

Energy efficiency pulls in focus

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

The government should help the country's industries replace their energy-guzzling machineries with energy-efficient technology and enact laws to ensure efficient use of scarce gas and costly electricity, speakers at a roundtable said yesterday.

They urged the government to speed up process to set up the Sustainable Energy Development Authority (SEDA) and enact the Energy Conservation Act to have policies and legal framework for saving energy.

The roundtable on 'promoting energy efficiency in industries' was arranged at CIRDAP auditorium in the city.

Power plants, fertiliser plants and other industries together consume over 80 percent of the 2,000 million cubic feet of gas produced in the country, while industries and commercial enti-

ties account for half of the 5,500 megawatt of electricity generated, according to the government estimates.

Prof Dr Ijaz Hossain, a professor of department of chemical engineering at Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BuEt), said, "The government must understand to what extent the country's economy is suffering due to its decision to produce oil-based power."

"The government might achieve something in the shorter term, but I think there will be no gain in the long-run," he said.

The expert said the average energy efficiency of the power plants run by Power Development Board is 31 percent. "It is unthinkable in any country in the world to have such power plants in 2011," he added.

"So, energy efficiency should be one of the major pillars of Bangladesh. But it seems that the

government is not serious about it, as we do not know how long it will take for the government to pass the SEDA and the Energy Conservation Act."

Hossain said, "The government would never be able to reach its target on energy without energy efficiency, as there is no initiative to set up coal-based power plants and the country is making very little progress in finding new gas."

He said equipment and technology used in the country's most industries are energy inefficient and should be replaced with new technology. Gas-guzzling fertiliser plants and boilers should also be replaced.

Dr Khursheed Ul Islam, senior advisor of Sustainable Energy For Development of GIZ, said, "The country's power situation has improved thanks to increase in generation, but the economy

is under pressure to achieve this due to increased import of liquid fuels."

"Adding on the generation side is, of course, necessary, but the demand side management through efficient use of energy and its conservation by planning and implementation of appropriate technological, capacity building and policy intervention can release the pressure to a significant extent," he said.

Islam said appropriate intervention is needed in areas of industrial lighting, motors, boilers, steel re-rolling mills, brick-kilns, sugar, pulp and paper, fertiliser and ceramics industries to improve energy efficiency.

"Energy audit is the major tool to identify and quantify the need for any energy efficiency intervention. Experience of neighbouring countries shows that creation of certified energy audi-

tors combined with implementation of the Energy Conservation Act became the major catalyst to trigger off rapid dissemination of energy efficiency measures."

Abdul Aziz Khan, managing director of Titas Gas Transmission and Distribution Company Ltd, said his company has installed 5,000 prepaid metres in Lalmatia in the capital as pilot basis to prevent wastage of gas.

"The state-run company will install more metres in the coming days," he said.

Khan said around 5,000 industrial units in the country use boilers from the models of 1980s, which consume a huge amount of gas compared to modern machineries. "The owners do not want to remove them as new technology will require new investment. We are ready to fund them so that new boilers can save 60 percent of gas."



KBCCI

Korean embassy in Bangladesh and Korea-Bangladesh Chamber of Commerce and Industry organised a seminar on "Current Economic Situation: Challenges and Risks" at The Westin Dhaka on Monday.

Stocks end week in the red

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Share prices fell yesterday for the fifth consecutive day as investors refrained from making new investments.

DGEN, the benchmark general index of the Dhaka Stock Exchange (DSE), fell 98.88 points or 1.97 percent to end the week at 4,932.30.

The index again fell to the 5,000-point level after three weeks as investors went for huge selling in the last few days.

The hesitation of making new investment has crippled investors in the last couple of weeks.

Investors are reluctant to make new investment although the Securities and Exchange Commission declared a stimulus package on November 23 to boost investors' confidence, said a market analyst.

Experts said the present market situation is lucrative for new investment as share prices are low.

A group of institutional investors remained inactive and observed the market carefully, they said.

The market started the day on a positive note, gaining more than 40 points in the first trading session. However, the market started to decline due to huge sell-offs for the rest of the day.

The investors also demonstrated in front of the DSE building to protest the relentless fall in the market. They demanded prompt stabilisation of the market.

Among the major sectors, non-bank financial institutions declined 2.6 percent.

The banking and telecommunication sectors declined more than 2 percent. The power sector lost 1.61 percent and pharmaceuticals shed 1.12 percent.

Turnover on the premier bourse stood at Tk 202 crore, which is 26.2 percent lower than the previous day.

Of the total 254 issues traded on the DSE, 39 advanced and 204 declined. A total of 11 issues remained unchanged.

Beximco traded 7.05 lakh shares worth Tk 8.11 crore as the turnover leader.

Sonali Aansh was the biggest gainer of the day, posting a 9.98 percent gain, while Rahim Food was



ROBI

Badar Uddin Ahmed Kamran, mayor of Sylhet City Corporation, inaugurates an 'Internet Corner' sponsored by mobile operator Robi in Sylhet divisional public library yesterday. Segufta Y Samad, Robi vice president, was also present.



ENVOY TEXTILES

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina hands National Export Trophy (gold) for 2009-10 to the Chairman of Envoy Textiles Kutubuddin Ahmed at a programme in the capital recently.

Bangladesh on a rising tide

Noted economist tells seminar

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Noted economist Binayak Sen said Bangladesh is now on a rising tide; there are a few countries in the world that are both rising socially and economically.

Sen was speaking at a national seminar on rural employment opportunities at Bangabandhu International Conference Centre styled 'Sharing of REOPA experience, results and lessons learnt'.

The project, REOPA (Rural Employment Opportunities for Public Assets), is a social safety net programme arranged by the Local Government Division with United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and European Union (EU) as development partners.

Sen said development should not be measured from economic data alone; rather, it should consider the confidence levels or helplessness of the people. These are not considered in the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) of the United Nations, he said.

He also said if the local governments work well, then the social safety net programmes will work better.

The REOPA project is ending this December and the seminar was arranged to share experiences, results and the lessons learnt, with project stakeholders. At the seminar, a report was also published.

Speakers at the programme highly appreciated the people who implemented the workforce, as it was a successful one. A beneficiary of the project, Nurjahan Begum of Belkuchi in Sirajganj district, expressed gratitude as she is now a self-employed woman. She makes compost fertiliser at home.

In response to a question, she said she wants to see herself as a local government representative in the future. A number of women of her village are self employed under this project, she added.

The REOPA project was designed to respond to the needs of the most vulnerable groups of people in rural Bangladesh. It focused on generating employment and alleviating poverty through effective local government institutions, community partnerships and pro-poor service delivery, said Goran Jonsson, international team leader of the project.

Jahangir Kabir Nanak, state minister of the local government, rural development and cooperatives ministry (LGRD), said 15 percent of the national budget is allocated for the social safety net programmes, where more than 80 programmes are currently going on.

Abu Alam Md Shahid Khan, LGRD secretary, Milko Van Gool, head of cooperation of EU, and Stefan Priesner, country director of UNDP, also spoke at the programme.

Keep believing in yourself

Successful businesspeople urge young Bangladeshis

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Bangladesh has its success stories. But a lack of confidence and self-underating holds the country back in realising its full potential, said a panel of top business executives yesterday.

They said such attitudes should be changed. Instead, confidence in own ability and continuous efforts of all should be the national motto leitmotifs to achieve excellence for building a prosperous Bangladesh.

"We have to change our attitude that we cannot. We are poor. This attitude has nipped our possibilities in the bud," said Niaz Rahim, group director of automotive battery maker-supermarket pioneer Rahimafrooz.

"We can if we try. You have to be humble and confident. Do not underrate yourself, your country. Believe in yourself," he said, citing that continuous efforts and an urge to compete globally have helped Rahimafrooz to export its automotive battery to 34 countries, including China and India.

Rahim made the remark at a gathering of under and post-graduate students of the Department of Industrial and Production Engineering (IPE) of Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology.

Department of IPE and Association of Industrial Production Engineers (AIPE) jointly organised the event titled IPE Symposium.

Chairman of export-oriented shipbuilding firm Ananda Shipyard

Abdullahel Bari, Director of Corporate Affairs of cosmetics and toiletries maker Kohinoor Chemical Abul Khair and Chief Operating Officer (COO) of furniture giant Otobi Ltd Mohammed Kamruz Zaman also spoke on the occasion.

Rahim said Bangladesh needs to stand up with identity as a nation. For this, a change of the negative mindset of the Bangladeshis is a must.

"When we go abroad, many of us feel humiliated to introduce ourselves as Bangladeshis. We have to shun this mindset. This country belongs to us. This is our identity."

Khair said Bangladesh has many outstanding and courageous entrepreneurs who are carrying forward the industrialisation in the country despite various barriers.

"Once we bought ferries from Denmark. Now we export to that country," said the chairman of Ananda Shipyard.

Giving tips to students about success in life and career, Rahim said none should give up in trying succeeding.

"You have to be positive. Do not give up," he said. "We did not give up. That's why, our battery is going to China, which exports its products to the whole world."

Khair suggested students and young employees to refrain from frequently changing workplaces. "You have to give your employer adequate space to evaluate your performance," he said.

Otobi COO recommended that students stick to honesty throughout to shine in life. "Be humble but don't accept unjust practices," he said.



IDLC INVESTMENTS

MA Mannan, managing director of Butterfly Marketing, and Md Moniruzzaman, managing director of IDLC Investments, exchange documents after signing a deal recently. IDLC Investments will be issue manager for an initial public offering of Butterfly. Selim RF Hussain, chairman of IDLC, was also present.



AAMRA TECHNOLOGIES

Syed Faruque Ahmed, chairman of aamra technologies, and Syed Farhad Ahmed, managing director, attend the 22nd annual general meeting of the company in the capital recently. The company declared 10 percent cash dividends for 2011.

Training on eco-friendly brick-kilns begins

STAR BUSINESS DESK

A three-day hands-on training programme on environment-friendly low-cost brick making technology started at Ashulia Campus of Annesha Group, Savar on Wednesday.

In coordination with Gesellschaft Fur Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), Annesha Group and the Embassy of Brazil jointly organised the event.

Francisco Jose Casanova, a professor of Federal University of Rio de Janeiro, conducted the training session. He also presented an innovative idea on environment-friendly brick-making technology.

Debair Silva, vice-councilor of Brazilian embassy in Bangladesh, and UM Ashek, managing director of Annesha Group, also spoke.

Jeanette Weruer, representative of GIZ in Bangladesh, university teachers, experts from environmental department, brick field owners and workers, were also present.

Prof Casanova will also deliver a keynote paper on "Environment-Friendly Low-Cost Brick Making Technology" at Sonargaon Hotel in Dhaka on December 11, said a statement.

Dilip Barua, industries minister and Prof Abul Barkat, president of Bangladesh Economic Associa-

Bangladesh second worst to invest in: Survey

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Bangladesh is the second worst country after Myanmar in the Asia-Pacific region to invest in, according to a survey conducted by Singapore-based Vriens & Partners.

Vriens & Partners is an Asia-focused corporate advisory firm, specialising in government relations and public affairs and political risk analysis. The firm offers expert counsel and a suite of discreetly tailored and highly specialised services to multinationals, non-profits and governments.

The survey, which was published recently, ranked Bangladesh 18th in the "Good Governance for International Business Index in 2011" out of the 19 countries surveyed.

Bangladesh was placed at the bottom last year when the firm launched the index.

But this year the country is just ahead of Myanmar -- a country still largely shut off from foreign investment.

However, Bangladesh scored remarkably well on the taxation pillar as the current government has looked to reform the country's out-dated tax code, but it received weak scores across the remaining pillars, which is not encouraging, said Vriens &