

Report No. 73

**In Search of New Products and New Markets  
for Bangladesh**

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**Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD)**

House 40/C, Road 11, Dhanmondi R/A, GPO Box 2129, Dhaka 1209, Bangladesh

Tel: 8124770; Fax: 8130951; E-mail: [cpd@bdonline.com](mailto:cpd@bdonline.com)

Website: [www.cpd-bangladesh.org](http://www.cpd-bangladesh.org)

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*The Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD), established in 1993, is an innovative initiative to promote an ongoing process of dialogue between the principal partners in the decision-making and implementing process. The dialogues are designed to address important policy issues and to seek constructive solutions to these problems. The Centre has already organised a series of such major dialogues at local, regional and national levels. These dialogues have brought together Ministers, opposition frontbenchers, MPs, business leaders, NGOs, donors, professionals and other functional groups in civil society within a non-confrontational environment to promote focused discussions. The expectation of the CPD is to create a national policy consciousness where members of civil society will be made aware of critical policy issues affecting their lives and will come together in support of particular policy agendas which they feel are conducive to the well being of the country. The CPD has also organised a number of South Asian bilateral and regional dialogues as well as some international dialogues.*

*In support of the dialogue process the Centre is engaged in research programmes which are both serviced by and are intended to serve as inputs for particular dialogues organised by the Centre throughout the year. Some of the major research programmes of the CPD include **The Independent Review of Bangladesh's Development (IRBD), Trade Policy Analysis and Multilateral Trading System (TPA), Governance and Policy Reforms, Regional Cooperation and Integration, Investment Promotion and Enterprise Development, Agriculture and Rural Development, Ecosystems, Environmental Studies and Social Sectors and Youth Development Programme.** The CPD also conducts periodic public perception surveys on policy issues and issues of developmental concerns.*

*As part of CPD's publication activities, a CPD Dialogue Report series is brought out in order to widely disseminate the summary of the discussions organised by the Centre. The present report contains the highlights of a dialogue organised by CPD under its Trade Policy Analysis programme on the theme of **In Search of New Products and New Markets for Bangladesh.** The Dialogue was held at **CIRDAP Auditorium, Dhaka on August 08, 2004.***

**Report prepared by:** Inam Ahmed, News Editor, The Daily Star

**Assistant Editor:** Anisatul Fatema Yousuf, Head (Dialogue & Communication), CPD.

**Series editor:** professor Rehman Sobhan, Chairman, CPD

*Dialogue on*

## **IN SEARCH OF NEW PRODUCTS AND NEW MARKETS FOR BANGLADESH**

### **The Dialogue**

The Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD) organised the dialogue on *In Search of New Products and New Markets for Bangladesh* at CIRDAP auditorium, Dhaka on August 8, 2004. The dialogue was moderated by *Professor Rehman Sobhan*, chairman of the CPD. Minister for Commerce *Air Vice Marshal (Retd.) Altaf Hossain Chowdhury* was present as the Chief Guest. EU Ambassador *Mr Esko Kentrschynskyj*, Japanese Ambassador *Mr Matsushiro Horiguchi* and Awami League lawmaker *Mr Kazi Zafarullah MP* were the special guests.

Two keynote papers were presented at the dialogue. The first one was presented by *Professor Mustafizur Rahman*, Research Director of the CPD, on *Everything but arms initiative of the EU (EU-EBA): Market access implications and potential benefits for Bangladesh*. The second paper namely *The New Japanese GSP Schemes for LDCs and Bangladesh's Export Opportunities* was presented by *Dr Ananya Raihan*, Research Fellow of the CPD. A cross-section of private sector businessmen, academics, NGOs, members of the parliament and diplomatic missions attended the dialogue. A list of participants is annexed.

### **Introductory note by Dr Debapriya Bhattacharya**

*Dr Debapriya Bhattacharya*, Executive Director of the CPD, made an introductory speech and explained the scope of the research, which has been done as part of the CPD's trade policy analysis of different kinds of trade concessions that the EU and Japan had given. The analysis would help Bangladesh assess its new trade opportunities.

He said the dialogue has been organised to discuss the incremental opportunities Bangladesh will have in the EU and Japan and also the requirements like compliance, rules of origin, quality and other non-tariff issues needed to enjoy these new offers.

The study has taken these issues to a very desegregated level, identifying the very specific products up to 60 HS digit codes and see what exactly can be done over here, *Debapriya* pointed out. He felt that market access is a necessary condition but not a sufficient one to explore markets. A raft of domestic measures is also needed to allow Bangladesh take full advantage of facilities offered by the EU and Japan.

## **Comments by the moderator of the dialogue Professor Rehman Sobhan**

*Professor Rehman Sobhan* who moderated the dialogue also explained the objective of the dialogue and said that the aim is to try and influence policies by bringing the principal policymakers and legislators together with the civil society to see how specific problems facing the country can be effectively dissolved.

## **Keynote presentation by Professor Mustafizur Rahman**

CPD Research Director *Professor Mustafizur Rahman* presented his keynote paper on the EU's Everything but Arms (EBA) initiative and mentioned that the initiative provides duty-free and quota-free market access for all goods exported by the LDCs to the EU, except those falling the category of trade in arms. The EBA has expanded the list of the earlier GSP scheme by another 919 HS8 digit items. These items mostly belong to agri-product category.

### *Features of EBA*

The EBA has a number of important features and is important for Bangladesh for a number of reasons, *Professor Rahman* stressed. For one, the initiative has ensured WTO compatibility by ensuring that non-Lome LDCs receive the same treatment as was offered to Lome LDCs. Unlike the previous EC-GSP scheme which was subject to renewal and revision, the EBA has no time limit, adding an element of certainty and security in terms of market access. The facility of regional cumulation for members of a number of regional associations including the SAARC has been retained. The speaker also reminded that entry of 10 new countries into the EU has enlarged the market and thereby increased the scope for Bangladesh's duty-free exports.

### *Expected impact on Bangladesh's exports*

*Professor Rahman* noted that since the new initiative does not envisage any change in the RoO (Rules of Origin), from a static perspective, the EBA may have limited impact on the exports of existing products which have been enjoying preferential market access under the GSP.

Talking about the expected change in Bangladesh exports because of the EBA, the keynote speaker stated that if the RoO remain unchanged, the potential benefits would be limited – about \$52 million, but a more relaxed RoO would lead to an immediate incremental benefit of about \$102 million. However, when the impact of other initiatives such as NAFTA, USTDA are also factored into study, the incremental export comes down to \$50 million.

*Professor Rahman* also pointed out that since all the new items included in the EBA belong to agri-product groups, Bangladesh's exports of vegetable products and food items to the EU may register some increases.

In this connection, he highlighted the importance of agri-products in EU market by pointing out that if textiles account for 12 percent of global trade, trade in agricultural goods accounts for 11 percent. The EU is the largest importer of goods from developing countries worth \$432 billion, its imports being higher than the combined import of the US, Japan and Canada. The EU's share in export of farm products from the LDCs is the highest among all development countries.

Talking about incremental gains, the speaker explained that as part of the study a mapping exercise was undertaken to identify Bangladesh's products exported to the EU prior to the EBA which have now come under the purview of the new initiative.

Before the introduction of the EBA, Bangladesh had exported 25 items in the newly included list of 919 product items. In 2001, 13 items were exported from this list although the total value of these items was not very significant at around 91,000 euro only. Under the EBA, there will no longer be any duty or quota on these items.

He felt that the next generation exports will be in agri-products. The EU will have to open up its market in agriculture products under the WTO and its export subsidy will be gradually dismantled. This will mean that countries outside the EU will be more competitive in terms of price and the EU's imports from outside the zone will increase.

Going into specifics, *Professor Rahman* mentioned that seven of the most important exports of Bangladesh in the identified list are 1) Fresh or chilled asparagus, 2) Medium grain husked brown rice, 3) Long grain husked brown rice, 4) Wholly medium grain rice, 5) Dried, prepared pasta, 6) Rice, pre-cooked or otherwise prepared or roasted, 7) biscuits, 8) juice of passion fruit or guavas and 9) Juice of mango, mango in tin, papaws, tamarinds, cashew apples, lychees, jackfruit, sapodilla. Previously these items were subjected to ad-valorem taxes or specific duties or both, with the ad-valorem taxes ranging from 6.4 percent to 33.6 percent and the specific duties ranging from 120 euro per ton to 460 euro per ton. Under the EBA, both the ad-valorem taxes and specific duties on these products have been withdrawn for Bangladesh. As a result, the landed price of these products in the EU will be significantly reduced, providing Bangladeshi exporters an edge over their competitors in the EU market. The speaker estimated that if the 2001 export figures of Bangladesh to the EU are considered, the incremental gain for Bangladesh's exports in terms of these duties and specific taxes would be around 11,000 euros on exports of 91,000 euros or equivalent to 10 percent of the export value.

Following the EBA, he noted, Bangladeshi was able to export some new products included on the list and its exports of the newly inducted agro-products grew from 91,000 euros in 2001 to 386,000 euros or by 300 percent.

He stated that rice is an item that showed significant increase in exports following the EBA. From an insignificant level of 1.09 thousand euros in 2001, exports of milled medium grain rice rose to 138.04 thousand euros in 2002. Garlic also added to Bangladesh's export basket as a new item after the EBA. Bangladesh also appears to enjoy price advantage in the EU market as in case of rice which had an average unit price per ton of 0.46 thousand euros in 2002 compared to 0.72 thousand for extra-EU

imports of the same item. Bangladesh's garlic price per unit was also lower compared to intra-EU and global average prices.

### *Supply side situation*

Talking about Bangladesh's strength in supply side capacity, *Professor Rahman* said it is one of the very few LDCs which has considerable supply side capacities in producing many of the items which have been newly included on the list of preferential treatment under the EBA. Moreover, Bangladesh exports the products that it has been given incremental opportunities under the EBA to countries other than the EU. So, the country now has a new opportunity to export the items to the EU. Poultry products are among some of the items which Bangladesh does not export now but has potential of exporting.

### *Standards issue*

The keynote speaker reminded that for exporters to enjoy preferential treatment under the EBA, they must ensure compliance with SPS-TBT requirement and other certification and standardisation requirement and EC's relevant rules and regulations. He felt that a lot will need to be done in terms of addressing the health-hygiene concerns.

### *Recommendations*

In the closing part of his presentation, *Professor Rahman* identified some policy challenges and issues that are critical to incremental exports to the EU. He felt that to support exports of agro-processed goods, domestic capacities will need to be developed in such areas as quality foil printing, cap printing, vacuum packaging and bottle manufacturing. He also felt a number of fiscal and institutional facilities including matching fund facilities have to be in place.

His specific recommendations include:

- Provide credit, interest and tax support and other facilities/incentives to promote export-oriented agro-processing by taking cognisance of the specific characters of agro-based industries (eg relatively longer gestation period) in designing the supportive policies for this sector.
- For supporting preservation of horticulture products, imports of related equipment such as reaper vans and refrigerated-containers should be exempted from duty and VAT.
- To support food processing industries imports of preserving chemicals and technology should be exempted from tax, VAT and duty.
- Establishment of an "Exporting Firms Group" based on export markets should be encouraged and supported through credit, tax, VAT and duty exemption facilities, and technology transfer.

- Provide credit, tax, VAT and duty facilities for imports of technology to support standard packaging.
- Air cargo space for the export of agro-products should be increased and other facilities including offloading and cool room facilities in cargo sheds should be enhanced.
- Reduce export freight charges to regional levels.
- Support overseas market research for agro-exports through projects such as the Matching Grant Facility (MGF).
- Institutionalise and implement quality control measures. The BSTI should be equipped with a appropriate technology and qualified manpower to support standardisation of export-oriented agro-industry products.
- Support the development of suitable varieties such as baby corn, french bean, okra, mushroom etc. garlic and promote their introduction in the market, both domestic and overseas.
- Strengthen laboratory testing capacity and internationally recognised certificate issuance capacity.
- Harmonise fiscal and tariff structures; existing anomalies in duty structure, which levy a higher duty on raw materials, inputs and packaging as against processed imports and thus make locally produced agro products relatively uncompetitive, will have to be removed.
- Establish intermediate input industries, ie packaging, bottling, printing, etc.
- Develop an effective infrastructure for the transportation of perishables.
- Provide bonded warehouse facilities to enable agro-industries to import their inputs.
- Establish a HYV seed research and multiplication institute.
- Establish an agricultural product development authority to offer one window assistance to local exporters and foreign importers of agro-based industries.
- Ensure adequate human resource development through the establishment of a food technology institute with modern facilities.
- The revised EU-GSP Scheme for 2006-2015 strongly articulates the need for capacity building through technical assistance to enable LDCs to realise the potential opportunities originating from the EC-GSP Scheme. In view of the above felt-needs, Bangladesh should prepare concrete proposals for technical assistance from the EU to address the relevant tasks.

- Make best use of the ongoing regional trading negotiations with a view to enhance opportunities of exporting agro-based and agro-processed goods to the EU.
- Analyse the outcomes of the ongoing negotiations in Geneva as regards the Agreement on Agriculture (AoA) in order to identify the market opportunities in the EU under the EBA in the context of further liberalisation of the markets for agri-goods products.

## **Presentation by Dr Ananya Raihan**

*Dr Ananya Raihan, Research Fellow of CPD* made the second presentation on the new Japanese GSP schemes for the LDCs and Bangladesh's export opportunities. Giving a brief of Bangladesh-Japan trade relations, he highlighted that Bangladesh's total export to Japan in 2001 was only 1.7 percent of its total export and 0.04 percent of Japan's total import. The principal items exported to Japan are frozen fish, leather, woven garments, optical products and electrical and electronics goods. He noted that Bangladesh's exports to Japan constitutes several non-conventional industrial products with or without preferential treatment. *Ananya* pointed out that although the export basket of Bangladesh is more diversified in Japan than in the EU and US markets, the total export is insignificant despite the preferential regime.

### *Japan's new GSP scheme*

Talking about the recent trade liberalisation initiatives, *Dr Raihan* said Japan launched 99% initiative in 2000 which came into force in April 2001. Japan's market was liberalised further under the initiative for exports of industrial products from the LDCs. Textile products from the LDCs will now enjoy enhanced preferential treatment in terms of access to the Japanese market.

The GSP scheme was revised in 2003 to include more products in the preferential access list for the LDCs like knitwear, woven garments, leather and leather goods which are of interest to Bangladesh and promise to create important market opportunities for Bangladesh.

The speaker mentioned that Japan adopted a positive list approach for agricultural products for inclusion in the preferential list for the LDCs.

### *Bangladesh's incremental benefits*

About Bangladesh's incremental benefits, *Dr Raihan* said Bangladesh's total export to Japan was valued at \$112 million and \$115 million in 2001 and 2002, showing a virtually unchanged situation in absolute terms. He felt that it needs to be analysed whether this was because of limitation of the new offer or inability of the supply capabilities to pick up.

Bangladesh's knitwear products have got a new opportunity after it got GSP facility under the new GSP scheme of Japan. This is likely to increase Bangladesh's competitive strength in Japanese market.

On the other hand, 28 out of 29 woven-RMG products received preferential treatment for access to Japanese markets under the previous GSP scheme. Despite such comparatively liberal regime for the products, the quantity of items exported from Bangladesh to Japan under the category remained insignificant.

### *Effective gain of Bangladesh*

*Dr Raihan* disclosed that in 2001, 17 HS 6 digit level items (except HS 190590) worth \$3.9 million exported to Japan enjoyed preferential treatment following the 99 per cent initiative. As a consequence of the revised 2001 GSP scheme, Bangladesh's effective gain in terms of tariff concessions on MFN rates was \$0.38 million. The benefit arose from export of several items, including \$206.30 thousand for men's shirt (HS 620530) and \$45.4 thousand for sports footwear (HS 640411).

According to the estimates, *Dr Raihan* observed, effective gain for RMG products in terms of duty exemption amounted to \$2 million. The effective gain in terms of reduced tariff was mostly confined to the top 10 knit-RMG (HS 61) and woven RMG (HS 62) items amounting to \$1.86 million.

In respect to the leather products, Bangladesh's effective gain as a result of preferential treatment amounted to \$2.68 million. The average tariff rate for footwear (HS 64) and leather (HS 41) is higher compared to RMG products.

He again said Bangladesh's total effective gain from export of agricultural products was worth \$4.8 thousand. This comprised of 2 HS 03 items, 1 HS 19 and 1 HS 21 items granted preferential treatment. The average tariff on agricultural products was \$6.18 thousand in Japan, which will be gain in terms of tariff concessions under a duty-free regime.

About the overall impact of Japan's preferential treatment of exports from LDCs, *Dr Raihan* said it was found to be rather negligible. When the influence of other global initiatives facilitating preferential access of products from LDCs is isolated, the simulation exercise shows that the incremental gains to Bangladesh as a result of Japan's recent initiatives was found to be rather insignificant. The absolute value of the impact was found to be only \$9.95 million (over the base period) equivalent to 0.184 per cent of Bangladesh's export to Japan.

He stated that leather and other sectors of Bangladesh are expected to benefit in terms of positive export growth under the revised GSP scheme. The other food and leather sectors are projected to grow by 4.8 per cent and 2.1 per cent respectively from the base period.

If the incremental gains are decomposed, *Dr Raihan* maintained, it is found that Bangladesh's exports of all products other than sugar and primary products are set to go up in the Japanese market.

### *Rules of origin*

Japanese rules of origin shows that *simplified* rules of origin does not ensure *better market access*, *Dr Raihan* mentioned. The basic rules are either the products to be exported should be wholly obtained in the exporting country, or, the resulting export goods which are produced from the imported raw materials should undergo sufficient processing in the exporting country. He felt that this is a very stringent criteria for many products, essentially reduce scope of utilisation of duty-free and quota-free market access. However, there are exceptions to these rules, when the processing of imported intermediate goods or raw materials are not considered sufficiently processed. There are some criteria for transportation to obtain preferential treatment. Besides, there is specific documentation process, which is standard for export-import of goods.

### *Adhering to standards is important*

*Dr Raihan* noted that the compliance mechanism with standards and SPS for exporting goods to Japan is very complicated. There are 15 laws implementation of mandatory technical compliance of goods imported to Japan. There are two levels of compliance: voluntary standards, which exporters follow for hassle free processing of goods through customs authorities in Japan; second, mandatory technical standards. The compliance for industrial products is done through the Japan Industrial Standards (JIS) which are covers compliance both for voluntary standards and mandatory standards. Similarly, for agricultural products there is a system of codes which is called Japan Agricultural Standards (JAS). Bother for agricultural and industrial products there are additional environmental measures, which covers, SPS and chemical residue compliance. He also explained that Japan is very sensitive about the genetically modified organisms (GMOs) and ban virtually all GM products to Japan, except a few exceptions. Japan has also very stringent standard for industrial products which contains harmful chemical residue.

### *Prospective products*

In respect to agricultural items, 28 HS 6 digit categories were identified which appear to have export opportunities in the Japanese market. In addition to price advantage in the Japanese market, Bangladesh possesses the capacity to produce and export these items and at present these products are indeed exported to a number of countries. Thirteen of these 28 categories of products have been recently included for preferential treatment under the revised 2003 GSP scheme, the total export value of which is USD 11.41 million. The Top 10 items which have potential to Japanese market, constitutes 94 per cent of world export from Bangladesh worth USD 10.68 million and Fish product (HS 03), Vegetable (HS 07, HS 08, HS 09, HS 11), Animal and Vegetable Fats and Oils (HS 15). However, price at which Bangladesh exports to the global market is lower than the average Japanese import price for these products. According to the price analysis, Bangladesh should eye the Japanese market for exports of fish and frozen food, beans, cucumbers, nuts, asparagus, fresh fruits, processed food such as dog or cat food, processed cucumbers, onions and lentils and black tea. Market analysis shows that Bangladesh's major competitors for these products would be China, Korea, Thailand, Vietnam, Philippines, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Indonesia, India, Sri Lanka, Oman, UAE, Mexico and USA. Though Bangladesh presently meets approximately 9 percent demand of the Japanese market, the zero-tariff access is expected to provide Bangladesh some competitive edge over the principal suppliers of shrimp to the Japanese market.

### *RMG products*

The speaker mentioned that among the RMG products currently exported to Japan, only 2 of 63 HS 6 digit level categories under HS 61 (HS 610110 and HS 611130) have been included for preferential treatment under the revised GSP scheme in 2003. The total export of these two items in 2001 was USD 8.87 million. However, 63 categories of knitwear items have been newly included in the revised GSP Scheme of 2003, which Bangladesh did not export earlier to Japan; though the export value of these 63 categories to the world market amounts to USD 251.36 million.

Of the newly included items in 2003 Bangladesh exported only two items to Japan. *Dr Raihan* observed that since Bangladesh exports a large number of HS 61 items in the global market, there is potentially good scope for export of these to the Japanese market by taking advantage of the new GSP Scheme.

He made a price advantage analysis and found that Bangladesh has export opportunities for undergarments and dresses for women and girls, garments of babies, men's suit and ties. Export data indicate that Bangladesh currently exports only limited quantities of these products to the global market. *Dr Raihan* asserted that a scope for quota and duty free export of such high-end products to the Japanese market will help Bangladesh realise the potentials of diversifying her apparel product basket. He reasoned that given Bangladesh's proven capacity to compete the export of these items in the global market, the recent inclusion of HS 61 category into the preferential regime is likely to open an window of opportunity for Bangladesh to explore new markets for these products in Japan.

All 66 HS 62 6 digit level categories were included for preferential treatment under the revised GSP scheme in 2003. The total export of HS 62 products from Bangladesh to the world market is valued at USD 419.84 million. The inclusion of 66 additional items under preferential regime is likely to enhance export opportunities of such items from Bangladesh to Japan, *Dr Raihan* said. According to the Top 10 HS 62 items, Bangladesh holds price advantage primarily in high-end items for women and babies. The price advantage of these items range from 22.2 percent to 95.1 percent over Japan's average import price of the same products from other countries in the world.

### *Non-RMG products*

Talking about non-RMG categories, the speaker pointed out that 31 HS 6 digit level were identified as holding export potential in the Japanese market. Twenty-two out of 31 HS 6 digit level non-RMG categories have been recently included for preferential treatment under the revised GSP scheme in 2003. The principal non-RMG categories included in the list are Footwear (HS 64) and Textiles (HS 52). Bangladesh's global export of products under such categories amount to USD 17.24 million. The price advantage for these items ranges from 5.6 percent to 97.5 percent.

He maintained that Bangladesh has good potentials in expanding export of home textiles and the market opportunities provided by Japan could allow Bangladesh to also tap the market for this item in the Japanese market.

Price analysis shows that 19 out of 56 HS 6 level products exported by Bangladesh enjoyed price advantage in the Japanese market.

With respect to HS 24 category, though Bangladesh does not currently export tobacco and cigarette products to Japan, an analysis on export prices of these products to the world market indicates that these Bangladeshi items should have some price advantage in the Japanese market.

### *What is Left Out?*

Bangladesh at present exports 76 HS 6-digit level categories to the Japanese market under non-preferential treatment; these constituted 30% of Bangladesh's total export to Japan in 2001. In his price analysis, Dr Ananya showed that Bangladesh enjoyed price advantage of varying degrees in 30 items out of a total of 76. At present Bangladesh's current export of knit-RMG, duty paid, stands at USD 3.91 million. Export of this item despite prevalent duty regime indicates Bangladesh's ability to maintain a competitive edge in certain segments of this item in Japanese market, he asserted.

He said it can be inferred that further liberalisation and flexibility in RoO is likely to enhance Bangladesh's market and increase share of quota and duty free export to Japan.

### *Some recommendations on capacity Building*

Dr Raihan made a raft of recommendations on how Bangladesh should approach to enhance its capacity to meet the Japanese market standards. He maintained that although the system of standard compliance is very complicated and costly which often not possible for LDCs to afford, it is essential for realising the potential of new exports generated through the extended preferential treatment of EU and Japan.

The following is a short list of measures, needed to be taken for overcoming supply side constraints by Bangladesh:

- Establishment of Food Technology Research Institute (lessons can be learnt from Indian experience of establishment of Central Food Technology Research Institute (CFTRI);
- Establishment of Packaging Technology Institute;
- Establishment of Agricultural Processed Food Products Wing under EPB to help the agro-products exporters (Indian experience: APEDA);
- Establishment of Product Specific Institutions to guide the manufacturers complying standards, fashion, test and promotional techniques;
- Building capacity to deal with trade remedies including ADD and CVD cases
- Building capacity at the enterprise level to ensure compliance with SPS-TBT standards
- Providing training in SPS-TBT issues for the entrepreneurs
- Providing support for promotion of marketing of the identified agri-products
- Preparation of Hand Book of Rules of Origin of major export countries and organise training for exporters: BFTI

- Providing training on SPS-TBT Compliance
- Initiate bilateral arrangements for JAS and JIS Compliance for Japanese market
- Launching relevant national standards for auto-compliance
- Equipping BSTI for international standard compliance testing at Pre-certification stage
- Organise export fairs in EU and Japan
- Development of e-commerce for product selling
- Development of product promotion facilities based on importing country language.

### **Remarks from the Chief Guest**

Speaking as Chief Guest, Minister for Commerce *Air Vice Marshal (Retd.) Altaf Hossain, MP* stressed the importance of the EBA and new GSP scheme of Japan particularly with the phasing out of the MFA.

He felt that the recommendations of the CPD studies would be of help for the ministry of commerce to strategise the future of the export sector. The EU is a major trading partner of Bangladesh accounting for more than 50 percent of the exports. In FY03, he pointed out, Bangladesh's export to the EU equalled \$3.2 billion. On the other hand, Japan is Bangladesh's major development partner although Bangladesh's export to Japan is not as significant yet. The minister stressed that the EBA and the Japanese GSP are important for Bangladesh because of the export opportunities of new products to the EU and apparel and agro products to Japan.

*Altaf* acknowledged that a large number of agricultural products has been given zero tariff access to the EU, which is of critical interest to Bangladesh. Although Bangladesh has not been able to export agriculture products to the EU in a big fashion yet, the new opportunities will help Bangladesh diversify its export basket, he observed. *Altaf* noted that agro export has a direct poverty alleviating impact on Bangladesh.

Talking about the Japanese market, he commented that Japan's zero tariff offer for apparels is also of importance for Bangladeshi entrepreneurs as it comes at a time when the MFA is phasing out. While acknowledging that it would not be easy for Bangladesh to enter the highly fashion sensitive Japanese market, he expressed his optimism that the competitive edge offered by the new GSP scheme will encourage Bangladeshi entrepreneurs to make inroads into the Japan market. He extended all-out help of the ministry of commerce to entrepreneurs in this regard.

The minister gave a short description of how Bangladesh is developing its exports in non-traditional items. He said high quality rice and white sugar are already being exported.

To boost tea production, the government has taken up a massive tea plantation programme. Tea plantation in northern part and the Chittagong Hill Tracts has been successful and possibility is being explored in central part of Mymensingh. This will help balance the gap between tea demand and production in 2-3 years. He stressed that there will be no need to import tea as even at the current production rate, it will take 11 years for a mismatch between production and demand.

*Altaf* pointed out that the government has been providing subsidies as far as the country's finances permit. As floods started, the BKMEA approached the government and the government has given them Tk 150 crore for rehabilitation.

The minister invited all the head of delegation of the EU, the Japanese ambassador and the business leaders to have a meeting with the commerce ministry on exploring new export products. He also proposed creation of a high-powered committee to assess the possibility of what should be done to boost new exports.

*Altaf* also acknowledged Canada's market access scheme which he called as a very pragmatic step.

### **Statement of the Special Guest Japanese H.E. Ambassador Matsushiro Horiguchi**

Japanese Ambassador *H.E. Matsushiro Horiguchi* gave a detailed outline of the behaviour of the Japanese market. He agreed that there are certain difficulties of making inroads into the Japan market since Japanese consumers are highly sensitive and choosy about products. They care about how products look like. For example, the *Mr Horiguchi* pointed out that the Japanese will not buy curved cucumber or spotted bananas.

He said Japanese consumers are also ready to spend more on safe food. For several years, import of Chinese vegetable increased rapidly. But then presence of chemical residue led to a sharp fall in imports from China, he cited.

Japan's quality requirement is also very stringent and exporters need to deliver goods in a very short time.

Citing example of China, *Mr Horiguchi* said the Chinese are doing well in Japanese market not only in apparels but in other products because they are very eager to meet the market requirements. Similarly, Bangladesh has to meet such requirements to expand trade.

*Mr Horiguchi* gave a brief of how Japan has been helping Bangladesh to develop its capacity. The Japanese government has been offering technical assistance through JICA. AOTS and other semi-government organisations receive Bangladesh manpower to train them up. Last June, Japan-Bangladesh Chamber of Industries was launched and Jetro is eager to make it a successful forum. He assured that Japanese embassy is ready to do whatever needed to promote trade.

### **Statement of the Special Guest EU Ambassador H.E. Mr Esko Kentrschynskyj**

At the onset of his statement, the EU Ambassador clarified that it is not because of EBA that some LDCs experienced a quantum jump in exports. Rather some products such as readymade garment, frozen food, leather, tea and jute enjoyed benefits before the introduction of EBA. According to him, the phenomenal export growth of knit garments can only be explained by the change in the rules of origin in 1999, which allow import of yarn to qualify for EU's GSP. This represents a positive correlation between relaxation of rules of origin and rise in exports, he asserted.

On rules of origin, *Mr Kentrschynskyj* confirmed the readiness of the EU to positively consider a request from Bangladesh for derogation. This issue has been discussed for quite sometime and the possibility of relaxed rules of origin still exists. He however felt that with the introduction of the new GSP scheme in January 2006, the issue may become less acute because under this new scheme readymade garment exports from Bangladesh will be allowed to have originating stage in Bangladesh with regional inputs under a much relaxed conditions. If Bangladesh avails itself of the facility it would greatly help readymade garment sector by giving it breathing space between the present GSP regime and the future regime, he observed.

Stressing the importance of the readymade garment sector, *Mr Kentrschynskyj* said although it is not the largest employment sector in Bangladesh, it employs hundreds of thousands of women. And therefore it is very important that the industry gets a chance to continue operating in a way which will allow majority of the employees to retain jobs.

About exports of sugar, banana and rice to the EU, the EU ambassador stated that a new sugar regime is being worked upon in Brussels and is expected to be approved very soon. This is expected to play a more potential role for sugar exports. Already 9,000 metric tonnes of sugar has been exported to France. This reflects a situation where the markets for these commodities in the EU are being opened up on a first-come-first-serve basis, he felt.

The ambassador felt that freight cost is one of the constraints of export and that the private sector needs to have competitive freight cost.

About standards of product, *Mr Kentrschynskyj* pointed out that it is very important for the EU consumers as they are very aware of food safety and look for value for money. Such requirements are not a barrier and have to be disassociated from trade as

such. He mentioned that the EU customs often complain of shipment of shrimps with low standards. Such things have to be addressed to sustain exports, he stressed.

Turning to technical assistance, *Mr Kentrschynskyj* said the EU is specially interested in such cooperation. In his view, such assistance is very important for Bangladesh to gain knowledge, increase its trade and negotiation capacity.

Mentioning about a 10 million euro quality control project, *Mr Kentrschynskyj* said this will be implemented in consultation with all ministries concerned and the private sector to help exporters comply with EU standards. Bangladesh is the main recipient country of trade related technical assistance in Asia from the EU.

Regarding market access, *Mr Kentrschynskyj* mentioned that with the enlargement of the EU from May 1 this year, 11 more countries with 75 million more consumers have joined the EU, representing greater opportunities for Bangladesh.

## **Statement of the Special Guest Mr Kazi Zafarullah, MP**

*Mr Kazi Zafarullah MP* stated that Bangladesh has to achieve the desired breakthrough in the new items offered under the EBA. When Pakistan can export \$1 billion a month Bangladesh cannot afford to export only half a billion dollar. He felt that Bangladesh should set a target of doubling its exports and then go about achieving it.

Agreeing that the Japanese market is very quality conscious and look for brand names, he suggested that Bangladesh has to understand Japan's history and psyche to make a breakthrough.

Mentioning that downslide in law and order and political uncertainties are instilling lack of confidence in investors, he said these issues should be faced boldly. The government and the opposition need to work together to resolve the issues for trade progress.

## **Open discussions**

### *New offers to boost RMG, but relaxed rules of origin is a must*

Discussants observed that the new offers by the EU will raise Bangladesh's readymade garment exports, but to reap the full benefit Bangladesh must adopt relaxed rules of origin.

The EBA will help Bangladesh's garment sector grow even further if some measures are taken, *Mr Annisul Huq*, President of the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA), observed. According to him, garments is the most potential sector to reap the benefit of EBA. Last year, the EU imported \$84.66 billion of readymade garments including textiles worldwide. But Bangladesh had exported only \$3.2 billion of garment, 67 percent of which is knitwear.

He observed that Bangladesh's garment sector still has a vast scope to grow in the EU since only 57.3 percent of the woven garment enjoys GSP facility under stringent rules of origin. This means the rest 43.7 percent of woven products still can get GSP.

The BGMEA president also advocated for a relaxed rules of origin to get full benefit of EBA. In his support, he said Bangladesh does not have enough local fabric to support the garment sector to comply with the stringent rules of origin requirement from the EU.

Bangladesh has the scope of getting relaxed rules of origin permission from the EU, *Annisul Huq* pointed out. Such relaxed rules are under process and Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam are going to get it. He stressed that Bangladesh should also apply for it irrespective of whether exporters are allowed to enjoy it or not. He maintained that once the facility is available, the government can decide after consultation about its use.

In support of relaxed rules of origin, *Mr Alamgir Farrouk Chowdhury*, former Commerce Secretary, pointed out that although trade has increased tremendously under the EBA, rules of origin is still an impediment. He however felt that the relaxed rules cannot take place immediately and will happen incrementally. One incremental support for relaxed rules is regional cumulation, which will have a positive impact on Bangladesh's exports under regional grouping agreements like Safta.

*Mr AK Azad*, President of Bangladesh Chamber of Industries, also talked in favour of SAARC cumulation and said the government must take a decision in this regard for export growth.

### *Difficulties of Japanese market*

*Annisul Huq* discussed the challenges of exploring the Japanese market. He pointed out that China is the largest exporter of apparels to the \$19.78 billion Japanese market while Bangladesh's export there is merely around \$15-16 million. Although this represents a huge scope to expand exports there, it is not an easy market to enter. The basic advantage of China is its proximity to Japan. Korea, even after having a much higher unit price, has higher exports also because of its proximity. Moreover, Japan's duty on readymade garment is not as high as the EU and as such duty-free concessions will not make the market as attractive as the EU.

*Quazi Monirul Haq*, President of Bangladesh Frozen Food Exporters' Association, also agreed about the difficulties faced in export of frozen food to the Japanese market due to non-tariff barriers. In comparison, he pointed out that \$170 million worth of frozen fish is exported to the EU every year.

*Alamgir Farrouk Chowdhury* felt that Bangladeshi exporters need to know the peculiarities of Japan market. This is more needed because although Japan offers a very relaxed rules of origin, exporters are still not able to take advantage of it.

In support of these view, *AK Azad* pointed out that despite having GSP facility, Bangladesh could not close the trade gap with Japan because the Japanese are very

quality conscious and sensitive to various standards. He observed that Bangladeshi manufacturers are yet to achieve such quality and standards.

### *Dairy products to get a boost*

*Syed Rezaul Karim* of BRAC Dairy and Food Project felt that Bangladesh's domestic dairy industry to get a boost because of liberalisation of market and withdrawal of subsidies by the EU, particularly in the dairy sector. Bangladesh now imports almost Tk 4 billion worth of powdered milk. Because of heavy subsidisation by the EU, the price of imported powdered milk is even lower than domestically produced milk. With the withdrawal of subsidy and market liberalisation by the EU, Bangladesh would have the advantage of producing the same kind of products such as powdered milk.

### *Agriculture to gain highest, but Industrialisation of agriculture is needed*

While supporting the view that export of agro products is the key to Bangladesh's survival in the globalised economy, *Dr Momtaz Uddin Ahmed*, Vice-chancellor of State University of Bangladesh, felt that there should be serious attempts at industrialisation of agriculture. At the same time, very specific crop diversification planning is needed. As a strategy, development of rural non-farm sector should be focussed on identifying new products.

*Rouf Choudhury*, Vice-president of FBCCI, said incremental gains from the facilities offered by the EU and Japan will mainly come from the agriculture sector as there is no supply-side constraints here. Presence of sufficient processing capacity is also a positive factor in this regard.

*Nasreen Huq*, Country Director of Action Aid noted that Agriculture market opening is very important for us because it employs a huge manpower, having direct bearing on poverty.

However, *Annisul Huq* came up with a different view and expressed his skepticism about the increased prospect of agricultural product export because of the limited Bangladeshi consumers abroad.

### *Adhering to quality requirements key to exports*

Talking about quality, *Rouf Choudhury*, Vice-president of FBCCI, feels that the greatest bottlenecks for Bangladeshi exporters are the SPS-TBT requirements, packaging and marketing. In his view, it is not enough to have EBA and a list of items which have the potential of export. It is also important to know what procedures exporters have to follow.

Supporting *Rouf's* view, former Ambassador *M Zamir* pointed out that Bangladesh can meet the SPS-TBT requirements when countries like Pakistan are complying with them. He observed that the EU will give \$10 million to help Bangladesh meet the phyto-sanitary requirements. He also said packaging is equally an important factor for export.

Expressing similar views, *Fakhrul Islam Munshi*, President of ADOB, said if Bangladesh wants value addition in agricultural products, it has to ensure quality and competitiveness in price.

Supporting the views of the previous speakers, *Rokia Kabir* of BNPS said maintaining quality of products is a must to export to the new markets. She also spoke of reducing systems loss by addressing infrastructure problems, red tape etc. to make products competitive.

### *Lowered airfreight a must to boost export*

As discussion turned to competitiveness to boost exports, *Rouf Choudhury* pointed out that factors like high cost of cargo freight hold back exports. He wondered why the government feels shy to give around Tk 15-20 crore in subsidy for cheaper cargo facilities while it doles out Tk 600 crore to fertiliser.

In support of the above view, *Faruk Sobhan* of BEI said competitive airfreight can play a vital role in ensuring competitiveness of Bangladeshi products.

### *Foreign Investment, product display centres to promote agriculture exports*

Highlighting the important role foreign investors can play in augmenting a country's exports, Ambassador *Zamir* suggested the local businessmen identify the Japanese and other importers of Bangladeshi products and invite them to invest in Bangladesh. The attraction here is when the investors will export to the EU, they will get 8-10 percent tariff advantage because of EBA.

But to make investors and importers aware of Bangladesh's potential, display centres are also important. Bangladesh lacks food display centres like India or China has in the buyer countries to highlight items, Ambassador *Zamir* pointed out. India has specialised offices in the EU and importers can just walk in and know what products to import from India. Similar offices would also help Bangladesh attract customers, he observed

### *Canada's duty-free regime helps exporters*

*Robert Beadle* of Canadian High Commission highlighted Canada as a showcase where Bangladeshi exporters have done well taking advantage of duty-free facility. Canada has been very generous in allowing full duty-free access for LDCs with the exception of a few poultry and dairy products. It has also been very generous in terms of rules of origin with only 25 percent value addition requirement. Beadle said Canada has also been very pro-active in bringing potential Bangladeshi exporters to Canada to attend trade fairs. These things had had an impact on exports.

### *Technical support, product analysis is important*

Speakers also felt that analysis of products to know the current export constraints and then seeking technical support to scale them over should help Bangladesh diversify its exports to the EU and Japan.

*Nazneen Ahmed* of BIDS felt that before setting strategies for export of new commodities, experts should analyse the constraints of exporting the existing agricultural products that had been enjoying GSP even before EBA was introduced. This would help exporters know the problems facing the new items.

*AK Azad* felt the need for technical support to start an institution that would help exporters understand the requirement of the Japanese consumers and help close trade deficit.

*Beadle*, Canada said Canada is also involved in technical assistance with the ministry and planning a major trade related capacity building along with other donors. It is important to have a professional trade commissioner's service to help Bangladesh exporters and we are ready to work in it.

The importance of technical support was also stressed by *Faruk Sobhan* who observed that technical assistance would be needed if Bangladesh explores the high-value organic produces like tea and vegetables, which are in good demand in the EU.

*Md Abdur Rouf Bhuiyan*, Managing Director of IMUST, offered NGO help to give backup support for development of agriculture exports.

### *Seeds can be a new item in export basket*

Seeds can be a new export product for Bangladesh, *Mahabub Anam*, President of Bangladesh Seed Association, suggested. Explaining the possibilities, he pointed out that Japan is one of the largest seed exporting countries in Asia but it does not grow any seed. Japan has the seeds grown in China, brings it, packs it and sells. In *Anam's* view, Bangladesh can also be one of the seed producers for Japanese firms because of cheap farm labour.

### *Agricultural exports to harm poor people's nutritional status*

*GM Quader*, Jatiya Party lawmaker, expressed the fear that export of agricultural products would undermine the nutritional status of the poor. According to him, Bangladeshi people are still not well fed and they have nutrition problems. Even items like tea which Bangladesh now exports will need to be imported soon. He observed that the items which have prospects of exports to the EU and Japan are not in excess supply in our country. If these things are now exported, the poor people will not get to consume them. *Kader* said even export some fine quality rice and import of coarse rice would need the government's coordination.

### *Infrastructure support, Political stability needed*

The speakers pointed out that while infrastructure development is needed to process food products to the standards of the EU and Japan, political stability is also important for buyers' confidence.

*AK Azad* stressed infrastructural support from the government such as gas, telecommunication and power and a streamlined law and order so that exporters can be competitive.

*Fakhrul Islam Munshi* said infrastructure to ensure phyto-sanitary standards are needed for quality control.

He further went on to say that the government's infrastructure does not allow entrepreneurs to continue business. Lack of accountability of the government and increasing corruption are making exports suffer.

*AK Azad* mentioned that importers often question Bangladeshi manufacturers about political disturbances such as hartal. Fear of political unrest after 2006 general elections will lead to a drop in garment order and buyers will go to peaceful countries, he observed.

### *WTO compliance is important*

*Fakhrul Islam Munshi* said the government's policies have to be framed according to the WTO agreement and complications. But the WTO cell of the ministry of commerce is not properly equipped particularly to deal with agricultural issues.

### **Concluding remarks by Professor Rehman Sobhan**

*Professor Rehman Sobhan* thanked the participants for taking interest in the topic, which he termed as important for Bangladesh at this juncture of trade dependency. He hoped that the issues which came up during the deliberations would help the policymakers chalk out policies to explore the EU and Japanese markets in a better way.

**List of Participants**  
(in alphabetical order)

<i>Mr Md Abdullah</i>	DGM, Bangladesh Bank
<i>Ms Selima Ahmad</i>	President, Bangladesh Women's Chamber of Commerce & Industry
<i>Ms Nazneen Ahmed</i>	Research Fellow, Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies
<i>Mr Iqbal Ahmed</i>	Professor, Institute of Business Administration (IBA)
<i>Mr Jahangir Bin Alam</i>	Secretary, Foreign Investors Chamber of Commerce & Industry (FICCI)
<i>Dr Rajani Alexander</i>	First Secretary (Development), Canadian High Commission
<i>Professor T Ali</i>	Director, Centre for Management Studies
<i>Mr Liaquat Ali</i>	Director, BSTI
<i>Mr Mahbub Anam</i>	EC – Member, BAPA
<i>Mr A K Azad</i>	President, Bangladesh Chamber of Industries
<i>Mr Qazi Humayun Baksh Azad</i>	Acting Chairman, Bangladesh Tariff Commission
<i>Mr Syed Azim</i>	Project Manager, UNDP
<i>Mr M A Baset</i>	Executive Committee Member, BKMEA
<i>Mr Robert Beadle</i>	Head of Development Cooperation, Canadian High Commission
<i>Ms Lutfa Begum</i>	Law Officer, Bangladesh Parliament Secretariat
<i>Mr M A Rouf Bhuiyan</i>	Managing Director, IMUSTT
<i>Mr Waliur Rahman Bhuiyan</i>	Former President, FICCI
<i>Ms Sayma H Bidisha</i>	Lecturer, Dept of Economics, University of Dhaka
<i>H E Mr Juerg Casserin</i>	Charge D' Affairs, Embassy of Switzerland
<i>Air Vice Marshal (Retd.) Altaf Hossain Choudhury, MP</i>	Hon'ble Minister for Commerce, Government of Bangladesh
<i>Mr M A Rouf Chowdhury</i>	Director, FBCCI
<i>Mr Sayed Alamgir Farrouk Chowdhury</i>	Former Secretary, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare
<i>Mr Shah Abdul Hannan</i>	Chairman, Islami Bank Bangladesh Ltd.
<i>Mr Kazi Monirul Haque</i>	President, BFFEA
<i>H E Mr Matsushiro Horiguchi</i>	Ambassador Embassy of Japan
<i>Mr Shamsul Hossain</i>	Agriculturist
<i>Mr Nazir Hossain</i>	Director, The Dhaka Chamber of Commerce & Industry
<i>Mr Annisul Huq</i>	President, BGMEA
<i>Ms Nasreen Huq</i>	Country Director, Action Aid, Bangladesh
<i>Mr Abu Tahir Md Hussain</i>	PRO, Ministry of Commerce, Bangladesh Secretariat
<i>Mr Ilder</i>	Third Secretary, Russian Embassy
<i>Mr Jahirul Islam</i>	Research Associate, BIDS, Dhaka
<i>Mr Mahbub Jamil</i>	President, FICCI
<i>Ms Rokeya Kabir</i>	Executive Director, BNPS

<i>H E Mr Esko Kentrschynskj</i>	Head of the Delegation, European Commission
<i>Mr Anisur Rahman Khan</i>	M Sc in Health Economics, University of Dhaka
<i>Mr Masahiko Kiya</i>	Counsellor, Head of Economic and Development Cooperation, Embassy of Japan
<i>Mr Syed Rezaul Karim</i>	BRAC Dairy and Food project
<i>Mr A F M Rahman Mahbubur</i>	General Manager, Rahman Chemical Ltd
<i>Ms Anne Marchal Marchal</i>	First Secretary, European Commission
<i>Md Lutfor Rahman Matin</i>	Director, BGMEA
<i>Mr Mustafa Mohiuddin</i>	Director General, Export Promotion Bureau
<i>Mr A F M Fakhrul Islam Munshi</i>	President , ADOB
<i>Ms Rukhsana Nasreen</i>	Director (WTO Cell), Ministry of Commerce, GOB
<i>Mr Sotaro Nishakawa</i>	Representative, Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO)
<i>Md Jamal Pasha</i>	Deputy Director , Export Promotion Bureau
<i>Mr G M Quader</i>	Hon'ble Member of Parliament
<i>Mr Shamsur Rahman</i>	Chief Economist, JBIC
<i>Mr Mortoza Rahman</i>	Trade Advisor, Canadian High Commission
<i>Mr Kamran T Rahman</i>	Deputy Managing Director, Pubali Jute Mills Ltd
<i>Mr Alamgir Rahman</i>	2nd Vice president, BGMEA
<i>Mr Izaz Rasool</i>	Trader
<i>Mr Zillul Hye Razi</i>	Economic and Information Officer, Commission of the European Communities
<i>Mr Amarnath Reddy</i>	Programme Co-ordinator, Royal Danish Embassy
<i>Mr Harish Kumar Sachdeva</i>	Managing Director, Helix Group
<i>Mr Abu Saleh</i>	Former Vice Chairman, Export Promotion Bureau
<i>Mr S Sazu</i>	Step to garments workers
<i>Mr Anil Sinha</i>	General Manager, SEDF
<i>Ambassador Farooq Sobhan</i>	Former Foreign Secretary and President , BEI
<i>Mr Babar Sobhan</i>	Consultant (Visiting), UNDP
<i>Mr Md Abu Taiub</i>	PS to G.M Quader MP
<i>Dr M I Talukder</i>	Former Chief, Planning Commission, GOB.
<i>Professor Mohammad Ali Taslim</i>	Department of Economics, University of Dhaka
<i>Mr Ray Tsutomu Uchida</i>	Chief Representative, JBIC
<i>Professor Momtaz Ahmed Uddin</i>	Vice Chancellor, State University of Bangladesh
<i>Mr Wilhelm Wiig</i>	First Secretary, Royal Norwegian Embassy
<i>Ms Masuda Yeasmin</i>	Asst Professor, Dept of Economics ,University of Dhaka
<i>Mr Kazi Zafarullah, MP</i>	Former Chairman, Privatisation Board
<i>Ms Riffat PhD Zaman</i>	Economist, SEDF
<i>Mr Muhammad Zamir</i>	Former Secretary and Ambassador

**Annexure B****List of Journalists**  
(in alphabetical order)

<i>Mr Zainul Abedin</i>	New Nation
<i>Mr Rashed Ahmed</i>	The Daily Jugantor
<i>Mr Taieb Ahmed</i>	The Bangladesh Today
<i>Mr Iqbal Ahmed</i>	New Age
<i>Mr Inam Ahmed</i>	Daily Star
<i>Mr Asif Reza Anil</i>	The Executive Times
<i>Mr Mominul Haque Azad</i>	Ajker Kagoj
<i>Mr Masudul Karim Biswas</i>	The Bangladesh Observer
<i>Mr M B Alam Choudhury</i>	Asian TV, Daily Nagorik
<i>Mr Mostafa Chowdhury</i>	Bangladesh Betar
<i>Mr Rafiq Hasan</i>	The Daily Star
<i>Mr Arman Hossain</i>	The Daily Star
<i>Mr Md Mamun Hossain</i>	Samachar
<i>Mr Suyadul Islam</i>	Daily Ittefaq
<i>Mr Saidul Islam</i>	NNB Staff Reporter
<i>Mr Saiful Islam</i>	Daily Sonar Alo
<i>Mr Md Aminul Hoque Liton</i>	Dhaka Post
<i>Mr Hanif Mahmud</i>	The Daily Prothom Alo
<i>Mr Asad A I Mahmud</i>	Bangladesh Protidin
<i>Mr Sultan Mahmud</i>	The Inquilab
<i>Ms Romana Main</i>	Tara Bangla
<i>Mr Tareq Moretaza</i>	Manabzamin
<i>Mr Jean Nezar Osman</i>	Tara Bangle
<i>Mr Kawser Rahman</i>	Daily Janakantha
<i>Mr Saleheer Rahman Ratan</i>	Bangla Bazar Patrica
<i>Mr Sujon Sarker</i>	Daily Patrica
<i>Mr Md. Shahjahan</i>	Dainik Patrica
<i>Mr Hossain</i>	The Daily Nagorik
<i>Ms Fahmida</i>	News Network

