

India eases red tape but foreign firms still struggle

AFP, New Delhi
Narendra Modi was elected two years ago this week promising to ease India's notorious red tape and unpack regulatory tangles, but for foreign firms, doing business in the world's fastest-growing large economy can still be a costly headache.

With a billion consumers and rising middle class, India holds dazzling potential -- yet despite signs of change on the ground, high-profile corporate tussles continue to bamboozle investors.

British firms Cairn Energy and Vodafone have this year been hit with fresh bills for billions of dollars in backdated tax and threats of asset seizure linked to long-running disputes.

Agribusiness giant Monsanto in March threatened to pull out of India over government plans to slash cotton seed royalties paid by local firms by about 70 percent to help farmers.

And two major American business bodies this month voiced disappointment with the glacial pace of market reforms.

In a submission to the US commerce secretary, the National Association of Manufacturers urged Washington to press for change during a visit by Modi in June.

"Despite statements made by Prime Minister Modi and other senior Indian officials over the past two years, there has been limited progress in many key areas that make it challenging to do business in India," the group wrote.

- Open for business? -
Modi took power after winning elections in May 2014 promising to make India "open for business", seeking to replicate an impressive economic track record as chief minister in Gujarat and speed up a market opening that began 25 years ago.

The potential is breathtaking: India's population will overtake China's within six years and comprise 1.7 billion people by 2050, according to the UN.

But India ranks 130 out of 189 on the World Bank's Ease of Doing Business index -- the worst of all G20 countries.

Regulations vary capriciously across its 29 states, where even the same law can be

interpreted in bafflingly different ways.
"It is a hassle, it's a pain, the amount of (tax) bills we get, the number of licences we need," the India head of one major European retailer told AFP on condition of anonymity.

"Any store that we open, there are between 25 to 40 licences. It's just a mess."

A much-reviled 2012 retrospective tax law has not been repealed, with telecoms giant Vodafone and oil explorer Cairn charged billions over previously cleared dealings.

"The finance minister himself has said on more than one occasion that retrospective taxes have been an own goal," Naushad Forbes, president of the Confederation of Indian Industry, told AFP.

"They ruin our reputation and don't bring us any revenue."

Trade remains a bugbear, with US exporters to India lamenting eye-wateringly high tariffs and protectionist restrictions, and years-long talks with the EU all but stalled.

"One big conflict at the highest level (is) that the Modi government is very pro-investment but at the same time, very anti-trade access," said Richard Rossow of the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) in Washington.

Even Facebook -- personally courted by tech-loving Modi in Silicon Valley -- ran into trouble with Free Basics, an initiative to give limited free Internet to the poor.

After Indian entrepreneurs railed against corporate paternalism, Free Basics was blocked by the telecoms regulator, in a ruling ostensibly over data pricing.

Some suggest India's buoyant economy, expected to have grown 7.6 percent this year, has bolstered nationalist tendencies.

- Change afoot -
While headline-grabbing corporate wrangles spook investors, many businesses say they see signs of change.

Several executives told AFP they find civil servants more approachable under the Modi government and said a drive to bring a vast ocean of approvals online has had a tangible effect.

"We have certainly seen an improved



The photo shows an Indian government employee sorting through registration notary paper at the office of the registrar in the district court of Allahabad.

willingness amongst some individuals in government organisations to close out historic project problems," said Liz King, India managing director of engineering consultancy Mott MacDonald.

Hundreds of backdated tax cases have been quietly resolved and it appears new ones are not being taken forward, said Rossow of CSIS.

"In the weeds there are good things

happening," he said.
The UK India Business Council said its members still cite legal and regulatory impediments as their biggest challenge to doing business in India.

But, said its head Richard McCallum, things are moving faster.

"It used to take three months to incorporate a company in India and now we are doing it in three weeks," he said.



Rashed Khan Menon, civil aviation and tourism minister, hands the Best Domestic Airline of the Year-2015 award to Mohammed Abdullah Al Mamun, managing director of US-Bangla Airlines, at a programme at Pan Pacific Sonargaon Hotel in Dhaka on Thursday. Bangladesh Monitor, a travel publication, gave the awards.



Md Abdul Hamid Miah, managing director of Union Bank, opens a branch of the bank in Ataikula Bazar in Sathia, Pabna yesterday. Md Mainul Islam Chowdhury, head of human resource, was also present.

Trade resumes at main Tunisia-Libya crossing: officials

AFP, Zarzis, Tunisia

Border traffic between Tunisia and Libya resumed on Saturday after the two countries reached a deal to lift a trade blockade at the main frontier crossing following angry street protests.

The breakthrough came after an agreement was reached late Friday on customs duties for goods passing through Ras Jedir, local governor Tahar Matmati said.

The accord provides for the establishment of a single customs duty for goods, Matmati said, adding that a joint monitoring committee was to oversee the deal.

Libyan border officials halted all freight traffic through the crossing at the end of April in an attempt to stop the smuggling of fuel, which is much cheaper across the border.

The closure sparked demonstrations on the Tunisian side and a strike on Wednesday in the impoverished town of Ben Guerdane, where the economy is heavily dependent upon trade with Libya, both legal and contraband.

Greece will return to bond markets next year: PM

AFP, Athens

Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras said Saturday that Greece will return to the bond markets in 2017, seven years after losing access to the markets due to its debt crisis.

"We will return to the markets in 2017," Tsipras said in an interview with the Realnews weekly newspaper.

While the eurozone country has continued to raise funds through short-term, low-risk, bonds, Greece has not had access to the medium- and long-term bond markets since 2010, when Athens sought the first of three multi-billion euro (dollar)

bailouts from the EU and the International Monetary Fund.

Since then Greece has made just two brief returns to the medium-term market, in 2014, during a period of slight growth.

Last year Athens agreed on its third EU-IMF bailout loan and is awaiting the green light from a meeting of eurozone finance ministers, in May 24, for the latest tranche of this money to be handed over.

The bailouts have required the Greek government to impose tough austerity measures that have proved hugely unpopular.
Last weekend riot police fired tear gas

to disperse petrol bomb-throwing protesters in Athens as thousands took to the streets in anti-austerity demos in protest at tax hikes and pension cuts demanded by creditors, and which were approved by the Greek parliament.

German Vice Chancellor Sigmar Gabriel on Monday urged debt relief for Greece, arguing that more austerity would kill off the "little green shoot of economic recovery".

Alleviating the debt burden would ease Greece back towards the markets "during next year," Deputy Prime Minister Yannis Dragasakis said in an interview with the Naftemporiki economic daily.

GOVERNMENT OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF BANGLADESH
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF ENGINEER
HEALTH ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT (HED)
MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE
105-106, MOTIJHEEL C/A, DHAKA-1000.

Memo No. HED/HPNSDP/NC(Phase-II)/Jhalokathi/Tender-280 /2016/ 87 Dated : 15.05.2016

Invitation for Tender

Sealed Tenders are hereby invited from the eligible Tenderers for "Construction of Hostel building, Vertical extension of 1250 sft & 1000 sft Quarter (2nd floor), Vertical extension of 800 sft quarter (2nd floor) & Guard room & ancillary works (Phase-II) for Nursing College at Sadar Upazila in Jhalokathi District". The Particulars of Tender are shown in the table below:

1	Ministry	Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW).
2	Agency	Health Engineering Department (HED).
3	Procuring Entity Name	Chief Engineer, Health Engineering Department (HED), Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.
4	Procuring Entity Code	None.
5	Procuring Entity District	Dhaka.
6	Invitation for	Works
7	Invitation Ref. No.	Memo No. স্বাস্থ্য/স্বাঃ-১/পিড/২০১৬/১০৫
8	Date	26.04.2016

KEY INFORMATION

9	Procurement Method	Open Tendering Method (OTM), National.
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FUNDING INFORMATION

10	Budget and Source of Funds	GOB Development Budget.
11	Development Partners	None

PARTICULAR INFORMATION

12	Project / Programme Code	5-2701-5480
13	Project / Programme Name	Health, Population & Nutrition Sector Development Program (HPNSDP).
14	Tender Package No.	WP-752/SDP(GOB)-HED, Lot-II.
15	Tender Package Name	Construction of Hostel building, Vertical extension of 1250 sft & 1000 sft Quarter (2 nd floor), Vertical extension of 800 sft quarter (2 nd floor) & Guard room & ancillary works (Phase-II) for Nursing College at Sadar Upazila in Jhalokathi District.
16	Tender Publication Date	16.05.2016
17	Tender Last Selling Date and Time	Date: 13.06.2016, Time : 1600 hours.
18	Tender Closing Date and Time	Date: 14.06.2016, Time : 1300 hours.
19	Tender Opening Date and Time	Date: 14.06.2016 Time : 1400 hours.
20	Name & Address of the office(s) for Selling Tender Documents	i. Office of the Chief Engineer, Health Engineering Department, 105-106, Motijheel C/A, Dhaka-1000. ii. Office of the Director General, Directorate General of Health Services, Mohakhali, Dhaka. iii. Office of the Divisional Commissioner, Dhaka /Barisal Division. iv. Office of the Superintending Engineer, HED, Circle-4, (Khulna), Faridpur. v. Office of the Executive Engineer, HED, Barisal Division.
21	Name and address of the office for receiving Tender Documents	i. Office of the Chief Engineer, Health Engineering Department, 105-106, Motijheel C/A, Dhaka-1000. ii. Office of the Director General, Directorate General of Health Services, Mohakhali, Dhaka. iii. Office of the Divisional Commissioner, Dhaka Division. iv. Office of the Metro Politan Police Commissioner, Ramna, Dhaka
22	Name & Address of the Office for Opening of Tenders	Office of the Chief Engineer, Health Engineering Department, 105-106, Motijheel C/A, Dhaka-1000.
23	Place / Date / Time of Pre-Tender Meeting (Optional)	Not Applicable.

INFORMATION FOR TENDERER

24	Brief Description of Works	(i). Construction of Hostel building 07-Storeyed with 07-Storeyed foundation. (ii). Vertical extension of 1250 sft & 1000 sft quarter (2 nd floor). (iii). Vertical extension of 800 sft quarter (2 nd floor). (iv). Construction of Guard room. (v). External work -Site development work, Surface drain, Boundary wall, Internal road, 800kg Passenger Lift & along with External Electrical works.
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25	Eligibility of Tenderers :	(i). The minimum amount of liquid assets or working capital or credit facilities of the Tenderer shall be (Taka in Lac) (ii). Required average annual construction turn over shall be greater than over the last 5(five) years (Taka in Lac) (iii). Least value of works as experience of similar nature of works in a single contract successfully completed with in last 5(five) years (Taka in Lac) (iv). Completion time					
1	WP-752/SDP(GOB)-HED, Lot-II.	Construction of Hostel building, Vertical extension of 1250 sft & 1000 sft Quarter (2 nd floor), Vertical extension of 800 sft quarter (2 nd floor) & Guard room & ancillary works (Phase-II) for Nursing College at Sadar Upazila in Jhalokathi District.	Tk.80.00	Tk.800.00	Tk.2600.00	Tk.2000.00	20 Months

26 Brief Description of Related Services Not Applicable.
27 Price of Tender Document (Tk) Tk.5000.00 (Taka Five thousand) only in the form of Treasury Challan to Accounts Code No. 1-2717-0006-2366

PROCURING ENTITY DETAILS

28	Name of Official Inviting Tender	Brigadier General M A Mohy,psc
29	Designation of Official Inviting Tender	Chief Engineer, Health Engineering Department (HED)
30	Address of Official Inviting Tender	105-106, Motijheel Commercial Area, Dhaka-1000.
31	Contact details of Official Inviting Tender	i. Telephone No. : 880-2-9577917, 9577918. ii. Fax No. : 88-02-9587601. iii. e-Mail address : hede@yahooc.com
32	Special Instructions	i. All submittals must be signed by the Tenderer, if not, the Tender will be treated as non-responsive. ii. In case of submitting Tender documents by secured post service must be addressed to Chief Engineer, HED, 105-106, Motijheel C/A, Dhaka-1000 and it must be reached within the time mentioned in SI, no.18. iii. Tender submission letter (Form PW3-1) should be filled in & signed as per form attached with the Tender document. If not, Tender shall not be accepted. iv. Any less or discount/above on total quoted amount in the abstract of BOQ of Tender Document will not be accepted but Modification as per ITT Clause 45.1 will be accepted. v. Notification of award (NOA) will be issued to the Successful Tenderer after getting approval from the competent Authority. vi. The procuring entity reserves the right to reject all Tenders prior to acceptance without assigning any reason whatsoever.

GD-1085
Brigadier General M A Mohy,psc
Chief Engineer
Health Engineering Department.