

Stronger diplomatic ties with Uzbekistan in focus

DIPLMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Opening of an embassy in Dhaka and resumption of direct airlines will be the top of the agenda for discussion in the meetings between government high-ups and a high-level delegation of Uzbekistan on Thursday.

Ganiev Elyor Majidovich, minister of foreign economic relations, investments and trade of Uzbekistan, will lead the delegation.

The Uzbek team will also aim to exploit new avenues of commerce and cooperation in their three-day visit to Bangladesh beginning from Wednesday.

The delegation will call on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and hold meetings with Commerce Minister Tofail Ahmed, Civil Aviation and Tourism Minister Rashed Khan Menon and State Minister for Foreign Affairs Shahriar Alam and

chamber leaders.

Diplomatic ties between Bangladesh and Uzbekistan were established in 1996 when Dhaka opened its embassy in Tashkent.

As gesture of opening of Bangladesh mission, Uzbekistan began Dhaka-Tashkent direct flight in 1997 but it was stopped in 2005, as flight operation was not commercially viable.

Dhaka is considering the upcoming visit important as the visit of a cabinet minister from Uzbekistan is taking place after 16 years with the intention to open its full-fledged embassy in Dhaka and establish connectivity through Uzbekistan Airways.

Official said there have been few visits at the foreign and commerce ministers level in between 1998-2010 despite having huge potential for expansion of bilateral interactions and commercial interests in the region.

The two countries on 18 July, 2000 signed an agreement on the reciprocal protection and promotion of investments.

A memorandum of understanding was signed on trade and economic cooperation between the two in May 2012.

Foreign ministry officials said Tashkent is now eager to strengthen its bilateral ties with Dhaka as the trade between the two countries is increasing gradually and Bangladesh is Uzbekistan's eighth largest trading partner in the cotton sector.

Dhaka imports around 40 percent of cotton from Uzbekistan. Though cotton being Uzbek's largest export item, officials said there is considerable scope for further enhancing bilateral cooperation.

In 2012-13, Bangladesh exported goods worth \$6.51 million and important goods worth \$539.39 million.

Apple and Google vie to offer game apps

REUTERS

Apple Inc and Google Inc are wooing game developers to ensure that top game titles arrive first on devices powered by their respective operating system, the Wall Street Journal reported, citing people familiar with the matter.

Both the companies are trying to lure game developers by offering premium placement to these games on their app stores' home pages and features lists, the daily said.

Both Google and Apple were not immediately available for comment outside regular US business hours.



STANDARD BANK

Kazi Akram Uddin Ahmed, chairman of Standard Bank, poses with the participants of a foundation training course organised by the bank at its training institute on Sunday. Md Nazmus Salehin, managing director, was also present.

JCI, Smile Foundation organise maternal health camp

STAR BUSINESS DESK

A free maternal health camp for the underprivileged was organised by Junior Chamber International (JCI) Dhaka Cosmopolitan with the help of Smile Foundation in Uttara on Friday.

At the camp, expectant mothers received a brief physical examination and a routine pregnancy checkup (blood grouping and blood glucose level). They were provided

with three-month supply of free medicines from Jason Pharmaceuticals. It was JCI's ninth monthly camp under the project.

The camp was part of JCI's "Better Health for Better Life" project, which seeks to further the objectives of MDG 5 aiming to improve maternal health.

Dr Kathleen Rooney, Dr Sarah Haque and Dr Noor Afsa Zaman along with other volunteers participated.



HOTEL AGRABAD

Officials of Hotel Agrabad pose with the children of the Saint Benedict and Saint Peter Orphanage after gifting them food and other items on the occasion of Easter Sunday, a religious festival of the Christians, at Patharghata in Chittagong recently.



RUPOSHI BANGLA

Khurshed Alam Chowdhury, civil aviation and tourism secretary, and James P McDonald, general manager of Ruposhi Bangla Hotel, cut a cake to mark the 31st anniversary of Balaka Executive Lounge at Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport in Dhaka recently.



GREEN DELTA

AQM Nurul Absar, chairman of Green Delta Insurance Company, attends the 28th annual business conference of the company held in the city recently. Farzana Chowdhury, managing director, was also present.

Improve standards in apparel factories

FROM PAGE B1

He met survivors of the two deadly accidents, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, labour rights activists and visited garment factories.

He said there has been visible progress in security and social standards in the sector, which was necessary after the tragedies.

Sommer praised the government's initiative to establish an industrial park in bids to ensure the establishment of garment units in a planned manner, ensure safety, and encourage relocation of the clothing factories from the capital.

However, lots still need to be done in order to improve workers' safety and their social standards, he added.

Unless the government and factory owners continue to remain focused, there are risks for the \$20 billion worth export-earning sector, he said.

"The risk is that it will be impossible to sell Bangladesh garments in Europe," warned the 62-year old.

"Bangladesh's image was really damaged in Europe by these accidents. And for the consumers, it is necessary to have a good image, not only low prices."

"You are producing garments in the low price segment for Europe and if companies think the only way (to do business) is to give low prices and people (consumers) do not care, they are on the wrong path. People care about the living conditions of the workers here."

There are alternative garment makers around the world, he said.

"If you want to be the champion in garments, you have to become champions in ensuring proper working conditions too. Otherwise, people in Europe will say it is possible to get garments from other countries, from other regions," said Sommer, who lives in Berlin.

European Union members account for 56 percent of Bangladesh's total garment exports, with Germany being the biggest consumer in Europe.

"I think that if Bangladeshi apparel makers believe that there is no pressure on their sketch, they are really wrong. They can dream on but they have no alternative but to improve working conditions. Otherwise, they are losing the business."

He favoured continuation of independent inspections to monitor progress. "It is crucial that independent inspection continues throughout the sector."

The recent international initiatives, especially the Accord, which involves employers and trade unions as equal partners, are a promising sign in helping the sector move forward.

But he also reminded global apparel retailers and local factories about their responsibilities. "Some of the injured

workers are unable to work anymore in the sector and they do not have any income. So, it is my role to remind brands and factory owners to come forward and compensate the workers."

"Accountability for what happened at Rana Plaza and Tazreen lies with the factory owners and the international brands that sourced from these factories. There is no way that they can deny their responsibilities."

"This means that compensation must be paid."

The ITUC president criticised the bar on formation of trade unions in the amended labour law.

The 30 percent membership requirement to form a trade union at a factory is abnormal and not in line with international standards, he said.

The threshold should go and the international community expects that Bangladesh adjust its labour legislation and working conditions in line with international standards, he added.

Trade unions in the export processing zones also have to be allowed; labour movement in Bangladesh also needs to be recognised as an integral part of the economy, he said.

Referring to his talks with the prime minister, Sommer said Hasina has promised to work further to bring the labour law in line with international standards and ILO conventions.

"She knows and should remember that international labour movement and the international community will continue to remind Bangladesh of bringing standards in line with international standards."

ITUC and the German trade unions do not support boycotts, although there is a campaign to boycott clothes of international brands that source from Bangladesh, he said.

"We do not think that is the way to change anything because people and workers will be affected and will potentially lose their jobs."

Discussions are necessary on the gap between brand's purchase price of garments from Bangladesh and the retail tag prices of the same in European markets, he said.

"We need to close that gap and make sure that more money comes to Bangladesh. However, what we do not want that the money ends up in the pockets of the owners. This money needs to go to the workers."

A huge task lies on the government's shoulders to improve social and safety standards in the factories, he said.

But no-one expects that the government would do that overnight, this will require time, he added.

"I do not expect a big jump. I expect some steps forward."

Kailashtila drilling starts in July for oil and gas

IQBAL SIDDIQUEE, Sylhet

The drilling of the Kailashtila well 7 (KTL 7) in Golapganj upazila of Sylhet will begin in July, ten months after Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina laid the project's foundation last year.

Preparation is almost complete for the drilling of the appraisal and development site, around 15km away from Sylhet city.

"About 500 barrels of oil are expected to be produced a day as it is targeted as an oil well," said Harun Ur Rashid Molla, project director of the KTL 7 project and deputy general manager of state-run Sylhet Gas Fields Ltd yesterday. The well is likely to produce 25 mmcf/d gas a day.

If oil is found, it will be the country's second oil well, after the first was drilled in the Haripur field in Jaintapur upazila in Sylhet in the 1980s. The Haripur field ran dry in 1994.

The field has a reserve of 109 million barrels, of which 44 million barrels of oil and 658 billion cubic feet of gas are recoverable. The estimated cost for the drilling is Tk 220 crore.

Work on the rig foundation is almost complete and transportation of the drilling rig components would start soon. It will take two months to install, test and commission at the Bapex-run site.

The rig is to be brought over from Fenchuganj gas field, where drilling of a well is complete, he said.

Bangladesh Petroleum Exploration Company will drill the site, approximately completing in three months. The well was to begin drilling in December earlier.

In 2011-12, Bapex carried out 3D surveys in Kailashtila, Rashidpur and Haripur and found oil and gas reserves in several zones below the gas structures in

Tata, Mitsubishi to create Japan IT firm

AFP, Mumbai

India's biggest outsourcing firm Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) and Japan's Mitsubishi Corp said Monday they are teaming up to create a Japanese software services provider with annual revenues of \$600 million.

Tata Consultancy Services Japan, Nippon TCS Solution Center and IT Frontier Corp -- a Mitsubishi unit -- will merge to create the provider under the agreement slated to close in June.

"This strategic transaction signifies our serious commitment to the Japan market," TCS chief executive N. Chandrasekaran said in a joint statement with Mitsubishi.

IFIC launches mobile banking

FROM PAGE B1

Bangladesh already ranks second for financial inclusion in South Asia, right after Sri Lanka, he said.

Mobile banking has facilitated easy flow of money from the cities towards rural areas, helping economic activities to flourish and supporting development, Rahman said.

Prospects and challenges of garment industry

FROM PAGE B4

We have realised there is no best alternative but to improve productivity in order to compete in the global market since the prices of garments in the world market have gone down to such an extent that there is hardly any scope for a further decrease in the price level. Keeping the fact in mind due emphasis should be put on developing the skills of our workers.


Practically saying one word that describes our garment sector is 'resilience'. Even after many external and internal challenges, we have come out successful and still going strong. This sector has such strong foundations that a few mishaps cannot and will not take the glory away.

We may have had disruptions in our supply chain but still we met our shipments and deliveries, though they have cost more than usual

but at least we kept our words. No one can deny our commitment that buyers have enjoyed all these years by importing from us. Unfortunate incidences happened but with time and effort we can avert such incidents. It is good to see that even during our difficult time in the wake of Tazreen and Rana Plaza tragedy, buyers have not lost their confidence in us and they are still supporting.

The RMG industry has the potential to grow more in the coming years. With tangible support from our government, buyers and all other organisations concerned, we can reach heights. But with dreams in the eyes of millions of Bangladeshis, achieving that feat may not be impossible.

The writer is president of Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters



পাওয়ার গ্রীড কোম্পানী অব বাংলাদেশ লিঃ
POWER GRID COMPANY OF BANGLADESH LTD.
(An Enterprise of Bangladesh Power Development Board)
Institution of Engineers Bangladesh (IEB) Bhaban New Bhaban (4th floor) 8/A, Ramna, Dhaka-1000.

Web: www.pgcb.org.bd

সূত্র নং- পিজিসিবি/পিডি(বিবি-২৩০কেডি প্রকল্প)/১১.১১/২০১৪/২২৪

তারিখঃ ২০/০৪/২০১৪ইং

দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি

১। বিষয় বা কাজের নাম	৪। বিবিয়ানা সুইচিং স্টেশন সংলগ্ন ২৩০ কেভি কানেকটিং লাইন নির্মাণ কাজ।
২। জামানতের টাকা	৪। টাকা ৫,০০,০০০/- মাত্র যে কোন তফসিলী ব্যাংক হতে পে-অর্ডার/ব্যাংক ড্রাফট এর মাধ্যমে পাওয়ার গ্রীড কোম্পানী অব বাংলাদেশ লিঃ এর অনুকূলে দেয়।
৩। দরপত্র দলিলের মূল্য	৪। টাকা ১,০০০/- মাত্র পাওয়ার গ্রীড কোম্পানী অব বাংলাদেশ লিঃ এর অনুকূলে (অফেরতযোগ্য) তফসিলভুক্ত যে কোন ব্যাংক হতে পে-অর্ডার/ব্যাংক ড্রাফট এর মাধ্যমে দেয়।
৪। দরপত্র দলিলপত্রাদি প্রাপ্তিস্থান	৪। ক) প্রধান প্রকৌশলী (প্রকল্প), আরসিসি টাওয়ার (৭ম তলা), ১৭, মহাখালী বা/এ, ঢাকা। খ) বিভাগীয় কমিশনার, ঢাকা বিভাগ, সেগুন বাগিচা, ঢাকা। গ) নিম্ন স্বাক্ষরকারীর দপ্তর।
৫। ঠিকাদারের যোগ্যতা	৪। বিগত ১০ বছরে পিজিসিবি/বিউবো/ডিপিডিসি এর অথবা ঐ সংস্থা কর্তৃক নিয়োজিত ঠিকাদারের অধীনে ১৩২ কেভি অথবা ২৩০ কেভি সম্বলন লাইনের কমপক্ষে ১ কিঃমিঃ লাইন নির্মাণের কাজ সম্পাদনের পূর্ব অভিজ্ঞতা থাকতে হবে।
৬। দরপত্র বিক্রয়ের শেষ তারিখ ও সময়	৪। ৭ মে ২০১৪, বিকাল ৩ঃ০০ ঘটিকা।
৭। দরপত্র গ্রহণের শেষ তারিখ, সময় ও স্থান	৪। ৮ মে ২০১৪, দুপুর ১২ঃ০০ ঘটিকা, (১) বিভাগীয় কমিশনার, ঢাকা বিভাগ, সেগুন বাগিচা, ঢাকা। (২) কোম্পানী সচিব, আইবি ভবন (৫ম তলা), রমনা, ঢাকা।
৮। দরপত্র খাম খোলার স্থান, তারিখ ও সময়	৪। কোম্পানী সচিব, পিজিসিবি লিঃ, আইবি ভবন (৫ম তলা), রমনা, ঢাকা। ৮ মে ২০১৪ তারিখ বিকাল ৩ঃ০০ ঘটিকায় উপস্থিত দরদাতাগণের সম্মুখে খোলা হবে (যদি কেউ উপস্থিত থাকেন)।

৯। দরপত্র জুয়ের পূর্বে দপ্তর প্রধানের নিকট ঠিকাদারী প্রতিষ্ঠানের হালনাগাদ তালিকাভুক্তি ও মালিকানা দলিল, আয়করের হালনাগাদ সার্টিফিকেট, VAT রেজিস্ট্রেশন, হালনাগাদ ট্রেড লাইসেন্স ও অভিজ্ঞতার সনদ প্রদর্শন এবং দপ্তর প্রধানের অনুমতি গ্রহণ করতে হবে। সিডিউলে উল্লেখকৃত অন্যান্য শর্তাবলী এক্ষেত্রে প্রযোজ্য হবে। কোন কারণ দর্শানো ব্যতিরেকে যেকোন/সকল দরপত্র বাতিল করার ক্ষমতা পিজিসিবি কর্তৃপক্ষ সংরক্ষণ করে

(প্রকৌশলী মোঃ কামরুল হাসান)
তত্ত্বাবধায়ক প্রকৌশলী ও প্রকল্প পরিচালক
বিবিয়ানা ২৩০ কেভি সুইচিং স্টেশন প্রকল্প
এনএলডিসি ভবন (৮ম তলা), আফতাবনগর, ঢাকা।