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Top UAE companies to invest in Bangladesh

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two major companies from the United Arab Emirates, Abu Dhabi Ports Group and Masdar, have unveiled plans to invest in Bangladesh's port development, management, and logistics, as well as the renewable energy sector.

The proposals were presented by Ahmad Ibrahim Al Mutawa, CEO of Abu Dhabi Ports Group, and Fatima Almadhloum Alsuwaidi, head of development and investment for Asia-Pacific at Masdar, during a meeting with Chief Adviser Professor Muhammad Yunus at the State Guest House Jamuna.

"Bangladesh is ready for business," said the chief adviser, welcoming the

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UAE Ambassador to Bangladesh Abdullahi Ali Abdulla Khaseif AlHmoudi called on Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus at state guesthouse Jamuna yesterday.

PHOTO: PID

Approval needed to cut trees under social forestry HC issues rule

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday ruled that trees planted under the social forestry programme cannot be cut without approval from designated authorities.

It also stated that planters of the programme must be compensated at the market value of the trees.

The HC directed the authorities concerned of the government to amend the Social Forestry Rules, 2004, to enforce this decision.

Delivering the verdict on a writ position, it ordered the formation of separate committees at the capital, district, and upazila levels to oversee tree felling across the country.

For Dhaka, the court ordered the Department of Environment to establish a committee within seven days, including

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140 LIVES LOST IN FLAMES From faulty wirings to cigarettes: What sparked 26,659 fires in 2024?

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The country recorded 26,659 fire incidents last year—an average of 73 per day—according to a report by the Fire Service and Civil Defence.

Electrical malfunctions were the leading cause, accounting for 9,069 fires, or 33.98 percent of all cases.

Cigarette butts ranked second, responsible for 4,139 fires (15.52 percent), followed by stoves with 3,056 incidents (11.46 percent).

Fires from haystacks totalled 4,513 (16.92 percent), while kitchens caused 2,411 incidents (9.04 percent).

Other notable causes included unruly mobs 789, children playing with fire (759), gas cylinder leakages (704), and gas line malfunctions (465).

The fires claimed 140 lives—107

men and 33 women—and left 341 injured, including 237 men, 104 women, and 37 firefighters.

Two firefighters lost their lives during rescue operations.

Brig Gen Muhammad Jahed Kamal, FSCD director general, said poor electrical systems are a significant contributor. "Cables often look fine externally but are compromised internally. Loose connections frequently cause overheating," he said.

He stressed the need for regular audits by relevant departments.

He added that awareness campaigns had reduced fire incidents in the garment sector. However, residential buildings remained the most vulnerable, accounting for 7,131 fire incidents (26.74 percent).

Last year's fires caused property losses estimated at Tk 446 crore,

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LEADING CAUSES

Electrical Malfunctions: 9,069 incidents (33.98pc)

Cigarette Butts: 4,139 incidents (15.52pc)

Stoves: 3,056 incidents (11.46pc)

Haystacks: 4,513 incidents (16.92pc)

Residential Fires
7,131 incidents (26.74pc)

Fatalities
107 men, 33 women

Injuries
237 men, 104 women

Firefighters
37 injuries, 2 deaths



NATIONALISATION DEMAND Ebtedayee madrasa teachers end sit-in after govt assurance

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Teachers of independent Ebtedayee madrasas – primary level educational institutions under madrasa board – ended their sit-in protest yesterday after the government announced plans to nationalise all registered institutions.

SM Masudul Haque, joint secretary of the Technical and Madrasa Division under the Ministry of Education, made the announcement in front of the Fine Arts Faculty at Dhaka University, where several hundred teachers had been protesting.

"We have agreed in principle to nationalise all Ebtedayee madrasas in phases," he said, following a meeting with a 15 member delegation of the teachers. He also assured them that their other five demands would be addressed.

The announcement triggered emotional reactions among the teachers, with many cheering.

"We have ended our protest upon the government's assurance," said Rabiul Islam, an executive member of the Swatantra Ebtedayee Madrasa Shikkhak Oikyojote.

Another teacher hoped the nationalisation process would be implemented by June next year.

On Monday, the teachers had warned of tougher protests if their demands were not met by 2:00pm yesterday. Their sit-in began Sunday afternoon after police dispersed them with batons and water cannons during a march toward the Chief Adviser's Office, where they planned to submit a six-point memorandum.

Protesters said many Ebtedayee madrasa teachers remain unpaid. About 1,100 institutions provide an allowance of up to Tk 3,500 per month, but payments are often irregular.

INDEPENDENT UNIVERSITY 7-college students want framework within 15-days

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Students of seven colleges previously affiliated with Dhaka University yesterday gave the government a 15 day deadline to publish a framework for establishing an independent university.

"The committee responsible for the framework has assured us that their work is complete. We demand its publication within 15 days," said Abdur Rahman, a Dhaka College student and spokesperson for the movement.

The announcement followed a meeting among student representatives of the seven colleges at Dhaka College auditorium.

Earlier, the students withdrew a 24-hour ultimatum after meeting advisers from the home and information ministries. "The government has shown a positive attitude towards our six-point demands," said Moinul Islam, another spokesperson, following the meeting at the Home Ministry.

The students also called off plans to seize New Market Police Station and block DU buses after the authorities cancelled the colleges' affiliation with DU and reopened DU campus roads to the public.

The meeting, chaired by retired Lt Gen Md

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Govt to take measures to recover Sal forest: Rizwana

STAR REPORT

Environment Adviser Syeda Rizwana Hasan yesterday said the government will commence efforts to recover 150 acres of the Sal forest in Tangail from March.

Restoring lost forests is crucial for protecting nature and biodiversity, she said while addressing a workshop titled "Restoration of Madhupur Sal Forest through Co-management" at the forest department headquarters in Dhaka.

The advisersaid an action plan will be formulated and periodically updated, addressing the needs of forest-dependent communities.

A gazette-notified committee is set to be established by March, and a village forest rule will be introduced to define the

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Interim govt 'jamaatising' edn institutions

Alleges Rizvi

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP Senior Joint Secretary General Ruhul Kabir Rizvi yesterday accused the interim government of "Jamaatising" the country's educational institutions.

He claimed that individuals linked to Jamaat-e-Islami have been appointed to key positions in leading universities.

Rizvi made the remarks while speaking as chief guest at a programme organised by the Diploma Engineers Association of Bangladesh at the Jatiya Press Club.

"During the 1/11 period, the government was called an army-backed government. Now, amid the ongoing student and public movements, the current government is being referred to as a government backed by a particular party," he said.

"This government has 'Jamaatised' all educational institutions, which is very alarming. The Ministry of Education has been taken over by this particular party. Why has this been allowed? At Dhaka University, Rajshahi University, Chittagong University, and other institutions, Jamaat-affiliated individuals have been placed in key positions," Rizvi alleged.

Rizvi also criticised the appointment process in the education engineering department, citing an example of alleged bias.

"The top-ranked meritorious engineer in the education engineering department was a Chhatra Dal activist. However, he was not made the chief engineer. Instead, the fifth-ranked candidate was appointed because he belongs to that particular party," he claimed.



Survivors of the July uprising staged a protest at the capital's Shahbagh yesterday, demanding swift trials for those responsible for the atrocities during the movement, as well as lifetime access to quality treatment, rehabilitation, and employment opportunities for the injured.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS