminary evaluation showed around 100 million barrels of oil and 0.2 trillion standard cubic feet of gas.

Petronas said that in the next three years it, along with its production-sharing contractors, expected to drill more than 50 exploration wells off Malaysia.

"These activities, especially if they result in discoveries, are expected to spur business opportunities in the oil and gas industry and will promote upstream investment in the country," it said.

Petronas last June said it will scale back on foreign drilling and focus its development and extraction efforts closer to home.

Petronas -- Malaysia's only Fortune 500 company -- accounts for almost half the country's bud-

Abramovich slips down Russia's rich list

AFP, Moscow

Chelsea Football Club owner Roman Abramovich is no longer one of Russia's three richest men after being outranked by oligarchs who benefited from recovering oil and commodity prices, a report said Monday.

The 2011 rich list compiled by Moscow's Finans magazine put Abramovich's wealth at \$17.1 billion, up only \$100 million in a strong year that saw some of Russia's other 114 billionaires make dramatic gains.

Vladimir Lisin, the publicity-shy owner of the Novolipetsk Steel giant, retained his position as Russia's wealthiest man, seeing his fortune soar to \$28.3 billion from \$18.8 billion in 2010.

He was followed by Onexim investment fund owner Mikhail Prokhorov at \$22.7 billion and Alisher Usmanov, the part-owner of Arsenal Football Club, whose wealth was estimated by Finans at \$19.9 billion.

Abramovich slipped to fifth behind Oleg Deripaska, the majority shareholder in steel maker UC Rusal whose empire was worth \$19 billion, Finans said.

Russia's biggest tycoons -- many of whom made their fortunes in the chaotic privatisations of the 1990s and then accrued major political influence -- were hit hard by the onset of the global financial crisis in 2008.



Obaidullah al Ejaz, Chevron Bangladesh's external affairs manager, addresses a road safety awareness meeting at Char Kajal under Patuakhali district recently. The meeting was organised to mark Chevron's Global Road Safety Week from February 2-7.



Green Delta Insurance Company has recently signed a bankers' indemnity insurance policy with Commercial Bank of Ceylon at a programme in Dhaka. The insurer's Managing Director Nasir A Choudhury handed the policy to the bank's Country Manager S Prabagar at the programme.