**Janasanyog, Assam Press Release – 10, Industries & Commerce**

**Bangladesh I& B Minister and Assam Industry Minister discuss on improvement of trade and business ties**

**Dispur, February 24:** Industries and Commerce Minister Chandra Mohan Patowary attended an interactive session with Information and Broadcasting Minister of the People’s Republic of Bangladesh, Dr. Hasan Mahmud at a programme organized by Indian Chambers of Commerce (ICC) today.

Addressing the gathering, Minister Mahmud deliberated on the similarities on food, attire, culture, language between Assam, India and Bangladesh. ‘People of Bangladesh an Assam live on the banks of the same river – Brahmaputra in Assam and Jamuna in Bangladesh.’

Dr. Mahmud stated that Bangladesh is focused on improving people-to-people contact and strengthening connectivity to improve trade and business through waterways, railways and airways. ‘Chittagong Port has a long historical association with Assam and the region since the British colonial period. The century-old seaport has been redeveloped to handle cargo ships with deeper depths. Chittagong Port is nearer to Guwahati compared to Haldia Port of Kolkata. This will not only reduce transportation costs but also boost trade and commerce activities.’

Deliberating on the vibrant trade activities that took place prior to independence through the territories which are now Bangladesh, Industries and Commerce Minister Chandra Mohan Patowary said, ‘The Barak River used to carry vessels from Chittagong and other ports of then East Bengal to this region. With the formulation of the Act East Policy of Government of India, the disrupted traditional trade routes are gradually being restored and reconnected through the Chittagong and Mongla Ports.’

It may be mentioned that in a major development recently, the first 260 MT digester package of Numaligarh Refinery Limited reached Silghat in Assam from Kolkata via river route through Bangladesh.

Minister Patowary called upon the Bangladesh Ministry officials to offer necessary support and cooperation for increase of volume of trade from Assam. ‘Bangladesh can take the opportunities of potential sectors of Assam like ethanol, methanol, plastic, hydrocarbon to improve trade and business.’

During the event, India-Bangladesh trade portal was also launched which will facilitate the business fraternity of both India and Bangladesh. It is a trade portal wherein database of exporters and importers of both NE India and Bangladesh is uploaded and would enable B2B collaboration between buyers and sellers of both counterparts and also allow business dealings and negotiations among the two sides.

Shaimum Sarwar Kamal and Ms. Momtaz Begum, MPs of Bangladesh; Md. Mokbul Hossain, Secretary, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Bangladesh; Dr. Shah Mohammad Tanvir Monsur, Assistant High Commissioner of Bangladesh in Guwahati and other senior officials were present in the programme.

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