

\$2.5m for better worker rights

Norway and ILO sign deal on labour relations

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Norway's foreign ministry and the International Labour Organisation yesterday signed a \$2.5 million deal to assist Bangladesh in ensuring workers' rights.

Promotional works including training and awareness programmes will be carried out in the export-oriented industries such as readymade garment, leather and shrimp sectors to promote the worker rights and labour relations in Bangladesh.

Heikki Eidsvoll Holmås, Norwegian minister for international development, and Srinivas Reddy, ILO's country director for Bangladesh, signed the deal at Ruposhi Bangla Hotel in Dhaka.

Prior to the signing ceremony, the Norwegian minister said the most important question raised by the Rana Plaza incident aftermath was "What needs to be done in the future?"

Improving working conditions and safe work places and ensuring fundamental rights of workers are required to prevent such incidents in Bangladesh, he said.

"By supporting the ILO's efforts in Bangladesh, we want to make a contribution to improved working conditions and better and fairer wages for Bangladeshi workers."

Stressing the need for trade union in the export-oriented industries, Holmås said: "Without that [trade union], we have nothing."

He also urged international buyers from across the world to continue to buy from Bangladesh.

Reddy said the support directly contributes to implementation of one of the commitments, on workers education and training of mid level supervisors and managers on occupational safety and health and fundamental principles and rights at work.

Fazlul Hoque, president of Bangladesh Employers Federation, said the support will help the country to rebuild its images that it lost in the international markets after the Tazreen Fashions and Rana Plaza tragedies.

Mikail Shipar, labour secretary, and Sukkur Mahmud, a representative of National Coordination Committee for Workers' Education, also spoke.

GSP verdict may be delayed

FROM PAGE B1

The verdict was supposed to come in the first week this month.

"We are yet to get any response from the USTR," Ahmed told The Daily Star by phone.

A 14-member team led by Ahmed attended the hearing after the American Federation of Labour and Congress of Industrial Organisation (AFL-CIO) along with some Senators put pressure on the USTR to discontinue the duty-waiver scheme for Bangladesh.

The AFL-CIO, the largest trade union in the US, and some other quarters came with the call alarmed by a devastating fire at Ashulia-based Tazreen Fashions that killed around 112 workers in November last year.

"I don't know when the USTR verdict will come. But I can say the verdict will be in favour of Bangladesh as we presented our position strongly at the hearing," Ahmed said.

Bangladesh enjoys duty-free benefit for some selected goods such as plastic products and ceramics under the GSP scheme, but the amount is only 0.54 percent of the total export of \$5 billion to the US market a year.

Yet, the GSP issue is important for Bangladesh, as some other countries, where Bangladesh is now enjoying the benefit, might be influenced by any negative move by the US, Bangladesh had said at the hearing.

Eight firms bid to operate six berths at Ctg port

The last date of submitting bids ended yesterday

DWAIPAYAN BARUA, Chittagong

Eight firms submitted bids in the tender for appointment of six berth operators to handle containers at Chittagong Port yesterday, the last day for submission.

The operators will work at six out of 12 general cargo berths for three years as the contract with the current operators expires in October, said Syed Farhad Uddin Ahmed, secretary of the Chittagong Port Authority.

The remaining six berths handle bulk and open cargoes, for which nine firms, including six current operators, submitted their bids in the tender on May 30.

In berth number 10, 11, 12 and 13, no competition was found, as the current operators were the only applicants in the bidding. The operators are: M/S Bashir Ahmed, A&J Traders, Everest Enterprise and MH Chowdhury Ltd.

In berth number 6, the present operator FQ Khan & Co took part in the bidding with another firm Cosmos Enterprise.

There was also new bidder for berth

number 9, which Fazlisons Ltd is now operating.

In the bidding, Nobab & Co submitted its papers, but did not mention any particular berth number, according to the officials.

Eight other firms also bought the tender papers, but did not take part in the process due to tough conditions, including at least two years experience of handling 50,000 twenty-foot equivalent units of containers in the last 10 years.

On May 28, Mahbubul Alam, president of the Chittagong Chamber of Commerce and Industry, urged the port authority to relax the tender conditions to give chance to other skilled firms for participation.

The tender conditions were prepared according to the public procurement rules and were also mentioned in the tender held in 2010, said the CPA secretary.

The port's efficiency increased noticeably after the last caretaker government introduced the berth operating system replacing the previous stevedoring system, said Fazle Ekram Chowdhury, proprietor of Fazlisons Ltd.



New recruits pose with the senior officials of Commercial Bank of Ceylon at a two-day orientation programme organised by the bank at its head office in Dhaka recently.

Rental power: a no-go

FROM PAGE B1

Rather, it has increased significantly until 2011-12, from Tk 18.9 lakh per megawatt in 2009 to Tk 44.5 lakh by January 2013.

CPD said the gap between installed capacity and generation has been widening over the years, from 1,004MW in 2009 to 3,118MW in April 2013.

"This has happened mainly because of low-level of capacity utilisation of quick rental power plants. Such huge unrealised capacity raised questions about their quality."

CPD also called for more fiscal and financial support for renewable power generation projects given the huge potential of the sector.

"Renewable energy could play an important

and supplementary role in the power sector. The government should consider feed-in tariff for renewable power generation projects to woo private investors to the sector."

About six million households from the off-grid area could be brought under the renewable energy network, CPD said.

Growth performance: off target

FROM PAGE B4

As those projects approach their finishing lines, it is plausible that their implementation could have gained momentum. However, CPD analysis shows that even fuller utilisation of FY2013 allocation for these projects will not be enough to complete them. The gaps (between cumulative allocation up to FY2013 and total project cost) were 28.3 percent and 49.2 percent of aggregated project costs for the power and transport sectors respectively. However, on a positive note, in the revised ADP, allocation for power and transport sectors was increased by 8.5 percent and 2.3 percent from their original allocations. It needs to be mentioned that subsequently total ADP allocation was slashed by 4.8 percent. All (14) other sectors, except Rural Development and Institutions, experienced substantive cuts in their budget. The decline in allocation for the education and religious affairs sector was the highest (Tk 774.3 crore).

Revenue mobilisation by the NBR has been one of the areas of success for the present government. For the first time in last four fiscal years, it is now anticipated that NBR revenue will likely fall short of the target. A lack of import, lower commodity prices in the international market, deceleration of financial institutions' profit, unrealised revenues from state enterprises are among the major reasons causing low intake of NBR revenue collection. Indeed, in FY2011 and FY2012, NBR managed to surpass the revised targets which were later set at higher levels compared their respective targets in the original budget. Furthermore, revenue collections from non-NBR tax and non-tax sources have not been very impressive.

During the first half of FY2013 non-development revenue expenditure was in line with the budget allocation. Overall, net revenue expenditure recorded 12.6 percent growth during the first six months compared to the matching period of the previous year, while target growth for FY2013 was 12.8 percent.

Traditionally, during the first half of the fiscal year, budget deficit remains within the safe zone. Fiscal deficit in the first half of FY2013 was limited to only Tk 3,991 crore (only 7.7 percent of planned budget). As a result, low off-take of foreign grants (5.4 percent of planned budget) and net foreign borrowing (24.4 percent of planned budget) did not put any serious pressure on the budget deficit financing till now (up to the first half of FY2013). The large revenue surplus was in fact used to repay government borrowing from non-bank sources (sources outside borrowing from sale of NSD certificates).

Borrowing from the banking system was only Tk 8,377 crore (36.4 percent of planned budget). However, less than expected net sale of NSD certificates may give rise to some concern as regards management of the deficit financing in the latter half of the fiscal year.

TO BE CONTINUED

Envoy clarifies Indian ad on Narayanganj project

FROM PAGE B1

Haque said the Indian envoy informed him about the project. "It is related to a foreign direct investment and it is at the initial stage."

Separately, the two countries will sign a deal tomorrow on roadshows in India to encourage Indian investment in Bangladesh, Haque said.

The Confederation of Indian Industry and the Board of Investment will sign the agreement to promote Bangladeshi products in Indian market as well as attract Indian investment in Bangladesh, he said.

Haque said they have identified 15 projects worth \$794 million under the Indian line of credit.

Disbursements are continuing and contracts of projects under the LoC are being signed, he said.

They also discussed the projects of Akhaura-Agartala Rail Link, Ashuganj River Port and India-Bangladesh Foundation, the Indian envoy said.

Mastercard's new top brass

STAR BUSINESS DESK

Syed Mohammad Kamal has been appointed as Bangladesh country manager for Mastercard, and Mohammad Anwar Hossain, director of business development, the company said in a statement yesterday.

The move comes as a precursor to the launch of a local representative office of the company by the middle of the year in Dhaka.

Garment exports to US stagnant

FROM PAGE B1

"I fear orders will decline further during the next spring if we cannot improve the political environment and working condition," Islam said.

He said although Bangladesh is losing its business, the cost of production is increasing by around 13 percent a year for various reasons.

Bangladeshi garment makers are less interested in exporting to the US, as the market does not give any duty benefit for Bangladeshi products, said Fazlul Hoque, a former president of Bangladesh Knitwear Manufacturers

and Exporters Association.

Also there has been no significant investment in the garment sector over the last few years, which brought sluggishness in exports, he added.

In contrast, as the EU offers duty-free benefit, Bangladeshi garment makers export more to the European countries, he said.

In the EU markets, garment exports from Bangladesh posted a modest growth at 6.2 percent during the July-February period, while Vietnam recorded 1.11 percent, Cambodia 23.27 percent and Turkey 6.56 percent growth, the CPD study found.

Costs of a day's hartal

FROM PAGE B1

CPD applied data from the early months of 2013 on the computable general equilibrium model, a class of economic models that use actual data to estimate how the economy would react to changes in policy, technology or other external factors.

In the study, a major long-term impact arising from shutdowns has been assumed to be the decline in capital stock.

Shutdowns impact certain sectors, such as transportation and retail, more than others (mining, agriculture and energy), the study found.

"The increasing violence and damage of transport and public properties have both

short as well as medium to long-term adverse implications for the economy, undermining both current performance as well as growth potentials of the economy," the research firm said.

"In the current context, it is critically important to identify modalities for a mutually acceptable political situation."

A congenial environment could be created through immediate cessation of all destructive and subversive activities, release of the opposition political leaders from jail to create an enable an environment for dialogue and the announcement of a roadmap along with a framework towards holding a free and fair election, it added.

No plan to scrap licence of GP, Muhith says again

FROM PAGE B1

About the discussion with the GP chairman, the finance minister said they talked about the upcoming 3G licence fees and the report of Grameen Bank Commission.

Muhith said, "They (GP) are unhappy with the Commission report. But I have assured them that the government has no intention to cancel their licence."

Earlier in March, Muhith had said the government will not suspend the licence of GP as recommended by the Grameen Bank Commission, because the country looks to boost foreign investment.

Rajdhani Unnayan Karttripakkha

Rajuk Bhaban, Dhaka
www.rajukdhaka.gov.bd

Invitation for Expressions of Interest (EOI)

Providing consultancy services for preparation of design-drawing, estimate of water supply, sewerage & drainage system of the project ensuring pollution free water of lake at Uttara RMT (3rd Phase) Project.

01. Ministry	:	Ministry of Housing and Public Works.
02. Agency	:	Rajdhani Unnayan Karttripakkha (RAJUK).
03. Name of the procuring entity	:	Chairman, RAJUK.
04. Procuring entity code	:	Not used at present.
05. Procuring entity district	:	Dhaka.
06. Expression of interest for selection of	:	Consulting Firm, Time based.
07. EOI Ref. No.	:	EOI No.- 01/2012-2013 (Uttara 3 rd Phase).
08. Date (dd/mm/year)	:	03/06/2013
09. Procurement sub-method	:	Selection under a fixed budget (SFB).
10. Budget and source of funds	:	RAJUK own fund.
11. Program/project name	:	Providing consultancy services for preparation of design-drawing, estimate of water supply, sewerage & drainage system of the project ensuring pollution free water of lake at Uttara RMT (3 rd Phase) Project.
12. EOI/closing date and time	:	24-06-2013, Time: 12:30pm.
13. Brief description of the assignment	:	The services include but not limited to i) Study the development proposal report of the project prepared by BRTC, BUET; Infrastructural design-drawing report prepared by the consultant DPM-SCPL; design-drawing of bridge and lake vetted by BRTC, BUET; Layout plan & RDPP of the project etc. ii) Study & assess water and sewerage demand of Uttara RMT (3 rd Phase) Project & its zone of influence. iii) Study the quality & prospect of use of surface water ground water with recommendation. iv) Preparation of detail master plan of water supply, sewerage & drainage system of the project as per information of survey data of the project and adjacent catchments area. v) Preparation of component & Lot/Group wise detail design-drawing estimate (including detail item description), BOQ, specification etc considering 1 (one) year work execution period on the basis of above master plan. vi) Considering 1 (one) year work execution period the works to be supervised full time by experience consultant and to be certified on component wise measurement and quality of the work.
14. Experience, resource & delivery:	:	Intending firms have to submit the following documents along the required capacity required with EOI. - Brochure summarizing their facilities, areas of the expertise general information including legal documents; - Description of similar assignments; - Experience in similar operating conditions; - Availability of appropriate experience and professional qualification among applicant staff and resources to carryout the said assignment. - Administrative strength, logistics and financial capability.
15. Name of the official inviting EOI	:	Md. Emdadul Islam.
16. Designation of the official inviting EOI	:	Chief Engineer, RAJUK, Dhaka.
17. Address of the official inviting EOI	:	4 th Floor, RAJUK Bhaban, Dhaka-1000.
18. Contact details of the official inviting EOI	:	Project Director, Uttara 3 rd Phase Project, 6 th Floor, Rajuk Annex Building, RAJUK, Dhaka. Tel: 9563605
19. Other details	:	a. A consultant will be selected in accordance with the Public Procurement Regulations-2008 and Public Procurement Procedure time to time issued by the GOB. b. The shortlist shall normally comprise of minimum 4 (four) to a maximum of 7 (seven) firms, who will be requested to submit detail technical and financial proposals later on. c. Consultants may associate with other consultants (not more than one) to enhance their qualifications. d. Envelope containing application/proposal (EOI) along with relevant supporting documents to be marked "Providing consultancy services for preparation of design-drawing, estimate of water supply, sewerage & drainage system of the project ensuring pollution free water of lake at Uttara RMT (3 rd Phase) Project" to be submitted in the Office of Project Director, Uttara 3 rd Phase Project, 6 th Floor, Rajuk Annex Building, RAJUK, Dhaka.
20. RAJUK reserves the right to accept or reject all EOI either partly or in full without assigning any reason thereof.	:	

Md. Emdadul Islam
Chief Engineer
Rajdhani Unnayan Karttripakkha, Dhaka

GD-2181