

STOCKS		COMMODITIES		As of Friday		ASIAN MARKETS		Friday closings		CURRENCIES		STANDARD CHARTERED BANK	
Week-on-week													
DGEN	CSCX	Gold	Oil	MUMBAI	TOKYO	SINGAPORE	SHANGHAI	USD	EUR	GBP	JPY	BUY TK	SELL TK
▼ 5.81%	▼ 5.08%	\$1,713.99 (per ounce)	\$98.04 (per barrel)	▼ 1.74%	▼ 1.48%	▼ 1.24%	▼ 0.62%	79.85	105.26	123.40	0.97	80.85	109.45
4,932.30	9,058.21			16,200.99	8,536.46	2,694.60	2,325.27						1.06



BUSINESS

DHAKA SUNDAY DECEMBER 11, 2011, e-mail:business@thedailystar.net

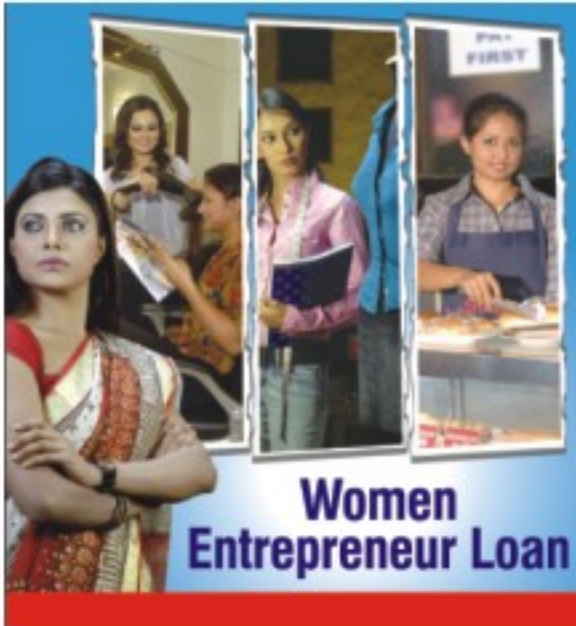


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RMG makers want power connections to new units

Three-day textile show BATEXPO kicks off

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Garment makers yesterday demanded gas and electricity connections to new factories to help them start production soon.

Many industrial units built a few years back are yet to start production due to the gas and power crises, said the garment exporters.

“We demand the government give priority to the industrialists who want to relocate their factories outside Dhaka to reduce traffic jam in the capital,” said Shafiul Islam Mohiuddin, president of Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA).

Mohiuddin spoke at the inaugural session of the three-day Bangladesh Apparel and Textile Exposition at Bangabandhu International Conference Centre. The BGMEA has organised the mega annual exposition to showcase local apparel products to international buyers.

The BGMEA president also urged the government to increase the use of Mongla port to ease pressure on the Chittagong port and upgrade Dhaka-Chittagong highway to six lanes to help carry exportable cargos easily.

The government should increase gas and power production and announce national coal policy soon to ensure a sustainable energy solution, he added. Mohiuddin also demanded easy bank loans for setting up effluent treatment plants.

“We need more policy supports to enter new markets such as Japan, South Africa, Latin American countries, New Zealand and Australia,” he said. The traditional export markets of Bangladeshi garments are the EU-27 countries and the US.

Nasir Uddin Chowdhury, first vice-president of the trade body, urged the government to start



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina takes a look at a children's wear after inaugurating the country's biggest apparel exhibition, BATEXPO, at Bangabandhu International Conference Centre yesterday.

coal-based power plants to contain the power crisis in the industrial units.

LGRD and Cooperatives Minister Syed Ashraf Islam said the government will give support to the garment makers in their initiative to set up a full-fledged world standard university that will offer courses on garment making.

Shipping Minister Shajahan Khan said Paangaon River Port in Narayanganj will start functioning from next year to connect up Chittagong and Mongla ports. He said trade unionism is not being properly practised in the garment sector. “Trade unionism does not mean

destroying the industries,” he added.

Civil Aviation and Tourism Minister Faruk Khan urged the garment makers to improve the standards of their exportable clothing items.

Textiles and Jute Minister Abdul Latif Siddiqui, Commerce Minister GM Quader and Industries Minister Dilip Barua also spoke.

The domestic and international buyers and manufacturers will display their products at a total of 146 stalls at the show, he said.

Garment business representatives from Thailand, India, China and Pakistan are also participating in the show that is open to all throughout the day.

Sluggish real estate jolts glassmakers

SAJJADUR RAHMAN

A sluggish real estate sector has affected the growth of glass processing industry, market players said.

Float-glass manufacturers, who saw a jump in domestic demand in 2009 and 2010, have been facing a sort of stagnation since early this year.

“No gas and electricity in new buildings has put a brake on our growth,” said Mizanur Rahman, marketing manager of PHP Float Glass Industries.

Now the company plans to go for making value added products, such as tempered, low-emission and solar control glass, to increase the volume of their revenue, Rahman said.

Nasir Glass Industries, a market leader, is in a better position due to its variety of products.

“Our business is still growing at a double digit rate, but if gas and electricity were available, the growth could be 25 percent this year,” said Abu Sayed, general manager of Nasir Glass.

Nasir Glass has a capacity to produce 250 tonnes per day and PHP 120 tonnes. Both of the manufacturers are now running under-capacity.

The use of float glass in

buildings is relatively new in Bangladesh. Before Nasir and PHP entered the market -- in 2005 and 2006 respectively -- the product was imported in a small scale.

Glass-sheet factories -- Usmania Glass (state-owned) and MEB Glass -- made cheaper glass used in more affordable structures long before Nasir and PHP came to the market.

The glass market is around Tk 800 crore a year, market players said.

Silica and gas, the primary needs of the float glass makers, are available in Bangladesh, while the secondary raw materials such as dolomite, feldspar and limestone are imported from neighbouring Bhutan, Nepal and India.

A surge in construction, which was almost stalled during the army-backed

caretaker government in 2007-08, was behind the rise in local demand for float glass in 2009 and 2010.

Now hundreds of newly-made flats remain unsold due to the absence of gas and electricity connection, which has affected not only the glass industry but also ceramics, tiles, steel and sanitary ware.

“We did not grow this year compared to the growth in 2010,” said Khoshed Alam, managing director of MAB Glass that manufactures sheet glass.

MAB's per day capacity remains stagnant at 30 tonnes, said Alam.

Earlier, in 2010 Nasir and PHP reduced their exports to meet the growing demand in the domestic market.

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93pc still without insurance: UNDP

UNB, Dhaka

About 93 percent of the country's population still remains outside insurance coverage and the absence of micro-insurance regulation makes it difficult to bring the poor under it, said a UNDP study published recently.

The poor are the most vulnerable to a wide range of risks, including illness and injury, death of livestock, harvest failure, flood, cyclones and droughts, as they do not have sufficient means of coping with a risk when it strikes, the study said.

The UNDP study titled "Micro-insurance for the Ultra Poor" was formally released last week.

Though Bangladesh is rich in social safety-nets, these typically provide a coping mechanism for affected households after a shock has occurred, and there is no system in place to provide protection against risks before they appear, the study added.



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