

## Hatching eggs now in export basket

ASHIQR RAHMAN

Bangladesh has added a new product to its basket exporting hatching eggs for the first time.

Kazi Farms Limited, the country's largest poultry breeding enterprise, has started exporting hatching eggs from February this year.

"The company is exporting 2.16 lakh hatching eggs to Saudi Arabia every week and will start the same to the UAE very soon," said Kazi Zahedul Hasan, managing director of Kazi Farms.

As a non-traditional exportable commodity, hatching eggs have tremendous potential for contributing to the country's economy, he observed.

The government should come forward with incentive to explore and tap potential of this new item, he felt.

It is possible to earn even Tk 100 crore by exporting hatching eggs in the first year provided the government gives 30 percent incentive to this item like other agricultural products, Hasan said.

The quality of local hatching eggs is much better than that of India, he added. There is hardly any farm in India, which is free from diseases such as Salmonella and Mycoplasma but Bangladeshi farms are mostly diseases free.

"Countries like India and Pakistan give incentive for exporting hatching eggs. If the government wants to develop new areas and gives incentive, we will be able to earn at least Tk 8 crore in foreign exchange every month which is now about Tk 1.4 crore," he explained.

Hasan said the commerce ministry has asked the Export Promotion

Bureau (EPB) to look into the potential of exporting hatching eggs and make necessary recommendation for incentive after a request from Kazi Farms.

"EPB has already sent necessary information on hatching egg export to the commerce ministry," said Faridul Hasan, a director of the EPB.

"The commerce ministry is now considering giving incentive for exporting hatching eggs and it may request the finance ministry soon to take necessary measure in this regard," said another EPB official.

Abdul Motalib, director of Department of Livestock Services (DLS), strongly endorsed giving incentive for exporting hatching eggs to encourage the exporters, saying the product has good potential and the incentive will attract the entrepreneurs.

"Around 20 percent people in the country directly and 50 percent indirectly are involved in livestock but the government has not given this sector any significant support so far," he explained.

The managing director of Kazi Farms complained that obtaining DLS certificate before each shipment for exporting hatching eggs is a cumbersome procedure. "We have already missed two shipments due to delay in getting DLS certificates," he alleged.

However, Motalib said hatching eggs is not a conventional export item. "DLS took time to issue the certificate as the item is being exported for the first time. DLS has already issued certificates to Kazi Farm to export 0.36 million eggs," said the DLS director.



AKTEL Managing Director Md Nasir Bin Baharom cuts a cake to mark the inauguration of the second customer care centre of the company in Chittagong on Thursday. Regional Director of Chittagong AZ Nizam and General Manager (Marketing) Jose Ravee are also seen in the picture.

## Nepali trade team visits Banglabandha land port

BDNEWS, Panchagarh

A five-member trade delegation of Nepal visited Banglabandha land port in the district on Thursday.

Kishore Kumar, President of Murong Chamber of Commerce and Industries, led the delegation.

After their visit to the land port, they exchanged views with the leaders of local chambers.

Both the parties discussed prospects of establishing joint venture industries and strengthening trade between Bangladesh and Nepal.

Panchagar Chamber President Iqbal Kaiser Mintu urged the government to provide immigration facilities at Banglabandha.

## AKTEL opens new customer care centre in Ctg

AKTEL, a cellphone service provider of the country, has opened a new customer care centre in Chittagong on Thursday.

Managing Director of the company Md Nasir Bin Baharom formally inaugurated the second centre of its kind at Saber Plaza on Strand Road in the port city, says a press release.

## Indian-born Briton world's 3rd richest man

AFP, New York

Indian-born steel tycoon Lakshmi Mittal boosted his fortune faster than anyone in the world over the past year to become the third richest person in the world, Forbes Magazine said Thursday.

London-based Mittal, who built one of the world's biggest steel empires, has a net worth of 25 billion dollars, trailing only Microsoft chief Bill Gates (46.5 billion) and US investment guru Warren Buffett (44 billion).

## Clothing exports remain stagnant in Vietnam

ANN/VIETNAMNEWS

Vietnam's garment industry has seen slower exports due to harsher competition after the WTO removed its quota regime at the beginning of this year.

While the heightened competition was predicted, the setback exceeded expectations. During the first two months of the year, the industry's export earnings edged up only 1.4 percent against the same period last year, bringing in only

around US\$566 million, said the Ministry of Industry (MoI).

The figure was much lower than the industry's initial target of 18 percent for the entire year.

Domestic exporters have encountered particularly harsh competition from Chinese enterprises that sell primarily to American and European importers.

Chairman of the Vietnam Textile and Apparel Association (Vitas) Le Quoc An said Vietnam's "best-selling" products on the EU market

cooled and that exporter revenues have decreased remarkably.

The slowdown has occurred despite the EU's agreement to remove quotas on Vietnamese garments this year.

The same products exported from China have seen strong growth. Chinese exports to the EU in high-demand categories such as trousers, sweaters, T-shirts and Polo-shirts have surged by 40-60 percent.

## Emirates to up flights to Sydney via Bangkok

Emirates will soon boost its services to Sydney via Bangkok with additional flights.

Emirates will introduce an extra thrice-weekly service from its operation hub Dubai to Sydney via Bangkok from March 29. Initially operating on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays, the airline will increase this to a daily service from May 1, says a press release.

Moreover, Emirates' new Dubai-Bangkok-Sydney daily service will be extended to Auckland in New Zealand from May 1.

The airline will fly its Boeing 777-300 aircraft on the new route with configuration of First, Business and Economy classes, the release added.

## Country breeds poultry parent stock from May

UNB, Dhaka

Country's first grandparent (GP) poultry farm, set up in Tentulia, will save about \$ 2.17 million of foreign exchange by reducing dependence on import of broiler-breeder chicken for the burgeoning poultry sector.

Aqua Breeders Ltd (ABL), the farm, will go into production of broiler-breeder parents from next May. Initially, it will produce some 7 lakh pieces of parent chicken a year against 35 to 40 lakh pieces that the country needs annually.

Currently, Bangladesh imports one-day-old broiler-breeder chickens from France, UK, Malaysia, Denmark and the Netherlands at a cost of US\$ 3.10 or more for each.

"From now on our grandparent farm will be able to meet about 15 to 20 percent of the country's total

demand for parent stock," said Marketing Manager of ABL Nazmul Hassan Siddiki.

Gazi S Hossain, an expatriate Bangladeshi living in US, founded the farm on a 180-bigha plot of land. Rajshahi Krishi Unnayan Bank (Rakub), Tentulia branch, and EEF unit of Bangladesh Bank have provided the financial support and the Netherlands technical expertise in setting up the business.

The farm has already started rearing some 20,000 pieces of GP against its capacity of 30,000 pieces, and will produce parent stocks to support the demand of 122 broiler stock farms across the country.

It has a target of producing nine lakh pieces of parents annually once the fully-fledged production is started, Gazi, also the managing

director of ABL, said.

"It will help local broiler-breeder farms avoid hassles of importing parent chickens. It will also help reduce the cost, minimise mortality rate and ensure supply of climatized birds," added Gazi.

Bangladesh is now totally dependent on imported parent stock which contributes to higher price of broiler meat. "Our farm will help to bring down the price of broiler meat from Tk 70 to Tk 45 a kg," he said.

ABL will produce Hybro species of birds in a totally controlled environment. "Hybro species are provided controlled food and that's why they grow 10 times faster than normal ones and lay eggs in time," said Dr Arif M Malik, technical advisor of Hybro, a Dutch company.

## PC in dark over 66 privatised cos

BDNEWS, Dhaka

Despite having legal obligation, the Privatisation Commission (PC) does not possess any information about the performances of 66 former state-run enterprises handed over to private entrepreneurs as part of denationalisation programme.

"Those are doing well. However, we have no monitoring and evaluation support to observe these enterprises because of limited manpower," said PC Chairman Enam Ahmed Chaudhury.

Under the clause 10 (2) (K) of the Privatisation Law-2000 and clause 20 of chapter eight of privatisation policy 2001, the PC is supposed to monitor the performances of privatised enterprises as well as to inform the government of the details on a regular basis.

According to the PC, some 66 nationalised enterprises under different ministries had been privatised from 1993 to October 2004. Of these, 39 enterprises were fully sold, shares of 15 enterprises were sold, four were privatised through off-loading of

shares and eight enterprises are yet to be handed over to the buyers.

However, the PC does not have actual figure of these privatised enterprises.

Replying to a query of the news agency, a PC official said most of the privatised enterprises seem reluctant to give data on their actual situation. Besides, the enterprises consider government interference a problem, he added.

Asked whether the PC communicated with the owners taking the matter seriously, he said "We have manpower shortage and none of the officials is given responsibility to look into the matter."

Among the 17 high officials working in the PC, there are one secretary, one additional secretary, five joint secretaries, one deputy secretary, five senior assistant secretaries, two assistant secretaries and the remaining two are non-cadre officials.

"Senior officials have little work to perform," said an official preferring anonymity, adding that lower-ranking officials do most of the jobs.

## 'Forex inflow handling a challenge for India'

REUTERS, New Delhi

Strong foreign exchange flows into the Indian economy are causing macro-economic management problems but policy makers will have to address the challenge, a top finance ministry official said Thursday.

Foreign funds have moved \$2.8 billion into Indian stocks so far this year, nearly a third of the record \$8.5 billion in the whole of 2004.

The inflows have put upward pressure on the rupee and the central bank has been intervening regularly on the currency market to keep the rupee competitive.

"The continuous foreign exchange inflows cause macro management problems, but it is a nice problem to have," Rakesh Mohan, economic affairs secretary, told reporters.

"Nevertheless, it is an issue for

monetary and fiscal managers," said Mohan, who was the deputy governor of the central bank until November.

Foreign investment has driven the main share index to a succession of record highs, peaking at 6,954.86 points on Wednesday. Investors have stepped up buying on expectations that annual economic growth of 7 percent will boost corporate earnings.

The inflows also pushed the rupee to a five-year high of 43.30 per dollar in early February, though central bank moves have driven the exchange rate down 0.6 percent since then to 43.57.

Analysts say the constant presence of the central bank diminishes the chances of an interest rate increase in the next few months as this could undo the impact of its intervention by raising the yield on the local currency.