

Developing industrial infrastructures in Northern districts

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NORTH Bengal is the one-fourth of total Bangladesh. It is the one-fourth of Bangladesh in all possible dimension including geographical area, population, administrative unit etc. But it is not the equal recipient in the economic development of Bangladesh. North Bengal is an agricultural-based economy. Seventy per cent (70%) of excess agricultural production are sold throughout the country. But in terms of industry and service sector North Bengal is lagging behind the other regions in Bangladesh. Reasons for this are manifold: Industrial and educational development and the service and export sector, business and employment sector is not as improved as those available in other regions of Bangladesh. Industrial infrastructure including entrepreneurs, gas, electricity, railway and road communication are too poor to compare with those in other regions of Bangladesh. One problem of infrastructure is closely associated with the other problematic infrastructure like a vicious circle of poverty. For example, because of the lack of gas, electricity and road communication, the industrial entrepreneurs do not tend to invest in North Bengal. That creates a lot of other problems including business, employment, self-employment and the quality of family life and living there.

The area of Rajshahi Division in Bangladesh or the North Bengal of British Indian regime is 35,000 sq km, which is about 24% of the whole geographical area of Bangladesh of 1,47,570 sq km.. Population of North Bengal is about one-fourth of Bangladesh. Population per square

kilometer is little bit higher in this region than the population per square km in whole of Bangladesh. It means that while Bangladesh is the most densely populated country, North Bengal is relatively more densely populated compared to the other regions.

Administratively, 7 divisions, two or 28% of which are located in North Bengal namely, Rajshahi and Rangpur. We have 64 districts in Bangladesh, 25% or 16 districts of which are situated there Bangladesh has 690 Upazilas or Thanas, of which North Bengal has 127 Upazilas or Thanas. Percentage of Upazila or Thana

is available only in Bogra. Bogra used to be the 4th largest industrial city in Bangladesh. Before the receipt of gas facilities in Bogra, many industrial units and factories happened to get sick and / or killed due to the lack of power and energy. It means that per capita availability of gas and electricity in Bogra are too less to help industrial growth and development. Railway, roads and airways are also too poor to help the growth of business in North Bengal. Service sector and financial institutions including bank, insurance, leasing company, industrial and NGO activities and industrial finance are

between Bahadurabad of Jamalpur and Phul-suri of Gaibandha, a triangular bridge in Aricha connecting North Bengal, South Bengal and Eastern part of Bangladesh through Dhaka is very necessary. We hope that the Chinese government will finance Bangladesh in constructing this triangular bridge and the new Jamuna Bridge. A railway line has to be constructed through the already acquired land from the Jamuna Bridge to Bogra. This Railway connection will ease the railway communications between North Bengal and Eastern part of Bangladesh. The exploration of coal mineral of Fulbari, Dinajpur has to be expedited by resolving all possible local problems in Dinajpur.

The local people must be made to understand that the exploration of coals will be more remunerative than the agricultural production. The loosing farmers would be ensured to get compensated at a relatively high rate. Rup-pur Nuclear Plant would be extended to include more projects, which will produce more than 5 thousand Mega Watt (M.W) electricity. Foreign investors with good past track record and reputation can be invited once again for a big-push investment in Pabna and Dinajpur for the greater interest of the nation, to produce cement and fertiliser at a very large scale. Finally, a number of private entrepreneurs, preferably of local origin, should be invited to produce electricity at a large scale in the northern region of Bangladesh in relatively easy terms and conditions.

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For example, silk industries in Rajshahi and Thakurgaon, agriculture and nonagricultural products and equipment in Bogra, weaving industry in Pabna, tobacco production and processing in Rangpur and the related many other industries of small and little concern have been suffering a lot due to lack of finance and loan facilities.

in North Bengal is about 18%. Number of total administrative Unions in Bangladesh is 4,451 of which 1,092 are located in This region. The number of unions in North Bengal is about 25% of the total number of Unions. Mouzas of 59,990 there, are about 32% of the total. Number of villages in Bangladesh is 86,174 including 25,475 villages in North Bengal, which is about 30%.

Among the 16 districts in North Bengal, gas

not very intense to be helpful in anything there. For example, silk industries in Rajshahi and Thakurgaon, agriculture and nonagricultural products and equipment in Bogra, weaving industry in Pabna, tobacco production and processing in Rangpur and the related many other industries of small and little concern have been suffering a lot due to lack of finance and loan facilities. Urgently needed road communications are: one more new Jamuna bridge