

India's budget gives lifeline to textile

PALLAB BHATTACHARYA, New Delhi

India's trouble-hit textile sector has got a leg-up from Finance Minister P Chidambaram's budget last Thursday as he allocated sizeable funds for modernisation of the power loom sector, Textile Upgradation Fund and for setting up of apparel parks.

Rising international competition, falling demand and a decline in exports have been plaguing the textile exports in recent years.

Chidambaram gave an additional sum of Rs 96 crore in the next fiscal to the textiles ministry for interest subsidy and proposed, for the first time, the setting up of apparel parks within the Integrated Textile Parks to house apparel manufacturing units.

A new scheme -- Integrated Processing Development Scheme -- with an outlay of Rs 500 crore to address the environmental concerns of the textile industry was also pro-

posed in the budget.

Acknowledging that the readymade garment industry faced a crisis and required a lifeline, the finance minister decided to restore the zero excise duty route for cotton and man-made sector (spun yarn) at the yarn, fabric and garment stages.

"In the case of cotton, there will be zero duty at the fibre stage and in the case of spun yarn, there will be a duty of 12 percent at the fibre stage," he said.

He also proposed to totally exempt handmade carpets and textile floor coverings of coir or jute from excise duty.

In more help to the handloom sector, Chidambaram proposed working capital and term-loans at a concessional interest of 6 percent which would benefit around 150,000 individual weavers and 1,800 primary cooperative societies.

He also reduced basic customs duty

on textile machinery and parts to 5 percent from 7.5 percent.

India's Apparel Export Promotion Council Chairman A Sakthivel welcomed the steps to address the concerns of readymade garments industry and said these would help boost the growth of the sector.

He said the creation of apparel parks within Scheme for Integrated Textile Parks and allocation of Rs 10 crore would go in a long way in increasing export of value-added textile chain.

The Confederation of Indian Textiles Industry welcomed the proposals terming them positive.

In a statement, CITI Chairman SV Arumugam said there had been signs of recovery in the industry for the past few months and the budget would help this process further.

Restoring the optional excise regime for branded garments and made-ups was the most positive factor in this budget, he added.

Best statistical practices presented at UNSC session

STAR BUSINESS DESK

Bangladesh's best practices in statistical activities were presented at a session at the UN headquarters in New York recently, according to a statement.

Md Nojibur Rahman, secretary of Statistics and Informatics Division (SID) of the planning ministry, has led a Bangladeshi delegation to attend the 44th session of United Nations Statistical Commission (UNSC) on February 26.

To develop a national accounts framework, Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics plans to collect data on selected segments relating to its five institutional sectors: non-financial corporations, financial corporations, government, non-profit institutions, and households sector, Rahman said.

Different agenda, including developing a spatial framework in National Statistical System, and implementation of the fundamental principles of official statistics and methods of doing so were highlighted at the event.



Toufiq M Seraj, managing director of Sheltech, attends a press meet to announce the celebration of the company's 25 years of operations recently. To mark the occasion, the first 25 apartments will be sold at 25 percent discount from 9am to 12pm only on March 12 at Sheltech Corporate Office in Dhaka.

Jamuna Bank's new DMDs

STAR BUSINESS DESK

Jamuna Bank has recently got two new deputy managing directors: Mirza Elias Uddin Ahmed and Mosleh Uddin joined, the bank said in a statement yesterday.

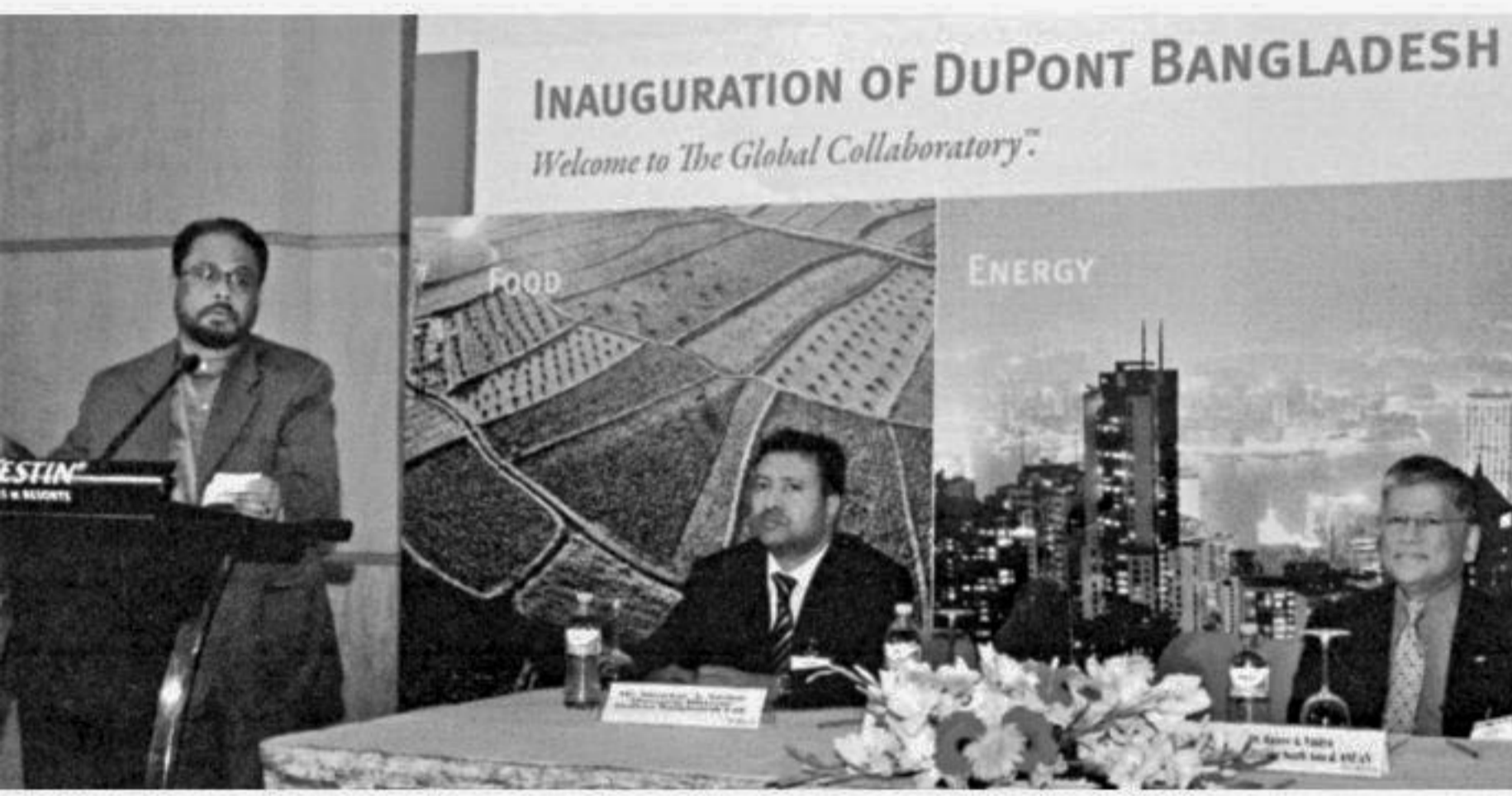
Mirza was promoted to the post while Mosleh Uddin has recently joined the bank.

Mirza joined the bank in 2011. He began his career in 1985 with National Bank Ltd and later he also served Prime Bank and Mercantile Bank.

Prior to joining Jamuna, Mosleh Uddin served The City Bank as its area head of the corporate division (Dhaka). He also worked with Prime Bank and the State Bank of India.



Mirza Elias Uddin Mosleh Uddin



GM Quader, commerce minister, attends the inauguration of DuPont Bangladesh, a subsidiary of DuPont, at a ceremony held at a local hotel in Dhaka recently. John F Danilowicz, charge d'affaires at the US embassy in Dhaka; Rajeev Vaidya, president of South Asia and Asean DuPont; and Showkat Sarkar, managing director of DuPont Bangladesh, were also present.



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina attends a ceremony to hand a Tk 4.8 lakh cheque to the family of a martyr of the BDR carnage. The fund was given by First Security Islami Bank (FSIBL) at the Prime Minister's Office in Dhaka recently. Mohammed Abdul Maleque, vice-chairman of FSIBL, was also present.

Stocks pass another gloomy week

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Stocks plunged for the second week with a significant decline in turnover as investors went on a selling spree amid political unrest and concern over the deadline for closure of omnibus accounts.

The DSE Broad Index (DSEX), the benchmark index of the Dhaka Stock Exchange, ended the week at 3,973.28 points, after losing 182.17 points or 4.38 percent, which is the highest single week fall in 2013.

The market went through significant downward movement in the last week. The key index of DSE came down below the 4,000 points level on Wednesday for the first time this year.

"The stocks closed lower for another week confronting the political unrest and ambiguity on omnibus accounts closing issue," LankaBangla Securities said in its market analysis.

"Anxiety about omnibus account closure by February 28, reduction of banks' exposure to capital market and political overheating may have contributed to the panic of investors," LankaBangla said.

The week ended amid conspicuous volatility over political worries as well as rising concerns over omnibus accounts closeout deadline, stated IDLC Investments, in its weekly market analysis.

"With political situation getting cloudier over the last two weeks, investor sentiment has been weakened for long, causing participation to fall," the merchant bank said.

The market witnessed five trading

sessions as usual. Among those, DSEX suffered heavy losses of 273.28 points in three sessions, while two sessions gained marginally by 65.95 points.

The daily average turnover on the DSE declined 41.31 percent as compared to the previous week.

Of the total 285 companies and mutual fund units that were traded during the week, among them 265 declined, 18 advanced and 2 remained unchanged.

All the major sectors posted huge losses with telecoms suffering the most by 9.59 percent in the past week, following the yearly financial and dividend disclosure by the sector heavyweight Grameenphone.

It was followed by power at 4.90 percent, non-bank financial institutions 4.42 percent and pharma 2.05 percent.

Summit Purbanchol Power Company dominated the week's top turnover list with 1.53 crore shares worth Tk 135 crore changing hands.

It was followed by United Airways, Argon Denims, Unique Hotel and Resorts, RN Spinning, Sunlife Insurance, Beximco Ltd, KPCL, Envoy Textile and BSCCL.

Orion Infusion was the week's highest gainer posting a 7.09 percent rise, while Modern Dyeing and Screen Printing was the worst loser, slumping 24.15 percent.

The Chittagong Stock Exchange also suffered heavily in the last week with the CSE Selective Categories Index plunging 403.49 points or 4.87 percent to close at 7,880.76 points.

Yahoo to shut down seven products

REUTERS, San Francisco

Yahoo Inc is shutting down seven products, including its mobile app for Blackberry smartphones, as new Chief Executive Marissa Mayer takes a page from Google Inc's play book by eliminating unsuccessful products en-masse.

The product shutdowns, which Yahoo announced on its official company blog on Friday, are part of what the company said are regular efforts to evaluate and review its product line-up.

"The most critical question we ask is whether the experience is truly a daily habit that still resonates for all of you today," wrote Jay Rossiter, Yahoo's executive vice president of Platforms.

The announcement represents Yahoo's second group shutdown of products since Mayer, a former Google executive, became CEO of the struggling Web portal in July. So-called "spring cleaning" announcements, in which multiple products are shut down, have become a regular feature at Google in recent years.

Mayer signaled the company would prune its line-up of mobile apps at an investor conference last month, noting that Yahoo would reduce the 60 to 75 disparate mobile apps it currently has to a more manageable 12 to 15 apps.

Yahoo said its app for Blackberry smartphones would no longer be available for download, or supported by Yahoo, as of April 1.

Yahoo also said that on April 1 it will stop supporting Yahoo Avatars - the cartoon-like digital characters that consumers create to depict them on Web services such as Yahoo instant messenger and Facebook. Consumers who want to continue using their avatar on Yahoo's online services must download the avatar and then re-upload the information to their personalized Yahoo profile.

Facebook to unveil new look for newsfeed

REUTERS, San Francisco

Facebook Inc will unveil a new look for its popular "newsfeed" next week, the latest move by the Web company to revamp key elements of its 1 billion member social network.

Facebook will showcase the newsfeed makeover at a media event on March 7 at its Menlo Park, California headquarters, the company said in an emailed invitation to reporters on Friday.

The event will be Facebook's second high-profile product event this year, following the rollout of its social search feature in January.

Facebook's newsfeed, which displays an ever-changing stream of the photos, videos and comments uploaded from a user's network of friends, is one of the three "pillars" of the service, along with search and user profiles, Chief Executive Mark Zuckerberg has said.



Mofazzal Hossain, chairman of Esquire Group, attends a dealer's conference for 2012 organised by Esquire, sole distributor of Sharp Corp of Japan, at the Sonargaon Hotel in Dhaka recently. Arifur Rahman, managing director of Esquire Electronics, was also present.



Salehuddin Ahmed, former governor of Bangladesh Bank, attends the launching ceremony of patient safety week at the Apollo Hospitals Dhaka yesterday. Tipu Munshi, director of Apollo Hospitals Dhaka, was also present.



Naaz Farhana Ahmed, president of Dhaka Women Chamber of Commerce and Industry, attends the chamber's annual general meeting held in Dhaka yesterday. Sajeda Minhaj Mukul, senior vice president, was also present.