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ADP fund to go up 32pc

Padma bridge project to receive the biggest share

REJAUUL KARIM BYRON

The allocation for the annual development programme for the next fiscal year is going to increase 32 percent over this year's revised ADP outlay, while the Padma bridge project will again get the biggest chunk of funds.

The Finance Division early this week sent the proposal to the planning ministry.

The planning ministry has been asked to prepare the next ADP within Tk 79,031 crore against the Tk 60,000 crore revised ADP for the current fiscal year.

In the next fiscal year, the Bridges Division has been given the third highest allocation among 71 ministries and divisions. The Bridges Division has only two projects -- Padma bridge got Tk 8,100 crore and Dhaka elevated expressway project Tk 635 crore.

In the Tk 8,100 crore set aside for the Padma bridge, Tk 1,600 crore is Indian grant.

In the current fiscal year's allocation, the Padma bridge, as a single project, got the highest allocation of Tk 6,852 crore; but as work on various components did not progress as per plans, Tk 2,042 crore has been kept for the project in the revised ADP.

However, officials have expressed doubt whether the revised allocation could be utilised as only Tk 414 crore was spent in nine months of the current fiscal year.

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| PROPOSED ADP FOR FY15 | |
|-----------------------|---------------------|
| Total allocation | Tk 79,031 cr |
| Local fund | Tk 51,331 cr |
| Project aid | Tk 27,700 cr |
| TWO MAJOR ALLOCATIONS | |
| Padma bridge | Tk 8,100 cr |
| Power Division | Tk 9,273 cr |



IN MEMORY OF RANA PLAZA VICTIMS
Fifth from right, Khandker Mosharraf Hossain, expatriate welfare and overseas employment minister, and foreign diplomats observe moments of silence in memory of Rana Plaza workers, at a programme at Ruposhi Bangla Hotel in Dhaka yesterday. Story on page 1

Rana Plaza episode: let's not repeat it

Ministers, business leaders, labour rights activists make a vow

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

The state minister for foreign affairs, on the occasion of the anniversary of Rana Plaza collapse, yesterday urged the garment sector stakeholders not to do business in a way that it endangers people's lives.

"Today we should commit that we will not do business which kills people. Personally, I made a commitment today that I will not do such a business which will kill people," Shahrar Alam, state minister for foreign affairs, said.

His comments came at an event organised by the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association at its headquarters to commemorate the first anniversary of the industrial accident, the worst in the garment industry.

The programme was attended by the dead workers' children and survivors, trade union leaders, ministers and garment owners.

Commerce Minister Tofail Ahmed said he could never imagine an incident as tragic as the collapse of the eight-storey building in

Bangladesh. "Let us learn some lessons from this dark chapter in our history."

"I do not want another tragedy like the Rana Plaza building collapse. I cannot even sleep when I remember the incident," said Saathi Akter, a survivor.

"I cannot express in words the enormity of this tragedy. I lost my husband in the incident. Nothing can be more heartbreaking than this," said Momtaz Parveen, wife of Saeed Ahmed, who was an executive director of Phantom Apparels Ltd, one of the five factories housed in the plaza.

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US unhappy over progress in GSP action plan

Two congressmen write to Hasina

REFAYET ULLAH MIRDHA

Two US congressmen have written a letter to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina expressing dissatisfaction over Bangladesh's progress in a US-prescribed action plan for regaining GSP in the American market.

In the letter sent on Wednesday, on the eve of the first anniversary of the Rana Plaza collapse, they called for improving working conditions in factories.

The congressmen are Sander M Levin, ranking member of committee on ways and means, and George Miller, a senior democrat member of committee on education and the workforce.

"We believe it is critical for the government of Bangladesh to take stronger steps to fully implement the action plan that was issued as a roadmap for reinstating trade benefits, which were suspended in June 2013 under the Generalised System of Preferences programme," the letter said.

The government has taken some steps but there has been insufficient progress in many areas, especially with regard to freedom of association, according to the letter.

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Regulator fines an insurer

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

The insurance regulator has fined Republic Insurance Company Tk 2.5 lakh for doing business in credit.

The Insurance Development and Regulatory Authority has settled a claim of nearly Tk 3 lakh for a client of Nitol Insurance, IDRA said in a statement yesterday.

IDRA Chairman Shefaqe Ahmed led the hearings attended by members of IDRA and chief executive officers of the insurance companies.

Four branches, two in Dhaka and two in Chittagong and Bogra, of Republic Insurance were fined a total of Tk 2.5 lakh for doing business in credit violating insurance rules.

In another hearing, IDRA asked Nitol to settle claims of Rangdhanu Enterprise in Chittagong worth Tk 2.85 lakh. A fire accident in 2012 caused Rangdhanu Enterprise a loss of Tk 2.85 lakh, but the insurer had dismissed the claim, saying that the client used substandard materials in building its warehouse.

After hearings, IDRA found the claim acceptable and asked the insurer to pay the claim.

IDRA warned the chief executives and branch managers of these companies against violating rules.

Though the government enacted a new insurance law in 2010 and gave the authorities adequate control over the errant insurers, the regulator is yet to get sufficient employees to monitor activities of more than 70 companies.

Cashing in on the weaknesses of the authorities, errant insurers have been violating tariff rates, paying illegal commission to clients and making transactions in cash and credit instead of commission.

Global rally for victims of industrial tragedy

MD FAZLUR RAHMAN

Gap's flagship High Street branch in Kensington over hundreds of its refusal to join companies that have signed a legally binding Bangladesh Accord for Fire and Building Safety, following the disaster which killed 1,135, mostly garment workers.

The protesters included comedian and writer Mark Thomas, and representatives from the charity War on Want, and Tansy E Hoskins, the journalist who has written the new book *Stitched Up: The names, age and profession of the*



People wear funeral shrouds and lie on the ground in Paris yesterday as they take part in a protest marking the first anniversary of the Rana Plaza collapse in Bangladesh.

Protesters called upon retailers to be more transparent about their supply chains and compensate the victims and their families

victims as they took part in a campaign of protest marking the first anniversary of the Rana Plaza building collapse, Gap's store in Kensington with a placard that says "Warning: Lethal Working

Conditions. A world premiere screening in London, of 'Tears in the Fabric', a film by the Rainbow Collective and supported by War on Want, was to be held in the evening in Tuke Hall at Regents University, according to the website of War on Want.

Several labour groups, including the AFL-CIO, International Labour Rights Forum and United Students Against Sweatshops, were to gather outside the Children's Place, an American retailer, in Columbia

Is the factory collapse a turning point?

BRUCE KENNEDY for CBS News

As the world commemorates the one-year anniversary of the deadly Rana Plaza factory building collapse in Bangladesh, an overriding question remains: What can be done to prevent such industrial accidents in the future, especially in emerging economies and business sectors like Bangladesh's garment industry?

Many European and North American retailers, who depend on the Bangladeshi textile industry for their apparel, have responded to the factory collapse with their own worker safety initiatives. There have also been calls for consumers to consider the human cost behind that bargain-priced clothing we all demand.

At the same time, the media has picked up on the parallels between Rana Plaza and a similar disaster, a century earlier in New York City, when 146 people, mostly young immigrant women, were burned to death or forced to jump to their deaths after a fire swept through the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory. That 1911 tragedy gave new momentum to the US labour movement; it also introduced regulations and reforms for workplace conditions and safety.

But will Rana Plaza serve as a turning point for garment industry workers or another missed opportunity?

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Telcos seek cuts in SIM taxes

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

The country's mobile phone operators want waivers on SIM taxes and value-added taxes on their services to boost internet dispersion.

The Association of Mobile Telecom Operators of Bangladesh (AMTOB) placed their budget proposal at a pre-budget meet with the National Board of Revenue yesterday.

The SIM tax waiver is the most important, as it emerges as the biggest obstacle to mobile operators, said TIM Nurul Kabir, secretary general of AMTOB.

Currently, the operators pay Tk 300 for each SIM connection sold. If SIM taxes become zero by 2015, tele-density will increase to 85 percent from 72 percent at present, AMTOB predicts.

The government could see a 2 to 4 percent jump in economic growth if more people have access to mobile services and 3G internet, the AMTOB proposal said.

The country can reach its digitisation goal even before 2021 if data use increases, as the internet is going to be the key driver, Kabir said.

The gross domestic product will increase by 0.15 percent if only 10 percent of 2G or voice subscribers are shifted to data or 3G services, said AMTOB.

AMTOB also called for tax exemption on the import of internet modems and other equipment for the industry, along with a cut in corporate taxes applicable on the mobile service providers.

Wata Chemicals mulls comeback

SARWAR A CHOWDHURY

Wata Chemicals seeks to relist its shares on the Dhaka Stock Exchange, which transferred the company to over-the-counter market four and a half years back.

The chemicals company filed an appeal after it became regularised in holding annual general meetings and paying dividends to its shareholders, according to the premier bourse.

Wata Chemicals was transferred in 2009 to the bourse's OTC market, a separate trading floor for trading of junk shares. The OTC market is meant for those companies that are not in operation or fail to hold AGMs or declare dividends or do not convert their paper shares into electronic ones.

Presently, 68 companies, including Wata Chemicals, are enlisted on the OTC market of the DSE.

This is the third time Wata Chemicals, which was listed on the stockmarket in 1992, sought to come back to the main market.

"The issue will be placed in the board meeting for taking decision on relisting of Wata Chemicals' shares," said a top DSE official.

The company has been holding AGM regularly and paying dividends to the shareholders a year after its delisting from the main market.

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