



Bangladesh Newsflash

Edition 65, February 2017

Newsflash Bangladesh is a publication by the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Dhaka. The newsflash provides an update in terms of economic developments, the most important tenders and a selection of other relevant business news related to Bangladesh. This newsflash is shared with a distinctive group of Dutch businesses with special interests in Bangladesh. It is put together on the basis of publicly available information from various sources such as news articles, press releases, and third party information. The Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Dhaka is not responsible for the accuracy of the published information. If you do not wish to receive the Newsflash Bangladesh, or would like to add a person to the distribution list, or if you would like to

give us your comments; please feel free to send a message to dha-ea@minbuza.nl For further practical economic information about Bangladesh, please refer to the Netherlands Bangladesh Business Platform – www.nbbp.org developed by the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Bangladesh in collaboration with Dutch Business University Nyenrode for the Dutch-Bangladeshi business community. The platform bundles information on all that is relevant for doing business in Bangladesh, providing targeted sector analysis, insights into risks and opportunities of doing business, including concrete advice on good business practices, an overview of the most relevant government policies for intending investors and much more.

Highlights

- Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina urges brands to help overhaul garment units - putting emphasis on adopting short, medium and long-term plans to boost the demand for Bangladeshi garments in the world market.
- Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association wants a single agency rather than the three at present to inspect and monitor progress in remediation of garment factories.
- China state firm Zhenhua Oil to buy Chevron's gas fields in Bangladesh that are worth about \$2 billion
- LPG can be exported - Licensed firms can produce, import and export liquefied petroleum gas under a policy the government has made for the first time in the country.
- The World Bank (WB) has come forward with money (\$200m) and mechanism to assist Bangladesh in tapping its maritime economic potential defined as 'blue economy'.
- Bangladesh can become 28th largest economy by 2030: PricewaterhouseCoopers.
- Alibaba, Amazon to build network in Bangladesh - Postal dept to join hands with the e-commerce giants
- \$100m ADB loan for skills development of young workforce especially women, to enhance job opportunities, expand economic base and boost income.

Political update

- A delegation of Myanmar’s ‘Advisory Commission on Rakhine State’ visited Bangladesh from 28 January-1 February 2017.
- The United Nations Special Rapporteur on human rights in Myanmar called for "urgent action" by the Myanmar government to end the sufferings of the Rohingya population in Myanmar. She visited Bangladesh from 20 – 23 February 2017. The Counter-Terrorism and Transnational Crime (CTTC) unit arrested Redwanul Azad Rana, an absconding death row convict for the murder of a secular blogger in 2013. A Dhaka court placed Rana on five-day remand on 22 February in a case filed under the Anti-Terrorism Act.
- Child Marriage Restraint Bill 2017 was passed in parliament on 27 February allowing marriage of both underage girls and boys in special cases.

Textile and Ready Made Garments (RMG)

PM urges brands to help overhaul garment units (The Daily Star) Putting emphasis on adopting short, medium and long-term plans to boost the demand for Bangladeshi garments in the world market, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on 25 February, called upon brands and buyers



to help the apparel industry owners overhaul their

factories. "Huge funds are required to overhaul the factories. So various brands and buyers can come forward to assist the Bangladeshi factory owners. The government would continue to provide its support in this regard," she said, while inaugurating Dhaka Apparel Summit 2017. "We have to work on increasing our share in the world market ... we have to formulate short, medium and long-term plans in this regard." As a sequel to the success of the first Dhaka Apparel Summit that took place in 2014, Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association organized the daylong second edition under the theme 'Together for a better tomorrow'. The aim of the summit was to explore priority areas to turn Bangladeshi garment industry into a sustainable sector. The summit featured discussions on how to establish a more sustainable apparel supply chain and focused on setting the next course of action for achieving the \$50 billion export goal by 2021. Highlighting the government's steps in

developing the sector, Hasina said a number of measures have been taken at the international level to make the sector safe. "Under the initiative, 3,869 factories have been inspected. Among those, faults have been found in only 39 factories and they were closed down. The remaining factories are being renovated to improve their safety," she said. The premier also stressed diversifying products and expanding markets to boost export earnings.

Remediation costs a factory Tk 4.9cr: Survey (The Daily Star) Remediation cost a garment factory \$614,000 or Tk 4.9 crore on average, according to a new survey. Bangladesh University in collaboration with the State University of San Francisco carried out the survey and prepared a report titled "Pains and gains of the readymade garments sector: Post 2013". The findings were based on the learning and remediation measures adopted since the Rana Plaza tragedy of 2013. After the industrial

disaster, western buyers began inspection of local factories through two platforms – the Alliance and the Accord. They have together

inspected 2,500 out of 3,660 factories in the country. Some 33 factories of different sizes were surveyed and their total expenditure for the remediation was over \$20 million. The cost



however did not include other implicit costs, such as the production loss owing to factory relocation, the ongoing remediation process and migration of skilled workers. Shortage of funds needed to implement the remediation was reported by 30 percent of the factories, followed by disruption of production by 27 percent factories, according to the report. The factories inspected by the mostly European brands-led effort Accord and the North American brands-led initiative Alliance received reports known as a Corrective Action Plan. Preliminary inspection identified 85 percent of factories have problems in areas of fire detection and protection.

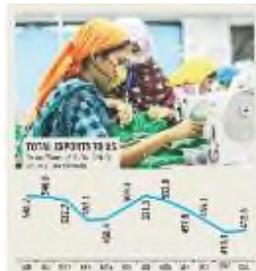
Brac to invest in Maya Apa app (The Daily Star)

Brac, on 15 Feb, signed a deal to invest in a mobile application -- Maya Apa -- to ensure the delivery of quality information and counselling services to a greater number of people. Through this initiative, Brac's urban development programme will implement a pilot project where Maya Apa app will be used to give services to 50,000 female garment workers, they said. Maya Apa is a virtual platform that can be accessed by anyone anonymously at any time for counselling and answers to questions on daily life, including health, psychosocial and legal matters. The app was launched in February 2015 and around 1.5 lakh queries were received and answered. Currently 10,000 users access it a day.



Apparel exports to US decline (The Daily Star)

Bangladesh's apparel exports to the US, its single largest destination, declined 1.96 percent year-on-year to \$5.49 billion, due to the volatile US economy and the recent presidential election. Bangladesh exported \$5.92 billion worth of goods to the US in 2016, down from \$6 billion a year ago, according to data from the US Department of Commerce. Garment items account for 95 percent of the goods exported from Bangladesh to the US market. Moreover, businessmen and traders adopted the



“wait and see” strategy in 2016 for the probable changes to the major US policies relating to tariffs. Furthermore, there is a change in the attitude of the US consumers, who now prefer spending more on electronic gadgets compared to clothes, exporters said.

BGMEA asks for a single inspection agency (The Daily Star)

Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA) wants a single agency rather than the three at present to inspect and monitor progress in remediation of garment factories. The BGMEA has prepared a new guideline for the next phase of inspection of the apparel production units in a bid to reduce hassles and set a unified code of inspection. All three inspection agencies apply different codes in inspection, and as a result, many owners face challenges in remedying their factories. Currently, the



Accord and the Alliance -- the inspection agencies of European and North American retailers and brands -- and the National Initiative backed by the government are inspecting and suggesting remediation to boost workplace safety. The agencies are now trying to extend their tenure. The tenure of the legally binding Accord and Alliance will come to an end in June 2018. Accord has so far conducted initial inspections at 1,600 factories while Alliance inspected 759 factories. At the same time, under the National Action Plan, the Bangladesh government, in collaboration with the ILO, inspected around 1,500 factories.

Banks, NBFIs sign deal with BB to disburse JICA loans for RMG units (the New Age)

Bangladesh Bank, on 13 February, signed participation agreements with 25 banks and 10 non-bank financial institutions to disburse a JICA fund amounting to Tk 268 crore to the clients for remediation work of their garment industries. The clients will be able to take loans from the fund with six percent rate of interest to strengthen the safety measures of their RMG industrial units. The JICA assistance will help the country's RMG sector to strengthen its safety measures, BB governor Fazle Kabir said at the participation agreement signing ceremony at the central bank headquarters in the capital. The

JICA initiative will ensure workers' safety through improvement of working conditions, he said. The governments of Bangladesh and Japan signed an agreement on December 13, 2015 to use the Japan International Cooperation Agency's fund amounting to Tk 268 crore to strengthen the safety measures of the RMG factories under the Urban Building Safety Project. The credit repayment tenure of the loan will be 10 and 15 years and the factory owners will also enjoy a grace period of two and three years. A client will be allowed to get maximum loan of Tk 35 crore from the fund.

“Workplace Wellbeing Management” training program for Females Graduates to work as ‘Welfare Officer’ in the Ready Made Garments (RMG) Industry in Bangladesh A Graduation Ceremony of first pilot program of “Workplace Wellbeing Management” was held at UCEP head office premise on 22 February 2017 with the presence of Dr. Annie Vestjens, First Secretary SRHR and Gender, Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to grace the occasion as the Chief Guest and many other distinguished persons from UCEP Board, Association and



Industry sectors and trainees under the project. Under UCEP's NUFFIC-NICHE SRHR Project, UCEP designed and developed an innovative curriculum for young people, especially for women to provide counselling related services that helps to ensure emotional wellbeing of garments workers in positive way. This is a 3 month course where different issues are taught to the trainees. This is a new scope of employment for young people, especially for women in garments industries of the country. To ensure the physical and mental wellbeing of industrial workers, Bangladesh Labor Law under provision (1) clause 89 (8) declares the need to have one Welfare officer for every 500 workers in a factory to look after the welfare issues [Bangladesh Gazette, September 2015].

Oil, Gas & Energy

AK Khan to develop solar power plants with Norway's Scatec (The Daily Star) Norway-based firm Scatec Solar and local conglomerate AK Khan & Company has signed an agreement to co-develop several large solar power projects in Bangladesh. The first 100 megawatt project will be in northern Bangladesh and several procedures have to be completed before the signing of a power purchase agreement, according to a joint statement from the two companies. The agreement was signed on February 20 in Dhaka in presence of visiting Norwegian Foreign Minister Børge Brende, State Minister for Power, Energy and Mineral Resources Nasrul Hamid and State Minister for Foreign Affairs Mohammed Shahriar Alam. The deal comes at a time when the government is signing agreements with solar power plants to buy electricity with the view to ensuring a portion of supply of electricity through renewable sources. The government aims to ensure 10 percent of the electricity requirement from renewable sources by 2020.

Gas to become 22.7pc costlier - First phase hike from next month, second phase from June (The Daily Star) A household will have to spend Tk 150 more on monthly gas bill from March 1, as the energy regulator on 23 Feb raised gas prices for all consumers by 22.7 percent. Households using double burners have to pay Tk 800 each from next month compared to Tk 650 now, while those using single burners have to pay Tk 750 each against Tk 600. The prices would be increased again on June 1 by another Tk 150 for each gas stove, as Bangladesh Energy Regulatory Commission (BERC) decided to implement the hike in two phases. “The prices are being increased in two phases so that consumers don't feel a sudden pressure on their purchasing power,” BERC Chairman Monowar Islam said after announcing

NEW GAS PRICE			
Consumer	Current	1st Phase	2nd Phase
Household one burner (monthly)	₹ 600	₹ 750	₹ 900
Household two burners (monthly)	₹ 650	₹ 800	₹ 950
EMS (per cubic meter)	₹ 35	₹ 38	₹ 40
Commercial user (per cubic meter)	₹ 11.36	₹ 14.20	₹ 17.04

the decision. The two-phase increase means expenditures of households and commercial users on gas bills would go up by around 50 percent. Gas prices for households have doubled over the last eight years. The BERC last raised gas prices in September 2015.

China state firm to buy Chevron's gas fields in Bangladesh (The Daily Star)

China's state-run Zhenhua Oil has signed a preliminary deal with Chevron to buy the US oil major's natural gas fields in Bangladesh that are worth about \$2 billion, two Beijing-based Chinese oil executives said. Zhenhua is a subsidiary of China's defense industry conglomerate NORINCO. A completed deal would mark China's first major energy investment in the South Asian country, where Beijing is competing with New Delhi and Tokyo for influence. Bangladesh, though, holds the right of first refusal on the assets and could block the transaction. The country, via its national oil company Petrobangla, is keen to buy the gas fields and is talking to international banks to raise financing, according to a banking source familiar with the process. Bangladesh is in the process of hiring global energy consultant Wood Mackenzie to assess the fields' reserves before placing a formal bid to buy the assets, two Bangladesh sources familiar with the matter told Reuters. Chevron, which is the largest foreign investor in Bangladesh's energy sector, operates the Bibiyana, Jalalabad and Moulvibazar gas fields and sells all the production to state oil company Petrobangla. In 2015, its net daily production averaged 720 million cubic feet of natural gas, which is about one-third of the total production of Bangladesh. It also produced 3,000 barrels of natural gasoline.

Move on gas exploration in Bay - Indian co goes for drilling (The Financial Express)

An Indian company will drill an exploratory well in a shallow offshore block in the Bay of Bengal to discover hydrocarbons, on terms that allow third-party sale. Officials said buoyed by findings of preliminary search, ONGC Videsh Ltd (OVL) has moved to drill the well near Moheshkhali under shallow-depth gas block SS-09. The Indian



firm drew encouragement from the results of two-dimensional (2D) seismic surveys it carried out in two shallow-water bay blocks last year. "ONGC is set to start the drilling programme within the next several months as it found the 2D survey results encouraging," according to Petrobangla director for production-sharing contract (PSC) Md Mahbub Sarwar. Bangladesh currently reels from an acute natural gas crisis while the demand is rising every passing day. The daily average output of the fossil fuel is around 2,700 million cubic feet per day (mmcf) against a known demand for over 3,300 mmcf, according to Petrobangla. The entire natural gas production comes from the country's onshore gas fields alone, as exploration in the bay remains a long way off. Any fresh discovery of hydrocarbons would boost the country's growing economy significantly, said a senior Petrobangla official.

LPG can be exported - Licensees also can import, produce, store the gas (The Financial Express)

Licensed firms can produce, import and export liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) under a policy the government has made for the first time. Officials said the Energy and Mineral Resources Division (EMRD) under the Ministry of Power, Energy and Mineral Resources (MPEMR) has already published a gazette notification of the policy styled 'LP Gas Operational Licensing Policy 2017. Under the maiden LPG policy, potential firms will be given license and the licensees will be called 'LP Gas Operator'. The firms will be



authorized to carry out LPG business, which includes import, production, storage, supply and transportation. They can set up LPG terminals, auto-gas filling stations, auto-gas conversion plants and LPG-bottling plants under the policy that opened up the petroleum-fuel sector to cater burgeoning energy demand in the country. The licensees would hold the authority to supply LPG to households, auto-gas stations, and to commercial and industrial clients through engaging dealers or franchises. They can also

export bottled LPG or LPG in bulk quantity after attaining no- objection certificate (NOC) from the EMRD and necessary approval from the commerce ministry.

Water/Maritime

WB comes to develop BD blue economy - Holds out \$200m, jumpstarts study in Bay (The Financial Express) The World Bank (WB) has come forward with money and mechanism to assist Bangladesh in tapping its maritime economic potential defined as 'blue economy'. Washington-based development financier has held out nearly \$200 million worth of funds for exploring the possible resources which would be helpful for further growth of the country's economy according to officials. The Bank is providing funds worth Tk 99 million for study on the offshore turfs under the TA (Technical Assistance) project for spotting the potential of the blue economy in the Bay of Bengal. Besides, the government is contributing Tk 1.5 million to the Tk 100 million TA project. The Blue Economy conceptualizes oceans and seas as 'Development Spaces' where spatial planning integrates conservation, sustainable use of living resources, oil and mineral wealth extraction, bio-prospecting, sustainable energy production and marine transport. Bangladesh established its sovereign rights on maritime territory through the win of international legal battles with neighbouring Myanmar and India.

Shipping department inks deal with India for certification (The Daily Star) Bangladesh and India, on 13 Feb, signed an agreement for certification in maritime, industrial survey and inspection in Bangladesh. Syed Ariful Islam, director general of the Department of Shipping and Vijay Arora, joint managing director of the Indian Registrar of Shipping (IRS), signed the deal on behalf of their respective sides in Dhaka. The IRS can now certify the raw materials for shipbuilding and oceangoing vessels. Currently, companies from France, Germany and Italy certify Bangladesh's oceangoing vessels on shipbuilding, safety and inspection. The agreement will help further grow trade between Bangladesh and India as both countries have

already signed a Coastal Shipping Agreement to increase bilateral trade through the coastal areas and reduce time and transportation costs.

Agriculture/Fisheries

Large firms investing in tea plantation (The Daily Star) Large corporate groups have started investing in tea plantations in recent years, riding on the wave of demand from local consumers -- a development that has been welcomed by seasoned producers. Square Group, a giant in consumer products, textile and pharmaceuticals;



Ha-Meem Group, an apparel manufacturer and exporter; and Orion Group, an

industrial conglomerate, entered the fray. Three other consumer and industrial giants -- Akij, TK and City -- followed soon after. The entry of big corporate groups into the tea farming business has been helping the country produce more tea, industry insiders said. Also, there will be a positive impact on the quality of tea, they added. In 2016, more than 8.5 crore kilograms of tea were produced, up 26 percent year-on-year, according to data from the government. Rising local consumption has also been cutting into Bangladesh's tea exports every year.

Govt buys 200,000 tonnes of wheat from Russia (The Daily Star) Bangladesh has bought 200,000 tonnes of Russian wheat at \$245 a tonne under a government-to-government contract. This is the first time the government has directly purchased wheat under state arrangement from Russia. Earlier, Bangladesh rejected 150,000 tonnes of Russian wheat as the grain bought through biddings did not comply with the quality specifications set by the food office. The food directorate tightened rules after the import of substandard wheat from Brazil. With the latest shipment from Russia, total import will be 250,000 tonnes this fiscal year. Bangladesh imported 4.36 million tonnes of the grain in 2015-16, up 15 percent from the previous year, according to FPMU data. The USDA recently

Newsflash February 2017

projected Bangladesh's wheat consumption at 6.2 million tonnes in the current fiscal year. Local production can meet one fifth of the wheat demand in Bangladesh.

Market Transformation Workshop, 2017: To operationalize the MoU between the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs and World Bank Group on transformative change needed for agricultural growth as well as food and nutrition security, both parties together with the Embassy of Sweden and iDE (a US based NGO) organized a workshop from 11th to 14th of February in Dhaka, Bangladesh, seeking to bring together practitioners, experts and market actors to share ideas, approaches and emerging practices in transformative changes in markets. Aptly named,



the Market Transformation Workshop was opened by HE Leoni Cuelenaere, the Ambassador

of The Kingdom of the Netherlands, who noted that “Market transformation is triggered by technologies, brokers, technical assistance, government, and organized producers. We want ideas, more than a particular approach.” This was followed by a keynote address by Dr. Madhur Gautam, Lead Economist with the Agriculture Global Practice of the World Bank, who put market transformation within the broader context of transforming value chains in evolving and modernizing food systems across countries. Highlighting the critical importance of competitiveness in driving innovation and efficiency as food value chains evolve to meet rapidly growing and changing consumer demand, he underscored the relevance of these trends for Bangladesh with recent findings showing that investment in infrastructure, technology, market friendly policy reforms and emerging market opportunities have been strong drivers of rural growth. The purpose of the workshop was not to provide prescriptive “blueprints” for development but rather seek ideas and approaches that open up the discourse of the

concept and approach to market transformation by bringing practitioners, market actors and experts together.

Other news

Bangladesh can become 28th largest economy by 2030: PwC (The Daily Star) Bangladesh has the potential to become the world's 23rd largest economy by 2050, overtaking countries such as the Netherlands, Australia, Spain, Thailand and Malaysia, according to PricewaterhouseCoopers. PwC also predicted that Bangladesh would be the 28th largest economy by 2030, up from 31st in 2016. But this lift will depend largely on how the country moves to create jobs for the growing young people, said the report -- 'The Long View: how will the global economic order change by 2050?' The report ranked 32 countries that altogether account for about 85 percent of the world's GDP measured on a purchasing power parity basis. Vietnam, India and Bangladesh have the potential to be the fastest growing economies between 2016 and 2050 -- with an average annual growth of about 5 percent -- thanks to their youthful and fast-growing working age population. But for that to happen there needs to be stronger macroeconomic fundamentals and institutions and mass education to ensure the rapidly growing working populations contribute productively to long-term economic growth.

Alibaba, Amazon to build network in Bangladesh - Postal department to join hands with the e-commerce giants (The Daily Star)

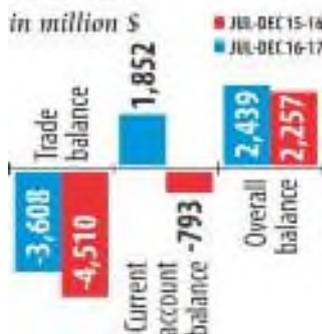
The postal division is going to collaborate with global e-commerce giants Alibaba and Amazon to deliver their products across Bangladesh. A pilot project will be launched within a short time, said Tarana Halim, state minister for telecom and postal division, after a meeting with the postal department on 18 Feb. If they get a positive response, they will sign an agreement in April. In November last year, the postal department launched postal e-commerce services in 20 post offices in Dhaka, which was the first such service under any



government entity in Bangladesh, said a top official at the programme. Through this initiative, online buyers are now able to receive their products from e-commerce sites, delivered to their doorsteps in Dhaka. The government has also planned to expand electronic money order services to the remotest parts of the country. The postal department has a huge range of services. However, there is no publicity about those. With the launch of the services with Alibaba and Amazon, they now plan to spend more on campaigning. At present, there are 500 e-commerce sites in the country and another 1,000 entrepreneurs are running their business through Facebook.

Current account deficit widening (The Daily Star) Current account deficit widened further in the first six months of the fiscal year on the back of the sliding remittance inflow and slow export growth. Between the months of July and December of 2016, the current account deficit stood at \$793 million in contrast to \$1,852 million in the surplus a year earlier, according to the central bank's balance of payments data. The current account balance set foot into negative territory for the first time in four years in the first

BALANCE OF PAYMENTS POSITION



quarter of fiscal 2016-17: the deficit was \$504 million and every month it has been gradually increasing. The last time the current account was in the deficit -- of \$447 million -- was way back in fiscal 2011-12. Since then there had been no deficit

in the current account balance at any point in time. A major source of foreign currency for the country in the last 10 to 12 years has been remittance sent by expatriate Bangladeshis, which also keeps the external balance sheet in a strong position. In the first six months of the fiscal year, remittance dropped 17.65 percent -- a development that has created pressure on the current account balance. However, Bangladesh Bank predicts that at the end of the fiscal year the current account deficit will come down to

within \$600 million on the back of a pick-up in remittance and export.

\$100m ADB loan for skills development of young workforce (The Daily Star) The government signed an agreement for a \$100 million loan with the Asian Development Bank (ADB) for upskilling the young workforce, especially women, to enhance job opportunities, expand economic base and boost income. The assistance is the second tranche of the \$350 million multi-tranche financing facility approved by ADB in 2014 for the skills for employment investment programme (SEIP). The remaining amount from the ADB assistance is expected to be utilized before the period of the financing facility ends in 2024. The second tranche of the SEIP will support expansion of the training programme to nine priority industries, bringing in three additional industry associations (Bangladesh Agro-processors' Association, Industry Skills Council for Hospitality and Tourism, and Bangladesh Women Chamber of Commerce and Industry), and 15 training providers.

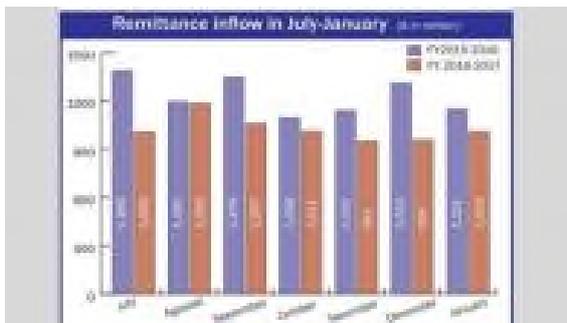
Bimstec power deal finalized (The Daily Star) An agreement on cross-border power trade among countries of the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (Bimstec), including Bangladesh, has been finalized. In a meeting in Kathmandu on February 7, senior officials of the seven Bimstec countries finalized the MoU on trade in power. The Trade Negotiating Committee would soon take up trade and trade facilitation matters. It was also decided in the meeting that to boost regional connectivity, India would organize a meeting of the Working Group to finalize the Bimstec Motor Vehicles Agreement that would allow seamless movement of passengers and cargo vehicles among the countries. The Kathmandu meeting "marked an important step forward to realize the action-oriented agenda for Bimstec" agreed to by top BIMSTEC top leaders, including Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, at their retreat hosted by Indian PM Narendra Modi in Goa in October last year, said an official statement of New Delhi.

EBL to borrow \$40m from Germany, Netherlands (The Daily Star) Eastern Bank Ltd,

on 6 Feb, signed deals with two foreign development banks -- DEG of Germany and FMO of the Netherlands -- to borrow \$40 million low-cost foreign currency loans. The local bank has taken such loans from the organizations on two previous occasions. The funds will be routed to EBL's Offshore Banking Unit. The loans will be lent to different export-oriented industries, green projects and small- and medium-sized enterprises, for which the lending will be in local currency to help them avert the risk of exchange rate. "The bank stands out as an entrepreneurial, innovative bank that puts clients first and we consider them to lead the financial sector in Bangladesh in many ways," said Linda Broekhuizen, Chief Investment Officer of FMO. Ali Reza Iftekhar, managing director of EBL; Rena Terfruechte, Director of Financial Institutions for Europe-Asia of DEG; and Dave Smit, Senior Investment Officer of FMO, signed the agreements on behalf of their respective organizations.

Remittance drops for 7th month (The New Age)

Monthly remittance inflow in year-on-year basis dropped in January, for the seventh month in a row, as non-resident Bangladeshis continued to send money through illegal channel, hundi, because of lower rate of US dollar in banks. The country received \$1,009.44 million in remittance



in January, down by 12.27 percent from \$1150.63 received in January, 2016, according to Bangladesh Bank data. Because of dismal inflow, the total remittance in seven months of the current fiscal year 2016-17 fell by 20.73 percent to \$7.18 billion compared with the same period of FY 2015-16. Remittance inflow totaled \$8.63 billion in July-January in FY2015-16. Although the country's macro-economic situation remained relatively stable, economists said that sliding remittance remained one of the major challenges for the economy this year.

Events

Bangladesh Lighting Expo is a 3 day event being held from 6th April to 8th April 2017 at the International Convention City Bashundhara (ICCB) in Dhaka, Bangladesh. This event showcases products like architectural, commercial and construction lighting, explosion protected lights and mine lights, electrodeless lamps, Sport arena, garden and public area lighting etc. in the Home Furnishings & Home Textiles, Household Services industries. For details, please visit <http://10times.com/lighting-expo->



2nd AGRO CHEM BANGLADESH INTERNATIONAL EXPO - 2017' scheduled to be held from 26-29 April 2017, which will be a glittering showcase for the Agricultural Chemical based products and service industry. The event will be held at International Convention City Bashundhara Hall- 1 (Gulnaksha), Dhaka, Bangladesh. For details, please contact: <http://10times.com/international-agro-chem-bangladesh-expo>

Tenders

Invitation for International Pre-Qualification Dhaka Power Distribution Company Limited issued a Pre-qualification Notice for design, supply, installation, testing & commissioning of approximately 295,000 pre-payment electricity meters and of related communication & IT equipment including vending terminal infrastructure and including system operation in the cities of Comilla and Mymensingh and in Dhaka in Bangladesh. Notice was issued on 8 February 2017, closing on 20 March 2017 at 11:00am BST. For details, please contact: Mr A H M Mohiuddin, Project Director, Pre-Payment Metering Project, www.bpdb.gov.bd; www.bpdc.org.bd; www.cptu.gov.bd

Invitation for International Tender Bangladesh Power Development Board issued a tender for procurement of Plant-Design, supply, install and commission for Conversion of 100MW Baghabari gas turbine power plant to 150MW Combined Cycle Power Plant and Conversion of 2 x35 MW Shahjibazar Gas Turbine Power Plant to 105 MW Combines Cycle Power Plant on turnkey basis. Tender issued on 19 January 2017, closing on 19 April 2017 at 12:00 hrs (BST). For details, please contact: Secretary, Power Development Board, Dhaka secretary@bpdb.gov.bd Tel: 8802 9554209

Invitation for International Tender Chittagong Port Authority under the Ministry of Shipping issued a tender for procurement of 4 numbers of Reach Stacker with spare parts, tools, accessories and related services for handling of 20' and 40' ISO containers up to five high. Tender issued on 31 January 2017; closing on 30 March 2017 at 12:00hrs. For details, please contact: Chief Engineer Mechanical, Chittagong Port authority, ecmcpabd@gmail.com

Invitation for International Tender Bangladesh Water Development Board issued a tender for construction of new Water Control Structures, sluice, rehabilitation of structures, Sluice under Irrigation Management Improvement Project. Tender issued on 31 January 2017, closing on 16 March 2017 at 15:00hrs BST. For details, please contact: Mohammad Shahabuddin, Additional Chief Engineer and Project Director - Irrigation Management Improvement Project, pd.imip.bwdb@gmail.com

Bangladesh Economic Zones Authority (BEZA) under the Prime Minister's Office issued an **EOI** for Selection of International Consulting Services Firm to Prepare a Master Plan of Mirsarai Industrial City. EOI was issued on 26 January 2017; closing on 12 March 2017 at 4:00pm. For details, please contact: Project Director, Office of the Bangladesh Special Economic Zones Authority, capacityproject@beza.gov.bd +8802 8180170

Invitation for International Expression of Interest Padma Oil Company Limited under the Ministry of Power, Energy and Mineral Resources issued an EOI for appointment of IT firm for Design, Supply, Installation, Testing, Integration and Commissioning of e-Filing and e-Procurement system and its Post Warranty Services. EOI was issued on 23 January 2017; closing on 9 February 2017 at 1500 hrs (BST). For details, please contact: Deputy Project Manager (Projects); haminul38@yahoo.com +88031 621399

Please remain updated on these and future tenders at the following website:
<http://www.cptu.gov.bd/Notices.aspx>

More information

The Embassy always welcomes your comments on, and suggestions for the Newsflash. We also encourage interested Dutch and Bangladeshi companies to place an article or message in our newsflash. For more information please contact our economic department at the Embassy in Dhaka through email dha-ea@minbuza.nl, or by phone (00882) 8822715-8.

