

## Common panel makes clean sweep in BGMEA polls

### STAR BUSINESS REPORT

All 27 candidates from the common panel won the biennial polls of Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA).

Election of the 27-member executive committee of BGMEA was held on Thursday in the trade body's Dhaka and Chittagong offices with a 71 percent voter turnout.

Mohammed Abdus Salam, a candidate of Forum, one of the constituents of the common panel, in Chittagong got highest 1496 votes while SM Abu Tayyab, a candidate of Tipu Munshi group, obtained second highest 1486 votes in the election.

Tipu Munshi, leader of a faction of Sammilito Parishad, got 1484 votes, Annisul Huq, incumbent president of BGMEA and leader of

Forum, obtained 1482 votes while SM Fazlul Hoque, leader of another faction of Sammilito Parishad, got 1296 votes.

Out of 1,775 voters in Dhaka zone, 1,217 exercised their franchise and out of 512 voters in Chittagong zone, 410 cast their votes in the election for the 2005-06 term.

Forum had 12 candidates, Sammilito Parishad (Tipu Munshi group) 10 and Sammilito Parishad (SM Fazlul Hoque group) had five candidates in the polls of 27-member executive committee of the country's largest trade body.

Forum candidates who won the election in Dhaka zone are: Anwar-Ul Alam Chowdhury (Parvez) with 1469 votes, Faisal Samad 1447 votes, Md Shahidul Islam 1400 votes, Ferdous Perves Bivon 1381 votes, Shafiqul Islam 1375 votes,

SM Mannan (Kochi) 1344 votes, Mahmud Hasan Khan 1332 votes and Md Meshba Uddin Ali getting 1294 votes.

Forum candidates who won the polls in Chittagong zone are: Mohammad Abdus Salam getting 1496 votes, AM Mahbub Chowdhury 1440 votes and Md Asheek Bhuiyan 1430 votes.

Contestants who won the polls from Sammilito Parishad (Tipu Munshi group) in Dhaka are: Khondoker Jamil Uddin bagging 1444 votes, Shawkat Ali Bhuiyan (Dilan) 1402 votes, Md Siddiqur Rahman 1398 votes, Shahadat Hossain Chowdhury (Arun) 1383 votes and Kazi Zakir Hossain with 1372 votes.

Candidates of the same group winning the election in Chittagong zone are: SM Abu Tayyab receiving 1496 votes, Nasir Uddin Ahmed

Chowdhury 1483 votes, Moinuddin Ahmed 1456 votes and ANM Saifuddin 1438 votes.

Candidates of Sammilito Parishad (SM Fazlul Hoque group) who won in Dhaka zone are: Jalal Uddin Ahmed with 1301 votes, Haroon Ar Rashid 1299 votes, Sirajul Islam 1287 votes and Golam Sarwar Milon with 1273 votes.

Although 75 candidates from three panels officially contested the polls, the three panels at the last minute floated a common panel in line with an internal consensus.

As per understanding, presidency will rotate among the three top leaders. Annisul Huq will be the president in the first eight months, Tipu Munshi in the second and SM Fazlul Hoque will act as the president in the third eight months.



An exhibitor attends a visitor at a cosmetics stall at the US Trade Show 2005 at Dhaka Sheraton Hotel yesterday, the last day of the three-day fair jointly organised by US Embassy and American Chamber of Commerce in Bangladesh aiming at popularising American products and services in the country.

PHOTO: STAR

## Dhaka Travel Mart 2005 begins March 4

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Travel and tourism service providers in Asia will gather in Dhaka next month to promote and explore the untapped potential of the industry in the region.

Officials of tourism bodies, airlines, tour operators, travel agents and hotels from India, Thailand, Nepal, Bhutan, Malaysia, Singapore, UAE, Qatar, Hong Kong, Saudi Arabia, Germany and host Bangladesh will congregate in the Dhaka Travel Mart 2005 to be held from March 4 to 6 at Dhaka Sheraton Hotel.

Participants will try to use the Dhaka gathering as a platform to find ways to minimise the impact of natural calamities on their busi-

ness. Countries such as India and Thailand, whose seaside tourism infrastructures were devastated by December 26 tsunami, will join the meet to woo tourists to return to the countries.

This is the second such tourism extravaganza in Dhaka being organised and sponsored by The Bangladesh Monitor, a fortnight travel tabloid. The inaugural Dhaka Travel Mart was held in 2002.

Tour Operators Association of Bangladesh and Association of Travel Agents of Bangladesh are the two co-organisers of the event co-sponsored by Amadeus, a reservation service provider.

Two seminars will be held on the sideline of the three-day fair. Subhash Goyal, president of Travel Agents' Association of India, Imtiaz

Moqbil, a renowned travel writer from Thailand and Sharifah Loon, director of Malaysia Tourism Board, will speak at the seminar on "Development of Regional Tourism." Distinguished guests from Dubai will address the other seminar titled "Emirates Holidays".

Four national tourism organisations, 12 airlines, six five-star hotels, 15 tour operators, 10 travel agents, four global distribution service (GDS) companies, three banks and regional tourism experts are expected to participate in the event.

The organisers will be installing 100 stalls at the fair venue. The fair will remain open daily from 10:00am to 8:00pm.

## India picks bureaucrat as new chief of bourse regulator

PALLAB BHATTACHARYA, New Delhi

Senior bureaucrat M Damodaran is to become new chief of the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI), the stock market watchdog.

A 1971 batch Indian Administrative Service officer, Damodaran, currently the chairman and managing director of Industrial Development Bank of India (IDBI), succeeds G N Bajpai who retired as SEBI Chairman yesterday.

Damodaran was a joint secretary in the banking division of finance ministry before he took over as the chief of Unit Trust of India, the country's largest and most popular mutual fund after it was plunged into a muddle in 2001. He was credited with successfully turning around the mutual fund and made it responsive to consumers.

He was also given the additional charge of heading the IDBI in October 2003 and as a result he quit UTI in May last year. He presided over the merger of IDBI Bank merger with parent company IDBI positioning it to face competition from major private banks.

Damodaran takes over as the head of stock market regulator when the Indian bourses are booming with foreign institutional investors (FII) pumping in close to nine billion dollars in 2004 alone. The projection for FII fund inflow into Indian stock markets is pegged at ten billion dollars.

But there are also concerns in some quarters about hedge funds brought in by FIIs along with the investments.

## China's mobile handset output capacity to hit 500m in 2005

AFP, Beijing

China's mobile phone production capacity, already the world's biggest, is set to rise from 300 million handsets in 2004 to 500 million this year as some 40 new producers begin manufacturing, the top economic planning body said Friday.

"Judging from developments in recent years, mobile phone production capacity has increased rapidly and the investment risk must not be overlooked," the National Development and Reform Commission said in a report on its website.

"As the capacity of domestic enterprises rises rapidly, market competition will become more intense and the capacity of the entire industry to earn profits will fall."

Since adopting preferential policies for the industry in 1999, fast paced growth and strong profits have spurred investment from both multi-national and domestic companies, the report said.

China produced some 240 million handsets in 2004, with 146 million sets exported.

From 1999-2002, China's mobile phone industry sold some 300 million phones, earning some 350 billion yuan (42.3 billion dollars) in sales and handing over 45.5 billion yuan in taxes, it said.

## Global recovery to gain steam despite slow Japan: OECD

REUTERS, Paris

The global economic recovery is set to gather momentum despite problems in Japan, which is suffering stagnation rather than recession, the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) said on Thursday.

In an interim report on six major economies, the Paris-based think-tank cut its 2004 growth estimates for Japan, Germany, Britain and Italy.

But the OECD kept its estimates of 4.4 percent growth in the United States and 1.8 percent growth in the euro zone, and saw rays of hope in Germany, Europe's biggest economy.

"The global recovery has been marking time as the adverse effects of higher and more volatile oil prices worked their way through," OECD chief economist Jean-Philippe Cotis said.

"Going forward, however, the conditions are in place for the global

recovery to pick up momentum, including as concerns enterprise balance sheets and profits, which have strengthened markedly," he told a new conference.

Cotis said the United States would continue to lead the global upturn with growth of about 3.5 percent in the first half of 2005.

Quarter-on-quarter US growth should reach 1.0 percent in the first quarter of 2005 and 0.7 percent in the second quarter, the OECD said.

OECD projections showed Japan should have 0.5 percent growth in both the first and second quarters of 2005, after -0.3 and 0.1 percent respectively for the last two quarters of 2004.

Euro area growth should rise to 0.4 and 0.5 percent respectively for the first two quarters of 2005 after 0.3 and 0.2 percent in the last two quarters of 2004.

Oil prices spiked to a record \$55.67 a barrel last October before falling back, though crude prices are again rising on persistent OPEC talk

of a cut in supplies.

Cotis welcomed the US Federal Reserve's "gradual tightening" of monetary policy and "accommodative" policies in the euro zone and Japan.

But he said there was not yet enough evidence to suggest a big improvement in the US structural deficit. There remained a danger of a strong rise in the euro against the dollar if Asian currencies did not play a balancing role.

Eurozone growth almost to a halt in the fourth quarter with gross domestic product rising 0.2 percent, while Japan's economy fell 0.1 percent in the three months to December, its third straight quarterly contraction.

But Cotis was at pains to temper gloom about Japan and Germany, the world's biggest economies after the United States.

## India's Jet Airways IPO sells out fast

AFP, Bombay

Shares of India's biggest private airline, Jet Airways, were snapped up within minutes at the launch Friday of its initial public offering (IPO) as an upbeat sentiment prevailed over the country's aviation sector.

Jet Airways, founded by London-based ex-travel agent Naresh Goyal, was selling 20 percent of its equity or 17.2 million shares to retail and institutional investors in a bid to raise up to 443 million dollars.

The funds would be used to buy new aircraft and retire debt. By late afternoon, the issue was subscribed 2.5 times.

Jet, which controls 45 percent of the domestic aviation market, aims to raise between 16.4 to 19.4 billion rupees (374 to 443 million dollars) through its share offering which was priced between 950-1,125 rupee a share.

Bookbuilding data on the Bombay Stock Exchange's website showed that the offer sold out within minutes with most bids at the higher end of the price band at 1,040-1,125 rupees.

Jet, which began flying in 1993, now holds a bigger market share than state-owned Indian Airlines which for decades held a monopoly on domestic air travel. It has won several travel industry awards as India's best airline for in-flight service and punctuality.

Analysts said pricing for the offering appeared aggressive amid rising competition with the arrival of new players, many offering cheap fares.

"Jet has been talking about increased growth in the coming year but one must understand competition will increase in coming months," said a dealer at brokerage Dalal and Broacha.

## Mitsubishi Tokyo, UFJ eye \$9.5b net profit after merger

AFP, Tokyo

Mitsubishi Tokyo Financial Group and UFJ Holdings aim to post a net profit of one trillion yen (9.5 billion dollars) three years after their planned merger in October, which will create the world's largest bank, a report said Friday.

Mitsubishi Tokyo, Japan's second-biggest bank, and UFJ, the smallest and weakest of the nation's big four banking groups, also plan to cut some 6,000 jobs, the business daily Nihon Keizai Shimbun said.

The banks are expected to announce detailed merger plans as early as Friday, the daily said. Their combined assets stand at 189 trillion yen.

The Mitsubishi Tokyo-UFJ alliance aims to post a net profit of some one trillion yen for the financial year to March 2009, it said, adding the merged group would consolidate domestic and overseas operations.



PHOTO: PHOENIX LEASING

A Quadir Choudhury, managing director of Phoenix Leasing Company Ltd, and Muzaffar Ahmed, president and CEO of Credit Rating Information and Services Ltd (CRISL), shake hands after signing a memorandum of understanding Thursday in Dhaka. Under the deal, CRISL will perform credit rating of Phoenix Leasing in connection with raising capital base by issuing IPO. Senior officials of both the companies are also seen.