



# Exhibits galore at flagship fair

REFAYET ULLAH MIRDHA

The number of people crowding the 15th Dhaka International Trade Fair (DITF) and participating local and foreign companies is a testimony to the resilient Bangladesh economy.

Many predicted a thin turnout because the whole world is yet to recover fully from recession. But purchasing trends say otherwise.

Bangladesh shows some positive macroeconomic indicators -- remittance inflow crossing a \$10 billion mark, exports in excess of \$15.57 billion and the central bank reserve at over \$10 billion.

The fair visitors, especially women, were busy purchasing foreign crockery items, textile products, cosmetics and jewellery.

The number of window-shoppers is also aplenty at the month-long fair, inaugurated by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at Agargaon in the capital on the first day of the new year.

DITF, since its beginning in January 1995, has been an opening for entrepreneurs to expand business, as foreign and local buyers visit such an exposition.

Overseas market diversification is another scope the participating entrepreneurs can cash in on.

The fair presents a wide range of products -- woven garments, knitwear, jute and jute products, frozen foods, leather and leather goods, footwear, handicrafts, agro-based products, light-engineering products, including bicycles.

Besides ceramic tableware, home textiles, household appliances, textile products, pharmaceuticals, chemical products, machinery, agriculture and gardening equipment, chemical and allied products are also put on display in the trade show.

Any visitor will also find there cosmetics and beauty aids, dairy products and equipment, electrical and electronic items, food stuff and grocery, gift and novelty items, furniture, building materials, sports goods, sanitary ware, toys and stationery, watches, clocks and jewellery.

DITF's special feature is participation of the highest number of local and foreign textiles and clothing companies, the country's main export earning sector.

Bangladesh fetched \$12.347 billion from exports of readymade garment (RMG) products (woven and knitwear) in fiscal 2008-09, registering 15.26 percent growth over the previous year, despite recession.

Of the clothing items, sales of jamdanis and printed cotton saris, boutique items, three-piece suits for women and lungi reached the peak, especially among mid-income groups.

Children have a liking towards footwear, toys and food items.

"So far, sales are good. We are happy with the presence of customers at our stall," said a salesman at Standard Lungi and Sari stall.

He said the demand for printed saris and traditional lungi is high among busy office-going people and businessmen, as they do not otherwise have the time to buy those items from shopping malls.

A section of customers alleged that many companies were selling cheap Chinese imitations, labelling them Thailand, India and Bangladesh.

Talking to The Daily Star, a salesman at Thai Collection, which displays shoes and other leather products, said their sales were good, as demand for their products is high.

"DITF is an opportunity for us to sell a hefty portion of our imported products," he added.



Visitors emerge from the 15th Dhaka International Trade Fair 2010. The annual event has gained popularity among urban people.

In a statement, Shahab Ullah, vice chairman of Export Promotion Bureau, the organiser of the fair, said the One District One Product initiative for product diversification will gain pace through the trade show.

He said export earnings of Bangladesh are not that considerable, as it depends on a few major products only. Bangladesh

exported 171 items to 189 countries in FY 2008-09 and earned \$15.57 billion.

Among the export items, only six such as woven garments, knitwear, frozen foods, jute goods, leather and chemical products contributed about 87 percent to total exports. The remaining 165 items accounted for only 13 percent, Shahab Ullah said.

"To maintain pace with globalisation and compete, dependence on such a limited number of products is not desirable and will never be a good strategy for overcoming the problems related to exports," he said.

A total of 476 national and international companies are participating in the fair to showcase their

products, of which, 28 pavilions came from 10 different countries. The major foreign participating companies are from India, Pakistan, China, Sri Lanka, Iran, Malaysia and Thailand.

The show is scheduled to conclude January 31.

reefat@thedailystar.net

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# Taking benefits of recession

MD HASAN

The global economic meltdown has brought expectations among the local exhibitors at Dhaka International Trade Fair to get a good volume of export orders from foreign buyers.

Some foreign traders have already shown interest to buy products from Bangladesh and sell their products to the country as well.

The buyers from UK, Sweden, Korea, China, Iran, Italy Malaysia, Singapore and Japan are visiting the month-long fair, and looking for Bangladesh's jute products, leather items, ceramic wear and textile products.

Jenny's Leather has received queries from Chinese, Korean and Japanese buyers.

"We are hopeful about getting export orders from them," said Shamim Ahmed, area manager of the company.

He said the buyers are seeking quality products at lower prices, as there is a demand for low-price products at the global market due to recession.

The buyers from Iran and Yemen have collected samples of around 20,000 products from Bexi Fabrics, a concern of Beximco Group.

Mohammad Zakaria, an offi-

FAIR'S HOT PICKS				FAIR'S HOT PICKS			
Company	Products	Price Range	Special Offer	Company	Products	Price Range	Special Offer
Transcom Digital	108 types of products including cellphone, television, woven, freezer, DVD player	LCD TV 56": Tk 5,95,000 LCD TV 32": Tk 75,000	Anything from the stall through scratch card	Walton	Television, freezer, motorcycle, air conditioner, microwave oven, generator	TV: Tk 8,400 to Tk 69,900 Motorcycle: Tk 67,400 to Tk 99,700	LCD TV, motorcycle, cash discount & more on gift card for every purchase
Otobi	Furniture and decors.	Bed: Tk 19,168 (at fair) and Tk 22,550 (regular price)	5 to 50 percent discount on every product	Monno Ceramics	Porcelain and bone china dinner sets along with some special limited editions for the fair	Special dinner set: Tk 75,000 to Tk 150,000. Others range from Tk 3,000 to Tk 12,500	Necklace and more on gift card for Bone China sets
Farr Ceramics	Ceramics tableware	62 pieces special dinner set: Tk 105,000. Low-priced dinner set: Nearly Tk 5,000	Rates are subject to change on request	Banglalion	Wimax services, Wimax modems	Highest package: Tk 15,000 for 5mbps and lowest package: Tk 600 for 128kbps	Buy service during DITF 2010, pay for January and enjoy for free in February
Euro Asia Foreign Zone	All household items, from earrings to carpet	Carpet (Highest 8'X11"): Tk 30,000. Carpet (lowest 4'X6"): Tk 2,500	Discount on request	Partex	Furniture, door, doorframe	Dressing Table: Tk 7,395 (for fair), Double bed: Tk 17,183 (for fair) and Tk 20,215 (regular)	5 percent discount on doors and doorframes in the fair

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cial of Bexi Fabrics, said the buyers are looking around. "We expect to get a good volume of orders from them at the last minute visit."

The 15th Dhaka International Trade Fair (DITF)-2010 organised by Export Promotion Bureau

(EPB) and the commerce ministry expects more export orders this time than the last two years. Bangladesh got a poor response at the last two shows because of global recession.

Export orders in 2006 were worth Tk 24.68 crore, which came

down to Tk 22.6 crore in 2008 and Tk 19.91 crore in 2009.

"We are hopeful about getting significant orders this year," said Abdur Rahman, director (Policy and Planning) of EPB.

"We believe global recession will push the buyers to knock

Bangladesh market for diversified products," he said.

Business delegations from Hong Kong and Sri Lanka will visit the fair soon, Rahman said.

Sweden-based Greensmile of Scandinavia AB expressed interest to buy jute products from

Bangladesh, according to EPB.

Iran is also looking for Bangladeshi products.

Iran has a very big market. "I think market share of Bangladesh in Iran has decreased recently, Bangladesh should increase its export to Iran to get back its share," said Ali Mass Aeli, a visitor from Iran.

Walton has got queries from the Korean exporters who expressed interest to sell some materials for locally made Walton refrigerator, said Md Mosharof Hossain, senior marketing manager of the company.

However, some DITF exhibitors are more interested in selling to the local customers.

"We haven't got queries from foreign buyers yet. But we are happy with the local sales," said Rashedul Yeazdani, executive of Otobi, a local furniture maker.

Fit Elegance stall was completely crowded with the young people as the company offers a blazer and trousers at only Tk 4,000. Golam Rabbani, branch manager of the company, said so far no foreign visitors have come to their stall.

"But the local sales are going up day by day," he said.

hasan@thedailystar.net

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## IN IMAGES



Women walk past a display of saris at a traditional clothes stall.



A highly decorated pavilion of Pran Group at the fair.



Sales persons wait for customers at a stall of fancy jute bags.



Visitors take a break near a fountain on the fair premises. The pavilion of Transcom Digital is seen in the background.



A stall attendant of Bestway Power Tech Ltd briefs visitors about a solar cooker.

PHOTO: SHAWKAT JAMIL and SHAFIQU ALAM