

## Int'l trade fair begins in Khulna

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

A month-long international trade fair styled 'Khulna International Trade Fair 2006' began here at the circuit house ground yesterday.

Commerce Minister Altaf Hossain Choudhury formally inaugurated the fair, being jointly organised by the Khulna Chamber of Commerce Industry (KCCI) and International Trade Promotion Company.

Thailand is participating in the fair for the first time as a partner country. Besides, companies from host Bangladesh and China, Iran, India and Pakistan are also showing their products in the fair.

A total of 16 pavilions and 140 stalls have been set up in the fair. The fair will remain open from 10am to 10pm everyday.

## 'Low productivity, compliance issues major problems of RMG sector'

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Low productivity, poor quality and compliance issues are some of the major problems facing the country's readymade garment sector, Annisul Huq, former president of BGMEA, said yesterday in Dhaka.

He was speaking at a seminar titled 'Productivity and System Improvement in RMG' at Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET).

Speaking at the seminar, Fazlul Hoque, president of Bangladesh Knitwear Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BKMEA), said poor supply capacity is hurting the country's RMG growth.

He also said deployment of skilled manpower, effective management system and latest technologies can improve the supply capacity.

The seminar was held as part of three-day 'IPE Day-2006', organised by Association of Industrial and Production Engineering (AIPE).

## IDLC opens new branch at Uttara

Industrial Development Leasing Company (IDLC) of Bangladesh Limited, a joint-venture multi-product financial institution, opened its sixth branch at Uttara in Dhaka yesterday.

Anwarul Huq, chairman of IDLC, formally inaugurated the new branch of the company, says a press release.

IDLC directors, and CEO and Managing Director Anis A Khan were also present at the inaugural function.

# Exports grow 17.91pc in eight months

MD HASAN

The country's overall exports grew by US\$ 1006.09 million, or 17.91 percent, in the first eight months of the current financial year, thanks to continuous good performance by knitwear products.

During July-February period of the 2005-06 fiscal year, exports fetched \$ 6624.21 million, which was \$ 5618.12 million during the same period of the last financial year, according to Export Promotion Bureau (EPB) statistics.

Knitwear products continued to maintain robust position, posting 30.18 percent growth. Knitwear items during the period earned \$ 2368.91 million against \$ 1819.67 million during the same period of the last fiscal year.

Export of woven garments had also been able to manage a minimum growth during July-February period of FY06, fetching \$ 2615.48, up only 8.35 percent over the corre-

sponding period of the last fiscal year.

According to Bangladesh Knitwear Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BKMEA), knitwear exports saw a regular rise in some major markets after quota phaseout from January this year.

The exporters hoped the trend will continue in the coming months as it has a strong backward linkage support. Besides, the BKMEA has embarked on an aggressive campaign in some major markets including the US to increase income from this sector.

Knitwear apart, export earning from leather, raw jute, frozen food, petroleum by products, textile fabrics, bi-cycle and computer services recorded growth during July-February period of the current fiscal year.

Export of jute goods, foot wear, electronics, chemical products, ceramic tableware and leather bags and purses was more than last

year's, but failed to achieve the target.

Earnings from agro-processing food, vegetables and melamine tableware recorded negative growth during the July-February period while earnings from home textile, tea and handicrafts declined during the same period.

Frozen food exports amounted to \$ 298.26 million during July-February period of FY06, up 0.23 percent.

Jute goods export fetched \$ 239.70 million in the first eight months of the current fiscal, recording a 20.83 percent growth.

Leather products export earning fetched \$ 157.87 million during the eight months period, marking 15.01 percent growth over the same period of the last fiscal.

Chemical products worth \$ 123.47 million were exported during July-February period of this fiscal year, marking a 16.14 percent rise.

## Govt role sought to ensure compliance in factories

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

The government should play a major role in addressing compliance issues in textile, shrimp, leather, ceramics and pharmaceutical units to help the industries become competitive in the global market, speakers at a seminar said yesterday.

Referring to recent building collapses and fire incidents in industrial units, the speakers also called for immediate steps to improve working condition in factories.

The seminar titled 'Cultivating Social Compliance across the Export Sector' was jointly organised by European Commission (EC) and Nari Uddug Kendra (NUK), an NGO, in Dhaka.

EC Chargé D'affaires Anthony Goodwin said the shared responsibility of the government, private sector, civil society and international community is needed for ensuring compliance in industries.

He also said international community and major Western buyers should come up with funds and technical support for ensuring compliance.

NUK Executive Director Mashuda Khatun Shefali suggested tough measures against non-compliant factories.

EC representatives Jenni Christensen and Charles Whiteley also spoke.

# President for developing tourism to boost economy

## StanChart Dhaka Travel Mart kicks off

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

President Iajuddin Ahmed yesterday stressed the need for developing Bangladesh's tourism to boost economy.

He said a country like Bangladesh has a huge potential to earn foreign exchange by developing tourism.

The president was speaking at the inaugural ceremony of Standard Chartered Dhaka Travel Mart (DTM)-2006 at Dhaka Sheraton Hotel in Dhaka.

The Bangladesh Monitor, a leading travel magazine in Dhaka, is organising the three-day tourism fair, where some 49 organisations from 11 countries including host Bangladesh are taking part.

Mirza Fakhru Islam Alamgir, state minister for civil aviation and tourism, Abdul Mannan MP, president of Bangladesh chapter of Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA), Kang Siew Kheng, regional director, South Asia, Middle East, Africa of Singapore Tourism Board (STB), and Kazi Wahidul Alam, editor of the Bangladesh Monitor and chairman of the organising committee of DTM-2006, were also present at the inaugural function.

President Iajuddin also said the government declared Cox's Bazar, the Sundarbans and Kuakata as special tourist zones in 2002 to promote tourism.

"It can be a good beginning, but we have to go a long way," he added. Tourism organisations from India,

Nepal, Thailand, Singapore, United Arab Emirate, Qatar, Kuwait, Hong Kong, Yemen, Malaysia and host Bangladesh are displaying their products and packages in the third version of the fair.

Bangladesh Parjatan Corporation, Nepal Tourism Board, Tourism Malaysia, Singapore Tourism Board, Biman Bangladesh Airlines, GMG Airlines, Emirates Airlines, Qatar Airways, Air India, Malaysia Airlines, Dragonair of Hong Kong, Singapore Airlines, Kuwait Airways, Yemen Airways, Thai Airways, Cosmic Air and Ethrad Airways are also presenting their attractive packages and services at the fair.

Pan Pacific Sonargaon, Dhaka Sheraton Hotel, Washington Hotel, Hotel Ormate, Hotel Peninsula of Chittagong, Sea Crown of Cox's Bazar, Rainbow Guest House of Sylhet are taking part in the fair. The Daily Star and Channel-i are the media partners of the Dhaka Travel Mart. Standard Chartered Bank is the title sponsor of the fair.

Tour Operators Association of Bangladesh and Association of Travel Agents of Bangladesh are the co-organisers, while Biman Bangladesh Airlines is the official carrier and co-sponsor. Bangladesh Hotel and Guest House Owners Association and GMG Airlines are also the co-sponsors of the fair, which will remain open from 10am to 8pm everyday.

# Nokia to deploy UltraSite base stations in Warid's network

ABU SAEED KHAN

Nokia, the second largest mobile phone infrastructure maker, yesterday announced that it has won a turnkey contract bundled with various services to deploy a GSM mobile radio network for the Abu Dhabi-based Warid Telecom's yet to be launched cellular mobile operations in Bangladesh.

It will rollout Warid's network across the Dhaka division except greater Faridpur. Financial details of this ground breaking deal for Nokia in Bangladesh, however, remains undisclosed.

In this project Nokia will install

"UltraSite" base stations to help Warid cost-effectively and rapidly launching its network in this highly competitive growth market. Unlike the conventional base stations, the weatherproof UltraSite is an outdoor equipment. Therefore, it does not require air-conditioning.

"It will be the first of its kind highly innovative deployment in the cellular mobile industry of Bangladesh," said Ricky Corker, Nokia Network Division's Asia Pacific Vice President, in a brief telephone interview with The Daily Star.

He said upfront savings in site construction and operating savings from lower power consumption offers up to 70 percent overall

savings to the UltraSite users.

"The contract shows Nokia's commitment to new growth markets such as Bangladesh, and is a further step in our drive to lower the total cost of ownership for consumers and spread the benefits of mobility," Ricky added. Nokia is also offering network and service management solution along with installation, planning and project management services to Warid in this deal.

"Although we are a late entrant, Warid Telecom has an aggressive roll out plan that will see us reach the entire Bangladesh population within one year," says Bashir A. Tahir, Warid's CEO. He also promises a wide range of services to the "Bangladeshi brethren" that will add value to their lives, as well as redefine customer service in the country.

Warid has also contracted Swedish telecoms giant Ericsson to deploy the core network equipment of its Bangladesh operations. American vendor Motorola will also deploy base stations in Warid's Bangladesh network.

Warid has set an ambitious plan to bag 2.80 million subscribers by activating its network in 26 districts by October. Its next target is to have 3.1 million customers by adding 22 additional districts within January 2007. In the third phase, Warid has planned to build a clientele of 3.35 million by March 2007. The sixth mobile operator desires to have five million customers by the end of next year.



President Iajuddin Ahmed formally inaugurates a three-day tourism fair styled 'Standard Chartered Dhaka Travel Mart (DTM)-2006' at Winter Garden in Dhaka Sheraton Hotel yesterday.



Anwarul Huq, chairman of Industrial Development Leasing Company (IDLC) of Bangladesh Limited, inaugurates a new branch of the company at Uttara in Dhaka yesterday. IDLC directors, and CEO and Managing Director Anis A Khan are also seen.