

Minister slams textile millers for unplanned factories

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

The state minister for power and energy yesterday came down heavily on textile millers for unplanned industrialisation and said entrepreneurs will have to relocate their factories in a planned manner to industrial zones.

"Find industrial zones by negotiating with the government and shift your factories to those areas; you will get uninterrupted gas and power supply," Nasrul Hamid said.

Entrepreneurs set up their factories wherever they found land -- in Gazipur, Ashulia and Narayanganj, Hamid said. "But we have to provide utility connections from the same grid that are usually meant for residential purposes, creating huge system losses."

Citing the API Park, an industrial zone for active pharmaceutical ingredients maker, he said the companies in the area are getting uninterrupted utility supply.

"There is no alternative to an industrial zone. Don't build factories like mushrooms."

Hamid made the comments while a delegation of Bangladesh Textile

Mills Association, led by its Chairman Tapan Chowdhury, met at the state minister's office with a set of demands. The demands included revising the gas tariff for captive power generation, uninterrupted power supply and new gas connections for industrial units.

Hamid refused to revise the gas tariff that was hiked recently and said the government is discouraging captive power generation. "We are moving forward to liquefied natural gas, which will be costlier than the existing gas tariff. So, you have to start preparing from now."

He however said his ministry has no power to revise the gas tariff, as it is set by Bangladesh Energy Regulatory Commission (BERC) through a public hearing. "You have to sit with BERC. But I will place your demands before the prime minister for consideration."

In response to millers' arguing that the energy tariff hike would raise the cost of production, the state minister said Bangladesh's utility price is among the lowest in the world and the government is providing thou-

sands of crores of taka as subsidy. He cited the Tk 7,000 crore in subsidy given to the power sector alone.

If the textile sector argues that it would not survive, there must be something wrong in another area, which the entrepreneurs should find, he said.

For instance, Hamid identified the high bank interest rate that is one of the highest in the world. "Talk with the bankers and raise your demand to reduce the interest rate. If the rate is reduced, your production cost will come down automatically."

On new gas connections, Hamid said the government is continuing to provide new connections, but in a slow pace, as it prefers to give the connections to only the planned factories.

Earlier, Chowdhury of BTMA urged the state minister to implement the new gas tariff for captive power generation in phases with a 25 percent hike in each year.

The textile sector, where around Tk 8,000 crore has been invested so far, would face a major setback due to the hike in gas tariff, which has been doubled, he added.

Nissan's Almera launched in Bangladesh

STAR BUSINESS DESK

Pacific Motors launched Almera, a new model of Nissan Motor, in Bangladesh, available at its three showrooms in Dhaka, Chittagong and Sylhet.

Almera, positioned as an affordable family sedan, is among Nissan's top sellers and has been introduced in more than 150 countries, Pacific Motors said in a statement yesterday.

Almera has a bigger front grille, a spacious interior, piano black centre console, premium audio system and a new premium steering wheel with added functionality.

Almera is equipped with one of the latest fuel-efficient technology, and is available with a down-payment of just Tk 2.59 lakh and easy monthly instalments and three-year manufacturer's warranty.

Bangladesh exports to remain competitive even after TPP

US Ambassador Bernicat says

UNB, Dhaka

Bangladeshi exports will remain 'competitive' in the US market even after the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) deal is signed, US Ambassador Marcia Bernicat said yesterday.

"I fully expect Bangladesh is going to remain competitive, especially RMG [readymade garment] sector adopts international standards," she said.

Bernicat made the comments while addressing a discussion arranged by the Diplomatic Correspondents Association, Bangladesh, at the National Press Club in Dhaka.

The association's President Masud Karim chaired the event where General Secretary Bashir Ahmed also spoke.

The ambassador said Bangladesh might one day qualify for the TPP. "I think that's an excellent topic for the upcoming Tifa [Trade and Investment Cooperation Forum Agreement]."

Twelve Pacific Rim nations sealed the TPP deal Monday on creating the world's largest free trade area, delivering President Barack Obama a major policy triumph.

The deal, led by the United States and Japan, aims to set the rules for 21st century trade and investment and press China, not one of the 12, to shape its behaviour in commerce to the TPP standards.

The deal will also promote jobs and growth

in the US and across the Asia Pacific region.

There is a perception that Bangladesh will lose its competitive edge in apparel trade due to the TPP deal.

At present, Bangladesh pays 15.62 percent duty for its garment exports to the US, whereas Vietnam pays 8.38 percent.

After the signing of the TPP, garment exports from Vietnam will enter the American market completely without duty.

Bernicat, however, said if Bangladesh can meet the same international standards, its economy can enjoy more robust trade in the US. "You'll remain more competitive by adopting those standards."

On the GSP issue, she said there are areas of relationship that require more work. "I can think of no better example than the restoration of GSP."

The recent visit of the assistant United States trade representative to assess progress on the action plan will help Bangladesh and its partners prepare for the upcoming sustainability compact review.

Despite the GSP suspension, Bernicat said, US imports from Bangladesh has grown consistently as GSP only covers less than 1 percent of total exports.

Then US envoy said she is optimistic about GSP restoration and mentioned that Bangladesh economy must expand into other areas.

Worries set in as TPP signed

FROM PAGE B1

At present, Bangladesh pays 15.62 percent duty on its garment exports to the US, whereas Vietnam pays 8.38 percent. The deal will make Vietnam's garment exports to the American market completely duty-free.

Bangladesh's competitiveness in the US market will erode, said Mustafizur Rahman, executive director of the Centre for Policy Dialogue.

Furthermore, Bangladesh's duty advantage on garment exports to some other TPP nations -- Canada, New Zealand, Japan, Australia and Chile -- will also take a hit.

"The deal has created an opportunity for Vietnam to get zero-duty benefit to enter markets in Japan, Australia, New Zealand and Chile. Bangladesh as an LDC has long been enjoying the same benefits in the same markets," Rahman said.

The TPP is a mega regional trade deal, completely apart from the World Trade Organisation (WTO). So it will have an important implication for Bangladesh, as the country is a strong player in the world apparel business, he added.

"Investment decisions by entrepreneurs will also be affected by the trade agreement, making Vietnam a stronger candidate as a preferred destination, due to zero-duty access to other TPP nations, which control about 40 percent of

global economy," Rahman also added.

"So, we should reduce the cost of business to maintain our competitiveness in international trade. We should also prepare to join such a mega deal, as some other countries are also planning for the agreement," he said.

Bangladesh should also explore the issue of benefitting from the deal even without being a member of the TPP, and raise the issue at the upcoming 10th WTO ministerial meeting scheduled to be held in Kenya in December, he said.

The duty difference between Bangladesh and Vietnam -- about 16 percent for apparel export to the US -- creates too much pressure, which the TPP will increase, said Matlub Ahmad, president of the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI).

"So, we should focus not only on the US market, but also on the other countries where Bangladesh enjoys duty benefit. We should also diversify our apparel items for more value addition."

"We should increase productivity in the factories to cushion ourselves against the probable losses in garment exports," Ahmad said.

"If we see Bangladesh suffering massively, we will sit together and find solutions to the issue," Ahmad added.

Vietnam will be a big beneficiary from the

deal, said Ahsan H Mansur, executive director of Policy Research Institute, even though he could not quantify how much Bangladesh will lose every year as a result of it.

If Bangladesh had been a strong player in raw material exports such as yarn, fabrics and fibres, it would have benefited slightly from the deal, Mansur said. "But we do not export garment raw materials."

He also said Bangladesh should liberalise its tariff structure as some other countries might also join the TPP in the near future, he said.

The average tariff in Bangladesh is 55 percent, which limits the economy's openness to business.

Pacific trade ministers including the US, Australia and Japan have reached a deal on the most sweeping trade liberalisation pact in a generation, which will cut trade barriers and set common standards for 12 countries, an official familiar with the talks said on Monday, the Guardian said in its report just after reaching the mega deal.

More than 18,000 taxes imposed by various countries on US products will be eliminated thanks to the partnership.

The deal could reshape industries and influence everything from the price of cheese to the cost of cancer treatments.

Only 6.5pc households connected with internet: ITU

FROM PAGE B1

Bangladesh ranked 101 among 133 countries and Nepal secured the 109th position with 5.6 percent of its households using the internet.

However, analysts raised questions on the findings of the report.

Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission does not have the authentic information on internet use actually, which made the ITU report questionable, said Abu Saeed Khan, senior policy fellow at LIRNEasia, a Colombo-based think tank.

As of August, the country has 5.22 crore active internet connections, according to Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission; although the ITU report says only 9.6 percent individuals use the internet.

Of the South Asian countries, the Maldives is on the top position with 44.5 percent households using the internet. Bhutan connected their 26.3 households and ranked 60 globally.

India and Sri Lanka both connected 15.3 percent of their households while Pakistan connected 13.2 percent. The three countries ranked 80, 81 and 83 respectively.

Iceland gained the top position with 98.2 percent people connected with the internet while 98.5 percent households are connected in South Korea as of December 2014.

PMO should take lead in sustainable development goals

FROM PAGE B1

The government now needs to adapt the SDGs to national contexts and ensure that all ministries provide the right policy ingredients into the mix.

He urged the Prime Minister's Office to take the lead role.

Heads of states and governments, together with leaders of the civil societies and the private sectors, adopted the 17 SDGs with 169 associated targets to replace the Millennium Development Goals that will expire at the end of the year.

The member states, including Bangladesh, have committed to work towards implementing the agenda within their own countries and at the regional and global levels.

But the agendas have been launched at a time when the world is passing a challenging time, including economic slowdown and wars.

New goals and targets will come into effect on January 1 next year to guide the international development agenda over the next 15 years.

The CPD identified five major challenges linked to the attainment of the SDGs.

They are: integration into the national planning process, institutional mechanism, financing, data for monitoring and participation, and accountability.

An ongoing CPD study has found that among the 17 SDGs, eight are better integrated into the existing national prioritisation processes.

But 20 percent of the targets are

not currently reflected in the national priorities.

Integration of these goals into national planning and policies will be a major challenge.

The think-tank said Bangladesh must integrate Goal 10 (inequality) and Goal 16 (peace, justice and strong institutions), which, it thinks, are important for the country.

Achieving the SDGs in all countries will require additional global investment in the range of \$5 trillion to \$7 trillion per year up to 2030, according to estimates by the Intergovernmental Committee of Experts on Sustainable Development Financing.

Developing countries will need between \$3.3 trillion and \$4.5 trillion a year to finance basic infrastructure, food security, climate change mitigation and adaptation, and health and education, according to the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development.

But at the current level of public and private investment, there will be an annual financing gap of \$2.5 trillion, or 3.2 percent of world GDP.

The CPD said the funding issue will be the key challenge for Bangladesh as it already faces deficiency in its spending on social security, education and healthcare.

For example, the think-tank said the average share of healthcare in total public expenditure stagnated at 0.7 percent of GDP during 2003-2014.

WB upgrades growth forecast

FROM PAGE B1

While agricultural production has been healthy and services have recovered with domestic demand regaining strength, these alone cannot explain why growth in fiscal 2014-15 was higher than in fiscal 2013-14, according to the WB.

The GDP growth in fiscal 2013-14 was 6.1 percent.

The comments came in the report, 'South Asia Economic Focus Fall 2015', which was released yesterday.

Achieving the 7 percent GDP growth targeted outlined in the budget for fiscal 2015-15 while reducing inflation to 6.2 percent will be challenging, it said.

"All evidence suggest Bangladesh's potential GDP growth rate is no more than 6.5 percent given its demographics, feeble state of physical infrastructure and lingering political uncertainties."

The WB also identified four main challenges in Bangladesh's progress, with the rising default loans a great worry. "There has been no visible reduction in nonperforming loans as habitual defaulters continue their delinquent behaviour with impunity." Inaction on making the defaulters accountable has not helped change the game, it said.

Bangladesh has not made use of the low fuel prices in the world mar-

ket to build fiscal space, which would allow an effective counter-cyclical response in the event of an economic slowdown, or to invest in infrastructure or human capital.

Reforms to improve the effectiveness of public expenditure and revenue administration are badly needed, while much of the reform agenda, including a broad-based reform of state-owned enterprises, remains to be implemented.

The country is not at significant risk from contagion related to the recent turmoil in international financial markets or slower growth in China, it said.

Tourism takes a blow for killings of foreigners

FROM PAGE B1

Some members of a delegation from Japan left Bangladesh on October 4 and the rest of the members are waiting to leave by cutting their trip short by a week, he said.

"There are queries regarding IS and they also informed us of warnings from their foreign ministries about visiting Bangladesh," said Wahid Ullah, managing director of Silver Wave Tours.

"They are inquiring about the situation here and seeking opinions on whether their visits will be safe."

Tour operators had expected that political stability would attract more tourists, and the sector that employs 10 lakh people would be able to recoup the losses of the last two years.

However, the blow comes right at the start of the peak tourism season from October to March.

"We hoped for good business this year, to recover a part of previous losses. Unfortunately, the situation is against us again," he said.

Silver Wave faced tour cancellations by three Japanese groups, who were scheduled to visit Bangladesh by the end of October and early November, since the killing of Kunio Hoshi, a Japanese national.

Another seven groups are scheduled to come in November and December; but it is unclear whether they will come or not.

Hasan Mansur, former president of Tour Operators Association of Bangladesh (TOAB), said the miseries of the tourism service providers started in December 2013 when bookings were cancelled due to political unrest.

"We were forced to sit idle and bear all the

overhead costs."

"I can definitely say that these two incidents have already taken our industry a thousand miles backwards," he said.

"It will be a difficult and time-consuming process to get back our previous position as a holiday destination," said Mansur, who has been involved in the tourism industry for almost 40 years.

A lot of effort combined with promotional activities will be needed to recover, he said.

Operators said the inflow of foreign tourists had been rising in the last couple of years because of tour operators' efforts and increased familiarity among the foreigners about Bangladesh for the apparel industry, microcredit and cricket.

The country receives tourists mainly from Japan and the UK, said Toufiq Rahman, chief executive of Journey Plus. Around 25,000-30,000 tourists come here for leisure, he said.

"The rate of arrivals had been rising but the recent incidents will have a negative impact."

Faridul Haque, managing director of Tour Planners Ltd, said the problems are already kicking in. "The Japanese tourists are not feeling secured."

"But we will be able to recover, given that no such incident takes place again. They will count these as isolated events."

Travel and tourism accounted for 1.9 percent of the country's GDP in 2014, down from 2.1 percent in the previous year, according to World Travel and Tourism Council reports.

The sector directly generated 9.03 lakh jobs in 2014, down from 13.28 lakh in the previous year, according to the council.

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২য় সংশোধিত দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি

ক্রমিক	বিবরণ	২৩/৭/২০১৫ তারিখের ১২নং স্মারক অনুযায়ী	সংশোধিত
০৮	ক্রয়/সংগ্রহ পদ্ধতি	জাতীয় উন্মুক্ত দরপত্র পদ্ধতি	জাতীয় সীমিত দরপত্র পদ্ধতি
১৫	দরপত্র প্রচারের তারিখ	২৮/০৭/২০১৫খ্রিঃ	০৫/১০/২০১৫খ্রিঃ
১৭	দরপত্র বিক্রির শেষ তারিখ	০৫/১০/২০১৫খ্রিঃ	১৯/১০/২০১৫খ্রিঃ
১৮	দরপত্র গ্রহণের শেষ তারিখ ও সময়	০৬/১০/২০১৫খ্রিঃ বেলা ২.০০টা পর্যন্ত	২০/১০/২০১৫খ্রিঃ বেলা ২.০০টা পর্যন্ত
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২১	দরদাতার যোগ্যতা	যে কোন সরকারি, আধা-সরকারি ও স্বায়ত্তশাসিত প্রতিষ্ঠানে একক কার্যদেশে একতমাত্র কাজে প্রকল্পটির প্রাক্কলিত মূল্যের কমপক্ষে ৭০% পরিমাণ অর্থের সেতু/কালভার্ট নির্মাণের বিগত ০৩ (তিন) বৎসরের অভিজ্ঞতাসম্পন্ন ঠিকাদারী প্রতিষ্ঠান	যে কোন সরকারি, আধা-সরকারি ও স্বায়ত্তশাসিত প্রতিষ্ঠানের তালিকাভুক্ত ঠিকাদার/ঠিকাদারী প্রতিষ্ঠান অত্র অধিদপ্তরের প্রাক যোগ্যতাসম্পন্ন ঠিকাদার/ঠিকাদারী প্রতিষ্ঠান হিসেবে গণ্য হবে

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