Labour rights still worry US

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But frustrations mount as the reviewers mentioned a lack of progress in dealing with issues cited in the petition, such as workers' rights, he said.

Bangladesh has been enjoying the duty-free facility for exporting some non-traditional items under the renewed GSP since September last year.

"This GSP review could send a negative signal on Bangladesh's commercial relations with America if the review results in the suspension of some or all of Bangladesh's GSP privileges," he said.

He, however, hoped that Bangladesh would identify and implement constructive measures to address the concerns raised in the GSP petition, so the petition can be resolved satisfactorily.

Mozena was speaking at a monthly luncheon meeting of Foreign Investors' Chamber of Commerce and Industry (Ficci) at the Westin hotel in the capital.

AFL-CIO (American Federation of Labour and Congress of Industrial Organisations) filed the petition against Bangladesh's having access to GSP on the grounds of Bangladesh's failure to ensure workers' basic labour rights.

The US ambassador said Bangladesh could make such "respect for labour rights" a great asset.

"I would hope that Bangladesh -- owners, government, workers -- would come together to participate in a better work programme with the support of the International Labour Organisation," he said.

Urging the government to launch the work programme quickly, he said the programme provides a ready means to address and resolve the labour issues that raise concerns for buyers.

He said this is a critical point in the history of the garment and household textile industries in Bangladesh.

"This is the moment," he added, "when Bangladesh will decide whether or not to become the world's largest exporter of RMG and household textiles, whether or not to become the next Asian Tiger."

With the support from all stakeholders, the country could address and overcome the challenges constraining the RMG sector and those relating to labour, he said.

Terming the partnership between the two countries "strong and growing", he said the US will do its part in helping Bangladesh become a middle-income country and the next "Asian Tiger".

Mozena referred to a recently released World Bank report that said Bangladesh could become an alternative to China in the garment and household textile sectors.

"Indeed, Bangladesh could replace China as the largest exporter of ready-made garments and household textiles," he said.

There are so many other areas where Bangladesh is poised to become a major global player -- production of generic pharmaceuticals, leather footwear and other leather products, information technology, shipbuilding, frozen shrimp, jute and silk, he added.

Mozena said everyone is aware of the constraints that include capacity challenges of ports, roads, railroads, energy, power and the challenges of corruption, inadequate rule of law, and the possibility of political instability.

"These are real challenges, but Bangladesh can overcome each of them," he remarked.

Referring to a meeting between the American Chambers of Commerce of Bangladesh and Hong Kong last week, he said the RMG, household and footwear industries are leaving China as it surges up the development ladder, making labour there too expensive.

"The buyers are scouring Asia, looking for new sources of these products. There are a growing number of options, including Vietnam, Indonesia, Cambodia and, increasingly, Myanmar. But these buyers want most to come to Bangladesh," he said.

The buyers, however, are concerned about the slow pace at which infrastructure challenges are being addressed, about political instability and about the labour situation here, he said.

Indeed, these challenges can and should be overcome, and will be overcome, as Bangladesh surges to the top as the number-one RMG and household textile exporter in the world, he said.

"This is no dream; this is no mythical vision. This is a reality waiting to happen. And you are the key to making it happen," Mozena noted.

NO-CONFIDENCE MOTION

CPI(M) may not back Trinamool

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *New Delhi*

Communist Party of India (Marxist) yesterday virtually rejected Trinamool Congress' appeal to support a no-confidence motion to be brought by it saying such a move would only help the government cover up all its "wrong" policies.

"A no-confidence motion will only help the government cover up all wrong measures it has taken and claim parliamentary mandate as it has the numbers to defeat such a motion," CPI(M) General Secretary said.

Dhaka shocked at Israeli atrocities

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international community to put pressure on Israel to stop the violence," said a statement issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs yesterday.

The recent attack causing the loss of lives of Palestinian civilians has posed a renewed threat to the regional peace and stability.

The statement said Bangladesh maintains its principled position on a comprehensive solution of the Palestinian question in accordance with the relevant UN resolutions, the Arab Peace Plan and the Road Map.

It said Bangladesh has always strongly supported the Palestinian people and their legitimate and inalienable right to a free and sovereign Palestinian state.

"Bangladesh strongly believes that the occupation of Palestinian land must come to an end, and the Palestinians must have their own independent state with East Jerusalem as its capital," it said.

The ministry statement further added that Bangladesh believes that the international community must strengthen their efforts to support the rights and aspirations of the Palestinian people.

Meanwhile, in two separate messages yesterday, BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia and Jatiya Party Chairman HM Ershad strongly condemned the ongoing Israeli aggression against Palestinian territories.

Khaleda Zia termed the attacks as blatant violation of international law and demanded to stop this unjustified military aggression. She suggested returning to dialogue to find a peaceful solution for establishing a sovereign Palestinian state, the press release said.

Ershad also expressed full solidarity with Palestine and denounced the attacks as illegitimate and called upon the Islamic Umma (community) to strengthen their efforts to stop the violence.

Gaza death toll passes 100

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On Sunday, the health ministry said eight journalists were injured when the Shuruq tower and another media building, used by local al-Quds TV, were hit.

Mark Regev, Israeli government spokesman, denied that Israel was targeting journalists.

Instead, he told Al Jazeera that the target of the attacks on media centres were "Hamas communications equipments".

CEASEFIRE EFFORTS

Egypt-brokered ceasefire talks in Cairo have so far failed to reach a deal.

Khaled Meshaal, the Hamas leader, said on Monday his movement is committed to efforts to secure a truce, but insisted that Israel must lift its six-year blockade of the Gaza Strip.

"We are not against a calming, but we want our demands... to end the thuggery, to end the aggression and to lift the blockade," he said, adding that Hamas would reject any Israeli preconditions for a ceasefire because "they started the aggression".

Israel has showed little sign of being ready to call off its campaign, with Avigdor Lieberman, foreign minister, insisting "the first and absolute condition for a truce is stopping all fire from Gaza".

A string of international leaders have visited the region in recent days in a bid to end the bloodshed, with Ban Ki-moon, UN secretary-general, expected to arrive on Tuesday for two-days of talks with Israeli Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu, Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas and other officials.

Speaking in Jerusalem after meeting Israeli President Shimon Peres, Tony Blair, envoy for international Quartet for the Middle East, expressed hope a ceasefire would firm up in the coming days.

DALOU FAMILY TRAGEDY

The bodies of four children wrapped in Palestinian flags were carried above a huge crowd from the rubble of their home, destroyed in an Israeli air strike, to their graves yesterday amid mounting anger over the sharply rising toll of civilians in the six-day-old war in Gaza.

Bulldozers, which were clearing concrete and twisted metal from the site of the Dalou family's home in the hope of finding two bodies still trapped beneath the ruins, stopped work to allow the funeral procession to pass.

Eight members of the Dalou family, including four children aged between one and seven, were killed when a missile struck their three-storey home at around 2:30pm on Sunday. Two family members are still missing, and two neighbours were also killed.

The funeral took place amid a heavy Hamas presence, although the family had no known affiliations with any militant group.

Neighbours told reporters that the Dalou family had no connections with militant organisations and that the father -- who was not at home at the time of the air strike – owned a grocery shop.

Another chance to change country

FROM PAGE 1

Otherwise, you will also have to shoulder the responsibility of its (government's) failures and corruption."

The opposition leader said no election would be allowed to take place under the Awami League government. "The election will be held only under a non-partisan and neutral government."

She alleged that the Awami League had done nothing for the welfare of the people. "Have a look and see the call of people. They want an election under a non-party and neutral government," Khaleda said.

"The government will have to be compelled to quit power," she said, adding, "We need to wage stronger movement against the blood sucker of the people."

Claiming that unemployment was rising, Khaleda promised a creation of jobs and bringing in more foreign investment in the country.

"Foreigners are not showing interest in investing here because we are not getting an investment environment. We will ensure increased foreign investment in the country to create more jobs," she said.

She also urged youths to reject the Awami League.

Assuring the future generation of better lives, the BNP chief said, "I do not have any high desire at this stage. We just want to see our future generation smiling always with the required access to education and jobs."

She pledged to make education for female students free up to degree-level.

Khaleda said, "Awami League means famine, AL means terrorism, killings and looting. People are in a critical stage as they are passing bad days due to unabated corruption, and price hike of essentials and utility bills."

She alleged that the present government had politicised police and civil administration, including the judiciary. "People these days are being deprived of justice. Police cannot play a neutral role because of the government's intervention. The administration has become dysfunctional."

Khaleda also came down heavily on Bangladesh Chhatra League, the pro-Awami League student body, saying it had turned a "monster".

They are continuously killing people, kidnapping innocent children and looting people's assets. "Even today, Chhatra League activists attacked the teachers. No one is safe in the hands of this government."

Branding the ruling party as a "great liar and world thief", Khaleda said the World Bank had to cancel fund allocation for the Padma bridge for the government's taking advance commission through graft.

"We'll build the Padma bridge, if voted to power, with two additional bridges on River Padma," she said.

The BNP chairperson also criticised the government for the alleged stock market scam. "Whenever Awami League comes to power, the share market sees such collapse."

Accusing the government of patronising terrorism, Khaleda said, "They [AL] are giving arms to their activists [of Awami League, Chhatra League and Juba League]. They kidnapped kid Parag and realised Tk 50 lakh as ransom."

She also alleged that there was no real investigation of sensational incidents including that of the Pilkhana carnage. "We'll ensure fair investigation of the BDR incident. No one will be spared."

Khaleda assured the people of Barisal that BNP, if voted to power, would build Kuakata and Cox's Bazaar as full-fledged tourism centres to attract tourists from both home and abroad.

BNP standing committee members Khandaker Mosharraf Hossain, ASM Hannan Shah, Mirza Abbas, Abdul Moin Khan, Opposition Chief Whip Zainal Abdin Farroque, LDP president Col (retd) Oli Ahmed, Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami Assistant Secretary General Mujibur Rahman also spoke at the rally with Barisal city BNP President Mojibur Rahman Sorwar in the chair.

Khaleda left Barisal for Dhaka by road after resting awhile at the local Circuit House for half an hour.

Sea level to rise 3ft by 2100

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The study says sea level-rise by 3 feet by 2100 is likely, with higher levels also possible.

Some of the most highly vulnerable cities are located in Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, the Philippines, Vietnam, Mozambique, Madagascar, Mexico and Venezuela.

The report, titled "Turn Down the Heat: Why a 4 degrees Celsius Warmer World Must be Avoided", urges "further mitigation action as the best insurance against an uncertain future".

It highlights the devastating impact of a world hotter by 4 degrees Celsius (7.2 Fahrenheit) by the end of the century, a likely scenario under current policies.

The study findings come as almost 200 nations meet in Doha, Qatar, from November 26 to December 7 to try to extend the Kyoto Protocol, the existing plan for curbing greenhouse gas emissions by developed nations that runs to the end of the year.

The Germany-based organisations Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research and Climate Analytics prepared the report for the World Bank.

Under the new World Bank president, Jim Yong Kim, the global development lender says it has launched a more aggressive stance to integrate climate change into development.

"We will never end poverty if we don't tackle climate change. It is one of the single biggest challenges to social justice today," Kim told reporters on a conference call on Friday.

Climate change is already having an effect. Arctic sea ice reached a record minimum in September, and extreme heat waves and drought in the last decade have hit places like the United States and Russia more often than would be expected from historical records, says the report.

Such extreme weather is likely to become the "new normal" if the temperature rises by 4 degrees.

This is likely to happen if not all countries comply with pledges they have made to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Even assuming full compliance, the world will warm by more than 3 degrees by 2100.

Extreme heat waves would devastate broad swaths of the earth's land, from the Middle East to the United States, the report says.

The warmest July in the Mediterranean could be 9 degrees hotter than it is today -- akin to temperatures seen in the Libyan deserts.

The combined effect of all these changes could be even worse, with unpredictable effects that people may not be able to adapt to, said John Schellnhuber, director of the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research.

Rachel Kyte, the World Bank's vice-president for sustainable development, said, "This report reinforces the reality that today's climate volatility affects everything we do."

'No excuse for violence'

FROM PAGE 1

Two major outbreaks of clash since June in the state have left 180 people dead and more than 1,10,000 displaced, reports AFP.

Most of those who fled their homes were stateless Rohingya Muslims, who have faced decades of discrimination.

The persecution of Rohingyas also affects Bangladesh. Whenever communal violence breaks out in Myanmar, the minorities intrude into Bangladesh through Teknaf bordering area.

Bangladesh accommodates around 29,000 registered Rohingya refugees, although different estimates suggest the number of the Myanmarese minorities unofficially living in and around Cox's Bazar ranges between 2.5 and 5 lakh, The Daily Star reported earlier.

Myanmar's reformist government is under pressure to give citizenship to the Rohingya as it comes under international scrutiny, with warnings that the conflict threatens its democratic transition.

Yesterday, Obama spent about six hours in Myanmar and did not visit the capital, Nay Pyi Taw, reports BBC.

The highlight of his visit was a speech at Yangon University, which was at the heart of pro-democracy protests in 1988 that were violently suppressed by the military regime.

Addressing students, he said America would help to rebuild Myanmar's economy and could be a partner on its journey forward.

Referring to his January 20, 2009 inauguration speech in which he pledged the US would extend a hand to any country that was willing to unclench its fist, he said: "Today I've come to keep my promise and extend the hand of friendship.

"Reforms launched from the top of society must meet the aspirations of citizens who form its foundation. The flickers of progress that we have seen must not be extinguished."

Obama then met pro-democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi at the lakeside home where she spent years under house arrest. She thanked the US for its support but warned that difficult times could lie ahead.

The US president and his team also made a brief stop at Shwedagon Pagoda, the Yangon landmark that has been at the heart of many key moments in the country's history.

Obama was accompanied by US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton - who was returning to Myanmar almost a year after her first visit.

After visiting Myanmar, Obama headed to Cambodia to join a meeting of the Association of South East Asian Nations, in a trip that underlines the shift in US foreign policy focus to the Asia-Pacific region.

The US President told Cambodia's premier in a "tense" meeting yesterday that his government's human rights violations were "an impediment" to better bilateral ties, a US official said.

Obama met Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen for talks in Phnom Penh ahead of joining an East Asia Summit.

Obama, the first US president to visit Cambodia, and Hun Sen shook hands before their meeting but the American did not smile during the greeting.

The Cambodian government has faced mounting criticism from rights groups in recent years for what they claim is a growing crackdown on dissidents and protesters in cases that are often linked to land disputes.

But Cambodia hit back at Obama's comments, saying the country was working to promote human rights and had been the victim of a "campaign" to distort the truth.

EDCL

ESSENTIAL DRUGS COMPANY LIMITED
395-397, Tejgaon Industrial Area
Dhaka-1208

LOCAL TENDER NOTICE

Tender ref.: EDCL/PUR/LOCAL/TENDER/2012/98 **Dated. 18/11/2012**

Sealed tenders are hereby invited from the reputed Contractors having experience for successful completion of construction works in any single work worth of Govt/Semi Govt./Autonomous bodies during the last 5 (five) years.

Name of work	Earnest Money	Cost of Tender Schedule	Time for completion after getting work order	Last date of Closing & opening
Construction work for extension of existing Packing Hall of EDCL at Thanthania, Bogra. (Details as per design drawing and BOQ).	Tk. 5% of quoted amount	Tk. 1,500.00/set (Non-refundable)	04 (four) months	Closing : **09/12/2012** At 12.00 pm Opening: **10/12/2012** At 12.15 PM

Tender schedule will be sold from the Accounts Department of **Essential Drugs Company Limited, Dhaka** on payment as stated above during office hours on all working days (except Friday, Saturday and Govt. Holidays). No tender schedule will be sold on the opening date of the tender.

The tender will be accompanied by an amount of Earnest Money as mentioned above in the from of Bank Draft / Pay Order / **Bank Guarantee** from any Schedule Bank of Bangladesh in favour of **"Essential Drugs Co. Ltd."** without which the tender will be considered as non-responsive.

EDCL authority reserves the right to accept or reject any or all the tenders without assigning any reason whatsoever.

(Md. Ali Mukarram)
Manager, Planning & Procurement.
For : Managing Director.