

Bangladesh benefits from trade with India: Tofail

Indian High Commission gives a reception to Bangladeshis studying in India

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Bangladesh benefits from trading with India although the balance of bilateral commerce tilts towards the larger neighbour, Commerce Minister Tofail Ahmed said yesterday. He said two-way annual trade between the two countries has crossed \$6 billion.

"When there is any price hike of any commodity we become eager to import it from India. So, definitely, trade will be in favour of India. We have benefited out of it."

Bangladesh imports more from India than exports, although the former enjoys duty-free market access in the neighbouring country, he said.

The minister also said Bangladesh has trade deficit with China but trade surplus with the US, the EU and Australia.

He made the remarks at the cele-

bration of the ITEC and ICCR Day 2015 at Bangabandhu International Conference Centre in Dhaka.

The High Commission of India organised the programme to give a reception to Bangladeshi students and professionals who went to India for studies and receive trainings or to visit the country under its Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) and Indian Council of Cultural Relations (ICCR) programmes.

The ITEC offers developing countries the benefit of India's development experience and appropriate technologies. Bangladesh is one of the principal ITEC partners.

Under the ICCR Scholarship programme, many Bangladeshis have studied in India at the undergraduate, postgraduate and doctoral levels.

Since 2007, more than 1,500 scholars undertook training under the ITEC

programme and about 1,000 scholars visited India under the ICCR programmes, Indian High Commissioner Pankaj Saran said in his speech.

Talking about the Indo-Bangla relationship, the diplomat said the relationship between Bangladesh and India is one of the most important and critical relationships with any country in the world.

"How this relationship progresses between India and Bangladesh will determine the destiny of not only the people of India but also the people of Bangladesh."

Saran also said both countries would have to provide their youth population exposure to best experiences and practices so their minds and skills can flourish and can contribute to the betterment of their respective countries.

Intel reports 6pc fall in net income

BBC NEWS

US computer chip giant Intel demonstrates how its no-touch technology enables users to operate their devices with hand gestures. The world's biggest chipmaker, Intel, reported a 6 percent fall in net income for the three months to September and cut its fourth quarter outlook for its important server-chip business.

Net income fell to \$3.11 billion compared with a year ago for the personal computer giant.

As its PC business continued to slow, the firm had relied on sales of its chips that go in data servers. But the firm said demand for its server-chips was slowing.

However, Intel said its latest quarterly numbers were largely in line with expectations and that the results were "solid".



Md Rezaul Haque, chairman of Social Islami Bank, attends the bank's business review meeting at its corporate head office in Dhaka. Md Shafiqur Rahman, managing director, was also present.



SK Sur Chowdhury, deputy governor of Bangladesh Bank, poses at the signing ceremony of a cooperation agreement, between the central bank and International Finance Corporation, on management of environmental and social risk management in the textile sector, at Bangladesh Bank in Dhaka on Tuesday.



Mahesh Sharma, India's minister of state (IC) for tourism and civil aviation, and PJ Kurien, deputy chairman of India's Rajya Sabha, present an award for "most innovative design and luxury facilities in a business hotel in South Asia" to Ashwani Nayar, general manager of Le Meridien Dhaka at the 11th Hospitality India and Explore the World Annual International Travel Awards at Ashok Hotel in India.

Samsung Electronics unveils second Tizen-powered smartphone

REUTERS, Seoul

Tech giant Samsung Electronics Co Ltd unveiled on Wednesday the second smartphone powered by its own Tizen operating system, its latest bid to increase the popularity of its own software ecosystem.

Samsung said the Z3 will go on sale in India on Oct. 21 for 8,490 rupees. While this is more expensive than the 5,700 rupees launch price for its predecessor, the Z1, the new phone offers better hardware including a faster processor, a higher quality screen and improved cameras.

The world's top smartphone maker is trying to reduce its dependence on Google Inc, whose Android operating system powers Samsung's flagship Galaxy smartphones. The company has also launched other products this year powered by Tizen, including the Gear S2 smartwatch and premium televisions. A person with knowledge of the matter told Reuters in June Samsung plans to launch more handsets running on Tizen this year.



Sayed Nurul Islam, member for investment promotion at Bangladesh Export Processing Zones Authority, and Chih-Cheng Hung, managing director of McEmblem Manufacturing Co, pose at the signing ceremony of an investment agreement in Dhaka yesterday. McEmblem, a China-Taiwan joint venture, will invest \$6.03 million to set up a label-pins, medals, and key-chain factory at Comilla Export Processing Zone.

Agro processing to get more emphasis: Amu

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Amu said the present Industrial Policy 2010 treats food processing and agro-based industries as one of the thrust sectors.

Incentives are also being provided to boost exports of processed foods. As a result, the sector is growing fast, and locally produced foods are now exported to 140 countries, he said. "We want exports to increase further," he said, adding that there is a huge potential for processed food in the local market too.

State Minister for Foreign Affairs Md Shahriar Alam said the expanding economy will fuel demand for food in the domestic market in the coming years.

However, the capacity to fulfil the demand is yet to be created, he said.

Alam called upon the agro processors and agricultural produce marketers to ensure safety and quality of food for sustainable business.

"The issue of quality is one of the main risks. All in the food supply chain should work responsibly to ensure safety," he said, citing the use of health hazardous chemical formalin in fresh farm produce such as mango.

Alam, citing the problems in the quality of packaged food exported from Bangladesh in the past, said: "You must ensure quality. It is your responsibility."

Anwar Faruque, director general of the agricultural ministry's seed wing, said the farmers are producing various foods in surplus quantity.

But they are deprived of getting fair and steady prices throughout the year in the absence of value addition and agro processing, he said.

To absorb the excess farm produce, there is no alternative to go for agro processing, Faruque said, while calling for more investment in post harvest management, storage and proper transportation of farm produce.

He went on to urge the industries ministry to give a special package to encourage the establishment of agro processing industries.

Faruque also wanted tax break of up to 10 years to lure investors in the sector.

Govt moves to boost Dhaka-Ctg river route

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The World Bank has proposed to provide \$330 million for the project.

The plans were discussed at a workshop on "environmental and social impact assessment study of Dhaka-Chittagong inland water transport corridor projects" at Cirdap auditorium in Dhaka yesterday.

Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority and the Institute of Water Modelling jointly organised the workshop.

Shipping Minister Shajahan Khan said around two lakh passengers travel daily on the Dhaka-Chittagong corridor and the adjoining routes.

"The route is important as goods

of local businesses and transit trade under protocol on inland water transport between Bangladesh and India are carried through it."

He said growth of international seaborne trade will largely depend on the Dhaka-Chittagong route.

The minister said the government will buy 20 dredgers at a cost of Tk 2,048 crore to increase navigability of the river routes.

Around 6,000 kilometres remain navigable during monsoon, but it shrinks to about 3,900 kilometres in the dry season, he said.

If the routes are revived, this will have a positive impact on employment generation, he said, adding: "Safe, reliable and faster communi-

cation will be developed."

The project aims to pilot a new approach to maintenance of the Dhaka-Chittagong corridor, two key connecting routes and construction and maintenance of six vessel shelters for use during cyclones or storms.

The project will increase capacity, reliability and safety of inland water transport along the Dhaka-Chittagong corridor.

The government has identified 65 main river navigation routes that are essential for passengers and freight transport within the country.

The Dhaka-Chittagong corridor helps transport about 80 percent of all inland water traffic.

Construction of first hi-tech park begins in Gazipur today

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The energy-efficient building will have a water recycling plant and will be equipped with an emergency evacuation system.

TechnoSity plans to invest some \$25.8 million (about Tk 200 crore) and finish the job in six years, even though the agreement allows for ten, a top executive of the company said.

"In one year's time, we should be able to begin handing over plots to the allotted companies," said Moynul Haque Siddiqui, chairman of TechnoSity.

"We will also spend more on developing the plots if necessary, as some international companies have already showed interest in investing

here."

The hi-tech park will create some 60,000 jobs in ten years, said Hosne Ara Begum, managing director of Bangladesh Hi-Tech Park Authority.

TechnoSity is a joint venture between the local company Fiber@Home and three Malaysian companies -- IRIS Corporation, MSC Technology Centre and Alpha Technologies. Fiber@Home holds a 76 percent stake in the consortium, with the rest shared by the Malaysians.

The consortium will have to share its revenue with the government: 12 percent of building rents, 21 percent of land rents, 5 percent of service charge on utility bills, and 6 percent

from all other earnings.

Earlier in June, the government entered an agreement with another consortium, Summit Technopolis, for the construction of development of blocks 2 and 5 that span 65 acres and 29 acres respectively. Technopolis will invest some \$114.56 million on block 2 and \$93.03 million on block 5.

Both Technopolis and TechnoSity will operate the blocks for 40 years, after which the agreements could be extended for another 20.

It will take some time to assign a developer for block 1, on 65 acres, as the government intends to make it the administrative block, Hosne Ara Begum said.

BoI main roadblock to foreign investment

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He cited the case of international hotel chain hotel Le Meridien as a case in point. Le Meridien is yet to get the bar licence as it needs approval from 28 signatories.

A strong partnership between the government and the private sector is needed to solve the problems faced by the foreign investors, said Farooq Sobhan, president of Bangladesh Enterprise Institute.

The continuation of policy is needed to boost the confidence of foreign investors, he said.

The central bank is reviewing the Foreign Exchange Regulations Act to further liberalise the currency regime for attracting more FDI, said SK Sur Chowdhury, deputy governor of Bangladesh Bank.

The country cannot attract FDI at the expected level due to a lack of investor confidence, congenial environment, unavailability of land, institutional weakness, corruption and some other 'unknown reasons', he said.

Supun Weerasinghe, president of Association of Mobile Telecom Operators of Bangladesh (AMTOB), said the costs of doing business and problems of collaboration are the other challenges.

Weerasinghe, also the chief executive officer of Robi, said the mobile phone operators have invested \$1.3 billion over the last five years as FDI but their investment is not completely protected.

"We need to create our own fibre connectivity for the sake of our own business, but the operators are prohibited from doing so," he added.

MA Taslim, a professor of economics at Dhaka University, said the government would have to work to reduce the gap between the prospect and actual investment.

Mahmudul Karim, country head of Santos Sangu Field, said neighbouring Myanmar managed to attract at least 18 foreign investors to its oil sector but only four came to Bangladesh. "The government needs to find out why."

Citycell Chief Executive Officer Mehboob Chowdhury, Citibank Managing Director Rashed Maqsood, and British American Tobacco Bangladesh's Managing Director Shehzad Munim were also present.



Muhammed Ali, managing director of United Commercial Bank, and Swapan Kumar Roy, general manager of Bangladesh Bank, exchange documents of refinancing schemes for setting up agro-processing units and small enterprises in rural areas. SK Sur Chowdhury, deputy governor of BB, was also present.



Pema Choden, ambassador of Bhutan; Samina Mehtab, deputy high commissioner of Pakistan; SM Anisul Haque, director general of Saarc and Bimstec under the foreign affairs ministry of Bangladesh; Iqramul Haque, director general of BSTI; Ashok Bhat, second secretary of Indian High Commission, and Syed Humayun Kabir, director general of South Asian Regional Standards Organisation (SARSO), pose at an event organised by SARSO to mark World Standards Day, at its secretariat in Dhaka yesterday.

Nissan turns to cricket to lure Indian buyers

REUTERS, New Delhi

Nissan Motor Co has entered into an eight-year sponsorship agreement with the International Cricket Council (ICC), a company executive said, in a bid by the Japanese car maker to boost its small market share in cricket-crazy India.

Nissan's passenger vehicles sales in India fell 24 percent to 19,563 in the six months from April to September, compared with the same period a year ago, giving it a 1.5 percent share of the market, industry data showed.

India is forecast to become the world's third-largest car market by 2020.

The slowdown in India sales has forced Nissan and its global carmaking alliance partner Renault SA to cut several hundred jobs in the country and reduce production at its plant near Chennai.

ICC is cricket's world governing body and India is a key member and its biggest revenue contributor.