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Star BUSINESS

DHAKA FRIDAY SEPTEMBER 23, 2005 E-mail: business@thedailystar.net

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Knitwear exporters eye \$1b US market

Knitwear fair begins in New York in Nov

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Local entrepreneurs eye \$1 billion annual knitwear export to the US from the next fiscal year as they are going to hold a three-day knitwear show in New York in November.

The fair titled 'Bangladesh Knitwear Show' will begin on November 14, 2005 at Hotel Pennsylvania in New York, US.

Bangladesh Knitwear Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BKMEA) in association with South Asia Enterprise Development Facility (SEDF), a multi-donor-funded facility managed by the International Finance Corporation (IFC) of the World Bank Group, will organise the fair.

The announcement came yesterday at a press conference in Dhaka where BKMEA and SEDF officials featured their goals in the exposition.

Addressing the press conference, BKMEA President Fazlul Haque said it is not so difficult to raise knitwear export to US to \$1 billion a year.

"If we can maintain our existing export trends to the US market, we can achieve the target within one year," he said.

BKMEA chief said, "Although we are exporting less than three percent of the total demand of the US market worth \$16 billion, we have a lot of chances to explore the US knitwear market. The fair will encourage local knitwear entrepreneurs to do more business with the US businesspeople."

Although US is the biggest mar-

ket for knitwear products, once the market was almost unexplored as knitwear exporters showed less interest in the US market due to quota hassles, BKMEA president said.

Haque said in the fiscal year 2003-2004 Bangladesh exported woven products worth \$1392 million to the US market while knitwear exports amounted to only \$237 million during the same period.

He however said in the post-MFA era, knitwear export to US surged notably. In FY2004-2005, Bangladesh exported knitwear products worth \$402.68 million to the US market, marking around 70.24 percent increase over the previous year.

In the first six months of the quota-free regime, knitwear export to the US market rose by 116.01 percent compared to the same period of 2004, he mentioned.

"Our knitwear exports to the US market is increasing day by day and so is our production as in every two and a half days a knitwear plant is set up in Bangladesh," BKMEA president said.

So, the fair will give a chance to the exporters to explore US market, he hoped.

BKMEA officials said Bangladesh knitwear businesses will showcase their products including T-shirt, Polo shirt and sweater at 45 stalls in the fair.

To get a positive response from

the fair, SEDF has already appointed two consultancy companies -- New York-based Global Marketing Strategies LLC and Canada-based Goss Gilroy INC, BKMEA officials said.

They said around 5,000 buyers will be invited to visit the fair. Commerce Minister Altaf Hossain Choudhury is expected to inaugurate the fair.

The fair is a part of the SEDF and BKMEA joint programme titled "Post-MFA program for the knitwear sector" to improve the competitiveness of the knitwear sector through technical assistance and export promotion in the US market, said Marlon Lezama, program manager (Business Enabling Environment) of SEDE.



Fazlul Haque (C), president of the Bangladesh Knitwear Manufacturers and Exporters Association, speaks at a press conference in Dhaka yesterday.

Asean mulls liberalisation of air services

ANN/VIENTIANE NEWS

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) aviation officials are discussing plans to liberalise airline services and develop co-operation programmes in Southeast Asia at the 12th Regional Air Transport Working Group meeting in Quang Ninh Province's Ha Long city.

At the meeting, which concludes on Thursday, aviation officials hope to reach a consensus on the details of deregulating regional air carriers by 2015, and are expected to sign multilateral agreements on air cargo, including legal regulations aimed at implementing full liberalisation of cargo transport rights in Asean member nations by the end of 2008.

The meeting was also scheduled to establish regulatory guidelines on deregulating commercial passenger transport.

Regional aviation officials discussed ways to develop an integrated Asean air services market that takes advantage of the region's existing and potential airline co-operation, based on the experiences of the European Union, Australia and New Zealand.

Delegates are also expected to approve a resolution to compile transport information and statistics from each of the Asean's air carriers, relating to airports and employees from all of their airlines. The data will be used to build the Asean Air Services Information Bank.

US won't cut farm subsidies unless others do: Portman

REUTERS, Washington

The United States will demand other countries make steep cuts in their farm subsidies and tariffs before considering any change to its own programmes, the chief US negotiator said Wednesday as lawmakers mull how the US farm safety net.

US Trade Representative Rob Portman assured wary members on the Senate Agriculture Committee he would insist any new world trade deal provide substantial new export opportunities to compensate US farmers for federal subsidy cuts.

"The US is already the most open developed country, and we will benefit the most from bold trade liberalisation," Portman said in prepared remarks.

"However, we will not consider changes to our own programmes unless the other WTO (World Trade Organisation) members commit to open their markets to our goods and agree to reduce their own subsidy and trade-distorting programmes," Portman said.

He repeated the US position that the European Union and Japan, which spend more on their farmers than the United States, must be required to cut more in any new trade deal.

World trade talks are at a critical juncture before a major WTO meeting in Hong Kong in December. International business groups have warned the talks could fail without an agreement soon on basic formulas for cutting farm tariffs and trade-distorting domestic farm payments and eliminating agricultural export subsidies.

New DMD of Social Investment Bank

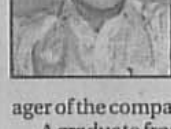


Abu Sadek Md Sohel yesterday took over as deputy managing director (DMD) of Social Investment Bank Ltd.

Prior to this new assignment, he was the DMD of Agrani Bank, says a press release.

Md Sohel started his banking career in 1977 as a senior officer of Sonali Bank. He joined Bangladesh Krishi Bank in 2001 as general manager.

GM of G3 Communication



The Board of Directors of G3 Communication Ltd has recently announced the name of AZM Saifuddin as the general manager of the company.

A graduate from the University of Dhaka, Saifuddin has been involved in the advertising industry for the last nine years, says a press release.



Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan, LGRD & cooperatives minister, Abdul Moyeen Khan, science and ICT minister, and Md Aminul Haque, post & telecommunications minister, visit a stall in the six-day BCS Computer Show 2005 that began in Dhaka yesterday.

6-day BCS computer show kicks off

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

With a view to introducing latest developments of the ICT sector, a six-day computer show styled 'BCS Computer Show-2005' began yesterday in Dhaka.

Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan, minister for local government, rural development and cooperatives (LGRD), formally inaugurated the fair at Bashundhara City shopping mall while Abdul Moyeen Khan, minister for science and ICT, and Aminul Haque, minister for post and

telecommunications, were also present at the ceremony.

A total of 105 companies including some reputed international ICT firms are showcasing their software, hardware, internet and other ICT products at 136 stalls and 15 pavilions at the fair organised by Bangladesh Computer Samity (BCS).

Speaking at the inaugural ceremony, the LGRD minister stressed the need for more use of ICT to reduce poverty.

The post and telecommunications minister said internet access through submarine cable is almost

at the final stage.

The ICT minister said the government has taken an initiative to distribute 10 thousand computers in schools.

The organisers said people can buy a personal computer with a very competitive price in the fair. They expect some 2,00,000 visitors at the six-day fair.

The fair will remain open from 10am to 9pm to the visitors. The entry fee is fixed at Tk 20 a person. Electronic giants LG and Asus are the sponsors of the fair.

Booming India to affect globe as it opens up: IMF

REUTERS, Washington

India's booming but relatively closed economy could have a profound impact on the world economy at large if progress in boosting regional and global trade links continues apace, the IMF said Wednesday.

Revising up India's 2005 growth forecast by half a percentage point to 7.1 percent, the International Monetary Fund said an opening Indian economy with a young population and rapid growth rates could become a key engine of world growth over the next decade.

If India continues to embrace globalisation and reform, Indian imports could increasingly operate as a driver of global growth as it is one of a handful of economies forecast to have a growing working-age population over the next 10 years.

Some 75-110 million will enter India's labour force over the next decade, the Fund said in its twice-yearly World Economic Outlook.

And government efforts to boost international trade links will bear fruit, it added.

India's exports, although coming from a relatively low level, were

forecast to more than double by 2010 while imports will nearly triple. The IMF said imports were growing at about 33 percent at year in 2003/2004, four times as fast as the 1990-2002 period.

However, the IMF stressed that such a boost to world demand will present major challenges for the global economy as well as obvious opportunities.

"Faster growth, rising incomes and the accompanying urbanisation and industrialisation of India will, however, exert further pressure on an already tight global energy market," it said.

China, Thailand aim to triple trade by 2010

AFP, Bangkok

Thailand and China signed a slate of trade and investment deals Thursday, aimed at more than tripling bilateral trade to 50 billion dollars by 2010, officials said.

The deals came after talks at the second meeting of the Thailand-China joint committee on trade and investment, led by China's visiting Deputy Premier Wu Yi and her Thai counterpart Somkid Jatusripitak.

Four memorandums of understanding signed by the two governments covered agreements on trade, investment and tourism that Thailand's commerce ministry said it will boost trade from 15 billion dollars to 50 billion dollars a year within five years.

The deals signed in the northern Thai city of Chiang Mai will also see investment rise to 6.5 billion dollars a year, as China's tourist arrivals in Thailand also jump to four million a year by 2010, the ministry said.

In addition to the pacts signed by the two governments, Thai businesses signed four deals with Chinese companies on joint investments in various industries.

Oil giants in the two nations, Thailand's PTT Plc and China National Offshore Oil Corporation (CNOOC), agreed to joint investments, explorations, and marketing in oil and natural gas.

Siemens telecom to cut working hours

AFP, Munich, Germany

German electronics giant Siemens said Thursday that it had agreed with unions on a reduction of working hours, part-time early retirement schemes and voluntary redundancies in order to help cut costs and capacity at its telephone division.

Siemens said in a statement that it had reached agreement with its general works council and the powerful IG Metall labour union with regard to a package of measures to make its communications division more competitive.

"To cushion the difficult cost and capacity situation, a first step will be taken to apply a special wage agreement -- primarily in the service sector -- in order to save as many jobs as possible," the statement said.

As part of the agreement, working hours would be cut to 30 hours from 35.8 hours at present.

In addition, Siemens will offer employees the possibility of transferring into a company-owned and employment firm in order to find a new job within or outside Siemens," the company continued.

Non-bank financial institutions urged to diversify business

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Deputy governor of Bangladesh Bank has urged the non-banking financial institutions (NBFI) to reduce interest rate and diversify their business by introducing new products.

"The financial institutions depend only on one product, which is providing loans," Muhammad A (Rume) Ali said while addressing the tenth founding anniversary function of Phoenix Leasing Company Ltd (PLCL), a non-banking financial institution, on Wednesday.

In the recent years, the NBFIs have seen a robust growth by acquir-

ing around 50 percent share of the financial market, he said adding, "The NBFIs can reduce the rate of interest."

Speaking at the function, Phoenix Leasing Chairman Deen Mohammad said starting with the initial paid-up capital of Tk 5 crore in 1995, the company now has a paid-up capital of Tk 13.63 crore.

The company is also going to float initial public offerings (IPOs) by the end of this year and launch zero coupon bonds worth Tk 30 crore to enhance its paid-up capital to Tk 25 crore to fulfill the requirement of the central bank, he said.

"Phoenix Leasing has been focusing its activities on the sectors and

sub-sectors such as agro-based industries, information and technology, transport, medical and diagnostic centres, and housing, which create avenues for employment and poverty alleviation," he said.

"The cumulative lease/loan contract/sanction and disbursement as on 2004 stood at Tk 7,537.56 million and Tk 5,523.44 million respectively while the outstanding lease and loan asset as on 2004 stood at Tk 2,912.40 million. The recovery rate is 97 percent," said A Quadir Chowdhury, managing director of Phoenix Leasing.

M Yunus, vice-chairman of the company, also spoke at the function.

Dhaka civil society lobbies development partners on LDC concerns at WTO

Bangladesh's civil society has urged the representatives of the bilateral development agencies to support the demands of the LDCs in the WTO Hong Kong Ministerial Meeting to be held in December this year.

A meeting of ambassadors and high officials of the diplomatic missions in Dhaka with the leading members of the civil society was held at the BRAC Centre Inn yesterday, says a press release.

The meeting was attended by development partners from Canada, France, Japan, Russia, UK, USA, EU, Netherlands, Norway, Pakistan, Sweden and Switzerland. French Ambassador Jacques Andre Costilhes, Swiss Ambassador Dora Rapold, Gene V George, mission director, USAID, Kiya Masahiko, head of Economic and Development Cooperation, Embassy of Japan, Tom Crowards, senior economist, DFID, Hans Peter Malby, minister counsellor, Embassy of Norway, Hans Nicklasson, minister, Embassy of Sweden, Rajani Alexander, first secretary (Development), Canadian High Commission, were present at this meeting.

The meeting was organised by the Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD) in connection with the upcoming Pre-Hong Kong International Civil Society Forum

on LDCs. CPD Executive Director Dr Debapriya Bhattacharya briefed development partners about the organisation of the Forum as well as demands and concerns of LDCs at the WTO. On behalf of the Forum, Dr Debapriya urged the development partners to request their respective governments to support the demands of the LDCs at the WTO.

These are related to effective market access for agricultural, non-agricultural products and services of LDC origin. Other issues raised at the meeting included trade-related capacity building, technology transfer, greater flow of foreign aid and investment.

The meeting was also attended by the members of the National Advisory Committee (NAC) of the LDC Forum 2005. They include the LDC Chair and President of the ICC-Bangladesh Mahbubur Rahman, Mir Nasir Hossain, president, FBCCI, Sayeeful Islam, president, DCCI, Anil Prabhakar

Tambay, country representative, Oxfam GB, Anwarul Alam Chowdhury, vice president, BGMEA, Farooq Sobhan, president BEI, Mahfuz Ullah, secretary general, CFSI, Rasheda K Chowdhury, director, CAMPE, Nasreen Awal Minto, president, WEAB, Nasreen Haq, country director, Action Aid,

Selima Ahmad, president, BWCCI, Nurul Islam, advisor, BILS, Mohidul Huque Khan, general secretary, BAPA, Mashuda Khatun Shefali, executive director, Nari Uddog Kendra, Rezaul Karim Chowdhury, secretary, SUPRO, MA Baset, director, BKMEA.

The CPD has taken the initiative to organise the international civil society conclave for advancing the interests of LDCs in the ongoing negotiations under the Doha Round of the WTO. The Forum will create an opportunity for the stakeholder groups to review the official work plan for the HK Ministerial and articulate LDC interests in the context of the current negotiations under the Doha Development Round. The Forum will be held in Dhaka on October 3-5 this year.

Action Aid International, Consumers International, Enda Tires Monde, EU-LDC Network, Oxfam International, South Asia Watch on Trade, Economics and Environment (SAWTEE), International Centre for Trade and Sustainable Development (ICTSD), and Southern and Eastern African Trade Information and Negotiations Institute (SEATINI) are the co-organisers of the Forum. About 45 international participants from more than 25 countries are expected to join the Forum.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Local Government Engineering Department
Office of the Executive Engineer
District: Sylhet

Memo No-LGED/XEN/SYL/5-285/2004/3933 Date: 11-09-2005

Invitation for Tender (Works)

Tender Notice Number: 35/2005-06

Sealed tenders are hereby invited from the eligible tenderers as defined in the tender documents for the undermentioned list of works as per terms and conditions stated below:

| Sl No | Name of upazila | Name of contract | Tender security (Tk) | Time for completion (days) | Price of tender documents (Tk) |
|-------------------------------------|---|--|----------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------------|
| SDRIDP (Phase-II) | | | | | |
| 01. | Kanaighat | Const. of 1x3.00x3.00m RCC box culvert on Haris Chowdhury road (Charipara-Naya road) Surma dyke-Nababi road (2nd call) | 8,000/- | 120 | 300/- |
| 02. | Kanaighat | Protection work (guide wall) of Shafiqul Hoque Chowdhury Atimkhana (2nd call) | 10,000/- | 120 | 300/- |
| 03. | Kanaighat | Imp. of Birdhol bazar-Lakhipur road from chainage: 00-500m (2nd call) | 10,000/- | 120 | 750/- |
| 04. | Golapganj | Imp. of Churbag-Chandanbag road from chainage: 00-1120m (2nd call) | 42,000/- | 120 | 750/- |
| 05. | Zakiganj | Imp. of Shah-Kashim Majar road from chainage: 510-1280m (2nd call) | 40,000/- | 120 | 750/- |
| Light Traffic bridge culvert | | | | | |
| 01. | Sadar | Const. of 21.00m long RCC Girder Bridge over Gaviour Khal near Blue Bird | 44,000/- | 120 | 750/- |
| 1. | Source of funds | SDRIDP (Phase-II)/Light Traffic bridge culvert (GOB) | | | |
| 2. | Date, time and place of pre-tender meeting | 19-09-2005, Time: 12.00noon and office of the undersigned. | | | |
| 3. | Last date, time and places of selling tender documents | 5-10-2005, Time: 4.00pm and a) Office of the undersigned. b) The Deputy Commissioner, Sylhet. c) The Superintendent of Police, Sylhet. d) The Project Director, SDRIDP, LGED, LGED Bhaban, Agargaon, Dhaka. e) The Executive Engineer, LGED, Moulvibazar. f) The Upazila Engineer, LGED, Sadar/Kanaighat/Golapganj/Zakiganj, Sylhet. | | | |
| 4. | Last date, time and places of receiving tender | 6-10-2005, Time: 12.00noon and a) The Deputy Commissioner, Sylhet. b) The Superintendent of Police, Sylhet. c) The Executive Engineer, LGED, Sylhet/Moulvibazar. d) The Upazila Engineer, LGED, Sadar/Kanaighat/ Golapganj/Zakiganj, Sylhet. | | | |
| 5. | Date, time and place of opening of tender | 6-10-2005, Time: 3.00pm and office of the undersigned. | | | |
| 6. | Tender shall be valid for a period of 60 days after bid opening and must be accompanied by the tender security specified above. The authority reserves the right to accept or reject any or all the tenders without assigning any reason whatsoever. Interested tenderer may obtain further information from the undersigned and purchase the tender documents in Cash/Treasury Chalan/Bank Draft from the places mentioned above. The tenderer or their authorised representatives are allowed to attend the opening of tenders. | | | | |

Executive Engineer
LGED, Sylhet

GD-1519