

International Business News

Harley-Davidson opens first Indian dealership

AFP, New Delhi

Harley-Davidson has launched its first Indian dealership as it pitches the "freedom of the open road" in a nation with some of the world's most congested traffic, the US company said Saturday.

Harley-Davidson, the iconic heavyweight motorcycle maker, launched its first outlet in the southern city of Hyderabad on Friday and plans to open more across the country, the company said in an emailed statement.

"We look forward to initiating a new era of motorcycling," said Anoop Prakash, managing director of Harley-Davidson India.

The Milwaukee-based company, whose brand was made famous in the movie "Easy Rider", is using the slogan "Hear the Roar!".

Prakash said bike is well suited for Indian roads due to its weight and hulking design, adding that the company plans to launch in other cities before the end of the year, including capital New Delhi and financial hub Mumbai.

But while India is the world's second-largest motorcycle market, most sales are of small, inexpensive bikes that can weave through traffic in India's clogged cities easier than a 1500cc Harley "Fat Boy".

India expects bumper harvest to ease food prices

AFP, New Delhi

India expects bumper foodgrain production this year that should help contain inflation after last year's worst drought in decades drove up prices, Agriculture Minister Sharad Pawar said Friday.

Foodgrain production slid by seven percent in the crop year to June 2010 to 218.19 million tonnes from a record 234.47 million tonnes the previous year due to the severe drought, the worst in 37 years.

But this year's monsoon, which sweeps across the subcontinent from June to September and accounts for about 80 percent of the rainfall India receives, has already covered the entire country ahead of schedule.

"With the way sowing operations are going and reports of a good monsoon from the states, we're likely to have a bumper crop production this year," Pawar told reporters in New Delhi.

India is the world's second-biggest producer and consumer of rice after China. Summer crops such as rice, sugar cane, cotton and oilseeds are sown in July and harvested from October.

Pawar added that the expected good harvest should help check food inflation, now at 12.63 percent, as well as overall inflation which was running at 10.16 percent in May.



Indian farm labourers plant paddy seedlings in a field near Dholka, 30km from Ahmedabad yesterday. Farmers in the western Indian state of Gujarat are expecting a bumper harvest due to recent rainfall.

YouTube to invest \$5m to fund video-makers

AFP, San Francisco

YouTube announced Friday that it will invest five million dollars in promising video-makers.

"Our goal is to catalyze the creation of new ideas and production models from some of our most innovative and original content partners," said George Stropoulos, partner development manager at Google-owned YouTube.

"We've been amazed by the creativity and resourcefulness of many of our partners," Stropoulos said. "Some, operating on shoestring budgets, have been able to produce incredible videos, generate substantial revenues and command an audience that rivals that of network television."

"Despite their success, many partners lack the resources and deep financial backing available to studio-backed production houses," he said.

"The goal of YouTube Partner Grants is to act as a catalyst by infusing additional funds into the production budgets of a small group of YouTube partners who are at the forefront of innovation," he said.

Worst of crisis is over: ECB chief economist

AFP, Frankfurt

The European Central Bank's chief economist said Friday that the worst of the eurozone's economic crisis was over but warned other major economies their policies were unsustainable.

Juergen Stark told reporters on the sidelines of a bank conference that "it seems that the worst is over" given that ECB loan operations came off smoothly at the beginning of July and economic indicators show solid growth in much of the 16-nation bloc.

"The most recent economic data is confirming that the recovery will continue," Stark said.

"We have entered a new phase in the sovereign debt crisis here in the euro area but which is a global phenomenon," he added.

COLUMN

The ex-factor

SARWAR AHMED

As the bus took a late evening break at a restaurant during our journey to Bogra, we wanted to eat light as dinner wasn't too far off. We asked the young boy who waited on us, what was available. Off he went reciting rapid-fire, a list of tummy filling, yummy items. Anything light to eat? I asked. A chicken sandwich he suggested with a big smile, though a chicken kebab would be more palatable, he went on. So we settled for the kebab, which was done well and did taste more of spices than of chicken meat. Russel, as he was being called, brought in just the right sized mineral water bottle so there wasn't any waste. The hot cup of tea followed promptly. All said and done, with Russel's attention to details, the stoppage was a pleasant experience, quite unlike another experience I had on a similar journey.

It was in the middle of an afternoon as the bus began its journey from Bogra to Dhaka. The bus' air-conditioning was an apology, as soon enough, the concentrated smell of sweating passengers permeated the enclosed bus interiors. The bus supervisor was spraying an air freshener every so often, but to no avail as the discontented passengers only sweated more in the poorly air-conditioned breathing space. Eventually, the bus stopped at its designated restaurant. As if gasping for fresh air, passengers were literally running over each other to get out in the open. In the cool ambience of the restaurant, I asked for the usual afternoon tea I normally have. Each time I asked the waiter, he would say, coming sir. Waiting for 20 minutes, the tea never arrived. I am sure by now, you too would not like to avail this bus or the restaurant.

This is what I call the ex-factor. It drives your customers away from you. When you treat your customers with disdain, you will be paid in kind.

The other favourite trick I have found companies resort to is warranties. In our Bogra Learning and Development Centre, we put in a home theatre music system of an internationally well-reputed European brand. Before the annual warranty ran out, the system malfunctioned. It has been months now, the system has not been repaired, returned, or replaced. We call this organisation religiously once a week, to no



A view of an airport. Salespersons at the duty-free desk at any airport may be good at selling their stuff but what remains missing is the after-sales support.

avail. So be careful with warranties.

I had a bitter experience with the same brand when I bought an electric beard trimmer. During a stopover in Dubai, I chose this brand over others and paid a premium, because of its international warranty. Unfortunately the trimmer malfunctioned and, since I had the international warranty, I asked the local representative to help me out. Sorry, they can't was the prompt reply.

Well, I thought, since this is an international company, I can ask for an online solution. So I went online explaining my problem and asking for a solution. Pat came an automated reply, we will reply within four working days. If you haven't guessed it, the reply never came.

I happened to be passing through Dubai again before the warranty year was out and I went over to the Dubai International Airport Duty Free warranty desk. I showed the malfunctioning trimmer with the money receipt. The so-called customer services representative quickly retorted, your war-

ranty is over. Showing him the signed, sealed international warranty, he had the same story, no we cannot repair or replace. As a customer, do you think I will ever buy this particular brand again?

So be wary of these ex-factors. If you promise, live and deliver the promise, if you cannot, do not make the promise in the first place.

I usually find businesses very good at selling their stuff but what remains missing is the after sales support. We seem to think this extremely important factor of customer experience to be a bother and as such not to bother about it. There is hardly any process defined of how to handle customer queries or complaints. So who ever unluckily picks up the phone, tries to parry the customer with hems and haws, and the worse case being, blaming the customer for the problem. In Bangladesh of course, you need to find your connections, be it relatives, even distant ones, friends, friends of friends to get anything done.

Each customer contact is a 'moment of truth', a phrase made famous by Jan Carlzon, former president of Scandinavian Airline Systems (SAS). Carlzon says that any time a passenger comes into contact with an SAS employee is a moment of truth. It can be an online booking, a call to make a reservation, airport check in, in flight experience or luggage handling. As Carlzon explains, "Nothing is more fragile than the fleeting contact between a customer and an employee on the front lines. When you establish contact, that's when you establish SAS."

This is true whether it is your employee, product or your service. Each time a customer comes in contact with an employee, your product or service is a moment of truth, whether this will translate into customer satisfaction and continuous business or whether this moment of truth will be the ex-factor, a customer lost forever.

The writer is the managing director of Syngenta Bangladesh Ltd.

Europe woes could hit recovery of Indian tech firms

REUTERS, Bangalore

India's leading information technology exporters should report robust quarterly sales, thanks to improving demand from their mainstay financial clients, but Europe's debt crisis and rising salaries could cap their outlook.

Tata Consultancy Services, Infosys Technologies and Wipro Ltd face uncertainty on orders from Europe -- the second-biggest market for the sector after the United States.

"There has been no major impact on volume growth due to the crisis," said Harit Shah, an analyst with brokerage Kavya Stock Broking. "It could have an impact going forward, especially due to the euro. We will have to watch for what the management has to say."

Indian software services firms are ramping up investments to grow their market share in Europe, which accounts for about a third of their revenue. The US contributes more than half.

Research firm Forrester said in a report last week that Europe's volatile economic situation and uncertainty about corporate IT budgets would result in possible delays or cancellations of some outsourcing projects.

Analysts expect Infosys, which sets the tone for India's \$60 billion outsourcing sector and counts BT Group and Goldman Sachs among its clients, to edge up its dollar revenue growth forecast for 2010/11 to 17-19 percent from the 16-18 percent estimated by the company in April.

Investors will focus on management comments on deal flows, the outlook for pricing and technology spending by their clients.

Growing competition from IBM, Accenture and Hewlett-Packard also pose a risk for the industry, which manages complex computer networks and maintains technology operations for Fortune 500 customers.

On Friday, Infosys shares rose as much as 2 percent to a record high of 2,882 rupees (\$62) on optimism about its results.

"The indications we are getting is the pricing environment is stable and improving and the volume growth is good," said Jayesh Shroff, fund manager at SBI Mutual Fund.

"Of course, the macro headwinds are there. America is still improving, Europe is in trouble. But the demand from corporates has improved."

Last month, Accenture posted better-than-expected results, indicating continued business momentum.

Indian IT firms are boosting hiring and have raised salaries by 10 to 20 percent on average to keep staff from being poached by global rivals on strong demand in outsourcing.

Brokerage Macquarie said profit margins at Infosys and Tata Consultancy could drop by 200 basis points and 250 basis points, respectively, in the June quarter due to the wage increases.



Pleasure of team building! "The MTB Management Trainee Batch of 2010"

Mutual Trust Bank Ltd. (MTB) is a fast expanding and well-diversified bank in the country. It has an admired corporate governance standard and unique corporate culture, based on a home-grown philosophy known as **MTB3V**. The Bank's vision is to be: **One of the best performing banks in Bangladesh, The bank of choice and A truly world-class bank.**

As part of realising its vision and mission, MTB is eager to enrich its human resources with extraordinarily talented and dynamic people. As a prerequisite, they must possess strong management abilities and have high potential to develop into future leaders of the banking industry in Bangladesh.

People applying for induction into "The MTB Management Trainee, Batch of 2010" must have the following qualifications and attributes:

- Requirements:**
- MBA/MBM/MSS/Masters degree in Economics, Mathematics, Statistics, Finance, Marketing, Computer Science, Human Resources, Law or any related discipline (to be decided by the bank) from a highly reputed university or educational institution anywhere in the world
  - Minimum CGPA should be 3.20 out of 4.00 or 4.00 out of 5.00 (no third division/third class in academic career is acceptable)
  - Very good spoken and written command over both the English and Bangla languages
  - Sound computer literacy
  - Keen interest in carving out a career in banking/financial services
  - Excellent interpersonal skills

- ▶ MTB is an equal opportunities employer and does not discriminate based on gender, religion, background or differently-abled person
- ▶ Any canvassing or influencing the selection process will result in automatic disqualification of the application

- Have demonstrated interest in extra-curricular activities
- Ability to work very hard, persevere, be enduring and willing to be posted anywhere in Bangladesh
- Age limit: Maximum upto 27 years (as on July 31, 2010)

- Offers:**
- Intensive orientation and induction program
  - Technical, motivational and leadership training programs, held both at home and abroad, to ensure you have the breadth and depth of skills to be a future leader
  - A high performance culture, where team members work with enthusiasm and pride, constantly seeking excellence
  - Fast track career to recognize pro-active and outstanding performers
  - An attractive compensation and benefits package with terminal benefits regarded as one of the best in the country
  - After successful completion of one year Management Trainee program, you will be appointed as a Senior Officer of the bank at any of its offices or branches

**Selection procedure:**  
Eligible candidates will first appear for a written examination. Applicants qualifying in the written examination will be required to face the subsequent stages of the selection process, which include interviews and finally a medical test.

**Application Procedure:**  
Interested candidates are requested to log on to [www.mutualtrustbank.com](http://www.mutualtrustbank.com) for completing the application form and submit it through MTB e-Recruitment System.

**Last Date of Application: July 31, 2010**



মিউচুয়াল ট্রাস্ট ব্যাংক লিমিটেড  
Mutual Trust Bank Ltd.

you can bank on us

Corporate Head Office:  
68 Dilkhusha C/A, Dhaka 1000.  
info@mutualtrustbank.com