

Chinese products, technology fair draws huge crowd

WAHIDA MITU

A wide range of Chinese products have been put on display in the first-ever China Commodities and Technology Fair (CCTF) that began on Monday at the Bangladesh-China Friendship Conference Centre in the city.

China National Machinery and Equipment Import and Export Corporation (CMEC) organised the four-day fair to celebrate the 30th anniversary of establishing diplomatic relations between

China and Bangladesh.

Nine categories of products are being exhibited at 96 booths in the fair which will remain open for the visitors without any entry fee from 10:00am to 6:00pm until December 8.

The visitors are showing keen interest in different kinds of Chinese commodities and technologies such as textile machinery, power plants, garment accessories, electronic products, medical equipment, dyeing and finishing machinery, furniture that are on display.

Fabrics, machinery items and electronics products have attracts most

visitors.

"The participants are displaying some of the latest items that I have never seen before," said Rabbi Ahmed, a small businessman while visiting the fair. "I was looking for a latest machine to make plastic products and got one. But it is too expensive," he added.

"The visitors are showing special interest in electronics product and computer accessories such as pen-drive, MP3, MP4 and webcam," said Jessica Yan, a participant.

Most of the products put on display are not for sale. The products will be sold

through local agents or dealers on receiving orders from the buyers.

The organisers believe the fair will contribute a lot to increasing co-operation and exchange of views between the businesspeople of the two countries and promoting the three-decade old bilateral economic and trade relations.

They said the fair has created a good opportunity for the local businesspeople to meet their Chinese counterparts and explore the potential for business opportunities -- both export from Bangladesh and import from the Asian industrial giant China.

"This fair reflects the business and economy of the two countries," said Xu Jianchuan, deputy general manager of CMEC. "Till today we are doing business with each other at personal level and now we want to expand it by arranging this fair," he added.

Xu said China is interested to import some products from Bangladesh, apart from displaying their own products in the fair. A group of Chinese businessmen have come to Dhaka to import products from Bangladesh and talk with the local manufacturers and exporters.

China mainly imports raw materials like leather, cotton garment and fish from Bangladesh and Bangladesh imports different items including textiles, machinery and electronic products, cement, fertiliser, tyre, raw silk and maize from China.

"China is holding such a fair for the first time in Bangladesh. They want to organise this type of fair every year," said Reazuddin Mosharraf of WindMill, event organiser of the fair.

The diplomatic and trade relations between Bangladesh and China were established in 1975. In the last 30 years, the trade relations between the two countries have developed successfully with the steady increase in the trade volume.

The volume of trade between the two countries was \$3.06 million in 1975 and it increased to \$1.96 billion in 2004. From January to September this year, the trade volume was \$1.77 billion, marking a 31.7 percent growth over the same period last year, sources said.

Janata Tower remains unutilised for long

KAUSAR ISLAM AYON

Many government offices are cramped without adequate space, and the state-owned 11-storied Janata Tower in Karwan Bazar, which could be utilised, has been abandoned for the last five years.

Janata Tower was originally designed for 15-storeys and an estimate by the Public Works Department (PWD) states that each floor of 3,600 square feet can house at least three to four government directorates.

Minister for Housing and Public Works, Mirza Abbas told the Star City in January 2005 that the building would be taken into use within the current year.

The minister said that a proposal was sent to the finance ministry for allocation of funds for renovation, but no response has been received.

"We asked the Finance Ministry for Tk 14 crore to put up four more floors according to its original design," said the minister.

In 1990 only 11 storeys of the building were complete with four more left to be done.

But the government acquired the building in 2000, after the High Court convicted former president HM Ershad and his wife Raushan Ershad, in a corruption case regarding purchase of the land where the building was constructed.

After the acquisition, the work came to halt.

"We had an alternative proposal of Tk 5 crore for refurbishing the structure as it stands at present," said Abbas.

It was decided that four floors of the building be allotted to law ministry and the rest to other ministries that are facing a shortage of office space.



The Janata Tower at Karwan Bazar.

"The law ministry has agreed to provide some funds in exchange for space to house its offices," said the minister.

Since 1991 floating families have been occupying the building making it a high-rise slum. About four years ago, the government evicted these dwellers and allotted space for a Public Works Department office. But no steps have yet been taken to make use of the entire building by completing

the rest of the construction work. PWD Officials said that apart from completing construction work, roads around the building should be made usable and the wholesale kitchen market relocated. At present the Dhaka City Corporation the roads in front of the building as the Karwan Bazar.



Visitors to the China Commodities and Technology Fair make inquiries on a machine displayed.

10x3

10x2

5x3

5x3