

Refrigerator



Whirlpool
America's No. 1 Appliance Co.

TRANSCOM ELECTRONICS
Dhaka: 8110163, 9882192, 9896285, 9569613
Chittagong: 637669, 653758, Bogra: 66215
Khulna: 720304, 723695

Star BUSINESS

DHAKA MONDAY NOVEMBER 22, 2004 E-mail: dsbusin@gononet.com



Washing Machine

Whirlpool
America's No. 1 Appliance Co.

TRANSCOM ELECTRONICS
Dhaka: 8110163, 9882192, 9896285, 9569613
Chittagong: 637669, 653758, Bogra: 66215
Khulna: 720304, 723695

Govt plans to upgrade drug admin directorate

Move to help local cos to tap overseas markets

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

The government is planning to upgrade the Directorate of Drug Administration to a full-fledged department to provide better support to pharmaceutical companies to take maximum benefit from WTO rule that allows Bangladesh to produce drugs without patent until 2015.

"The step is a part of government's initiative to amend the Drug Control Policy 1982," said Health and Family Welfare Minister Khandkar Mosharrar Hossain at the launching ceremony of a pharmaceutical company yesterday in Dhaka.

He said upgrade of the directorate will help Bangladeshi companies expand overseas market and develop backward linkage.

The minister was speaking at the launching function of Delta Pharma Ltd, a new company with Tk 10 crore initial investment and having a capacity of producing Tk 120 crore worth medicines a year.

According to a WTO TRIPS rule, least developed countries (LDCs) will enjoy patent exemption to produce essential drugs until 2015. Of the 49 LDCs, only Bangladesh has

a good manufacturing base and it is exporting drugs to over 60 countries now.

The minister said the pharmaceutical is a promising sector and the WTO rule has opened up avenues of opportunities for Bangladesh. If import dependency on raw materials can be reduced, pharmaceutical industry will further boost.

State Minister for Health and Family Welfare Mizanur Rahman Sinha said the Directorate of Drug Administration, the regulator for medicines, cannot crack down on spurious drugs and stop smuggling

due to lack of manpower and technical support.

The state minister also proposed allowing foreign companies in the field of homeopathy, *ayurvedi* and *yunani* sectors to start business in Bangladesh with condition that they would set up production plants here after a certain period.

Health and Family Welfare Secretary AFM Sarwar Kamal said the government can incorporate a clause in the proposed amendment to Drug Control Policy 1982 banning import of medicines which are widely produced in the country.

On the occasion, President of

Bangladesh Association of Pharmaceutical Industries SM Shafiquzzaman said Bangladesh cannot make foray to European market as the bloc does not recognise standard certificate issued by Bangladesh Drug Testing Laboratory.

"As the government testing laboratory fails to get recognition from some developed countries, the private sector wants to set up an independent international standard testing lab. But the public works ministry is dillydallying to allocate a chunk of land in Dhaka for the lab in spite of a prime ministerial direc-

tion," Shafiquzzaman said.

Housing and Public Works Minister Mirza Abbas, former advisor to the caretaker government Prof MA Majed, Vice-chancellor of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University Prof MA Hadi, Director General of Department of Health Mizanur Rahman, Director of Directorate of Drug Administration M Habibur Rahman, Secretary General of Bangladesh Medical Association AZM Zahid Hossain and Managing Director of Delta Pharma M Omar Faruque also spoke at the function.

Stocks rally on strong investors' demand

Indices witness consecutive rise

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Bourses experienced consecutive rise in indices before and after the Eid-ul-Fitr, recording high turnover in the face of strong demand from the investors.

Banks declared lucrative stock and cash dividends this year and are expected to do the same next year that attracted substantial investment in the capital market after a long lean period, market analysts said.

Besides, few initial public offerings (IPOs) this year could not meet the strong demand from the growing number of investors, they added.

"Capital market is experiencing a demand-driven situation. There is strong demand of good stocks in the market. Investors are picking up stocks with strong fundamentals as they have very little investment option," Salahuddin Ahmed Khan, chief executive officer of the Dhaka Stock Exchange (DSE), told The Daily Star yesterday.

The management is continuously monitoring the market and nothing is going wrong, he said. "Of the total turnover of Tk 42.39 crore on DSE yesterday, stocks worth Tk 37 crore were transacted in the A category, meaning stocks with strong fundamentals still have strong demand."

Substantial number of IPOs may cool the market, the CEO said noting the government is holding good volume of stocks, which should be released immediately to cool down the market.

The investors are in buying mood and when the market is on rise, the investors tend to buy more, said an operator. "Everyday we are getting new investors."

Trade volume on DSE amounted to Tk 43.96 crore Saturday, a record transaction in the last three years

while the transaction was Tk 42.39 crore yesterday.

The Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) officials said that presently three new issues are in the pipeline, which are being vetted by the regulators.

"But still it will take a bit more time before the new issues are floated," said an SEC official.

The companies are Premier Bank Ltd, Agrani Insurance Ltd and Global Insurance Ltd. Besides, Grameen Mutual Fund is also expected to go public shortly.

Only three IPOs Exim Bank Ltd, Mercantile Insurance Ltd and ICB AMCL Islamic Mutual Fund have so far made debut in the primary market this year.

After Eid, DSE general index gained 15 points on November 17, 9.5 points on November 18, 27 points on November 20 and 2.83 points yesterday.

DSE General Index rose by 2.83 points to close 1823.83 points while DSE 20 index gained 11.55 points to close 1999.947 points yesterday.

Of the 187 issues traded at DSE yesterday, 46 gained, 116 declined while 25 remained unchanged.

On the other hand, general index of the Chittagong Stock Exchange (CSE) gained 54 points on November 17, 13 points on November 18, 43 points on November 20 and 1.99 points yesterday to close at 3237.05 points.

Of the 68 listed issues traded at CSE yesterday, 19 gained, 41 declined and eight remained unchanged.

DSE general index rose by 3.5 points on November 8, 17.5 points on November 9 and 20.56 points on November 10, the last trading day before Eid. CSE general index gained 8.34 points on November 8, 24.5 points on November 9 and 32.5 points on November 10.

Danish grant for offshore digital mapping house

UNB, Dhaka

Bangladesh will get Tk 4.6 crore Danish grant for training, technical assistance and export promotion to support the establishment of an offshore digital mapping house.

Danish Ambassador in Dhaka Niels Severin Munk has approved the grant as a part of the Danida Private Sector Development (PSD) programme, said a Danish Embassy release.

The offshore digital map production house, the first of its kind in Bangladesh, will provide services such as digital mapping, orthophoto and digital elevation models, utility mapping and vector mapping to clients such as local and national authorities in Africa, Faeroe Islands, Germany, Greenland, Russia, Scandinavia and Spain.

The cooperation is expected to train the Bangladesh programmers and project managers in the latest digital mapping skills using sophisticated software and hardware tools.

The offshoring centre for production of digital maps will be established as a joint venture with equity participation from Denmark and Bangladesh as a collaboration between Sankort A/S, Denmark and Decode Limited, Bangladesh.

The overall objective of the Danida PSD Programme is to contribute to the economic and social development of Bangladesh by attracting Danish technology and investment in the private sector of Bangladesh.

PSD Programme supports the establishment of profitable, long-term and mutually binding commercial ventures between Bangladesh and Danish companies.

New MD of GrameenPhone



Erik Aas has been appointed managing director of GrameenPhone (GP) Limited.

He will replace Ola Ree, who has been in the position as managing director of the company since 2000, from December 1, 2004, says a press release.

Aas, 38, has eight years experience with Telenor, four of which was spent in Asia.

He served as marketing director of Malaysian mobile phone company DiGi since June, 2002.

He completed his Master of Science degree from NTNU in Trondheim, Norway, in 1991, and also obtained Master of Business Administration degree from IMD in Switzerland in 2001.

"GrameenPhone enjoys a very strong position in the Bangladeshi mobile market. I have been a member of the company's board for the last three years; I am thus familiar with the company and some of the challenges it is facing. I look forward to continuing the excellent work of Ola Ree," Aas said.

Ola Ree, 50, takes on a new position at Telenor's Asia office in Singapore, effective from December 1.

GP, the leading mobile phone operator in Bangladesh, has crossed the two-million subscriber mark recently.



Health and Family Welfare Minister Khandkar Mosharrar Hossain (Centre) attends the launching ceremony of Delta Pharma Ltd in Dhaka yesterday. State Minister of the ministry Mizanur Rahman Sinha (Left) and former advisor to caretaker government Prof MA Majed are also seen in the picture.

Dhaka Sheraton outstrips rivals

General Manager Trevor MacDonal tells The Daily Star

M SHAMSUR RAHMAN and M ABDUR RAHIM

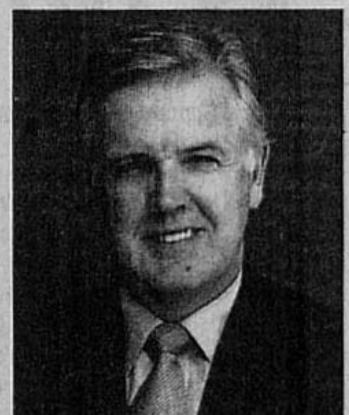
Dhaka Sheraton Hotel has outstripped all its competitors in sales and occupancy after 20 years of neck and neck fight with its key arch-rival, an achievement top executive of the Americap hotel chain credits to expansion and launch of new services.

The Starwoods brand hotel achieved 58 percent occupancy rate outperforming its rivals in the hospitality sector of Bangladesh.

In an exclusive interview with The Daily Star, General Manager of Dhaka Sheraton Hotel Trevor MacDonal said the recent expansion and an aggressive public relations campaign helped it to grab highest market share in Bangladesh.

"After the recent expansion, we have now 280 rooms up from 233. The new rooms are the most luxurious available in the city. We have also added five meeting rooms which are of great demand in the market," he said.

The recent trend shows that there is great demand for meeting rooms and it is rising. These rooms always



remain booked and such bookings also increase consumption of food and beverage generating huge revenue, said MacDonal, who joined Dhaka Sheraton two years back.

"When I first came here, there was no full-fledged Public Relations office in the hotel. Website was worst. We worked hard to develop all these. Now we have website which is updated frequently. We now provide broadband internet service for every room," the 14-year Starwoods veteran said.

"Parking was a perennial weakness of the hotel. In the new expansion we have 124 parking lots. It is not enough yet. The hotel needs more parking lots," he said noting that it will be considered in future expansion.

"The government has chosen Sheraton as host hotel for the upcoming Saarc (South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation) summit. This is a recognition to our performance and quality services. All heads of the governments and states will enjoy our hospitality. We are building six new presidential suites to up it to seven," he said.

Asked about its strategy against the backdrop of Radisson and Westin chains, which are launching operations soon, MacDonal said Dhaka Sheraton has started renovation works on the eastern wing to bring it on par with western wing, the new expanded building.

"We are also introducing new products and services. We will continue our pursuit to further improve services," the Australian said.

Asked about tourism potential, MacDonal said the country has

great prospect but poor infrastructure negates the potential.

"Cox's Bazar is a beautiful sea beach. But tell me what entertainment facilities it can offer to tourists. Country's hotel, bus, rail, aviation and other facilities and services are not of international standard," he said.

Less number of foreigners come to Bangladesh on tourism purpose. Most of the foreigners are garment buyers and come for business purposes. If tourism is to grow here, the infrastructure has to be upgraded, he said.

The flood put negative impact on hotel industry. The grenade attack on opposition rally made the situation even worse. Foreign business visitors did not come at that time. But the situation has now improved. The hospitality industry is growing rapidly. There is a market here, he added.

Sheraton arrived in Bangladesh in 1984 employing over 500 employees. Apart from Sheraton, Starwoods also has Westin, Four Points, St Regis, The Luxury Collection, and W Hotels brands in the chain. Starwoods has more than 750 hotels and resorts in over 80 countries.

Bangladesh has good prospect of exporting banana to China

Visiting Chinese delegation observe

UNB, Dhaka

Bangladesh has a good prospect of exporting banana to China as the different varieties of this fruit grown here are better in quality and taste and have a great demand in China.

This was observed by a Chinese business delegation now in Bangladesh exploring avenues to import banana, officials said yesterday.

Led by Chairman of Xiamen Trade Limited of China Professor Wang Shao Feng, the delegation at a meeting with Agriculture Minister MK Anwar at the ministry yesterday expressed their interest in importing banana.

China presently imports about one million tons of banana worth about Tk 3,600 crore annually. The country can meet only 40 percent of its demand with local production.

Welcoming their willingness, the minister said the government is providing 30 percent cash incentives on the export of agricultural

products. Besides, foreign investors are welcome to set up agro-processing industries.

China wants stable climate for yuan reform

AFP, Santiago

Chinese President Hu Jintao, meeting US leader George W. Bush during an Asia-Pacific summit, said Saturday he plans to loosen the yuan's decade-old peg to the dollar, but only under the right conditions.

In a nearly one-hour summit on the sidelines of a major Asia-Pacific conference, Bush and Hu discussed the exchange rate and record growth in US-China trade. He Yafei, a senior Chinese diplomat, told journalists.

He also requested the Chinese team to invest in fruit and vegetable-processing industries for local and foreign market.

The minister advised them to make contact with banana growers so that they can maintain "constant supply with quality products by increasing both quantity and quality of the produce".

Asking them to visit the banana-growing areas, he sought for technological support for better post-harvest preservation.

The delegation informed that they would make joint venture with EURO BANGLA Associates of Bangladesh to make the project successful. Besides, they have experience and technology that can be shared with the banana growers.

BADC Chairman Mohammad Ismail, Director General of Agriculture Extension Department Tariq Hasan, MD of EURO BANGLA Hasnat Ahmed Hashemee and other concerned officials were present at the meeting.

HK firm to set up jt venture RMG finishing plant at DEPZ

A Hong Kong company will establish a garments finishing and washing plant jointly with a local firm at Dhaka Export Processing Zone with an investment of US\$1.55 million.

The company named as M/s Shanta Washworks Limited is expected to handle 7.706 million pcs of garments washing, sand blasting, laser blasting, grinding, tinting, drying, paint spraying, coating, curing and other special finishing.

An agreement to this effect was signed between Bangladesh Export Processing Zones Authority (Bepza) and Shanta Washworks recently in Dhaka, says a press release.

AZM Azizur Rahman, general manager (Investment Promotion) of Bepza, and Khondoker Moniruddin, chairman of Shanta Washworks, signed the agreement on behalf of their organisations.

Bepza Executive Chairman Md Zakir Hossain was also present.

Export Promotion Bureau
TCB Bhaban, 1, Kawran Bazar C/A
Dhaka, Bangladesh
Tel: 88-02-9144821-4 PABX
Fax: 88-02-9119531
E-mail: epb.bd@aitlbd.net
Website: www.epb.gov.bd

Export to Spain

If you are planning to export to Spain, the Commercial Wing of the Embassy of Bangladesh in Madrid is ready to respond to your queries and assist in all possible ways. Please contact the following address and send your company profile with address, samples and product descriptions to our Mission in Spain.

Mr. Md. Rafiqul Islam
Commercial Counsellor, Commercial Wing
Embassy of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, Madrid
C/Diego de Leon, 69-2nd Floor-D, 28006- Madrid, Spain
Tel: (34) 91 309-2735, 91 401-9932 (PABX)
Fax: (34) 91 402-9564
E-mail: chancery@bdoot-mad.e.telefonica.net

GD-719 EPB is committed to create wider market for Bangladeshi products.

International BANGLADESH

EXTENSION OF CLOSING DATE FOR

International Tender for Supplying, Installing, Testing and Commissioning of IP- POI at Chittagong on turnkey basis

Reference to the Notice on the International Tender for Supplying, Installing, Testing and Commissioning of IP- POI at Chittagong on turnkey basis dated 29.09.2004, several reputed bidders have urged us to extend the duration for submission of bids. Considering the holidays intervening the Eid festival and the request made by these bidders we are pleased to announce that the date of closure for submission of bids is extended till 19th Dec 2004.

Bids will be received up to 1500 hours BST of 19th Dec 2004 in the office of the Project Director POI Project (3rd Floor), Delta Dahlia, 36 Kemal Ataturk Avenue, Banani, Dhaka - 1213 and will be opened at 1530 hours (BST) on the same date in presence of bidders/their representatives (if any).

Tender information is also available at the website <http://www.akteel.com>. The other Terms & Conditions of the Tender will remain unchanged.

(Q M Rezaur Rahman)
Chief Coordination Manager, TMIB
and Project Director, IP- POI Project

AKTEL
CLEARLY AHEAD
এক বাস এগিয়ে

Head Office : 9th Floor BRAC Centre, 75 Mohakhali Commercial Area, Dhaka-1212; Tel: -9867149; Fax: -(880-2) 988 4563
Technical Office : 3rd Floor, Delta Dahlia, 36 Kemal Ataturk Avenue, Banani, Dhaka 1213; Tel: 88019 921 0464, Fax: (880-2) 989 0710