

Star BUSINESS

E-mail: business@thedailystar.net

Singer new distributor of Samsung

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Samsung Electronics has appointed Singer Bangladesh as its distributor to strengthen its consumer electronics business in Bangladesh.

A memorandum of understanding (MoU) was signed between the two companies to this effect in Dhaka yesterday. SH Oh, president and chief executive officer (CEO) of Samsung India Electronics Ltd, and Gavin Walker, president and CEO of Singer Asia, signed the MoU on behalf of their organisations.

Under the deal, all types of Samsung's consumer electronic products will be available at all the Singer's outlets across the country.

Electra International is the other distributor for Samsung consumer electronic products in Bangladesh.

With the appointment of Singer, Samsung's consumer electronic products such as colour televisions, DVD players, refrigerators, microwave ovens, washing machines, air conditioners and audio systems business will be strengthened considerably.

Speaking at the MoU signing ceremony, Ravinder Zutshi, deputy managing director of Samsung India, said the Samsung will leverage Singer's strong channel presence to reach out to a larger base of customers in Bangladesh.

"We plan to double our business in Bangladesh this year, based on our strengthened product portfolio and enhanced channel and service network," he said.

Gavin Walker said Singer has a network of 230 retail outlets across the country from where Samsung products will be retailed in Bangladesh.

Mahbub Jamil, chairman and managing director of Singer Bangladesh, was also present at the function.

Tata expresses concern over large scale economic disparity

PTI, New Delhi

Industry doyen Ratan Tata Wednesday warned that "absence of strong unified ideological construct in parliament" would hinder the impressive growth momentum, while expressing concern over large scale economic disparity.

Tata, under whose stewardship, India's numero uno group is on an expansion binge including through large scale global acquisitions, told PTI on the occasion of Independence Day: "In its 60th year, clearly India's time has come.

Licensing for freight forwarders agreed upon

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

A joint meeting of the National Board of Revenue (NBR), freight forwarders and cargo agents in Dhaka yesterday reached a decision on formulating freight forwarding rules in order to bring discipline to the export-import trade and ensure tariffs from the sector.

All the concerned agencies including representatives from International Freight Forwarders Association of Bangladesh (IFFAB), Association of Cargo Agents Bangladesh (ACAB), Chittagong Port Authority and Customs representatives attended the meeting at the NBR auditorium.

As per the understanding reached at the meeting, the freight forwarders will withdraw their writ petitions against the statutory regulatory order (SRO) issued by the NBR in 2006 to ensure implementation of a licensing system for the freight forwarders.

All the freight forwarders have

to pay Tk 5,000 non-refundable application fees to get license and then they are to pay Tk 50,000 as license fee and Tk 10,000 renewal fees biennially.

Besides, the freight forwarders will provide a Tk 3 lakh bank guarantee, which would be forfeited if they violate their licensing conditions.

The joint meeting also decided that the foreign freight forwarders operating in Bangladesh shall have to invest US\$ 5 lakh in the country to set up business and must get permission from the Board of Investment.

According to the understating, a joint venture company has to invest minimum US\$ 1 lakh here and the foreign company cannot own more 49 percent of that venture.

The NBR will prepare a minute of what was agreed among the parties and the minute will be sent to the finance ministry for its approval Monday.

Following the ministry's approval,

the minute will be sent to the Law Commission for vetting. If the commission okays it, then the draft law will be distributed among the freight forwarders and cargo agents.

"We will issue the SRO when the freight forwarders withdraw their writ petitions," Badiur Rahman, chairman, NBR said, emphasizing immediate enforcement of such rules to have more tariffs from the sector.

At present, the sector is plagued by financial indiscipline making it easy to use as a cover for illegal transactions.

Under the new proposals, the government aims to ensure that money earned by freight forwarders abroad is returned to Bangladesh.

NBR Sources said due to lack of licensing, freight forwarders had been able to operate without any legal obligation or government control.

Significant improvement in Ctg port activities

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Operational activities of the Chittagong Port improved significantly as 1,51,605 TEUs (Twenty Equivalent Unit) containers were handled at the Chittagong Container Terminal (CCT) in the last five months.

Loading and unloading of containers took place in 143 ships during this period since a private operator, SAIF Powertec Limited, started handling operation at the CCT in March, according to a press release issued yesterday.

Of them, the highest number of 34,790 TEUs containers of 34 vessels was handled in July, 24,148 TEUs containers of 24 vessels were handled in March, 30,766 TEUs containers of 30 vessels in April, 32,696 TEUs containers of 29 in May and 29,205 TEUs of 27 vessels were handled in June.

"All out support from the Joint Forces and strict monitoring by the Chittagong Port Authority helped infuse dynamism into the port activities," said SAIF Powertec Managing Director TMR Amin.

Citibank inks correspondent deal with UCB

Citibank, NA Bangladesh and United Commercial Bank Ltd have recently signed a correspondent banking agreement, which will enable Citibank to expand its distribution channel in the country, says a press release.

The agreement will facilitate transactions of the valued clients of Citibank through the 84 branches of UCB across the country.

Md. Ruhul Amin, executive vice president of UCB, and Khondoker Rashed Maqsood, director and head of Global Transaction Services of Citibank, signed the agreement on behalf of their respective organisations in presence of Hamidul Huq, managing director, UCB, and Mamun Rashid, managing director and Citigroup country officer, Bangladesh.

SKorea becomes biggest investor in Vietnam

AFP, Seoul

South Korea has become the biggest foreign direct investor in Vietnam thanks to its involvement in building new towns and leisure facilities, a state trade agency said Thursday.

At the end of July its direct investment reached 10.33 billion dollars, according to the Korea Trade-Investment Promotion Agency. Singapore was second with 9.69 billion dollars, followed by Taiwan with 9.1 billion dollars, it said.

In the first seven months of this year alone, South Korea's investment in the country stood at 1.43 billion dollars compared to Singapore's 1.31 billion dollars, the agency said.

Vietnam has become one of South Korea's biggest business partners since they normalised relations in 1992.

Bilateral trade soared to 4.85 billion dollars last year from 490 million dollars in 1992, according to South Korean figures.

Non-tariff trade barriers for shrimp exports to EU, USA discussed

Bangladesh Shrimp and Fish Foundation (BSFF) held a meeting with Humayan Kabir, Bangladesh ambassador to the USA, in Dhaka recently.

At the meeting various non-tariff trade barriers for Bangladesh's shrimp and fish export to the EU and USA were discussed, says a press release.

Mahmudul Karim, executive director of BSFF, made a presentation on the non-tariff trade rules relevant to the shrimp-based industry and emphasised the need for compliance of the rules at all levels of the food chain to sustain the global competition.

The meeting was also attended by Feroz Ahmed, secretary of commerce ministry, Syed Ataur Rahman, secretary of fisheries and livestock ministry, Prof MA Taslim, chairman of Bureau of Economics Research, Elias Ahmed, managing director of Sadharan Bima Corporation, Mahfuzul Haque, chief controller of Insurance, Mokammel Hossain, director general, Department of Fisheries, and Maqsudur Rahman, senior-vice president of Bangladesh Frozen Foods Exporters Association.

THIRD GENERATION CELLPHONE Ericsson suggests moderate license fee

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

The government should consider a moderate license fee for Third Generation mobile phone, suggested a top executive of Ericsson, the world's leading telecom equipment manufacturer and supplier.

"The licence fee for 3G should be moderate," said Karl Henerick Sundstrom, executive vice president and group chief finance officer (CFO) of Ericsson, at a press conference at the Hotel Pan Pacific Sonargaon in Dhaka yesterday.

However, the Bangladesh Telecommunications Regulatory Commission, the telecom watchdog in the country, still has no plan to issue license for a 3G service that offers high-speed voice and data transfer speed for mobile phones.

Karl Henerick said Ericsson is

working with the BTRC to do 3G trials to provide broadband connectivity in rural Bangladesh.

The Ericsson CFO also highlighted various aspects of Ericsson's operation and activities in Bangladesh.

Addressing the press conference, Arun Bansal, managing director of Ericsson in Bangladesh, said his company is negotiating with some mobile phone operators in the country to obtain managed service contract.

Ericsson is currently providing the managed service to the network of Warid telecom in Bangladesh.

Ericsson's managed services range from designing, building, operating and managing day-to-day operations of a customer's network to providing network coverage and capacity on demand.

China calls for global co-op to improve food safety

XINHUA, Washington

China Wednesday called for global cooperation to improve food safety, noting that it along with product quality are an international problem.

"No country's products are immune to problems," said Zhao Baoqing, a spokesman for the Chinese embassy in Washington.

But Zhao added that China will intensify food safety supervision and punish all those responsible for supplying tainted food.

"Food safety and product quality is an international problem, and is also something that all countries pay attention to," said Zhao, who previously worked for China's product quality watchdog, the General Administration of Quality Supervision, Inspection and Quarantine (AQSIQ).

Zhao admitted that China's food safety needs improving, but said that the vast majority of Chinese exports to United States are of high quality.

"During 2004 to 2006, more than 99 percent of Chinese food to the US met the US safety and quality standards," he said.

The official said the Chinese government has been actively cooperating with other countries to seek solutions to issues of food safety and product quality.

"Quality and safety questions are something that every country has to deal with," Zhao reiterated, adding that more international cooperation and less finger-pointing was needed.

Indian electric-car maker gears up for global market

AFP, Bangalore, India

At first sight, it looks like a toy car that has grown big on steroids, but a closer look at the two-door hatchback reveals a cable connecting it to a power outlet in a Bangalore shopping mall car park.

Some 2,000 of these zero-polluting city commuters have been put on the roads in India and

Europe, including 600 in London, in the six years since Reva Electric Car Co. turned commercial.

The test-marketing phase is now over and the Reva, as the electric car is known, is ready to leap into the mass market for environment-friendly vehicles, said Chetan Maini, deputy chairman and chief technical officer.

The Bangalore-based company hopes to sell 3,000 units this year and 30,000 next, said the 37-year-old mechanical engineer in an interview.

"In the last five years, we innovated and improved and developed the core technologies," said Maini, who studied in Michigan and Stanford universities. "We got the partners and we got the funds.



Gavin Walker, president and CEO of Singer Asia, addresses the MoU signing ceremony between Samsung Electronics and Singer Bangladesh at a city hotel yesterday. Mahbub Jamil, chairman and managing director of Singer Bangladesh (extreme left), SH Oh, president and chief executive officer (CEO) of Samsung India Electronics Ltd (2-R) and Ravinder Zutshi, deputy managing director of Samsung India, were present.



Karl Henerick Sundstrom, executive vice president and group chief finance officer (CFO) of Ericsson, speaks at the press conference at a city hotel yesterday. Arun Bansal, managing director of Ericsson in Bangladesh (extreme right), was also present.