

No surcharge

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yesterday after a meeting with telecom operators and ministry officials at his secretariat office.

The minister said Jica President Akihiko Tanaka and the new WB President Jim Yong Kim met on Wednesday night in Washington and discussed the issue of reviewing the Bank's cancellation of its \$1.2 billion funding for the project.

"But the meeting's outcome is yet to be known as it was held late last night [Wednesday night]."

Later in the afternoon, Kei Toyama, Jica senior representative in Dhaka, held a meeting with Muhith at the latter's office.

As Toyama came out of the meeting, journalists wanted to know from him the outcome of the Washington meeting. Toyama told journalists, "Nothing to give you yet."

Muhith said the government is still considering four alternative sources of funds

for the project.

If the first option -- the revival of the loan agreement with the WB -- works, the government won't have to consider the other options, said Muhith.

But if the WB does not change its decision, the government will finalise loan deals with other development partners, including Japan International Cooperation Agency (Jica), Islamic Development Bank (IDB) and Asian Development Bank (ADB).

"The third option is to go for Public Private Partnership and sign a deal with Malaysia for getting funds. If the first two options don't work, we will finalise the loan deal with Malaysia to build the bridge under PPP initiative," Muhith said.

The fourth and final option is to construct the bridge with own resources, he said.

"I am hopeful that the World Bank will reconsider its decision because

Bangladesh has already fulfilled the Bank's two [remaining] conditions."

To fulfil the global lender's conditions, the Anti-Corruption Commission had formed a committee to probe the corruption allegations against former communications minister Syed Abul Hossain and a government official, said Muhith.

The government official, who was allegedly involved in corruption, had already gone on leave, he said.

"Abul is a patriot. He has resigned voluntarily to keep his dignity. He made our task easier."

Muhith said, "Our decision is to start the project's initial work within this year."

He said the Economic Relations Division had not sent any letter to the WB to reconsider its loan cancellation, but different newspapers published that the ERD sent a letter to the lending agency for reviewing its decision.

"The World Bank has been saying that they have credible evidence [of corruption in the project], but it is not credible to us." The WB must prove who committed the corruption, he said.

The government has decided to open two bank accounts -- one foreign and one local currency account -- to collect money from people for the bridge project, Muhith said.

People are free to deposit money directly to the accounts. If anybody wishes to donate a big amount through a cheque, the person can seek time from the prime minister for handing over the cheque to her.

But nobody is allowed to deposit undisclosed money with the bank accounts, he said.

The government agency concerned will inform people about the bank accounts through newspaper advertisements, and Bangladesh Bridge Authority will manage the accounts, said the minister.

The WB on June 29 cancelled its \$1.2 billion project funding that it had kept suspended since last September on allegations that ex-communication minister Abul and some public officials were involved in corruption in selecting the Canadian company SNC-Lavalin for the bridge's supervisory work.

Muhith yesterday clarified his July 24 comment on Abul's resignation.

Talking to some journalists at his secretariat office on July 24, Muhith said, "Abul is in town".

The minister meant that the journalists could contact Abul to enquire him about his resignation, as he was in the capital.

But different newspapers and electronic media misquoted Muhith as saying, "Abul is down."

Muhith clarified it in yesterday's press briefing, and said, "I meant Abul is in town."

Reform bid hibernating

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to plug legal loopholes and to empower the commission further.

They finalised the proposals after holding a series of talks with political parties and civil society personalities and on February 2 this year and then sent the proposals to the law ministry for vetting.

Officials at the EC Secretariat said the law ministry at the end of February sent back the proposals to the newly constituted EC for its opinion. The new EC decided to examine the necessity of the reforms.

"We have yet to make any decision about the reform proposals. We did not hold any formal discussion on it," Chief Election Commissioner Kazi Rakibuddin Ahmad told The Daily Star on Saturday.

He said the EC would review the existing electoral laws to assess the need for reforms.

Echoing the CEC, Election Commissioner Shah Nawaz said, "We will examine the

reform proposals before making any decision."

Officials at the EC Secretariat said even though around six months had gone by, the EC was yet to hold any meetings to discuss the proposals for reforms.

The reform proposals include making it mandatory for the Cabinet Division and three ministries--LGRD, public administration affairs and home--to consult with the EC before making any decision regarding the elections.

The proposals also include empowering voters to file complaints with the EC against MPs if they conceal information or furnish false information about themselves in their affidavits submitted during the polls, cancellation of election of such MPs by the EC, introduction of committees to curb the influence of black money in the polls, and authority to punish government officials for incompetence and neglect of poll duties.

About the proposal for having control over the Cabinet Division and three ministries, Election Commissioner Shah Nawaz questioned its necessity.

"Why will the Election Commission control the Cabinet Division and three ministries only?" he told The Daily Star recently. "The education ministry plays a vital role during the polls as a huge number of teachers are engaged in election duties. Why will the education ministry not be kept under the commission?" he said hinting that the EC did not need to control any ministries.

Shah Nawaz was not alone in questioning the reform proposals. CEC Kazi Rakibuddin Ahmad last month said the EC did not require further authority during the parliamentary elections. It had adequate power to conduct the parliamentary polls, he argued.

Talking to reporters, another Election Commissioner, Zayed Ali,

last month said, "Why should only four ministries be kept under the commission? Why not other ministries? Don't the other ministries have any influence on the election?"

He said the EC was trying to ascertain whether it needed more authority during the general elections in the changed circumstances and was scrutinising the existing laws and provisions.

When his attention was drawn to his previous comments, Kazi Rakibuddin on Saturday said, "It's all theoretical talk. It is difficult to speak about the reform proposals before we discuss them."

Former election commissioner Brig Gen (ret'd) M Sakhawat Hussain said he and his colleagues had made the proposals to strengthen the EC further. They prepared the proposals in light of the experience gained while conducting the 2008 parliamentary polls and later elections to different local government bodies.

"We had to face some difficulties in implementing the RPO [Representation of the People's Order] during the last parliamentary polls. So, we made the proposals to overcome the difficulties by amending the laws."

"We prepared the proposals in consultation with all political parties, civil society personalities and others concerned. I don't know whether the new EC has something to do with the reform proposals."

The past EC led by ATM Shamsul Huda also finalised the upazila parishad election rules and electoral rolls rules. Both the rules were sent to the law ministry for vetting. The law ministry, however, sent back the drafts to the newly formed EC in February this year for its opinion.

"The present EC examined the draft rules, but it did not bring about any major changes in the two rules. It only corrected some spelling mistakes. And then we sent them to the law ministry for vetting," a senior EC official said.

Labour issues

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understanding of the reality of the market in America for Bangladesh's readymade garments. That market is currently under threat due to a perfect storm," the ambassador said during a discussion at The Daily Star office.

The latest of the factors is the unresolved murder of labour leader Aminul Islam, who worked for the Bangladesh Centre for Workers' Solidarity affiliated with the AFL-CIO, the umbrella American organisation for organised labour.

The Aminul murder is being seen by the US as reflecting a major escalation in the movement for greater labour rights, Mozena noted at the discussion during his courtesy visit to The Daily Star.

Editor Mahfuz Anam and senior journalists, including various department heads,

were present on the occasion.

The other big factor, according to Mozena, is a pending petition from the AFL-CIO (American Federation of Labour and Congress of Industrial Organisations) against Bangladesh's having access to Generalised System of Preference (GSP), a duty-free privilege to the US.

According to the AFL-CIO, this petition has been driven on the basis of Bangladesh's failure to ensure workers basic labour rights. Pending since 2006/7, it is likely to come to a closure this year.

"Evolution of labour concerns in Bangladesh will of course impact [the closure]," Mozena said. "If it comes negatively for Bangladesh, that would be a powerful negative message for us about the Bangladesh market."

The third factor that

raises clouds over garment exports is Bangladesh's refusal to sign the Trade and Investment Cooperation Framework Agreement (Ticfa) that the US government has inked with many other countries.

"This is a very simple agreement with a one-point action item and that is to establish a forum to identify obstacles to increasing trade and investment and how to eliminate those obstacles," the US envoy said.

It is into the fourth year of negotiation and it has not been signed.

"Why, I leave it to the government to explain because I cannot understand it," he said.

The implication and perception regarding Dhaka's unwillingness to sign this agreement in Washington is that Bangladesh is trying to walk away from its international obligation to basic labour rights as stipulated in the international labour declaration, he stated.

On top of all this, big buyers are worried about safeguarding their own reputation and they will not risk that reputation by saving 10 cents through making a shirt in Bangladesh, he added.

"I met a top buyer in the USA who said he could import many times more from Bangladesh than what he is doing now only if the situation had improved."

As the second largest apparel exporter in the world, Bangladesh was drawing more attention than before. "All these forces create a negative atmosphere," he added.

But there are things that could be done, he said.

Most importantly, Bangladesh can cooperate with the ILO through the better work programme to bring together labour, owners and the government to a process leading to a situation where workers could freely and constructively associate and where the labour situation could be peaceful and positive.

This would build Bangladeshi brands as premium brands. He pointed out that the ILO along with the US Department of Labour was assessing the situation in Bangladesh.

"Every buyer told me he wants to buy a premium product, meaning a fair trade product. Brand Bangladesh needs to be synonymous with fair trade and fair labour products," he said.

"Many may say Bangladesh readymade garments do not benefit from GSP. But that is beside the point. The loss of GSP would send a tidal surge of negative coercing to American buyers... a very negative development for Bangladeshi brand. The positive outcome would be just the opposite."

The other issue of concern for Bangladesh-US relations is over Bangladesh's recent handling of the civil society.

"The gold standard for civil society in the world is Bangladesh. It's full of dynamism and creativity. The USA supports the civil society for Bangladesh's development. We talk about Brac, Grameen Bank or others for ensuring them space," he said, drawing notice to the government

move to review 53-54 affiliated bodies of the Grameen Bank through forming a commission. He hoped this review would be neutral and fair.

The Rohingya issue is another concern of the US. "Bangladesh has a long tradition of giving refuge to people driven out of their homeland. We want to see if that tradition is sustained," he said.

Expressing concern about the political uncertainty over the next general elections, he said, "I hope the parties will agree at one point. This country is and will remain democratic... this agreement should be sooner than later."

Explaining why political convergence was so important, he said due to the high cost of manufacturing in China, investors were now shifting to other countries, including Bangladesh.

"If they see political instability here, they will not come," he said, adding that the earliest there was an agreement between the two parties, the earliest the country could benefit from this shifting investment.

He, however, said the relationship between the two countries should not be measured by one such issue as there were many other areas where development were positive for both countries.

He said the US-Bangladesh partnership was very positive and the two countries were working to root out violent extremism.

"Our relationship is excellent," he insisted, referring to comments of Foreign Minister Dipu Moni and US

Secretary of State Hillary Clinton.

The US is helping Bangladesh's law enforcers and coast guard to enhance its capacity to free its land border and sea of pirates, drug and arms smugglers and terrorists, and protect fish and sometime in future its gas resources.

He reiterated that Bangladesh strategically mattered to America because it was a moderate Muslim dominant country, tolerant and an alternative to violent extremism.

On a question about the Padma bridge project, Mozena said, "I'm very disappointed that the Bank chose to cancel the loan... the bridge is a good and crucial idea for infrastructure development. I hope ways can be found to revive the idea."



RELIANCE INSURANCE LIMITED

SHANTA WESTERN TOWER (LEVEL-5)
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PHONE: 8878836-45, FAX: 8878831

Dispatch of Half-Yearly Accounts

In compliance with rule-13 of the Securities and Exchange rules 1987, it is notified that the un-audited half-yearly Financial Statements of the Company as of June 30, 2012 have already been dispatched to valued Shareholders, Stock Exchanges and the Securities and Exchange Commission.

The half-yearly Financial Statements is also available in Company's website www.reliance.com.bd.

Dated, Dhaka
July 26, 2012

(M. SABIR AHMED FCA, FCS)
Company Secretary



Seeking expression of interest

British Council Bangladesh is looking for outsourcing solution for temporary human resources in the following two areas. Interested service providers are requested to put forward their expression of interest:

1. To provide Temporary Staff for various operational activities
2. To provide Invigilators to support administration of different Exams conducted by British Council Examinations Services

Interested service providers who must have the relevant experience especially with international organizations and capable for providing full, prompt, accurate and appropriate expertise about the above mentioned services are requested to apply with the following documents:

1. Expression of Interest with Business Profile
2. Copies of valid and update trade license
3. TIN certificate
4. Vat Registration
5. Work Experience Certificate from any 03 reputed organisations
6. Service Area
7. Other relevant information (if any)

The sealed proposal (mention the category on top of the envelope) must be submitted on or before **Tuesday 14th Aug 2012** by 3pm to the following address:

Vendor Enlistment Drop box (Reception)


British Council
5 Fuller Road
Dhaka-1000
Phone: +88 02 8618905

Note:

1. Shortlisted companies will be contacted in the **first week of September '12** for the next stage of conversation.
2. Short listing will be done based on expression of interest, profile and other documents mentioned above.
3. No expression of interest will be accepted after the above mentioned date.
4. Expression of interest can be submitted for any or both of the areas mentioned above.

The management reserves the right to accept or reject part/whole of any or all the applications without assigning any reason whatsoever. For any further query please contact with **Mr. Peter Paul D'Costa**, Administrative Manager, email : Peter.paul@bd.britishcouncil.org

www.britishcouncil.org/bangladesh



SIBL
Social Islami Bank Limited
Logistic Support Division, Head Office, City Center, 103 Motijheel C/A, Dhaka.

Invitation of Tender for Printing & Supplying of Wall Calendar, Desk Calendar & Writing Pad/Note Book-2013

Sealed Tenders are hereby invited by Social Islami Bank Limited, Head Office, Dhaka from bonafide Printing Press/Firms for Printing & Supplying of Wall Calendar, Desk Calendar & Writing Pad/Note for the year 2013. The last date for submission of Tender is 7th August 2012.

Interested bidders may visit the Bank's web link <http://www.siblbld.com/html/tender.html> and download the detailed specification/schedule.

(Md. Akbar Ali)
Senior Vice President
Phone: 09612001122 Ext. 50290, 50294
E-mail address: lsd@sibl-bd.com



CHARS LIVELIHOODS PROGRAMME

Vacancy Announcement

Chars Livelihoods Programme (CLP) Market Development Unit (MDU) is looking for an energetic and result driven individual for the position of **Coordinator – Dairy Sub Sector**

DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:
Under the overall supervision of the CLP Market Development Unit Manager, the Coordinator – Dairy Sub Sector will be responsible for the planning and implementation of the Dairy Sub Sector ensuring that appropriate linkages are established between project activities and other relevant areas of interventions as required;

In particular the applicant will:

- Be responsible for the overall management and implementation of the CLP MDU Dairy sub sector project;
- Ensure smooth coordination with CLP management, different partners working for the CLP MDU and the consultants of the project;
- Provide guidance to the Business and Monitoring Specialists being based at the District levels offices;

MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS:
Candidates should meet the following:

- University degree in Dairy Science supplemented by post-graduate degree in a relevant field from a recognized university or MBA in Management/Marketing with relevant experience in implementing Dairy projects;
- At least 7 years of relevant working experience in the management of Dairy projects either at the donor or private level;
- Working experience in the Dairy value chain establishment in any of the adverse contexts of Bangladesh

REMUNERATION:
A consolidated salary package range initially between 71,500 – 110,000 BDT including TAX and VAT with incremental benefits based on yearly performance.

APPLY TO:
Detail of this advertisement will be found at the CLP website: www.clp-bangladesh.org. Applications with a covering letter, a recent passport size photograph and names and addresses of three professional referees should reach to **The Advertiser, CLP Secretariat, Rural Development Academy (RDA) Campus, Sherpur, Bogra-5842** or through email: muktadir@clp-bangladesh.org on or before 5 pm of 05 August, 2012. Late applications will not be considered. Only short listed candidates will be called for interview.

CLP strongly encourages female candidates to apply for this position. Persuasion of any kind will immediately disqualify the candidature.

বাংলাদেশ ডায়াবেটিক সমিতির যাকাত ফান্ডে দান করুন

বাংলাদেশ ডায়াবেটিক সমিতি বারডেম ও অন্যান্য প্রতিষ্ঠানের মাধ্যমে সারা দেশে প্রায় সকল রোগের, বিশেষত ডায়াবেটিস ও অন্যান্য অসংক্রামক রোগের চিকিৎসা দিয়ে আসছে। গরিব রোগীদের বিনামূল্যে চিকিৎসা সেবায় গত বছর সমিতির ব্যয় হয় প্রায় ৭৫ কোটি টাকা।


সমিতির অন্যতম প্রতিষ্ঠান বারডেম হাসপাতাল ইউটডোরের মাধ্যমে প্রতিদিন প্রায় ৪০০০ রোগীকে এবং ইনডোর ৬০০ বেডের মাধ্যমে ডায়াবেটিস ও অন্যান্য রোগের চিকিৎসা দেয়া হয়। এ হাসপাতালের ৩০ % বেডে গরিব রোগীদের বিনামূল্যে চিকিৎসা দেয়া হয়।

এ অবস্থায়, আপনার যাকাতের টাকায় গরিব রোগীদের সেবায় আপনিও এগিয়ে আসুন।

আপনার সাহায্য চেক বা নগদে দিতে পারেন বারডেমের ২য় তলায় অবস্থিত বাংলাদেশ ডায়াবেটিক সমিতির সভাপতি অধ্যাপক ডা. এ কে আজাদ খানের হাতে, অথবা সরাসরি জমা করুন নিচের একাউন্টে :

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পূর্বালী ব্যাংক লিমিটেড
শিত পার্ক শাখা
শাহবাগ, ঢাকা
অথবা যোগাযোগ করুন: ০১৭১১-৩৩৬৭০৬ নম্বরে।



বাংলাদেশ ডায়াবেটিক সমিতি
১২২ কাজী নজরুল ইসলাম এভিনিউ
বারডেম হাসপাতাল
৫ম তলা, শাহবাগ, ঢাকা-১০০০