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Star BUSINESS

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New MD of Aptech Worldwide Bangladesh



Amitava Ghosh has recently joined Aptech Worldwide Bangladesh Ltd. as its Managing Director, says a press release.

Ghosh is an engineer and has done his post-graduate diploma in management from India's premier management institute, Indian Institute of Management, Calcutta.

With an industry experience of fifteen years, Ghosh replaces Tarun Mitra who has moved to Aptech's Bombay operations.

Recently, we had been talking to him regarding the plans of Aptech. According to him, Aptech's main focus area this year will be providing students with jobs both inside Bangladesh and abroad. For this, the company is having tie-ups with different multinationals.

Also, another focus area of Aptech is to increase IT literacy in the rural and semi-urban areas of Bangladesh to foster entrepreneurship. To ensure this, Aptech is identifying different locations in Bangladesh to spread its wings.

Speaking about the IT industry, Ghosh said that "according to the McKinsey Report the information technology-enabled services market is poised to grow from the present US\$10 billion to US \$200 billion globally by 2010."

This means that the entire globe will be requiring a huge manpower base to make this happen. Bangladesh can be and will be a focus of the West for the generation of this qualified manpower.

He also added that, the "entertainment industry" is growing at the fastest rate worldwide. This sector is also seeking quality personnel, which ARENA Multimedia wing of Aptech will look into. ARENA is revamping its courses to take care of the current industry needs.

Russia against signing new IMF deal

AFP, Moscow

Russian Deputy Prime Minister Alexei Kudrin said today that Moscow has decided against signing a new one-year assistance programme with the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

"After assessing our capabilities, we have decided against striking a full-scale cooperation agreement with the IMF for the year," Interfax quoted Kudrin as saying.

Kudrin, who also serves as finance minister, said Russia had the financial resources to cope on its own and preferred not to remain "under constant IMF control".

New SEVP of Standard Bank



S A Farooqui, a renowned banker of the country, was promoted as Senior Executive Vice President (SEVP) of Standard Bank Ltd at its 26th board meeting held recently, says a press release.

Farooqui joined in SBL as EVP in 1999. He started his banking career as a Probationary Officer of Agrani Bank through BRC of Bangladesh Bank in 1973. He worked in various Agrani Bank departments and branches as Department Head and Manager and was honoured by the bank authority as the Best Manager for the year 1982.

Farooqui joined NBL as VP in 1983 and promoted as SVP. In 1989 he was awarded as one of the best Managers for his efficient and dedicated service.

Unauthorized firms engaged in issuing fake ISO certificates

Moody observes at its office inauguration in city

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Some unauthorised organisations are issuing fake ISO certificates, officials of an UK-based certification company has warned.

"We would like to give a warning message to the industry in general to be aware of cowboy companies who are issuing fake ISO certificates without validity and without performing regular surveillance audit and providing consultancy services at the same time which is demeaning to ISO 9000," said Rashid H Mehr, Director and Regional Chief of the Moody International Certification

Ltd, at its formal launching at a city hotel yesterday.

Such practices are harmful for local industries as the non-accredited certificates are not internationally acceptable, he cautioned.

These phony firms first offer their consultancy services in the name of improving the standards of the local companies and then issue ISO certificates without actually assessing their standards.

Sardar Asif Mahmood, General Manager of Bangladesh chapter of Moody, was also present at the launching ceremony.

Rashid said there are now around 50 Bangladeshi companies

which have ISO certification, but at least 10 of them have absolutely false certificates.

Sometimes these illegal companies issue ISO 9000 certificates for quality management and ISO 14000 for environmental management system for ten years. But such certificates should be issued every year as maintaining standards is a continuous process, he mentioned.

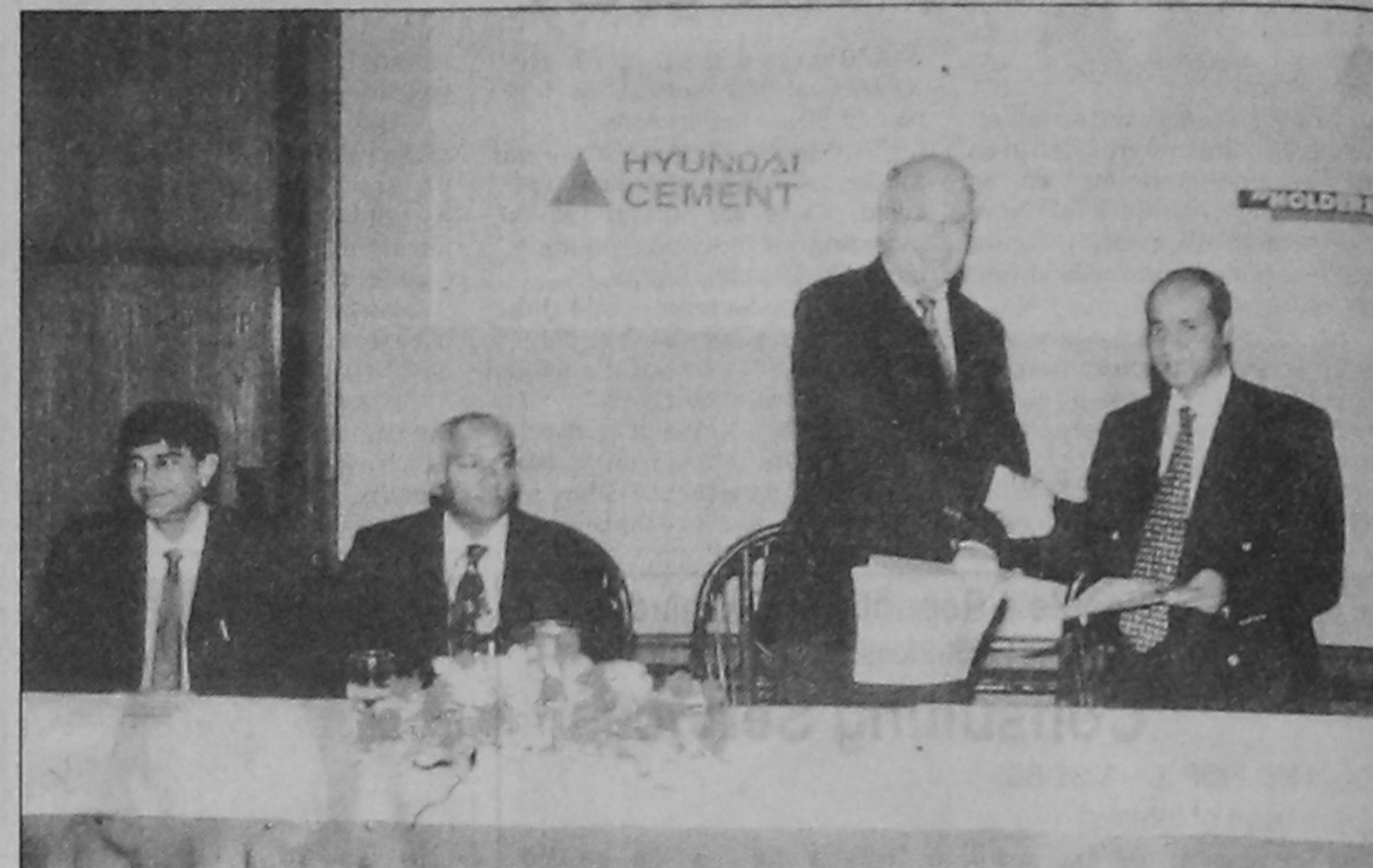
The government should design a mechanism to stop fake, unauthenticated and non-accredited certification in the country, Rashid said, suggesting that a regulatory

body be formed to check such malpractice.

In many countries including Australia, Britain, Canada, the USA, France, Holland, Switzerland, Japan, regulatory authorities check such malpractice, he stated.

Moody International has already certified over 20,000 companies around the world and it is operating in 100 countries enjoying a 20 per cent market share globally.

The company is providing comprehensive quality control services to oil and gas, power generation, textiles, food, electrical and mechanical industries.



Paul Hugentobler, MD of Hyundai Cement (3rd from left), shakes hands with Mostafa Kamal, Chairman of United Cement, after signing a takeover agreement at Sonargaon Hotel in the city Monday. Also seen (from left) are Ramit Budhraja, CEO of Hyundai Cement, and Latifur Rahman, Chairman, Hyundai Cement.

Move to boost garments export Separate immigration counter at ZIA soon

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

A separate immigration counter will be opened at Zia International Airport (ZIA) for accelerating garments export from the country, said C M Mohsin, acting Secretary of the Ministry of Civil Aviation and Tourism.

He said this while a BGMEA delegation called him at his office yesterday, says an Association press release. The garment exporters will be allowed to send goods through Chittagong Airport during *hazals*, he added.

The BGMEA team was led by its newly-elected President Kutubuddin Ahmed, Managing Direc-

tor of Biman Bangladesh Airlines Khasrur Alam, General Manager Jahangir Imam and other high officials were present.

C M Mohsin said the government is very sincere about continuing the export activities of garment items by air. He also said the government has recently decided to withdraw the royalty system at ZIA and Chittagong International Airport for chartering cargo aircraft.

The garments sector will be immensely benefited by the new system, he said. Earlier, the BGMEA delegation had forwarded a number of demands to the secretary, which included setting up a

separate counter for BGMEA at ZIA, offering VIP immigration facilities to prominent garments buyers, issuing two special passes for receiving and seeing off foreign buyers, allocating five reserve Biman seats for BGMEA and reduction of the handling charges.

The acting secretary assured the BGMEA leaders of urgent attention to their demands. BGMEA's first Vice-president Ershad Ullah, second Vice-president Kazi Moniruzzaman, Vice-presidents Atiqul Islam and Shaful Islam Mohiuddin and Director Lutfar Rahman were also present during the discussion.

NIIT launches SWIFT range of IT literacy courses

NIIT, the global major in the field of information technology education and training, launches its hugely-popular SWIFT range of IT literacy courses in Bangladesh.

This training programme will be immediately available through various NIIT education centres in Dhaka and elsewhere in Bangladesh, says a press statement.

NIIT has already trained more than 10,000 professionals in its long duration IT Career courses through its centres in Bangladesh. The introduction of SWIFT signifies a clear focus on part of the company on the growing computer literacy requirement in Bangladesh, a derivative of the fast growth of computer and Internet usage in the country.

Speaking at the occasion, Tulika Sinha, Zonal Head, NIIT, said, "The SWIFT programme is designed to serve a new set of requirements, one that of computers in life. The SWIFT range of courses are significantly different from all other NIIT programmes at this moment, because they address the needs of a person who wants to use computer effectively in his daily life - at home or at office - rather than seeking a job."

Dr. A K M Sahabub Alam, Managing Director, Beximco Systems Limited, NIIT's Principal Business Partner in Bangladesh, said, "SWIFT has had close to 5,000 participants since it was launched in India and then rest of the world, since 1994. With computer becoming an essential object in daily life, and with IT awareness in Bangladesh reaching the take-off stage, we expect to carry the trend in Bangladesh and will strive to serve a wide range of computer training requirements with this new SWIFT programme."

NIIT SWIFT range of courses are typically programme with one to three month duration, and cover basic and advanced skills in Windows, Microsoft Office and Internet. The courses also meet the requirement of internationally-acclaimed Microsoft Office User Specialist (MOUS) certification.

SWIFT courses are also mapped into NIIT's existing career curricula.

Hyundai Cement buys United Cement

Hyundai Cement, Group Company of "Holderbank" Switzerland - the world's largest cement producer, took over the operations of United Cement on Monday, says a press release.

United Cement was a part of Meghna Group of Industries, one of the large conglomerates of milk, food products, vegetable oils and food grains in the country.

With the acquisition of United Cement, the group is going to have the largest cement company of 1.1 million tons by the middle of the year and this will facilitate in meeting the country's current high demand for cement.

A formal ceremony to announce Holderbank's new venture was held at The Pan Pacific Sonargaon Hotel on the day. It was attended by prominent business leaders and government officials including the Charge d'Affaires of the Embassy of Switzerland, Giambattista Mondada.

The programme commenced with a speech from Latifur Rahman, Chairman of Hyundai Cement. "On this special occasion of

the 30th Independence Day of Bangladesh, I look back with pride on the progress made by the country in the field of industry and development," he said.

Following his speech, Paul Hugentobler, Managing Director of Hyundai Cement, spoke about the future of "Holderbank" in Bangladesh. With this acquisition, the group is already the largest cement producer in the country, he added.

Mostafa Kamal, Managing Director of Meghna Group, in his emotional speech described the hardship in setting up United Cement and expressed his contentment in handing over United Cement to one of the world's best manufacturers, which will give United Cement a bright future.

In his concluding speech, Ramit Budhraja, Chief Executive Officer of Hyundai Cement, dwelt upon the business and marketing strategies of his company together with United Cement and assured the customers of the same high quality of product and services from both companies.

Proshika signs MOU on eco-friendly agriculture

BSS, Dhaka

Proshika, one of the leading NGOs of the country, signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) Tuesday with West Concern, a private enterprise over distribution of compost made by organic wastes of urban hotels and residents for eco-friendly agriculture.

Under the MOU, Proshika will collect compost produced by West Concern and will distribute the same among its organised farmers to produce high-quality agri products through eco-friendly cultivation across the country.

Besides, Proshika will carry out research on the implication of the use of compost on agri-land and its subsequent effects on soil.

Provisions are also there in the MOU to go for joint venture programme to produce large-scale compost in future, a press release said.



Water Resources Minister Abdur Razzak inaugurates a new hotel, Grand Azad Hotel, in the city yesterday.

PHOTO STAR

11 more items under BSTI compulsory certification

BSS, Dhaka

A meeting of Bangladesh Standards and Testing Institute (BSTI) yesterday decided to include another 11 items in compulsory certification marks. These are tooth powders, unleaded motor gasoline premium, unleaded motor gasoline regulator, skin powders, high speed diesel, chips, channachor, semai, electronic type, fan regulators, cut-out switch and polyvinyl chloride pipes.

BSTI has taken steps to start new offices at two divisional headquarters in Barisal and Sylhet, the council was told.

Industries Minister Tofail Ahmed said at the meeting that only cost-effective and quality products would sustain in the local and export markets in the present era of open competition.

Consumers are now free to choose and they want better products at less prices, he said while addressing the council of BSTI in its conference room at Tejgaon here.

He urged the BSTI officials to ensure production and marketing of quality products in the country.

Ahmed said BSTI should exercise its power fully to ensure quality products in the market. He said the European Union and recently

Electrolux to restructure India operations

REUTERS, Bombay


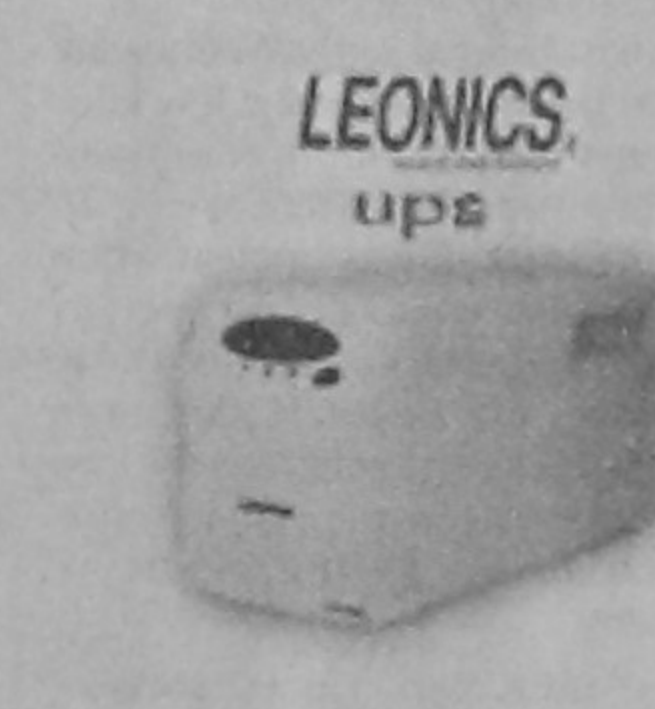

Indian home appliance maker Electrolux Kelvinator Ltd plans to absorb two group companies to cut costs and increase efficiency, a senior official said yesterday.

"It is part of our overall strategy to become the dominant, number one white goods player," said company president Ram S Ramasundar.

Electrolux Kelvinator will absorb Intron Ltd and Electrolux India. Electrolux Kelvinator makes refrigerators; Intron makes washing machines; Electrolux India imports cooking ranges, microwave ovens, refrigerators and air-conditioners made by the group's Swedish parent.

Electrolux makes refrigerators under the Electrolux, Kelvinator, Allwyn, White Westinghouse and Maxclean brand names. The combined entity will have annual sales in excess of eight billion rupees (\$171.45 million) and six manufacturing plants in India, Electrolux Kelvinator said in a statement.

Sweden's Electrolux currently owns 74 per cent of Intron, 100 per cent in Electrolux India and 56 per cent in Electrolux Kelvinator. The exchange ratios involved in the all-share deal indicate the Swedish parent will own a higher stake in Electrolux Kelvinator, the surviving entity, following the restructuring.

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