

The Reclamation of Prosperity

Satya Mandal

The Pake News agency reported that Oak Park Mall, in Kansas City area, will be converted to a Garment manufacturing factory. The mall was sold to Mr. Lovely Khan, a textile industry leader from Bangladesh, for a relatively moderate price of fifteen million dollars. Lovely Khan comes from the same town of Savar, 20 miles northwest of Dhaka, where a textile factory collapsed in 2013, and killing more than thousand textile workers. Beaming Mr. Khan said that this industry would benefit the local workers in the Kansas City area of United States, instead of exporting jobs to Bangladesh. He complemented the current political environment in US that eases the regulatory hardship that Garment Industry faces in Bangladesh. He commented that business atmosphere in Bangladesh is increasingly becoming difficult, due to the international media attention to the treatment of Bangladesh workers, regarding low wages, safety issues, building codes, health hazards due to the exposure to chemicals and sand used in the industry. When such hurdles, along with the export cost are factored into the business model, it is not so profitable to run the industry in Bangladesh.

Over last two or three decades, US regulatory burdens have eased considerably. Labor cost has remained under cap, due to export of jobs to Bangladesh, and other third world countries. So, it makes perfect sense to bring back the jobs from Bangladesh to US, commented the selling agent Mr. Greg Smith of McNichhols Realtor.

Oak Park Mall had its great days in eighties and nineties. The Mall is huge. Even in its enormous parking lot, it used to be a real challenge to find a parking spot. Inside the mall, it felt like a festival, seven days a week, around the year. The children formed long lines, for a joy ride, in front of the huge carousel, throughout the day. The carousal had two floors, horses, dragons and marry-go-rounds. Near the carousal there was a play area for the toddlers. Not surprisingly, there was an ice-cream shop next to the carousal that parents could not avoid. The ice-cream shop was housed in a log cabin, and the front of the serving window was decorated like a way through the forest. There used to be fancy coffee stores and comfortable sofas and chairs to sit and drink coffee and other drinks. There was a Panera Bread sandwich shop, near the exit on the west side. Opposite to Panera Bread was the Rain Forest Restaurant, whose interior looked like a real rain forest. Outside the restaurant, there was a croc going back and forth, breathing out fog through its nose. There was that cookie shop, right around the corner. Shops and stores in the mall were busy and the mall was crowded with people with smiles. That was the time of boom in Internet and local people had money. Oak Park Mall does not look the same, any more. There are barely a few cars in the huge Parking lot, and the mall is empty. Some of the shops and Restaurants are gone. Those that survived do not look the same. A carousel is still there, but it does not look the same. There is no line of happy eager children in front of it. It is standing idle, for the children to come and board.

However, jobs are coming back to Oak Park Mall, from Bangladesh.