

10m new jobs in five years

Planning Commission member speaks on unemployed youth

STAR BUSINESS REPORT
The government predicts that over 10 million new jobs will be created in the economy due to accelerated growth in manufacturing, construction and service sectors during the Sixth Five Year Plan (SFYP) period spanning 2011-2015.

Growth in the services sector is expected to create more than half of the total new employment opportunities. Nearly three million will come from the expansion of manufacturing and a million in the construction sector.

The prediction has been made in the draft of the SFYP 2011-2015, said Prof Shamsul Alam, member of the Planning Commission, at a programme yesterday.

The SFYP forecasts that the new opportunities in non-farm sectors will enable a large number of people to shift from agriculture, which is often called a place for disguised unemployed people.

The prediction about the new job opportunities, especially in the industrial sector, however, drew doubts from economist Mahabub Hossain, who called the projection 'too ambitious'.

"It's a big challenge. For this, the sector will need to grow by 13 percent from the present 6.4 percent a year," said Hossain, former director general of Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS).

His remarks came at a discussion on unemployment prob-

lems of the educated youths, at Bangabandhu International Conference Centre.

According to Hossain, also executive director of NGO BRAC, there exist opportunities of creating more jobs. "Agriculture is quite a vibrant sector now," he said, adding that it has created demand for products and services in the domestic economy.

"Time has come for industrialisation targeting domestic economy. If we can do it, employment opportunities will rise," he said.

The government is framing the SFYP targeting higher economic growth to address unemployment at a time when 2.1 million youths enter the job market every year. The number

of really jobless people will be higher if the jobless rate is considered.

Discussants said unemployment of educated youths is a major issue, which needs to be addressed to avoid social crises.

Bangladesh Economic Association and Dhaka School of Economics organised the programme as an activity under Bangladesh Social Economic Forum 2011. Prof Alauddin Ahmed, prime minister's adviser on education, also spoke.

Alam of Planning Commission said accelerated growth of manufacturing and services sectors along with construction will help absorb 9.2 million new entrants to the job market in 2011-2015. More people will get

jobs aboard, he added.

To achieve the target, Alam said the SFYP will focus on creating job opportunities in rural areas and wage labour industries, providing credit and training for self-employment.

It also eyes promoting subcontracting arrangements between big, small and medium industries and providing specialised training to support more skilled people getting jobs abroad, added Alam.

"We will have to modernise our education for enhancing productivity," he said, adding the SFYP aims to create facilities to help the private sector flourish. There is vast scope for new job openings if the private sector grows, he added.



BIAA
Shahab Uddin Khan, left, president of Bangladesh Indenting Agents' Association, presents a crest to Wang Lingzhen, deputy director of foreign liaison department of China Foreign Trade Centre, when Khan called on her on the sidelines of Canton Fair at Guangzhou in China recently.

Bhutanese delegates visit SME Foundation

STAR BUSINESS DESK

A high-powered delegation comprising both government and non-government officials from Bhutan yesterday expressed keen interest to work jointly with the SME sector of Bangladesh.

Visiting officials from the Himalayan nation showed their enthusiasm while a six-member delegation headed by Sonam P Wangdi, director of Economic Affairs Ministry of Bhutan, visited SME Foundation office in the city, according to a statement.

SME Foundation Managing Director Syed Rezwanaul Kabir informed the delegation that Bangladesh government is also keen about the development of the SME sector.

He said proper nursing and development of the small and medium enterprises and upholding women empowerment would help boost income opportunities, strengthen household security, improve living standards and reduce the risk of unemployment.

Kabir urged the delegation to import Bangladeshi products such as handmade garments products, jute and leather goods and to invest in the SME sector under the public-private partnership.

Wangdi said Bhutan is keen to invest in joint venture projects in different sectors in Bangladesh. He expressed hope to work with the SME Foundation for the betterment of the sector of both countries.

Counselor for trade from the Royal Bhutanese Embassy in Dhaka Dorji Rinchen, director of Economic Affairs Ministry Ugyen Penjir, third secretary of Foreign Ministry Nangyal Warji, chief trade promotion officer Kasma Wangchuk and deputy chief industry officer of the Ministry of Industry Sangla also spoke at the meeting.

They also exchanged ideas on issues like capacity building, women entrepreneurship, poverty alleviation and job generation, co-ordination, monitoring system, encouragement and providing necessary assistance and guidance for the SME develop-

AMTOB elects top brass



Mehboob Chowdhury

Tore Johnsen

STAR BUSINESS DESK

The Association of Mobile Telecom Operators of Bangladesh (AMTOB) has recently elected Mehboob Chowdhury, chief executive officer of Citycell, as chairman and Tore Johnsen, Grameenphone CEO, as vice chairman.

AMTOB represents all the six mobile phone operators in Bangladesh -- Airtel, Banglalink, Citycell, Grameenphone, Robi and Teletalk.

"We will work more closely with all stakeholders to introduce futuristic services through effective regulatory and policy engagements," said Chowdhury. "Our goal is to expedite the introduction of world-class mobile telecoms services in Bangladesh."

Johnsen said: "Mobile phone plays pivotal role in the development of Bangladesh. AMTOB members are committed to widen the role at a faster pace."

Chairman of GSM Asia Pacific, Chowdhury founded the South Asia Mobile Forum in 2002. Johnsen comes with decades of experience in the telecoms sector. He held top positions in diverse mobile markets of Europe and Asia before joining Grameenphone in March 2011.

New chairman for Jamuna Bank

STAR BUSINESS DESK

Jamuna Bank elected Md Belal Hossain as chairman at the bank's 168th board meeting in Dhaka yesterday.

Hossain is the managing director of Belcon Company (Pvt) Ltd, Nadia Food and Agro Industries (Pvt) Ltd and BH Specialised Cold Storage (Pvt) Ltd.



Syed Mahabur Rahman, managing director of BRAC Bank, inaugurates the Rokeya Sarani branch of the bank in Dhaka on Tuesday.

BRAC BANK

Exports grow 40pc in nine months

Commerce ministry official hails businessmen at Ctg seminar

ARUN BIKASH DEY, Ctg

Bangladesh has achieved 40 percent export growth in the last nine months of current fiscal year, said a senior government official yesterday.

The growth was only 10 percent in 2009-10 due to the global recession, added Monoj Kumar Roy, joint secretary of the commerce ministry. "The credit goes to business organisations and their leaders to overcome the situation very quickly."

Roy addressed a seminar on "Effective Participation in International Trade Fairs" at the Export Promotion Bureau (EPB) in Chittagong.

"BGMEA, BKMEA, FBCCI and other business organisations, besides their role in solving business-related problems in the country, have helped expand markets abroad."

Roy hoped the export growth rate will increase by the year. He opined business leaders can be valuable persons in the advancement of export growth with their effective participation in international trade fairs.

The only role the government has in the present economic system is that of a facilitator.

"We depend on the private sector for our business," he said adding that the private sector is matured now.

The government has already taken a lot of steps to remove the hindrances to business, he said.

Abdul Mayeen, regional manager of EPB for Chittagong, said they have set a target of \$3.5 billion in export earnings in fiscal 2010-11. Mayeen hoped EPB will exceed the target in the rest of the three months of current fiscal year.

Salahuddin Mahmud, director for policy and planning of EPB, presented the keynote paper in the seminar.

Mahmud stated different techniques for businessmen on how to make their participation effective in international trade fairs.

He said international fairs help the participants build a good communication channel with the buyers.

He said Bangladesh received export orders worth \$352.26 million in 2009-10.

Take moves to return stock investors' money

Speakers urge the government at IBFB workshop

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Eminent jurist Dr Kamal Hossain yesterday said the money embezzled from the capital market should be returned to the people.

"Thousands of crores of taka plundered in the share market are the resources of people. So, the government has to find out those who are involved in the share market scam," Hossain added.

He spoke at a workshop organised by International Business Forum of Bangladesh (IBFB) on business ethics at Sonargaon Hotel in Dhaka.

He said dishonest people are small in number in the country. "But they are very powerful and they possess a serious threat to the nation's prosperity and development."

Describing unethical business practice as a social disease, he said coalition of honest people from businesses, lawyers and politicians is a must to face them together.

Speaking as the chief guest, Commerce Minister Faruk Khan said lack of ethics and unethical practices are not the problems for Bangladesh only but for other countries. But, he said, businesses will have to be more concentrated on

ethical practice and avoid the tendency of making abnormal profits.

Khan said the country's business will not grow further if ethics are not maintained. He also came down heavily on a section of businessmen who do not maintain ethics in business.

"We don't want to see any election under a caretaker government," said AK Azad, president of the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry, as the special guest.

Azad said around 50 percent businessmen will leave the country if a caretaker government takes the power in future as the business community do not want to be harassed anymore like before.

The apex trade body chief said: "The election commission can conduct the national election freely and fairly without any caretaker government if the commission is strengthened."

He urged the government to identify the stockmarket plunderers.

Mahmudul Islam, president of IBFB, said corruption is a major hurdle to the country's economic growth, as the corrupted money is being spent in the productive sector.



MINDSHARE
Unilever Pureit partnered with Singer Bangladesh on Tuesday to market Pureit, a technology that purifies water without gas or electricity, through Singer showrooms across Bangladesh from the second week of May. Rakesh Mohan, managing director and chairman of Unilever Bangladesh, and AM Hamim Rahmatullah, MD and CEO of Singer Bangladesh, signed the deal.

HSBC closes hedging deal with ACI

STAR BUSINESS DESK

HSBC Bangladesh has recently closed two euro-dollar 'seagull' transactions with ACI Group, the bank said yesterday.

A seagull option is a three-legged strategy used in forex trading that offers a hedge against undesirable changes in the price of the underlying asset and provides advantages from any market move in their favour. HSBC said the currency hedging solution will safeguard ACI against exchange risks arising from import obligations.

Unlike a plain forward transaction, the client does not have to pay any premium cost for this.

A forerunner in actively analysing

various hedging tools used in the international market, ACI Group earlier used a cross-currency option to hedge their currency risk before closing the Seagull deal with HSBC.

"ACI has always been in the forefront of using financial engineering tools available under Bangladesh's forex regulations," said Mualllem A Chowdhury, executive director for finance and planning of ACI Group.

Bashar M Tareq, head of global markets of HSBC Bangladesh, said: "As the world's local bank, HSBC is committed to support the development of local financial markets and offer relevant solutions to our clients, aligned with the local regulatory framework."