

UK consultants' team arrives  
 March 4

A team of British consultants arrives in the city on March 4 on a four-day visit to Bangladesh to demonstrate to the business community high quality and value of British consulting services, reports B.

The mission, comprising delegates of nine British companies involved in agriculture, engineering, healthcare and energy supply and electricity.

I meet ministers, senior government officials and the business community in Dhaka.

An announcement yesterday said that they would run a series of seminars on the services at a local hotel on March 5.

The British Consultants Bureau (BCB) members work in liaison with local companies to develop joint ventures. They assist major funding institutions.

The BCB-organised visit is sponsored by British Trade International.

Emirates running competition on Dubai Shopping festival

Emirates passengers flying the airline between now and March 31 stand a chance to win a holiday for four to Dubai, says press release.

During this period, Emirates and the Le Meridien Dubai are running a worldwide competition on the Dubai Shopping Festival (DSF) on board all its flights across the network.

The airline is giving away 100000 holiday prizes, each for four persons, inclusive of return economy class tickets to Dubai and stay in a five-star hotel in the Emirates network. The 10 lucky winners will also be treated to a week's accommodation in two luxury rooms at the Le Meridien.

Emirates will arrange entry to Dubai, arrival meetings, assist services at the airport and complimentary tours of Arabian Adventures.

The DSF inflight competition is another of Emirates' efforts to raise awareness for the festival. Emirates is a major sponsor of the DSF, which takes place from March 1 to 31, a month of fantastic retail, restaurants, family entertainment and cultural events.

Entry forms for the competition are placed in seat pockets aboard all Emirates aircraft. Passengers may submit the completed forms to the cabin crew.

Other privileges enjoyed by Emirates passengers are assistance with entry visa processing and excess baggage allowance of 10 kg on exit from Dubai (valid only during the DSF).

BRAC signs seed supply accord with Druk Seed

BRAC and Druk Seed Corporation of Bhutan signed an agreement on production and supply of seeds in the city yesterday.

Managing Director of Druk Seed Jamshed Dorjee and Deputy Managing Director of BRAC Md Anumul Alam signed the deal behalf of their respective organisations at the BRAC Centre, as a press release issued yesterday.

Under the agreement, the Bhutanese government-owned Druk Seed Corporation will organise production and supply of tons of certified seeds of onion and 10 tons of radish to BRAC during the forthcoming crop season of April-May this year.

In addition to ensuring quality, Druk Seed will send samples and also provide technical guidance to the seed growers, ensure periodical inspections at various stages, and collect data about sowing, crop condition and estimated yield.

Al-Arafah Bank probationary officers' course ends

A comprehensive training course for the Probationary Officers of Al-Arafah Islami Bank concluded at its training institute, says a press release.

AZM Shamsul Alam, chairman of the Board of Director, Matin Uddin Ahmed, managing Director, Abdul Alek Molla, Member of Board of Directors, Shirajul-Dula, member of the Board of Directors, MA Matin, Vice President and Course Director, Kazi Md Jas and Mamunur Rashid, course Co-ordinator, were present in the closing session.

AZM Shamsul Alam, chairman of the bank, said that the overall quality of banking service in the country is poor. Efficiency of the junior officers can be raised through well-conceived and well-planned training programmes. Many senior officers are unfortunately indifferent towards the training programme and efficiency improvement of their juniors. The unfortunate part of our

"we are not courageous enough to realise and correct our lapses," he said.

# Forged items keep taking toll on multinationals

## Companies feel their goodwill is at stake

By Shahriar Karim

Unabated selling of counterfeit products has become a major cause for concern for the multinational companies (MNCs) here as they find it quite tough to face up to the situation.

In the last few years, a number of companies had lodged complaints with the police and even escorted the forces to the factories engaged in producing spurious items. And yet, the practice is on despite the knowledge of the law-enforcing agencies, industry sources complained.

"Such events make our business even more difficult because fake products hurt the goodwill of the company concerned," said a high official of Lever Brothers who is based in Dhaka.

The law-enforcers seldom nab the 'culprits' and seize the counterfeit products, but ultimately the forgers come out on bails and even threaten us for turning them to the police," said an MNC official.

In one such case, the officials of Lever Brothers Bangladesh Ltd detected a spurious product-making factory on the outskirts of Dhaka city.

Officials of British American Tobacco, Bangladesh (BATB) also said that the forgers were still active despite some police actions against counterfeit cigarette-makers in different districts.

Cement is another sector where the forgers are actively involved and a number of cement factories have brought the matter to the knowledge of the Home Ministry, sources said. But no action was taken against the politically influential forgers.

The MNCs now say the country's age-old patent law has to be changed to deal with the counterfeiting problem.

Recently, some MNCs met the Speaker of the Jatiya Shangsad to apprise him about the matter and urged him to take initiatives to have a new patent law or upgrade the existing one.

The country's legal experts partly share the views of the MNCs, but they think that the victims themselves are not that much serious about the issue.

They say that the legal and regulatory frameworks are there, but the concerned departments have to implement them. Any company can always go to the court if they think that they are not getting proper protection from the government.

"If they (MNCs) are serious, they can always file writ petitions with the High Court saying that the concerned government departments aren't performing their duties causing damage to their businesses. And such moves will play an instrumental role in creating public awareness and making the authorities play their due roles," said Barrister Azharul Haque of Legal Remedy, a law firm.

**FICCI**  
**GN INVESTORS' CHAMBER OF COMMERCE & INDUSTRY**



Finance Minister SAMS Kibria speaks at the monthly luncheon meeting of the Foreign Investors' Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) yesterday. Seen on his left are Chamber President Walir Rahman Bhuiyan and Secretary Jahangir Bin Alam and on his right is FICCI Committee Member James Ashworth.

— FICCI photo



Top: Md. Mokammel Haque, Vice President, ICC Bangladesh, Abdul Jalil, Minister for Commerce, and ICCB Vice President and MCCI President Latifur Rahman are seen on his left while M Mokammel Haque, Executive Chairman, BOI, and A Rob Chowdhury, Vice President, ICC Bangladesh, are on his right.

— ICC-Bangladesh photo

# LDCs should demand equal rights

## ICC-Bangladesh dialogue finds opportunity in WTO's Seattle failure

Star Business Report

Bangladesh and all other Least Developed Countries (LDCs) should consider the failure of the WTO meeting held in Seattle late last year as an opportunity to spearhead their demands for enabling them with equal rights and facilities to integrate themselves with global trading and economy.

This was summed up at a business dialogue on "After-effects of WTO Seattle Meeting and the Imperatives for LDCs" held at a local hotel in Dhaka yesterday.

Industries Minister Tofail Ahmed, Commerce Minister Abdul Jalil and Executive Chairman of the Board of Investment M Mokammel Haque attended the dialogue arranged to review the aborted WTO ministerial meeting in Seattle and what should LDCs do now to impress upon their demands.

Presided over by president of ICC-Bangladesh Mahbubur Rahman, the dialogue was also participated by vice-chairman of EPB Anwarul Bari Chowdhury, MCC president and ICC vice-president Latifur Rahman, ICCB vice-president A Rob Chowdhury, DCCI president Attaul Islam, MCCI president Walir Rahman Bhuiyan, executive director of CPD Dr Debapriya Bhattacharya, NSU pro-vice chancellor Dr Hafiz G A Siddiqi, president of Bangladesh Employers' Federation A S M Quasem, former DCCI president M H Rahman, former ambassador Masum A Chowdhury, former secretary Inam Ahmed Chowdhury and Nazem A Chowdhury, former NSU Mokammel Haque, eminent journalist Sayed Kamaluddin, editor of Financial Express A H M Moazzem Hossain, MCCI secretary general C K Hyder and

counsellor of European Commission delegation to Bangladesh Jorg Volker Kotelson, among others.

Speaking on the occasion, Industries Minister Tofail Ahmed said that the intended second round of multilateral trade negotiations dubbed "Millennium Round" would have brought more bad effects for the developing countries and the LDCs. He said it would make the LDCs more marginalised and added that the foremost need was the full implementation of the previous round of the stipulations of the Marrakesh Agreement.

Strongly supporting the viewpoints of Industries Minister Tofail Ahmed, Commerce Minister Abdul Jalil said the WTO must make a review of the implementation of previous round of multilateral negotiations before entering into any new phase of such talks.

ICC Bangladesh vice-president Tofail Ahmed and Mokammel Haque mentioned strict regulatory measures should be instrumental to see that deception and exploitation are not carried out taking advantage of the norms of globalisation.

# Call for cash incentives to help horticulture goods exporters

Export zone to facilitate post-harvest treatment sought

By Monjur Mahmud, back from Chandina, Comilla

A workshop on horticulture has recommended an exclusive export zone within 60 kilometres of Dhaka city to facilitate post-harvest treatment and establish a link between the farmers and entrepreneurs to export fresh produce.

It also underscored the need for providing cash incentives for exporting horticulture products which have a vast market in the US, Europe and other countries.

There is a huge demand of fresh farm products worth several billion dollars in Europe and US and if Bangladesh can win 10 per cent of the orders, it will exceed the earnings of the garment sector," observed the participants of the workshop on "Linkage Development of

DAE DG M Enamul Hoque

termed horticulture a gold mine for Bangladesh" and said that this promising sector was still untapped. He also emphasised value addition of the agricultural products.

Dr. A Quasem, Managing Director of the Hortex Foundation, was providing technical assistance to the growers and exporters to capture foreign markets.

"We have already established the demand of our products, including French bean, okra, green chili and baby pineapple in the international markets to some extent, and we want the entrepreneurs to come forward with a view to exploring the latent potential of the sector," he said.

Khaledur Rahman, Vice-President of BFVAPEA, said the current air freight charges are very high, which reduce the exporters' profit margins.

He demanded a 25 per cent cash subsidy to allow farmers to get more value for their products side by side encouraging the exporters.

"We hope that we would be able to market frozen vegetables to the EU and US markets within three to four years," Quasem said.

Dr. Semunegus Haile Marin, Production and Packaging Specialist of Hortex Foundation, said that priority should be given to establishing an exclusive export zone for exploring the potential of the sector.

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