

Wooden furniture to be replaced by plastic in schools: Saifur

Staff Correspondent

The government may replace the existing wooden chairs and tables by quality plastic-made furniture in all primary and secondary schools to give a boost to petrochemical industry and save the country's forest resources. Finance Minister Saifur Rahman announced on Wednesday.

As such a decision covers 65,000 primary and 25,000 secondary schools, business leaders said it could not only bring a revolution in the burgeoning plastic industry but also contribute a lot to the protection of environment.

The government would also bear two-thirds costs for setting up a testing laboratory and technology centre should the entrepreneurs come up with the initiative, the Finance and Planning Minister told the opening ceremony of the Plastic Fair-2002 organised by Bangladesh Plastic Goods Manufacturers Association (BPGMA) at Bangladesh-China Conference Centre.

He appreciated the last 10 year's growth of the plastic industry, which now earns Taka 100 crore as direct export and another Taka 500 crore as accessories of the readymade garments (RMG). Having some 2,000 small and medium industrial units, the sector employs around three lakh people, according to its leaders.

Saifur Rahman called upon the enterprising people to invest money since, as he claimed, the macroeconomic stability is so sound in view of the economic indicators during his latest tenure as the finance minister.

"Why don't you take money from the Taka 300 crore fund

(Equity and Entrepreneurship Fund/EEF)?" he asked and expressed optimism that a new generation of enthusiastic youngsters in Bangladesh and also non-resident Bangladeshis (NRBs) would be good entrepreneurs as they have the mentality to take risks.

Commerce Minister Amir Khosru Mahmud Chowdhury said the ban on polythene bag should not be confused with the plastic industry, which is a basic industry in the present-day world.

President of Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI) Yussuf Abdullah Harun pointed out that the ratio of domestic use and export of plastic goods is more than that of India. And FBCCI Director Rouf Chowdhury stressed that the Taka 100 crore export volume could easily be made Taka 1,000 crore in the next five years.

Presided over by BPGMA President Yussuf Ashraf, the function was also addressed by State Minister for Commerce Barkauddin Bulul and FBCCI Director and adviser of BPGMA ASM Kamal Uddin.