

# Star BUSINESS

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## Dhaka travel mart kicks off today

### STAR BUSINESS REPORT

In a bid to tap the potential of Bangladesh's tourism sector and offer competitive tour packages to the local backpackers, a three-day international tourism fair styled 'AKTEL Dhaka Travel Mart-2007' begins at Sheraton Hotel today.

Altaf Ali Shekh, acting secretary to civil aviation and tourism ministry, is expected to inaugurate the fourth version of the fair being organised by The Bangladesh Monitor, a travel journal.

Besides offering competitive tour packages for travelling both at home and abroad, tour operators at the show will highlight attractive tourist spots in the country. Kazi Wahidul Alam, chairman of the travel mart and editor of the journal, said at a press conference in Dhaka yesterday.

A total of 43 organisations from 11 countries, including Bangladesh, will display their services and products at 60 stalls at the fair, which will remain open for all between 10am and 8pm everyday with a Tk20 entry fee.

The participating countries include Malaysia, United Arab Emirates, Nepal, Thailand, Singapore, Qatar, Kuwait, Hong Kong, Saudi Arabia, China and host Bangladesh.

Four national tourism bodies—Singapore Tourism Board, Malaysia Tourism, Nepal Tourism Board and Bangladesh Parjatan Corporation—along with private hospitality businesses, aviation and tourism companies and tour operators' organisations are taking part in the show.

Mobile phone operator AKTEL is the title sponsor of the event, while The Daily Star, Channel i and Radio Today are the media partners.

Asif Iqbal, head of Marketing of AKTEL, and Hasan Mansur, president of Tour Operators Association of Bangladesh, among others, spoke at the press conference.

## Ctg Customs now to be divided into 2 wings by June

### JASIM UDDIN KHAN

The enforcement of the government plan to separate the functions of Chittagong Customs House through making it into two divisions for imports and exports has now been deferred to June, according to the tax administration sources.

The separation was planned for implementation since April 1, 2007.

The stakeholders' mixed reaction to the plan, which is aimed at easing tremendous work pressure and ensuring optimum service to the Chittagong Port users, and the tax officials' pre-occupation with preparation of the next budget have caused such a deferment, the sources said.

"We actually were sure about commencement of the separation from April 1, but we are now under serious work pressure to prepare

the budget," a high official of the National Board of Revenue (NBR) told The Daily Star yesterday.

Meanwhile, different stakeholders apprehended a trouble of double administration after dividing the customs house into two wings.

Exporters demanded modernisation and automation of services before going for enforcement of the 'two-wing plan'.

A representative from QC Shipping in a recent meeting with the NBR said, "If the current customs clearance is required at both the wings of export and import, the port users would face much more hassles."

Shipping and clearing and forwarding agents also expressed their concern about the necessity of separate licence for both the export customs house and import customs house.



Kazi Wahidul Alam, chairman of 'AKTEL Dhaka Travel Mart-2007', speaks at a press conference in Dhaka yesterday to announce the schedule of the three-day fair beginning today at Sheraton Hotel.

PHOTO: STAR

## Undelivered cargos on auction at Ctg port

### STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Chittagong Customs authority in its biggest auction of recent time yesterday put some 300 containers of imported cargos, including motor vehicles of 126 different brands, on sale.

As per the customs rules, authorities can auction any imported cargo lying undelivered inside the port for more than 30 days.

A total of 1924 intended bidders, including 320 from Dhaka, had collected catalogues of the items, while 769 of them submitted schedules within the stipulated time that ended at 2:00pm yesterday, sources said.

Although motor vehicles of 126 brands were catalogued for sale, the customs authority later withdrew 35 of them upon submission of bills of entry by the importers concerned.

The United States is still Japan's

## China becomes Japan's top trade partner

### AFP, Tokyo

Japan said Wednesday that China became its top trading partner for the first time since World War II, unseating the United States in the past fiscal year despite strained ties between the Asian giants.

The new milestone came as Japan reported the first rise in its overall trade surplus for two fiscal years, and a sharp increase in March that underpinned optimism in the outlook for Asia's largest economy.

Japan's total trade with mainland China came to 25.43 trillion yen (214.8 billion dollars) in the year to March, against 25.16 trillion yen with the United States, the finance ministry said in a statement.

"This reflects the gradual shift of production by Japanese firms to China. I think the trend of growing trade with China will continue," said finance ministry official Koichi Nose.

The United States is still Japan's

largest export destination but Japanese exports to China have been growing in recent years, while imports are strong.

Including Hong Kong, China overtook the United States as Japan's biggest trading partner in 2004.

Japanese manufacturers have been shifting more of their production operations to China, seeking cheap labour costs and a foothold in the fast-growing Chinese economy.

"For Japan, a very large market has emerged next door," said Senshu University economics professor Hideo Ohashi.

The two economies have strong links through direct investment while the flow of goods has increased sharply, ensuring that trade relations between the two Asian giants are likely to remain strong, he added.

## CURRENCY

Following is Wednesday's (April 25, 2007) forex trading statement by Standard Chartered Bank

Sell	Buy	CURRENCY	Buy		
			TT/CLEAN	OD/SIGHT	DOC/OD/TRANSFER
TT/OD	BC	USD	69.5500	68.5500	68.5272
69.5200	96.2433	EUR	91.9598	91.9292	91.8679
96.2018	140.8527	GBP	135.6467	135.6015	135.5111
140.7919	59.1245	AUD	55.5118	55.4933	55.4563
59.0900	0.6011	JPY	0.5751	0.5749	0.5746
0.6009	58.8808	CHF	55.9181	55.8995	55.8622
58.8554	10.7989	SEK	9.7421	9.7388	9.7323
10.7942	63.1928	CAD	60.5512	60.5310	60.4906
63.1655	8.9176	HKD	8.7496	8.7467	8.7409
8.9137	47.0728	SGD	45.2028	45.1877	45.1576
47.0525	19.0832	AED	18.5135	18.5073	18.4950
19.0832	18.6912	SAR	18.1349	18.1289	18.1168
18.6831	13.3345	DKK	11.9994	11.9954	11.9874
13.3287	237.1657	KWD	235.4239	235.3477	235.1954
237.0613	40.76				

The forward rates are indicative only and fixed dated.

EXCHANGE RATES OF SOME CURRENCIES AGAINST US DOLLAR

Indian rupee	Pak rupee	Lankan rupee	Thai baht	Nor. kroner	NZ dollar	Malaysian ringgit
60.79	109.965	34.810	5.9400	0.7445	3.42	

## STOCK



BASIC Bank Ltd opened its 30th branch at Karwan Bazar in Dhaka yesterday. Chairman of the bank Md Nurul Amin, Managing Director AH Ekbal Hossain, and directors, among others, were present at the inaugural function.

PHOTO: BASIC BANK