

## New Siemens mobile phone set launched

Siemens Bangladesh Limited on Monday launched a new mobile phone set, C55, says a press release.

With a built-in player sound recorder and a realistic sound playback, the new Siemens C55 allows one to record any sound and use it as a ring tone.

One can also enjoy polyphonic ring tones, which sound just like a small orchestra with several different instruments.

It also has calling image, group EMS, voice command and voice dial.

## Polly Dot Net signs for GP fibre optic network

GrameenPhone has recently signed a tripartite agreement with Polly Dot Net, an internet service provider of Comilla to provide the ISP data transmission facility through its fibre optic network, says a press release.

Polly Dot Net is being provided with fractional bandwidth connectivity. Under the agreement, Polly Dot Net will use 128 KBPS bandwidth to provide internet service in Comilla.

The agreement with Polly Dot Net was signed by A M M Yahya, director External Coordination and Legal of GrameenPhone, Sharif Uddin Ahmed, managing director of Polly Dot Net, and A H M Sultanur Raza, assistant general manager of RANKS-ITT, on behalf of their respective organisations. RANKS-ITT is the dealer agent of GP's optical fibre network, leased from Bangladesh Railway.

By providing such connectivity of fractional bandwidth, GrameenPhone is fostering the growth of WAN and ISP services in Bangladesh. At present, 44 districts including all six divisional headquarters are under GP coverage.

## Orion Infusion AGM held

The 18th annual general meeting (AGM) of Orion Infusion Ltd was held at Rugganj in Narayanganj, says a press release.

Managing Director of the company Md Obaidul Karim presided over the meeting.

The AGM approved the audited accounts for 2000-2001 financial year.

## New DMD of Janata Bank

Md Shamsul Alam, general manager of Janata Bank, has been promoted to the rank of deputy managing director of the bank, says a press release.

Alam joined Sonali Bank as probationary officer in 1973 to start his career as a banker.

He joined Janata Bank as its general manager on June 15, 2002.

## Seminar on 'social capital' held

A seminar on "Social capital" was held at BRAC Centre sponsored by IRIS Centre of University of Maryland and BRAC University in the city recently, says a press release.

World Bank Country Director Frederick Temple was the chief guest at the seminar while Dr Jamilur Reza Chowdhury, vice-chancellor of BRAC University, presided over the event.

Dr Thierry van Bastelaer, director of the Integrated Financial Services Team at IRIS Centre, presented the keynote paper on social capital and provided the distinguished guests with the book, "Understanding and Measuring Social Capital, co-edited by Dr Bastelaer and Christiaan Grootaert.

Mainul Huq presented his study paper on the social factors that account for the success of neighbourhood based refuses collection efforts in Dhaka. The event was organised by JOBS Project.

In the seminar Dr Bastelaer mentioned that "social capital" -- a new tool is rapidly getting importance to social researchers and practitioners alike. The definition of social capital is still evolving and it can be broadly defined as "Institutions, relationships, attitudes and values that govern interactions among people and contribute to economic and social development."

# BTMA seeks alternative benefits to cash incentive

### STAR BUSINESS REPORT

The Bangladesh Textile Mills Association (BTMA) yesterday sought alternative benefits to cash assistance like reduced bank rates, duty exemption on raw material import and rebate on utilities.

The association also urged the government to implement its policy of withdrawing bonded warehouse facilities for goods produced locally to stop leakage of duty-free imported goods into local market.

"Creating mistrust and hurting relations among different organisations apart, cash assistance is not working properly and also not serving the purpose. We are paying extra cost for it," said A Matin Chowdhury, chairman of the BTMA, at a briefing at its office in the city yesterday.

Alternative benefits will cost around only 50 to 60 per cent of what the government is now providing as cash subsidy for developing the backward linkage industries. Textile needs a policy for at least ten years as short-term investment cannot help this sector, he added.

After announcing government's new policy regarding cash incentive, nobody has come up with new investment proposal in the backward linkage, the BTMA chairman said.

He mentioned steps should be taken to grow the local market that is presently hit by leakage from bonded warehouse hard. "We want all sorts of misuse, suspicions and corruption removed. We want bonds to facilitate exports and not kill domestic industry."

"We want fair competition...not

asking any favour. Excepting for only 15 lakh yard most of the fabric used by 13 crore people are illegally imported which is very unfortunate and pushing local textile investors against the wall."

Domestic market consumes more than 50 per cent of local textile production. Only strong home market can help local industries for going in the international market with diversified products, Chowdhury went on.

"We have no objection about properly regulated bond. Duty free fabric import should be allowed only for export. But in the name of export, nobody can leak from bonds and kill the local entrepreneurs."

If readymade garment and textile are taken under one common ministry, many problems can be

solved, the BTMA chairman added.

Speaking at the briefing, Tapan Chowdhury, member of BTMA executive committee, noted domestic market is more attractive than the export market in many cases. Products are being imported at higher prices for domestic consumers but the exporters are getting lower prices in the international market.

"The domestic market with 13 crore population has become an export destination for other countries. We need to protect our own market, although the focus so far was in the export market," he continued.

Former BTMA president Md Shajahan, members MA Awai, Anisul Islam Mahmud and Jahangir Alamin, attended the briefing.



Chairman and Managing Director of HR Textile Mills Limited Mohammad Abdul Moyeed presides over the 17th annual general meeting (AGM) at Savar in Dhaka on Sunday. A 5 per cent dividend for the year ending September 30, 2001 was approved by the shareholders at the AGM.



AMM Yahya, director of External Coordination and Legal of GrameenPhone, Sharif Uddin Ahmed, managing director of Polly Dot Net, and AHM Sultanur Raza, assistant general manager of RANKS-ITT, sign an agreement on behalf of their respective sides recently. Under the deal, Polly Dot Net will use 128 KBPS bandwidth to provide Internet service in Comilla.

# Dhaka to set up ICT kiosk in Silicon Valley soon

### BSS, Dhaka

Bangladesh will set up information communication technology (ICT) kiosk in the Silicon Valley in the United States apart from assigning a Bangladeshi American as ICT envoy in nearby Los Angeles soon to promote export of local software and IT services.

The ICT kiosk facilities and services in the Silicon Valley will be open to all Bangladeshi ICT entrepreneurs and anyone interested to export their IT products in exchange for a token money. Commerce Minister Amir Khosru Mahmud Chowdhury told a function here yesterday.

Daffodil Institute of IT's (DIIT) organised the function on its Dhanmondi campus to celebrate "The Best Partner Award", which DIIT received from NCC Education Limited of the United Kingdom.

Secretary of the Ministry of

Science, Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Karar Mahmudul Hassan, President of Bangladesh Computer Society (BCS) and Chairman of Daffodil International University (DIU) Mohammad Sabur Khan, Country Examination Manager of the British Council Mark Bartholomew, Examination Services Manager of Dhaka British Council Saidur Rahman and Chief Course Coordinator of DIIT Dr Md Fokhray Hossain, among others, were present at the function, chaired by Academic Director of DIIT's Dhanmondi branch Mohammad Nuruzzaman.

The minister said Bangladeshi ICT professionals should be mindful for popularising local brand names across the world saying that Bangladesh had a bright prospect of exploring software and ICT enabled services in non-English

speaking countries.

He said recently Danish envoy in Dhaka has informed the commerce ministry that entrepreneurs in Denmark are interested in outsourcing some ICT tasks to the developing countries like Bangladesh.

Khosru said recently the government sent an ICT delegation to European cities and the "outcome of the tour was encouraging".

Chowdhury said rules and regulations were made easy for disbursing a government fund of Taka 300 crore for the development of software and ICT-enabled services.

He added the government would take massive endeavours for construction of reference sites of all leading ministries and government establishments.

## Holcim holds seminar for premium dealers

Holcim, the country's leading cement company, recently organised a seminar on "Basic Cement Knowledge" for its premium dealers, dealer-managers and retailers at its plant in Meghnaghat.

Conducted by Star Jingkaojai, manager (Corporate Sales), and G M G Mostafa, manager (Technical Services), the seminar and a training session covered in-depth discussions on basic cement technology, composite cement and its suitability in the country, and cement standards.

Around 250 dealers, dealer-manager and retailers attended the programme along with Holcim employees. The seminar was followed by refreshment and a cultural programme.

"The seminar is targeted to take our business partners a step ahead in knowing their business in-depth," said K S Chung, general manager of Holcim in his opening speech. The dealers appreciated such initiatives.

Zeeshan Kingshuk Huq, DGM (Marketing), and Jashimuddin Khandaker, manager (Dealer Sales), were also present.

## SEDF workshop on software quality held

Southasia Enterprise Development Facility (SEDF) organised a two-day workshop on "An in-depth look at quality issues in Software including CMM" at a city hotel on October 30-31, says a press release.

Thirty participants from 23 software companies of the country participated in the workshop.

Moderator for the workshop was a lead CMM Assessor from a US-India company.

The workshop introduced the participants to various quality issues, standards and criteria for software development, and CMM practices.

Procedures involved in the CMM certification process were discussed.

The participants were also given ideas on ISO 9000 certification.

SEDF is a multi-donor facility promoted by IFC and managed by the SME Department of the World Bank group to support the small and medium enterprises in Bangladesh, Northeast India, Nepal and Bhutan.

## WorldCom, SEC close to settling charges

### REUTERS, Philadelphia

WorldCom Inc. and the US Securities and exchange Commission are close to a deal to settle charges that the bankrupt telephone and data services company committed fraud by manipulating its financial records, sources familiar with the situation said Tuesday.

A settlement deal, which could be announced within a week or two, would impose a nominal fine on WorldCom WCOEQ.PK MCWEQ.PK and require the company to agree not to violate securities laws in the future, the sources said.

Reaching a settlement less than five months after the SEC filed its lawsuit would eliminate a major legal problem plaguing WorldCom, and give it a greater chance of emerging from bankruptcy as a viable company, legal and financial experts said.

# Vegetable oil refiners fix prices for Ramadan

### STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Bangladesh Vegetable Oil Refiners' and Vanaspati Manufacturers' Association yesterday fixed the prices of soybean and palm oil at Tk 40 and Tk 33.5 per kg respectively during the Ramadan.

It was fixed after a meeting held among the leaders of the Association and different wholesalers and retailers of Dhaka city.

Presidents and representatives from different market traders' associations were also present at the meeting.

They said necessary steps have

been taken to keep the prices stable. The Association leaders also warned of stern action if anyone found to be violating the decision.

"Our representatives will visit different markets on the first two or three days of Ramadan and if found otherwise we will start the open market sale within Sunday or Monday," said MA Rauf Chowdhury, chief of Bangladesh Vegetable Oil Refiners' and Vanaspati Manufacturers' Association.

The Association leaders also selected several places in Dhaka and Chittagong for open market sale from where customers will be able to buy

oil at fixed price.

He said owners of oil mills, wholesalers and retailers have given us assurance to help in this regard.

Rauf said the prices of soybean and palm oil in the country are lower than the world market. The present prices of soybean and palm oil in the world market are 535 US dollars and 450 US dollars per metric tons respectively.

They alleged Chittagong customs did not follow the government decision of reducing 14 per cent tax on imported soybean and palm oil. Rather the authority claimed tax at the same rate that was imposed before the decision.

# Bring textile related sectors under one ministry

## Roundtable participants urge authorities

### STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Participants at a roundtable on the country's textile sector yesterday stressed the need for bringing apparel, textile sectors and all other related sub-sectors under one ministry for expediting the development of the sectors.

"The apparel sector is under the commerce ministry while the textile sector is under another ministry. I think the disagreement between the sectors could have been resolved if they were under a single ministry," said former state minister for textile Abdul Mannan MP at the roundtable.

He was the keynote speaker at the roundtable organised by Ministry of Textiles. Among others, Textiles Minister Abdul Matin Chowdhury, State Minister for Textiles Mizanur

Rahman Sinha, BGMEA Vice-president Kazi Moniruzzaman and BTMA Chairman Matin Chowdhury spoke on the occasion.

According to Abdul Mannan, there has been a conflict of interest among the sub-sectors under both the sectors. The keynote speaker referred to the issue of SAARC cumulation in this regard.

The country's apparel exporters are in favour of SAARC cumulation as it would boost apparel export while the textile owners are against it as they fear that the sector would be affected seriously once SAARC cumulation is implemented.

BGMEA Vice-president Kazi Moniruzzaman said both textile and apparel sector have to work together for the development of the sector.

The BGMEA leader said it is the

government to decide which sector would belong under which ministry. Referring to the election manifesto of the BNP-led four-party alliance said it promised to set up a separate ministry for readymade garment sector.

He, however, said there should be a quick decision whether a new ministry should be formed or both the sectors would be under the same ministry.

Shahajada Mia, leader of Bangladesh Specialised Textile Mills and Powerloom Industries Association (BSTMPIA), also observed the sectors should come under one ministry.

At the roundtable, the textile minister gave a brief resume of achievements and initiatives taken by his ministry during last one year to boost the country's textile sector.

# Sri Lankan central bank sees 5-6pc growth in '03

### REUTERS, Colombo

Sri Lanka's economy should grow by five to six per cent next year on stronger hopes for a permanent end to two decades of war and wider economic reform, the central bank said yesterday.

It also said the government would try to cut the budget deficit to

less than 7.5 per cent of gross domestic product from a projected 8.9 per cent this year.

"Economic projections for 2003 are based on the assumption of progress in the ongoing peace process, strengthening political stability, rapid implementation of domestic economic adjustments and reforms..." the bank said in a

document issued as the government prepares to release its 2003 budget on Wednesday.

The budget deficit for 2002 was slightly wider than an earlier forecast of 8.5 per cent, while the central bank said growth this year should climb to 3.0 per cent, rebounding from a contraction of 1.4 per cent in 2001, the island's worst-ever year.

The central bank said an end to Sri Lanka's civil war that has killed 64,000 people and crippled the economy be the driving force of the economy.

"An early political solution to the north and east issue will increase growth prospects significantly, while any reversal in the peace process will have huge economic, political and social costs," the document said.

The Tamil Tiger rebels and the government agreed recently to discuss political issues at the core of one of Asia's longest-running wars -- rebel demands for self-determination in the north and east of the island nation.

The island nation said it saw strong growth across all major sectors, with agriculture expanding two per cent, and the industrial and service sectors both growing by six to seven per cent.



Building Technology & Ideas Ltd (BTI), a real estate developer, recently arranged a pre-handover meeting of its project Millennium Manor at Shantinagar in the city recently. The meeting was presided over by Deputy Managing Director of BTI Engineer F R Khan (3rd from right). All the apartment owners and high officials of BTI were also present.