

Strong monitoring a must to ensure food safety: analysts

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Safe food campaigners yesterday demanded the government go for strong monitoring and surveillance to ensure safe foods for all.

"People have to eat food to live. So, food has to be safe and good as much as possible. Good food is a condition for a civilized nation," said Prof Abdullah Abu Sayeed, chairman of Bishwa Sahitya Kendra, a non-profit institution.

He spoke at a discussion on food safety at the office of institution in Dhaka.

The country has been suffering from the fear of unsafe foods for nearly two and a half decades, he said. "Our life, well being and life expectancy all are related to food."

Bangladesh Food Safety Authority (BFSA) should introduce strong monitoring to ensure food safety, he said.

A study has recently found pesticides in 62.5 percent of the vegetable samples collected directly from farms, BFSA Member Prof Md Iqbal Rouf Mamun said at the event.

"Even after a rinse, 37.5 percent of the samples still contained pesticide residue.

After cooking, 81.25 percent of the samples were safe for human consumption though they still contained some level of the contaminants." The study also found that the level of pesticide residue that remains after washing is within the permissible limit, Mamun said.

However, Shykh Seraj, a prominent media and agriculture development activist, raised questions about the quality of safety of the foods.

"If domestically grown vegetables are safe, why they do not get access to chain supermarkets and main markets in Europe?"

The soil has become contaminated by heavy metal for use of chemical fertiliser, he said.

"About 80 percent of the farmers are yet to go for organic farming."

It is vital to strengthen the food safety authority, said Prof Shah Monir Hossain, senior national adviser to the Food and Agriculture Organisation in Bangladesh.

Farmers should stop using antibiotic in poultry farms at the production level, he said. "It is an unethical practice."

Md Mahub Kabir, a member of BFSA, also spoke.



Md Arfan Ali, president and managing director of Bank Asia, and Muhammad A (Rumeel) Ali, chairman of Finova Technologies Limited, look on as Sarder Akhter Hamed, SEVP & head of Channel Banking, and Firoz Ahmed Khan, co-founder & CEO of Dorpon, a prime Finova initiative, exchange documents of a memorandum of understanding at the bank's corporate office at Purana Paltan in the capital yesterday. The agreement is on partnering e-commerce services from the bank's agent outlets.

PROPOSED BAY TERMINAL CPA hands over compensation for land acquisition

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

The Chittagong Port Authority (CPA) yesterday handed over Tk 352.62 crore in compensation for the acquisition of around 67 acres of land for its Bay Terminal project.

Shipping Minister Shajahan Khan handed over the cheque to Chittagong Deputy Commissioner Md Ilias Hossain at a ceremony at the

Radisson Blu Chittagong Bay View.

With this, the port authorities will get the land for the terminal project about four and a half years after the beginning of the formal procedure of the initiative.

Speaking at the event, the shipping minister said once the project is completed, the port's capacity and efficiency will get a boost.

Chittagong Chamber of

Commerce and Industry's President Mahbul Alam called for speedy implementation of the first phase of the project as the port is experiencing huge growth in container throughput.

The site for the terminal is located at North Halishahar in the city and six kilometres off the existing port jetties.

The CPA will build the terminal

on 2,500 acres of land by acquiring a total of 907 acres.

CPA Chairman Zulfiqur Aziz said container yards would be constructed on the primarily acquired land for storing containers.

Local lawmaker MA Latif, Chittagong City Corporation Mayor AJM Nasir Uddin and Chittagong Development Authority's Chairman Abdus Salam also spoke.



Mahfuz Anam, editor and publisher of The Daily Star; Ejaj Ahmad, president of Bangladesh Youth Leadership Centre, and Homayara L Ahmed, an assistant professor of the Institute of Business Administration at the University of Dhaka, attend a roundtable on "Closing the skills gap: Preparing the next generation for an uncertain job market," at The Daily Star Centre in the capital yesterday. Story on B1

Export falls in August China to lend more this year: envoy

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Earnings from the export of leather and leather goods also dropped by 26.26 percent to \$183 million in July-August.

Home textile shipment brought home \$134.35 million, falling 4.53 percent.

Frozen and live fish exports declined 30.23 percent to \$87.20 million in July-August.

Exports of agricultural products rose 68.05 percent to \$177.70 million and handicrafts 11.52 percent to \$3 million.

Pharmaceutical exports were up 19.10 percent to \$18.77 million.

Terry towel shipment grew 22.05 percent to \$8.08 million and ceramic exports went up by 297.18 percent to \$29.59 million.

He was addressing a discussion on "China-Bangladesh Communication, Cooperation and Coordination Mechanism for Industry Enterprises under Belt and Road Initiative" at Pan Pacific Sonargaon in Dhaka.

However, the envoy did not mention the amount his country will lend Bangladesh this year.

The Chinese embassy in Bangladesh and the industries ministry jointly organised the discussion mainly to highlight the future of investment, trade, development assistance and infrastructure development under the China's flagship BRI project.

A group of Chinese entrepreneurs who have investments here for many years in different sectors like garment, IT and infrastructure have attended the discussion. Senior officials of the industries ministry represented Bangladesh at the programme.

Regarding Chinese investments in Bangladesh, Zuo said so far more than 200 small and medium enterprises from China have invested more than \$1 billion and created employment for 1.10 lakh people. "Now negotiation is going on to materialise an investment of \$3 billion in the steel sector of Bangladesh," he said.

The envoy also talked about bilateral trade between the two Asian nations as his country has already become Bangladesh's largest trading partner.

He said bilateral trade between the two countries reached \$9.35 billion in the first six months till June of the current year, up 17.6 percent from the same period a year ago.

Last year, the trade between the two countries was \$16 billion, up 5.8 percent from a year before.

He said, after the Chinese president put forward the BRI in 2013, some 103 countries and international organisations have signed cooperation agreements with China.

"A brighter prospect of the BRI is being carved out with the interconnected and simultaneous development of multiple 'roads of dreams', including the Blue Economy Corridor, the Sky Silk Road and the Digital Silk Road," the envoy said.

So far, the value of engineering contracts signed between Bangladesh and Chinese companies reached \$10.4 billion, second in South Asia.

He said Chinese companies are implementing some mega projects in Bangladesh like Padma Bridge Railway Link at a cost of \$3 billion. Out of the total cost of the project, China is giving \$2.67 billion as loan to Bangladesh.

Shah Md Aminul Huq, chairman of Bangladesh Chemical Industries Corporation, and Md Safiqul Islam, managing director of SME Foundation, presented business and investment opportunities in Bangladesh before Chinese investors.

Keep spending on skills development: experts

FROM PAGE B1

It is crucial for Bangladesh to reduce reliance on readymade garments as an export and job creation engine because the sector will become more capital intensive and automated in the next few years, he said.

Citing a study of the Centre for Policy Dialogue, he said automation was already playing a role in the sector while women's share in the workforce was declining.

Bangladesh's focus should now be on shipbuilding, pharmaceuticals, information technology and low carbon initiatives, the latter stemming from the fact that Bangladesh has always been at the forefront of discussions on climate change impacts, added Gudmundsson.

Focusing on a low carbon economy makes sense as a recent study showed that adopting it to meet challenges of climate change could potentially create 65 million jobs worldwide, he said.

The IMF official said though Bangladesh was putting emphasis on creating new economic zones, which would create a lot of jobs, the required skilled human resource for attracting foreign investors was not available here. "I have had discussions with some foreign banks. They want to invest in Bangladesh but they are concerned about having the right skills," he added.

So special training should be introduced for new recruits as many of them may initially lack the required skills, said Gudmundsson.

Assistant Professor Homayara L Ahmed of the Institute of Business Administration at the University of Dhaka said universities were grooming students to bridge the gap with industry needs but imparting skills was not an individual responsibility and should start at the school level.

Organisations also have to take up the responsibility of grooming graduates joining their teams so that they can take up senior roles, she said.

Engineers, pharmacists and doctors seeking an MBA degree invariably blame a

"very bad" job market is pushing them away from their line of work, said Ahmed.

"Are the organisations ready to understand that the employment market has changed because we are dealing with millennials now?" she said.

"The millennials are completely different. They know stuff that I don't know. Everyone has a role on integrating the millennials with the job environment," she added.

"The fundamental quality of the human mind must be curiosity. It is the curious mind that has invented everything in civilisation. Skills are fine, but first quality is curiosity," said Mahfuz Anam, editor and publisher of The Daily Star.

"And the second is the quality of modesty. Each of us must be modest because there are millions of others who are better than you and I. The third is a quality of self confidence," she said.

"We Bangladeshis suffer from two extreme emotions. On one end we think we are good for nothing and other is the sense of superiority," said Anam.

"I think one of the fundamental sources of my strength is that I always tried to do what I am not good at. And with that knowledge, what I am not good at, actually inevitably what springs out is what you are good at," he added.

Moderating the event, Ejaj Ahmad, the BYLC president, said they would adapt and introduce online courses taking the roundtable's suggestions on bridging the industry-academia gap.

BYLC's online learning academy equips youth from different corners of Bangladesh with relevant skills of the 21st century, he said.

Human resource and recruitment heads of different organisations—Md Mahbubur Rahman from DHL Bangladesh, Farhana Afeen Mahmood from United Group, Dipa Reza from Adcomm, Monjurul Alam from Eastern Bank and Shaila Parveen from City Bank—were present.

Ryanair warns of job cuts in Germany if strikes persist

AFP, Berlin

Ryanair warned Tuesday that it may slash jobs and close some bases in Germany if it is hit with more strikes, a day before a planned work stoppage for better pay and conditions.

"These threatened strikes can only damage Ryanair's business in Germany, and if they continue, will lead to base cuts and job cuts for both German pilots and cabin crew, particularly at some secondary German bases," said the Irish no-frills airline's chief marketing officer Kenny Jacobs in a statement.

Without naming the German sites under threat, Jacobs said they are already loss-making during the winter season and could suffer greater losses if strikes continued.

Condemning the union's call for a 24-hour walkout that is expected to involve 400 pilots and co-pilots in Germany, Jacobs also rejected the charge that the airline is underpaying its staff.

Lufthansa's subsidiary Eurowings pay pilots 30 percent less, he claimed.

13 banks face Tk 10,971cr provision deficit

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The decision to implement the single-digit interest rate will badly hit the banking sector in the days to come, said the former chairman of state-run Krishi Bank.

A BB official said the upward trend of default loans is largely responsible for the provision deficit.

At the end of June, default loans in the banking sector totalled Tk 89,340 crore, up 20.23 percent from six months ago. The capital base of the 13 banks will erode significantly if they kept provisioning as per the central bank rules, said a BB official.

The overall shortfall in provisioning against general and defaulted loans in the banking sector widened to Tk 7,990 crore in June, up from Tk 6,767 crore last December.

**INVITATION FOR B2B MEETING
TAIWAN TRADE MISSION**

Taiwan External Trade Development Council (TAITRA) is leading a delegation team consisting of **22** excellent Taiwanese Manufacturers and Suppliers to Bangladesh.

DATE: 1ST OCTOBER 2018 (MONDAY)
TIME: 10:00 A.M. ~ 5:00 P.M.
VENUE: PAN PACIFIC SONARGAON HOTEL (BALL ROOM-11)

PRODUCTS ARE AS FOLLOW:

- ▶ **Machinery:** Drilling, Wood Working, Slitting, Air Compressor, Screw & Nut Double Membrane Filter, Vacuum Drying Filter Press
- ▶ **Iron/Steel & S.S. Accessories:** HR, CR, GI, EG, SS Products & Coil etc.
- ▶ **Hardware & Hand Tools:** Door Closers, Hinges, Fastener, Industrial Parts.
- ▶ **Electrical:** Fan, Motor, Circuit Breaker, Electric Power Supply & Electronics Power Transformer
- ▶ **Lighting:** LED, Industrial, Commercial, Automotive Lighting & Fixture etc
- ▶ **Plastic Raw Materials:** Electrical: PVC/HDPE/LLDPE/EVA/PP/SAP/ (Formosa Plastics)
- ▶ **IT & Internet Accessories:** Audio/Video Cable, Plugs & Connectors, HDMI Cat-5/6/7, Network Patch, USB-C Cable & Adapter, Car Charger & Accessories
- ▶ **Visual Communication Products & Presentation Solution:** Capture & Interactive Boards
- ▶ **Cosmetics:** Face Powder, Blush, Lipstick, Eyeliner, Skincare, Electronic Product
- ▶ **Medical Accessories:** Blood & Suction Collection System, Rapid Test Kit
- ▶ **Battery:** Lithium Ion Phosphate Batteries
- ▶ **Fabric:** Functional Fabrics, Technical Polyurethane Film
- ▶ **Floor Covering Materials:** PVC Flooring Vinyl Sheet, Homogeneous & Heterogeneous
- ▶ **Bearing:** Automotive/Ball/Needle/ Thrust Ball/ Rod-End/Bushing/ Roller

You are Cordially Invited to Join this Trade Meeting

Please contact the following telephone number to collect the full delegation list and make an appointment with your interested company to get Prioritized Trade Meeting Service.

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****No Entry Fee, Only Visiting Card Required.**



Sajid Rahman, CEO of Telenor Health, and Ali Imam, CEO of EDGE Asset Management Company, exchange documents after signing a deal on forming a strategic partnership at Telenor Health's head office in Dhaka recently.