

1998 UK Trade Fair

Britain & Bangladesh-Partners in Trade

The Daily Star

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MESSAGE



I am very happy to know that the 3-day UK Trade Fair begins on 2nd December in Dhaka.

The UK Embassy in Bangladesh has been arranging this colourful trade fair for the second consecutive year and has achieved some success in pooling mutual resources for expanding bilateral trade links. I hope, the entrepreneurs and businessmen of the UK will have fruitful interactions with local consumers to improve the quality and expand markets of their products through the trade fair.

I hope, the fair will also help attract more British investment in Bangladesh as we are offering wide range of incentives to the investors. Bangladesh greatly value the foreign investment especially from the UK for historical relationship. The trade fair will definitely strengthen our bilateral relationship and it will contribute in bolstering mutual trade which has been increasing over the years.

With every success of the UK Trade Fair.

Tofail Ahmed
Minister
Ministry of Industries
Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

MESSAGE



The last few months have seen international financial and economic turbulence of an almost unprecedented range and seriousness. Bangladesh has remained largely immune, but has suffered greatly from the devastating floods of 1998, the most serious for at least the last 100 years.

It is at times of adversity such as these that it is important to stick to the fundamentals of free trade, increased investment and structural reform. That is why I am so encouraged that the second UK Trade Fair in Dhaka is going to be bigger and better than the successful pioneer of 1997. It will demonstrate, yet again, that Britain is a partner that can be relied on in difficult times as well as the good times.

I am sure that many good contacts will be made and old ones re-inforced during the fair, and I look forward to many deals being struck that will be of benefit both to British companies and their Bangladeshi partners and customers.

Let us build on the foundations we have so successfully laid to our mutual benefit.

David Walker
British High Commissioner in Bangladesh

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Britain and Bangladesh — Partners in Trade

by Harold D Biswas

TRADE and foreign direct investment are major engines of growth in developed and developing countries alike. The volume of goods traded worldwide today is 16 times greater than it was in 1950. Outflows of foreign direct investment (FDI) have grown even faster, rising twenty-five fold during the last quarter century, from \$14 billion to \$350 billion a year. The associated trade and investment-induced market integration has led to deeper forms of economic interdependence among nations. This is true of trade between developed countries like Britain and a growing number of developing countries like Bangladesh, which have become more closely linked to the global economy.

Britain has and continues to play a significant role in world trade. In 1996, the UK was the 5th largest exporter and importer of goods and 4th largest exporter of services. On investments, the UK remains the 2nd largest outward investor as well being the 2nd largest recipient

of overseas investment in the world. Trade is very important to the UK economy. The fundamental attractions for business remain as strong as ever which is why Britain is the business centre of Europe and the first choice location for many of the world's leading investors. This is one reason why Britain is a committed supporter of free and open markets across the globe.

With its strong economic and industrial background, the UK is a major trading partner of Bangladesh. UK exports in the first 9 months of this year to Bangladesh stood at some \$60 million, while Bangladesh sold goods worth some £180 million to UK. These figures reflected steady growth in the apparel and clothing, fish, fruit and vegetables and leather products sectors. The historic institutional and cultural links with Bangladesh have helped, to a great extent, in fostering trading relations between the two countries. The growing potential of Bangladesh helped by the actions of successive governments and private sector

initiatives, has further encouraged local emerging sectors to seek western technology and services from Britain. Britain is one of the largest investors in Bangladesh with significant investments in aviation, banking, gas exploration and development, power, tea, tobacco and other consumer goods.

Following on from the resounding success of the first UK Trade Fair in Bangladesh, in March 1997, the second Fair will again showcase the wide range of British technology and services available in Bangladesh. The products and services at the Fair range from industrial machinery for the electrical, textile and power generation sector, to industrial gases, commercial and private vehicles, petroleum products and exploration technology, chemicals, dairy products, tobacco, security equipment, household and consumer products and optical lenses. On the services side there will be banking, project, engineering and management consultancy, education and training, computers,

tea plantation, shipping, design and construction exhibits. The Fair is bigger this year both in size and scope. Many of the participants are well established in Bangladesh while others are relatively new to the market. The Fair also introduces some British companies who are seeking to enter the market for the first time.

It is firmly believed that the UK Trade Fair '98 will contribute further to the development of Bangladesh's economy, through new orders received by participants, the development of new trading links and perhaps through the start of new co-operative ventures. The UK Trade Fair will, therefore, help to achieve the long-term objective of developing the trading relationship between Britain and Bangladesh into an ever stronger and more mutually beneficial partnership in the years to come.

The writer is UK Trade Promotion Adviser, British High Commission, Dhaka.

MESSAGE

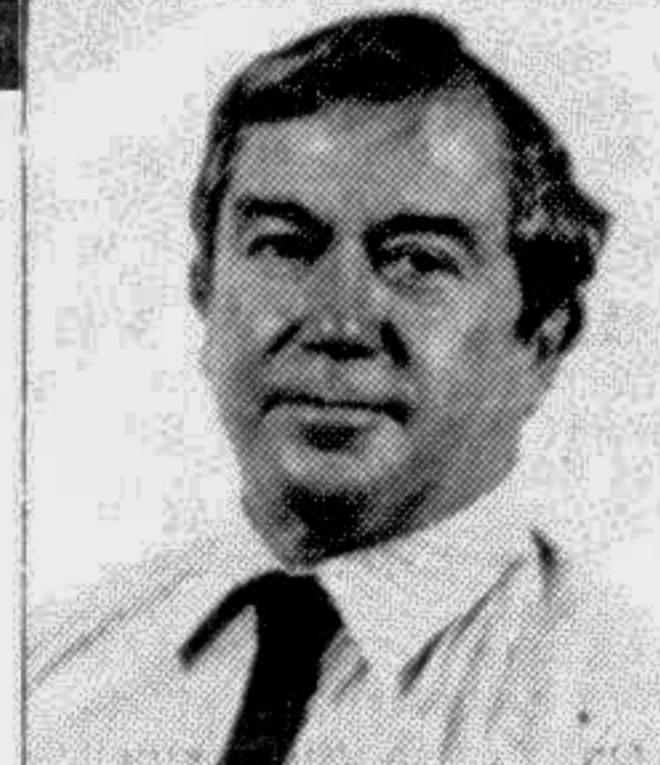


I am delighted to be visiting Bangladesh at this time to coincide with the second UK Trade Fair in Dhaka. This will be my first visit to Bangladesh and I am looking forward to learning more about this fascinating country. During the last few months I have heard many positive things about Bangladesh, particularly about the enormous opportunities available in the energy sector, and this visit will be a unique opportunity to gain firsthand knowledge for myself. As Minister, my predecessor Nigel Griffiths was especially keen to be involved in UK/Bangladesh trade and during their respective visits earlier this year, he had the opportunity to meet with Mr Tofail Ahmed, MP, Minister for Commerce & Industry and Mr Farooq Sobhan, Executive Chairman, Board of Investment. I look forward to continuing this important dialogue by meeting as many people as possible during my stay.

Now that the problems posed by the recent floods have eased a little, it is important that international business and investors are encouraged to visit Bangladesh. The DTI's Southern Asia Advisory Group trade mission in October was a clear signal of the UK's commitment. The second UK Trade Fair, being so well attended by British companies, both old and new to Bangladesh, is another sign of that commitment.

Kim Howells,
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Competition and Consumer Affairs,
United Kingdom Department of Trade and Industry

MESSAGE



Following the success of the Education Fair in March 1997, a second British Education Exhibition will take place in Dhaka from 2-4 December 1998.

The exhibition is designed to showcase a range of British institutions at college and university level. Its purpose is to provide an opportunity for prospective students and their parents, teachers, personnel and training managers to talk directly to representatives of the UK institutions at the exhibition.

Fifteen UK institutions will be taking part in the exhibition. Many of those participating have a wealth of experience in welcoming overseas students to the UK. Representatives will be able to answer questions on both academic and personal topics. This exhibition is a 'must' for any student contemplating studying in the UK.

The institutions represented will, between them, cover the range of British further and higher education and you will be able to obtain advice and information that will enable you to make informed choices about studying in the UK. Promotional leaflets, brochures, prospectuses and application forms will all be made available during the exhibition.

The Fair has been arranged by the British Council in Dhaka, and our staff will be present to offer advice and answer any questions you may have. You may follow up enquiries made at the exhibition, or come and see us at any time in our offices in Dhaka and Chittagong.

I wish you an enjoyable and fruitful visit to the Education Exhibition.

Tom Cowin
Director
The British Council
Bangladesh.

Asia's Consumers

by Iain Dale, OBE

we see a more cautious, more considered Asia, more in tune with mature markets?

Paul French and Matthew Crabb say that change will be gradual but that it is possible, even at this early stage, to forecast the direction. The downturn has provoked investment, not reduced it. They point out the sudden rise in out of town retailers — a more cost-effective shopping alternative, which has been provoked by different times. They point also to the dominant British pharmacy chain Boots, who is expanding in Thailand by opening 40 new stores because recession has produced a new environment of lower rents and flexible lease terms.

It deals with the new Asia and has many examples and references as late as mid 1998. It's the most up-to-date account of the unfolding saga of Asia's adjustment to a new world order. "One Billion Shoppers", published by Nicholas Brearley, says that Asia will continue to be an active market in the short term. It points out that before the end of the twentieth century, Asians will make up half the world's total population and that five hundred million Asians will have spending power equivalent to their middle class counterparts in Western Europe and North America.

Each year, several million south-east Asians become first generation owners of washing machines, microwave ovens and mobile phones. The new Asian market, says the book's blurb, cannot be ignored, but it must be understood by Europeans if they are to become valued partners.

The crucial question is "what sort of Asia will emerge?" Will it be a re-run on the old style 1990s decade markets, all gung-ho and busy-busy, or will

China has seen the impact of changing times. As economic prospects softened, there was a swing to elegant and sophisticated low key merchandise, made from platinum, rather than the gaudy gold jewellery, symbols of conspicuous wealth. Sales of the new style jewellery are zooming in 1998.

Asia is a newly booming market for financial services reflecting a more respectful view of the new pitfalls and hurdles of life. Pensions, insurance, and health care are all reported to be increased. Admittedly, part of the momentum comes from a growing number of professionals looking for jobs — direct selling of financial products is one route out of joblessness — but it does emphasise that change is created by opportunism.

Direct selling, say Mr French and Mr Crabb, are in

for a rise as low cost and low

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British Council's Education Market Assessment

BANGLADESH is a growing economy where the government and the private sector have placed much emphasis on the increase in investment in educational services.

Bangladesh is experiencing a strong and growing private sector in education which is an indicator of high market potential for overseas studies. In 1996, Bangladesh celebrated its 25th year of Independence, elected a government which promised to follow liberal and consistent economic policies and emphasised strong social development.

There is a definite growth in investment from the government for education. This increase is matched by prolific private sector investment which has resulted in the increase in number of private schools and universities. With sustained economic growth and an enterprising middle class, the market for education is likely to register a rapid growth and a corresponding demand for quality higher education abroad is expected to grow significantly as well.

In 1997, 709 student visas were issued to Bangladeshi students. In 1998 (up to October '98) 678 student visas were issued for students wishing to study in the UK.

Market Opportunities

Market opportunities for the UK education sector fall mainly in the further and higher education levels.

UK further education colleges are showing more interest in Bangladesh than their university counterparts. University Foundation Courses (UFC) have gained substantial popularity with local students.

The university courses that interest local students the most are LLB and LLM, Medical degrees, MBAs and short courses in development services and management skills.

There is great demand for management courses in Bangladesh. Typical students are employees of both private and public sector firms, administrators of academic institutions, entrepreneurs and industrialists.

In addition, local multinational firms are also in need of professional training courses for their managers and employees. These are mainly in Human Resources Management, Marketing and Information Man-

agement.

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