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## 45pc tannery workers undocumented

RMG more compliant than tannery, study finds

**STAR BUSINESS REPORT**  
Nearly half of the tannery workers do not have any proof of employment, but the situation has improved a lot in the apparel sector over the last four decades, according to a new study.

Also, apparel workers enjoy more benefits compared to the people in the tannery sector thanks to the presence of a work environment with comparatively higher compliance, it said.

Around 28-36 percent of the apparel workers are still deprived of any appointment letter whereas nearly 20 percent of the tannery workers have signed contracts while 45 percent of them do not have the proof of employment.

Around 72 percent to 84 percent garment workers have identity cards while the number is very negligible in the tannery sector, the study also said.

However, dismissal of workers without notice is quite common in both the sectors, the study said.

Jakir Hossain and Mostafiz Ahmed, two

researchers, shared the findings of their study titled "Worker rights situation and gaps in RMG and tannery sectors: evidences from law and research" at a seminar held at The Daily Star Centre in Dhaka yesterday.

Most of the time, non-compliant factories violate labour rights in the garment sector. Some 20 percent to 40 percent tanneries—especially small and sub-contracting ones—still employ workers under 18 years of age.

In the garment sector, wage discrimination is not significant, but there is discrimination against women in case of access to higher posts.

Often young and good looking women workers reportedly are the beneficiaries in many cases. Women are forced to do more overtime than men but the former group gets less overtime allowance than the latter.

On the other hand, gender-based wage discrimination was reported and discrimination in upper position in the tannery sector is almost absent. There is a strong preference for men workers in upper position, according to the study.

## Onion market to be stable in 10 days: minister

**STAR BUSINESS REPORT**  
The onion market will become stable in the next 10 days as more import consignments will reach the country at a time when the local harvest will hit the market, Commerce Minister Tipu Munshi said yesterday.

A consignment of 12,000 tonnes of onion from Egypt will reach Chattogram port by November 29, which will help cool down the market, he told reporters after a seminar at the Westin hotel in the capital.

Besides, the locally-grown onion will be matured enough within this month, he said.

The onion price has gradually decreased as the imported variety is now sold at Tk 120 a kg and the local produce at Tk 140 to Tk 160 a kg.

The country has to import 25 percent of its total domestic demand, of which 90 percent comes from India.

But the neighbouring nation banned the export of onion on September 29, leaving an adverse impact on the market.

Bangladesh has to import 100,000 tonnes of onion per month between September and November. But, only 24,000 tonnes and 25,000 tonnes were imported in September and October respectively due to the Indian ban.

## Economic growth alone can't ensure well-being of people

Economists say at event to discuss life, works of Prof Anisur Rahman

**STAR BUSINESS REPORT**  
Economic growth alone cannot ensure well-being of the general mass, especially those living under the poverty line, economists said yesterday.

The view came at the closing ceremony of a study circle on life and works of renowned economist Prof Anisur Rahman, at the University of Dhaka.



From left, Prime Minister's Economic Affairs Adviser Mashiur Rahman, PKSF Chairman Qazi Kholiuzzaman Ahmad, economist Prof Anisur Rahman and former finance minister M Syeduzzaman attend the closing ceremony of a study circle on the life and works of Prof Anisur Rahman at the University of Dhaka yesterday.

Rahman, who taught economics at the university, was a member of the first Planning Commission after the independence of Bangladesh in 1971.

At the discussion, Salehuddin Ahmed, former governor of Bangladesh Bank, said Prof Anisur Rahman dedicated his life for the betterment of people.

"He (Rahman) wanted to see everyone happy and focused on nurturing creativity of people for their betterment. He used to take his students to the rural areas so that they learn from the struggles of poor," he said.

Ahmed said political will is important to eradicate poverty.

He said only economic growth will not ensure development. People's well-being should be ensured, he added.

At the event, discussants were also critical about the role of microcredit to lift people out of poverty.

Qazi Kholiuzzaman Ahmad, chairman of Palli Karma-Sahayak Foundation, said a lot of discussion has been going on regarding the impact of microcredit on poverty alleviation.

However, this will not ensure development of people in real sense, he

said, adding that the PKSF now focuses on providing credit to ensure that people become self-sufficient so that they can have better education along with improved health and sanitation.

Meghna Guhathakurta, executive director of the Research Initiatives, Bangladesh and former professor of International Relations of Dhaka University, said Rahman always tries to see issues such as poverty alleviation, equity and knowledge creation from different perspective.

"He used to term people without wealth as under privileged, not poor," she said.

Prof MM Akash of the University of Dhaka, said Prof Rahman always focused on participatory development.

Prof Rahman is also an advocate and believer of self-reliant development of countries, he said.

Mashiur Rahman, prime minister's economic affairs adviser, and M Syeduzzaman, former finance minister, also spoke at the event.

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## Govt to award more NTTN licences

To break price monopoly in telecom transmission network

**STAR BUSINESS REPORT**  
The government has decided to award more licences to increase the number of companies providing national telecommunication transmission networks (NTTN).

The aim is to expand fibre-optic cable connectivity, reduce thick tangles of overhead cables and ensure fair prices for end-users through competition.

The NTTN companies rent out capacities of fiber-optic cables to voice, internet and data service providers.

Currently five companies have the licence, which turns them into the sole authority to set up fiber-optic cables for business.

Getting the licence in 2009, private entities Fiber@Home and Summit Communications currently dominate the market.

The remaining three public entities -- Bangladesh Telecommunications Company Limited, Power Grid Company of Bangladesh and Bangladesh Railway -- got theirs in 2012 but are barely visible.

The government has already taken its final decision to award a licence to Bahon and this new one will come very shortly, Telecom Minister Mustafa Jabbar told The Daily Star yesterday.

## Public-private efforts to help banks provide better digital services

Analysts say at fintech summit

**STAR BUSINESS REPORT**  
Public-private cooperation will enable banks to provide quality digital services to customers at a faster rate, top bankers said yesterday.

They made the observations

at a summit on fintech organised by Bangladesh Brand Forum in association with Guardian Life Insurance at a hotel in the capital.

The summit themed at "Shaping Future of Finance for People" was

organised to provide present and aspiring fintech companies spaces to share their knowledge, successes and failures so that entrepreneurs can initiate dialogues for the right policy framework.



Bankers attend a panel discussion at a summit on fintech organised by Bangladesh Brand Forum in association with Guardian Life Insurance at a hotel in the capital yesterday.

## Conducive business climate key to double digit GDP growth

Speakers say at BCI seminar

**STAR BUSINESS REPORT**  
Bangladesh needs to improve its ranking in the World Bank's Ease of Doing Business index in order to achieve double digit GDP growth in the years ahead, analysts said yesterday.

The country's ranking jumped eight notches to the 168th in the 2020 index from the 176th in the previous year.

"But there is no scope to be complacent," said Shaful Islam Mohiuddin, the immediate past president of the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry.

"We have to achieve double digit GDP growth and Bangladesh has a long way to go," he said.

After the Rana Plaza collapse, a large number of export-oriented industrial units completed retrofitting, but they have yet to manage desired funds spent on the upgradation due to bureaucratic tangles, Mohiuddin said.

"We have to avoid such complexity in the interest of ease of doing business," he said at a seminar styled "Ease of doing business: way forward" at the Westin hotel in the capital.

The Bangladesh Chamber of Industries (BCI) organised the event.

The WB has not accepted some development reports from Bangladesh related to the index, said Md Mosharraf Hossain Bhuiyan, chairman of the National Board of Revenue.

The country's ease of doing business index would have shown better ranking than the existing one had the multilateral agency accepted the reports, he said.

The speakers said the SME sector, especially light engineering and agriculture processing industries, could play a vital role in realising the untapped potential of the country.

Anwar-Ul-Alam Chowdhury Parvez, president of the BCI, while presenting a keynote, said Bangladesh has been posting good GDP growth for the last few years, but there have been some sorts of challenges to move the economy forward.

More than 40 percent of the total workforce is unskilled, which should be addressed by the authorities, he added.

## Foreign buyers keen to source processed foods from Bangladesh

Local participants at FoodPro International Expo say

**STAR BUSINESS REPORT**  
Local food processors received good response from the foreign buyers at the 7th Bapa FoodPro International Expo 2019 that concluded yesterday, industry people said.

Md Masudur Rahman, manager for sales and marketing at Eurasia Food Processing Ltd (Euro Foods), said some international buyers contacted them and discussed to ink deals to buy frozen foods.

Euro Foods exports seafood, meat, poultry, vegetables, and desserts to the US and European markets. It introduced at least 12 chicken items at the fair.

The products are new addition to its product list, Rahman said, while speaking on the last day of the three-day fair at the International Convention City Bashundhara at Kuril in the city.



Visitors through a stall at the 7th Bapa FoodPro International Convention City Bashundhara in the capital yesterday.

## Higher exports call for improved competitiveness

Entrepreneurs say

**STAR BUSINESS REPORT**  
Improved competitiveness of Bangladesh will support footwear, plastic goods, ceramic, furniture, jute processing, electronics, and ICT sectors to emerge as major foreign currency earners, according to a leading business chamber yesterday.

"We need to work hard to improve the competitiveness," said Osama Taseer, president of the Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry (DCCI).

He said Bangladesh should improve its position in the World Bank's Ease of Doing Business Index and the Global Competitiveness Report of the World Economic Forum.

Bangladesh stands at the 105th position in the Global Competitiveness Report 2019 out of 141 countries, whereas the country's ranking rose to 168th in the Ease of Doing Business Index 2020, up from 176th in the previous year.

"The government's fast-track infrastructure projects will enable competitiveness of Bangladesh," Taseer said in a statement.

Rubana Huq, president of the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association, said apart from the readymade garment sector, the country needs to focus on the diversification of other sectors to compete in the international market.

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