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Chief Adviser Dr. Fakhruddin Ahmed calls for food security in BIMSTEC region

Chief Adviser Dr. Fakhruddin Ahmed called on the BIMSTEC countries to craft an institutional mechanism for building food security and place climate change high on their agenda. He also said the grouping should explore all possible options of utilizing all renewable sources of energy, including solar power, hydropower and bio-fuels. Further, he called for setting a target date for the implementation of BIMSTEC Free Trade Agreement. The Chief Adviser was speaking at the second BIMSTEC summit in New Delhi held on 13-14 November 2008. BIMSTEC comprises Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Myanmar, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Thailand.

Dr. Fakhruddin Ahmed said that the rising global food prices had again highlighted the importance of development of agriculture for poverty alleviation in countries like Bangladesh. He said the 21st century belonged to Asia, but
that the continent could not truly tap the potential without dealing with the problems of high food prices and energy shortage. He proposed for building an institutional mechanism for food security as short-term measures following the example of creation of the SAARC Food Bank. On climate change, he said even a one meter rise in the sea level would inundate one-fifth of Bangladesh, rendering 25-30 million people homeless. "I, therefore, propose that climate change be included as a priority area of the BIMSTEC ", he said. He further emphasized on removing tariff and non-tariff barriers to facilitate free trade in goods among the BIMSTEC countries. The Chief Adviser also offered to host the permanent secretariat of BIMSTEC in Dhaka.

**Dhaka to host poverty alleviation center**

The BIMSTEC member countries accepted Bangladesh's offer to host a Poverty Alleviation Centre in Dhaka and decided to put in place a joint mechanism to combat terrorism. According to the summit declaration, the BIMSTEC members will hold the second ministerial conference on poverty alleviation in Nepal next year. It also called for strengthening the regional cooperation in poverty alleviation in the context of ensuring food security for vulnerable people in the region. The declaration said the BIMSTEC member countries agreed to initiate short and long-term joint research programmes to increase productivity and yields in the region.

**Bangladesh calls for inclusion of LDC representative in global economic summits in the future**

Bangladesh’s Foreign Adviser Dr. Iftekhar Ahmed Chowdhury said that representatives of the 50 Least Developed Countries (LDCs) should also have a seat in the global economic summits in the future. Speaking to journalists in Dhaka on 16 November 2008, he welcomed the inclusion of developing countries like Brazil, China and India in the G-20 summit held in Washington, DC to address the current global economic crisis. "There is a huge chunk of people from LDCs, who are being left out. Their impediments to development are structural, and unless these are removed by consultations among top global leadership, millions of the world's poorest will continue to suffer," he said.

The adviser said, "What you really need to address the issues is ideas. In fact thoughts and concepts like micro-credit and non-formal education emanating from Bangladesh are really changing the world." He urged that global leaders take note of this fact.

Referring to the global financial crisis, he said Bangladesh had largely managed to escape its worst effects so far. This is because our banking system is indeed better regulated with adequate capital-asset ratio, and our real economy is engaged in sectors that are so far insulated," he said. But we cannot remain complacent because we live in an interdependent, globalized world. The government has to remain ever vigilant with appropriate policy response as and when need arises," Dr. Iftekhar Ahmed Chowdhury added.

**Bangladesh Election Commission Announces schedules for the 9th Parliamentary Elections and 3rd Upazilla Elections**

On 2 November 2008, the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) of Bangladesh Dr. ATM Shamsul Huda announced the schedule for the 9th Parliamentary Election and the schedule for the 3rd Upazila elections. Following are the schedules:

**Schedule of 9th Parliamentary Election 2008:**

- Last date of filing of Nomination Papers: 30 November 2008
- Dates of Scrutiny of Nomination Papers: 03-04 December 2008
- Last date withdrawal: 11 December 2008
- Polling date: 29 December 2008
Schedule of 3rd Upazila Election 2008:

Last date of filing of Nomination Papers: 13 December 2008
Dates of Scrutiny of Nomination Papers: 17 -19 December 2008
Last date of withdrawal: 31 December 2008
Polling date: 22 January 2009

While announcing the election schedules, the CEC assured of free, fair and neutral elections. The Election Commission has requested the prospective candidates to abide by the new electoral code of conduct, which bans colored posters and graffiti on walls, erection of gates, and decorative illuminations for campaign purposes. Country’s top election official Dr. ATM Shamsul Huda also warned prospective candidates against pre-election massive show downs, undue entertaining of voters, and buying of votes. The CEC also said adequate security measured would be undertaken to ensure free, fair and transparent elections.

Foreign Adviser met Myanmar’s Foreign Minister

Dr. Iftekhar Ahmed Chowdhury, Foreign Adviser, held a cordial meeting with Myanmar Foreign Minister U. Nyan Win on the sidelines of the BIMSTEC Foreign Ministers Conference on 13 November 2008 in New Delhi. The two Foreign Ministers covered a wide range of issues that included the recent incidents in the Bay of Bengal as well as potentialities of cooperation in political and economic fields.

Speaking to the media thereafter, the Foreign Adviser said: "It was a meeting that was both frank and cordial. We both wanted differences resolved peacefully through negotiations conducted in a sprit of mutual understanding. We also saw the value in continuing in the political and the economic spheres as two close neighbors." He mentioned that Bangladesh always wants a close neighbourly relation with Myanmar and our policy will be directed towards that end.

Earlier, the Bangladesh Foreign Adviser termed the end to recent crisis in the Bay of Bengal a win-win situation for both Bangladesh and Myanmar while referring to the current relaxation of tensions between Myanmar and Bangladesh, caused by the withdrawal of the rig by Daewoo.

Ambassador visited Los Angeles and Phoenix

Ambassador M. Humayun Kabir paid an official visit to Los Angeles, California and Phoenix, Arizona from 24 October to 03 November 2008. During his visit to Los Angeles he met the Board of Supervisors of the Los Angeles County and Mayor of Los Angeles, held talks with a select-group of fellows of RAND Corporation— a reputed think tank in the United States, addressed luncheon forum of Los Angeles World Affairs Council, and of Pacifica Institute— a Turkish-American think tank in Los Angeles. Besides, the Ambassador had a meeting with Congressman Ed Royce from Orange County in Southern California, who is a member of Bangladesh Congressional Caucus. In Phoenix, he met Republican Congressman Jeffrey Lane Flake.

Ambassador Kabir addressed the Third Annual Conference on Kazi Nazrul Islam at California State University, Northridge (CSUN). He also exchanged views with the President and the Associate Vice President of International programs of CSUN. He also visited the Engineering Faculty of the Arizona State University (ASU) and interacted with the faculty members and students there.

In addition, Ambassador had several rounds of interactions with the Bangladesh community members in Los Angeles and in Phoenix. In Los Angeles, he exchanged views with Bangladeshi community members at the Open House programme hosted by the Bangladesh Consulate General in Los Angeles. He also addressed a business and investment seminar organized jointly by Bangladesh Consulate General and US-Bangladesh Business Forum (USBBF) in Los Angeles. He attended a number of receptions organized by Bangladeshi
community organizations in Los Angeles, and in Phoenix in Arizona. Ambassador Kabir talked to the media at a ‘Meet the Press’ session organized on 26th October 2008 at the Bangladesh Consulate General and responded to their queries on contemporary issues.

Bangladesh Consul General in Los Angeles Mr. Abu Zafar and Mrs. Zafar hosted a dinner in honour of the Ambassador and Mrs. Rakeya Kabir on 28 November 2008, which was attended by a good number of Consuls General and local dignitaries. Consul General Abu Zafar also accompanied the Ambassador to various programmes.

**Finance Adviser visited Washington, DC on 9-13 October to attend World Bank board of governor’s meeting**

Finance Adviser Dr. AB Mirza Azizul Jalil visited Washington, DC from 9-13 October 2008 in connection with his participation at the annual meeting of the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF). During his stay in Washington, DC visit, he held discussions with his counterparts from various countries, attended Board of Governor’s meeting at the World Bank and addressed a seminar entitled “A Retrospective on Development in Bangladesh” on 10 October 2008 organized by the Bank at their headquarters. He led the Bangladesh delegation in meeting on 11 October 2008 with the Bangladesh Country Team in the World Bank. Vice President of South Asia Region Mrs. Isabel Guerrero led the World Bank team. After reviewing the assistance package for Bangladesh for the current year, it was decided that 4 projects, namely, Budgetary Support under Global Food Crisis Response Program, Siddhirgonj Peaking Power Project, Dhaka Water Supply and Sanitation Project and Emergency 2007 Cyclone Recovery and Restoration Project will be approved by the World Bank by the end of December. With these projects, the commitment of the World Bank to Bangladesh will reach nearly $1 billion against 7 projects during 2008. Overall, the commitment World Bank in 2008 will amount to approximately $ 1.3 billion.

Earlier the Hon’ble Finance Adviser delivered a key note speech entitled “Economic Policy Reforms in Bangladesh: A Retrospective.” In his keynote speech, the Finance Adviser highlighted the progress that Bangladesh was making in accelerating its economic growth along with poverty reduction as well as attaining other Millennium Development Goals. He mentioned that despite food and energy price hike, Bangladesh had successfully managed macro economic stability and all the macro economic indicators were better than many other developing countries including those in the region. He also highlighted various reforms measures undertaken by the caretaker government for the economic development of Bangladesh. He opined that all these reforms have produced tangible positive results and hoped that the next elected government would not only sustain these reforms but further strengthen them to accelerate growth and poverty reduction.

He also visited the Embassy of Bangladesh to discuss with the Embassy officials on the current economic crisis in the United States and its possible implications on Bangladesh. Governor of Bangladesh Bank, Dr. Salehuddin Ahmed, Finance Secretary, Dr. Mohammad Tareque and ERD Secretary, Mr. Aminul Islam Bhuiyan accompanied the Adviser during the visit.

**“Bangladesh Avenue” launched in Hamtramck, Michigan**
The city of Hamtramck in Michigan renamed a section of Conant Avenue as Bangladesh Avenue on 8 November 2008 through an elaborate ceremony. Mayor of the city, Dr. Karen Majowsky formally announced the installation of the plaque in the presence of Councilmen of the City Council, including Councilman Shahab Ahmed, City Manager, Bangladesh Ambassador M. Humayun Kabir and a large number of invited Bangladesh community members.

In her speech, City mayor Dr. Karen Majowsky praised the Bangladesh community in Hamtramck for their active involvement in the economic revitalization of the area. On his part, Bangladesh Ambassador thanked the City Council for its generosity by naming this important city thoroughfare as Bangladesh Avenue. He mentioned that such initiative by the city council would help furthering the bilateral relations between Bangladesh and the USA.

He said that naming of this avenue in Michigan was an attestation to the contribution of the Bangladeshi community in the socio-political and economic activities of the city and he urged the community to remain united to bring such glories in the future for their beloved motherland. He hoped that Bangladeshi community and the city council would join hands together to promote Bangladeshi culture and heritage to other communities in the area and to the mainstream US society.

After the speech, Bangladesh Ambassador and Hamtramck City Mayor formally unveiled the plaque of the avenue in a simple ceremony after the speech.

Following the ceremony, Ambassador M. Humayun Kabir joined a dinner hosted in honour of him by the City Mayor in the same evening. A cultural show was organized by the local Bangladeshi community in the evening to celebrate the occasion.

Bangladesh Embassy in Washington, DC had provided mobile consular services to the members of expatriate Bangladeshi community in the locality on 8-9 November 2008. More than 400 service seekers received variety of services including issuance/renewal of passport, visa and other consular services.

$2.35b remittance received in first quarter of this fiscal

Foreign exchange remittances from expatriate Bangladeshis totaled to US$ 2.35 billion during the first quarter of the current fiscal year (July-September 2008). This indicates an increase of 43.99 per cent from the same period of the previous fiscal year. The remittance sent by the non-resident Bangladeshis (NRBs) in September this year stood at US$ 802.58 million, a rise of 35.88 per cent from September 2007, according to data released from the Bangladesh Bank. The remittance, however, increased by US$ 253.60 million or 44.72 per cent to US$ 820.71 million in July 2008 as against US$ 567.11 million at the end of July 2007.

Bangladesh to lead UN Committee on Disabilities

Mr. Monsur Ahmed Choudhuri, a visually impaired development practitioner in Bangladesh, has been elected a member of the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

The First Conference of States Parties to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities was
Disabilities elected a total of 12 independent experts to the Committee at the United Nations in New York on November 3, 2008.

Mr. Ahmed, Managing Director of Jatiya Protibondhi Unnayan Foundation, who was nominated by the government for this position, secured the highest number of votes. He will lead the Committee from January 1, 2009.

This committee will work as the monitoring committee to ensure full protection and promotion of rights of persons with disabilities in every Member State, which ratified the Convention and the Committee will work in close cooperation and support from the UN Office of the High Commission of Human Rights in Geneva.

Local Government Commission formed in Bangladesh

A three-member Local Government Commission has been formed on 22 October 2008 with the former Secretary to the Government Mr. Faizur Razzaque as its Chairman. The Commission will try to strengthen the local government system and supervise the functioning of the local government institutions. Former Secretary Hedayetullah Chowdhury and Professor of Chittagong University Mr. Tofail Ahmed have been made members of this independent Commission. A three-member selection Committee had earlier recommended the nominees to constitute the Commission. The appointments will be for a period of three years. It starts functioning on November 01, 2008.

Delegates from US Humanities Council visit Bangladesh Embassy

The Executive Directors of State Humanities Councils in the USA visited the Embassy of Bangladesh on 6 November 2008. The Humanities Council of DC in association with the Bangladesh Embassy organized the tour. The visiting team comprises 65 members including 36 Executive Directors of Humanities Council of different states. Bangladesh Ambassador M. Humayun Kabir welcomed the guests to the Embassy and spoke on various issues relating to Bangladesh, her culture and heritage. In this context, he also highlighted the efforts of Bangladesh to fighting poverty through home grown micro credit programmes and create social capital through women empowerment, universal children immunization programme, ensuring gender parity in primary
and secondary school enrollment coverage in line with MDG objectives, bringing back drop out student to mainstream school through informal education and mobilizing all social stakeholders to develop an excellent disaster management strategy, which could be a useful tool to fight the effects of climate change in vulnerable countries.

The Executive Directors from various US states came to Washington DC to attend the National Humanities Conference “Imagining the World,” which began on 7 November 2008. As apart of their exposure, they also toured other Embassies “Inside Embassy Row” including Ethiopia, Mexico and Kazakhstan.

It may be mentioned that the 56 humanities councils located in U.S. states and territories support local humanities programs and events. The state humanities councils are funded in part by the federal government through National Endowment of the Humanities (NEH) and other private sources.

**Colgate University students visit the Embassy**

A group of faculty members and students from the New York based Colgate University visited the Bangladesh Embassy on 7 November 2008. Bangladesh Ambassador M. Humayun Kabir welcomed the students to the Embassy and gave an overview of socio-economic developments in Bangladesh and highlighted on the various aspects of growing relations between Bangladesh and the United States. Ambassador had also briefed them about the leadership role of diplomats in Washington.

The group was led by Mrs. Gail Scott, author of “Diplomatic Dance: The New Embassy Life in America” and Diplomatic Correspondent: Washington Life, Washington Diplomat magazines. This was arranged as part of Embassy’s education and public outreach initiative aimed at interacting with the younger generation with a view to improving their perception and understanding about Bangladesh as well as its relationship with the United States.

**Social egalitarianism strengthens democracy in Bangladesh: Ambassador M. Humayun Kabir**

Bangladesh has all the potential to represent a vibrant South Asia in the global stage. This was stated by Ambassador M. Humayun while he was speaking on a theme titled “Bangladesh and Relevant Issues of South Asia” to an audience at the Wayne State University in Detroit on 10 November 2008. The speaking engagement was arranged at the University’s Law School Auditorium by the World Affairs Council of Detroit in association with the Center for Peace and Conflict Studies (CPCS) of the Wayne State University.

Ambassador Kabir said that the egalitarian nature of its society, people’s love for democratic polity, empowerment of women, the entrepreneurial capacity of young Bangladeshis and the driving creativity of the society itself were shaping modern Bangladesh. In this context, he narrated the evolution of democratic process in Bangladesh including the current efforts for transition to democracy through holding free, fair and credible elections, the positive impact of microcredit to both fight poverty and to modernize the social outlook and practices in a predominantly Muslim society through empowering the womenfolk. He stated that Bangladesh should be appreciated by the global community for its contribution to the UN peace keeping efforts and for its role in building
the broken societies in the conflict ridden communities around the world.

Prior to the lecture, he was introduced to the audience by Professor Dr. Frederick Pearson, Chair of the CPCS and Director, World Affairs Council of Detroit (DCWA). A good number of students, faculty members, members of the DCWA were present during the presentation.

**Bangladesh is a peace entrepreneur:**

Ambassador told Public Radio

Earlier in the morning, Bangladesh Ambassador appeared at a live talk show at the National Public Radio’s WDET channel. Detroit Today’s host Craig Fahle interviewed the Ambassador. During his discussion Ambassador Kabir pointed out that there was a big gap in perception between Bangladesh in the outside world and what is actually going on in the country. In this context he asserted that contrary to public perception of a poor country, Bangladesh is one of the emerging economies with good potential. In this context he cited the observation made recently by Goldman Sachs, which forecast that Bangladesh will be one of the 11 emerging economies after Brazil, Russia, India and China (BRIC).

Touching on the creativity and entrepreneurial spirit of the people of Bangladesh, he talked about the home grown strategy, such as microfinance schemes through which people of Bangladesh were trying to reduce poverty. Through women empowerment, Bangladesh could not only address the challenge of poverty, lack of economic advancement but also deal with the issue of extremism through bottom up strategy. This process also led to other unintended positive consequences, he added. He also informed the audience that more than 150 countries around the world have been replicating this model to fight poverty.

On climate change issues, he mentioned that Bangladesh handled the challenges of disaster management very well so far on its own and she would like to share it with other disaster prone countries in the world, particularly in the context of adverse impact of climate change. He also stressed that with support from the international community Bangladesh could emerge as a model of implementing adaptation strategy to deal with climate change.

Terming Bangladesh as a peace entrepreneur, he added that Bangladesh was not only contributing generously to UN peacekeeping missions in various troubled spots, it was also trying to help build up broken societies around the world. He also said that being a developing society itself, Bangladesh would be able to help other countries in stabilizing their institutions.

Stating the egalitarian nature of Bangladeshi society, Ambassador noted that the historical context and process, entrepreneurial spirit of the people, innovative social strategies and friendship of international community had been a great asset for Bangladesh in its journey as a nation.

On the recent outcome in US Presidential elections, he said that it was an epoch making event, and obviously Bangladesh was also taking great deal of interest along with other members of the international community. With strong possibility that Obama administration would focus a great deal on the issue of poverty alleviation, women empowerment as a tool for moderation and on the issue of climate change, Bangladesh would be happy to work with the new administration. On future course of relations between the two friendly countries, he mentioned that Bangladesh would like to have more interaction with the United States, particularly in terms of expanding economic and trade relations. Bangladesh could also work as a bridge to help US restore and renew its image and reputation in the world, particularly in the Muslim countries, he added.
Bangladesh made vessels for Mozambique

Six ocean going vessels, built in Bangladesh, were handed over to Mozambique government on November 13, 2008. Ananda Shipyard and Shipways Ltd (ASSL), one of the premier ship building companies of the country, has built these ships at a cost of US$8 million. Chairman of ASSL Dr Abdullahel Bari said that the ships were handed over to the Mozambique authorities on the premises of the shipyard at Meghnaghat in Narayanganj district.

Shipping Adviser Major General (Retd) MA Matin attended the handing over ceremony as the chief guest. The six vessels, equipped with international standard machineries, have been built at a cost of eight million US dollar. It was also informed that another ship will be exported to Denmark in the first quarter of January 2009.

Ananda Shipyard Ltd has so far received export orders for US$373 million for making 22 vessels for various countries, including Denmark, Germany and Mozambique.

Bangladesh fetches $130m RMG orders from Denmark fair

The first ever Bangladeshi garment fair in Denmark has fetched spot orders worth $130 million and large number of inquiries from the potential buyers in Scandinavian markets.

Dhaka International Exhibition Company Limited (DIEC), in cooperation with Danish Chamber of Commerce, organized the five-day fair at Copenhagen, Herning and Arhus of Denmark on October 20 and 21. Six Bangladeshi garments manufactures and exporters have displayed their knit, woven and sweater products in the fair. Buyers from different European markets, including Denmark, visited the fair and placed more than the expected orders.

The participating Bangladeshi garment manufacturers have been awarded certificate from DIPP for meeting compliance of European standard manufacturing specification and labour related issues.

Honoury Consul General of Bangladesh in Denmark Peter Bernhoft attended the fair as the chief guest, while Chief Consultant of DIPP Marie Vest Hansen and DIEC Managing Director Enayet Karim as special guests in the inaugural ceremony of the fair held at Danish Chamber of Commerce auditorium.
Local home textile mill at Ishwardi EPZ soon

A Bangladeshi company will set up a Home Textile (weaving, dyeing) and related products manufacturing industry in Ishwardi Export Processing Zone with an investment of US$ 23.74 million.

Sunman Industrial Corporation Limited, a cent percent Bangladeshi company, would also create employment opportunity for 5412 Bangladeshis, including 12 foreign nationals.

An agreement to this effect was signed between Bangladesh Export Processing Zones Authority (BEPZA) and the company in BEPZA Complex in Dhaka in October 2008.

Bangladesh gains $ 2.10m export order from GITEX-2008 UAE

A five-day long trade fair titled "Gulf Information Technology Exhibition" (GITEX-2008) was successfully ended on October 23, 2008 in World Trade Center in Dubai, UAE. Five IT firms from Bangladesh took part in the fair, which commenced on October 19, 2008 under the auspices of Export Promotion Bureau of Bangladesh. IT products like software, Hospital Management System, Banking Management System and other related IT solutions were exhibited in the fair.

Bangladesh pavilion was inaugurated by the Ambassador of Bangladesh to the UAE, Mr. Nazmul Quaunine. The main objective of participation in this fair was to introduce recent Bangladesh IT related products in the Middle-East and the North-African region with a view to expanding Bangladesh export market in those regions. Approximately 1,24,312 visitors from 137 countries visited GITEX-2008.

Bangladeshi participants received spot orders for an amount of US$ 2.10 million in the GITEX-2008. It is expected that Bangladesh would be able to significantly boost up her IT export market in Middle-East and African Countries.

Libya to recruit Bangladeshi professionals and workers

Bangladesh has signed an MOU with Libya on 31 October 2008 in Dhaka during the 3-day visit of Libyan Labour Minister, Maa’touq Mohammed Maa’touq. His visit was basically focused on making arrangement for recruitment of Bangladeshi professionals for Libyan government and non-government institutions and skilled, semiskilled and un-skilled workers to work in the construction sectors in Libya. Foreign Advisor Dr. Iftekhar Ahmed Chowdhury, who is also in charge of Ministry of Expatriates’ Welfare and Overseas Employment, and the visiting Minister said that Libya would need about one million foreign workers during the next five years to implement a massive US$130 billion infrastructure development project. A large number of those workers are expected to be sourced from Bangladesh.

During the bilateral meeting Libya showed interest in expanding Bangladesh’s refinery capacities to process its crude petroleum for export to the Southeast Asian countries. Libya has also shown interest to import Bangladeshi pharmaceutical products.

Bangladesh Bank issues Taka 1000 note

The Bangladesh Bank released currency notes of Taka 1000 denomination in the market on 27 October 2008. According to the Bank sources, 200 million pieces of the Taka 1000 notes would be released from the Central Bank. The note signed by the Governor of Central Bank Dr. Salehuddin Ahmed, has the image of the central Shaheed Minar on the front and the Curzon Hall of Dhaka University on the reverse.
The note has five circles embossed for the blind people to feel the denomination.

TESCO to procure jute bags from Bangladesh

Global retailer giant TESCO has started procuring jute-made shopping bags from Bangladesh as part of its move to promote environment-friendly products worldwide, said an official of a local company on 08 November 2008.

“It's good that global retailers like Tesco are using jute-made shopping bags to meet the consumer demand for environment-friendly and socially responsible products,” said Mohammed Mahbubur Rahman Patwari, Director of Sonali Aansh Group that participated in the German Trade Show 2008. One of the largest UK based retailer group TESCO is now using our jute bags at its stores in Poland, Japan and Korea,” he said. He further said that his company has exported over 7 lakh pieces of jute bags to a number of buyers including TESCO. Sonali Aansh Group is also engaged in exporting high-fashion jute-made ladies bags, jute fabrics and espadrille, a casual flat or high-heel fashion sandal made of jute or cotton.

The three-day fair, which brought nearly 70 companies from various sectors including pharmaceuticals, chemical, automobiles, machinery, leather goods and footwear, shipbuilding, and garments, also raised hopes among the organizers about better trade relations with Germany. Bangladesh German Chamber of Commerce and Industry (BGCCI), with the support of Federal Republic of Germany and GTZ organized the show.

NRBs urged to widen focus for investment

Adviser for Commerce and Education Dr. Hossain Zillur Rahman asked the non-resident Bangladeshis not to confine their focus to any particular zone for investment, but to think of Bangladesh as a whole to make investment.

"Bangladesh should be a point of reference, rather than any particular zone. The opportunities are coming for investment in new areas like shipbuilding," Hossain Zillur Rahman told a seminar in Dhaka on 11 November 2008.

Lauding the contribution of NRBs to the country's economy, the Adviser said there was a time people left their country, but decades later the brain drain turned into a brain gain.

"For us, the Diasporas are the important resources and mobilizing the Diasporas is the key element in development. For China, success came because of the engagement of the Chinese Diasporas in the development process,” he maintained.

Bangladesh-British Chamber of Commerce (BBCC) organized the seminar on "The Role of UK/EU Investors in relation to the Special Economic Zone in Sylhet" marking the visit of a 47-member business delegation from the UK. Most of the members of the delegation are NBRs (non-resident Bangladeshis), especially from Sylhet origin. BBCC Chairman Shahagir Bakth Faruk chaired the seminar where British High Commissioner to Bangladesh Stephen Nicolas Evans, former Ambassador Mofazzal Karim, Chairman of Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission Manzurul Alam, Executive Chairman of Board of Investment (BoI) Kamaluddin Ahmed, President of Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI) Annisul Huq also spoke.

British Ambassador Evans urged the BBCC for playing a proactive role in seeking out new business on the backdrop of global financial turmoil. He said the BBCC can play an important role in establishing bilateral business relationship between UK and Bangladesh as such a relationship is a key to increasing the
two-way flow of investment. Mr. Evans said that the UK is one of the largest investors in Bangladesh with approximately 1.5 billion Pound Sterling. The UK companies active in the market include Cairn Energy, Standard Chartered Bank, HSBC Bank, Unilever, British American Tobacco, TESCO, M & S, Finlays, High Point Rendell, GSK and Duncan Brothers. He said Seamarks, Euro Foods, Total Foods, FCI, Britannia Properties, Dhaka Regency Hotel and United Airlines are all good examples of Bangladeshi business acumen and entrepreneurship. 

**Japan firm buys low-end clothes from Bangladesh**

Japanese clothing giant Fast Retailing Co, mostly known by its brand name Uniqlo, has recently started outsourcing low-end products from Bangladesh to boost its sales worldwide. The company plans to treble its overseas sales within the next two years through selling inexpensive garments amid global financial recession.

Established in 1984 in Hiroshima Uniqlo provides fashionable, high quality, basic casual clothes that anyone can wear anytime anywhere, and always at the lowest possible market prices. Today Uniqlo has grown to over 760 stores worldwide and is a household name in Japan.

The company's new business plan for low-cost management, and the shortest and cheapest manufacturing and marketing strategy has led it to Bangladesh, a high official of Fast Retailing said. It has opened its local office in Dhaka in September this year. The company will also start outsourcing home furnishings and fashion accessories from Bangladesh soon, said Koji Yamamoto, an official of Fast Retailing Co in Dhaka. Besides Uniqlo, such global retail giants as GAP, Wal-Mart, JC Penney, Hennes & Mauritz and NEXT are already operating in the country. A high official of Fast Retailing said Bangladesh would be the Uniqlo's outsourcing partner to supply clothes both to its Japanese retail shops and other overseas outlets in India and Russia.
Visitors at the Embassy of Bangladesh

Ambassador’s visit to Michigan

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