

# United Airways to connect Bangkok

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Private carrier United Airways is set to start passenger service from Dhaka to Bangkok from June 9 as part of its recent move to expand international routes to a number of destinations.

For this, the carrier has bought an ATR-72 aircraft from Indonesia that was brought to Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport yesterday, increasing the strength of the airline's fleet to seven aircraft now.

The carrier will operate two

flights a week and will charge Tk 18,000 in Dhaka-Bangkok-Dhaka fare, including all taxes, which will be the lowest among local and foreign airlines, claimed officials of United Airways.

The new ATR-72 aircraft, configured with 64 economy seats, will primarily be used on Dhaka-Bangkok route, while it will also fly to regional destinations such as Kolkata and Delhi.

"We are ready to start passenger flights to Bangkok. The civil aviation ministry has approved our appeal to allow us to operate

on Dhaka-Delhi route, which we are hopeful about starting by July," said Mohammad Badrodduja Sagar, sales and marketing manager of the carrier.

The company is also likely to launch passenger flights to Jeddah from June 26 and to Singapore from the end of July, he said. To run operations to these destinations, United plans to buy two more Airbus-310-325 by the third quarter of this year.

Sagar said the carrier is ready with adequate aircraft, manpower and other technical prep-

arations to increase its international routes.

United Airways, the first listed airline in country's capital market, started its journey on July 10, 2007 with its maiden flight from Dhaka to Sylhet and it currently operates regular flights to all major domestic routes, including Chittagong, Cox's Bazar, Sylhet and Jessore.

The international operation of the airline began on September 24, 2008 with a flight to Kolkata. Later in 2009 it added five more international destinations such

as London, Dubai, Kuala Lumpur, Kathmandu and also connected Kolkata from Chittagong as well.

The company's authorised capital is Tk 1,000 crore, while the paid-up capital is Tk 210 crore, according to official data. In 2010, the company bagged a net profit of Tk 10.57 crore.

Tasbirul Ahmed Choudhury, chairman and managing director of United Airways, was present at the aircraft receiving ceremony at Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport.



**DIPON GROUP**  
Bangladesh's Dipon Group has recently received an international award, BIZZ 2011, from World Confederation of Businesses (World COB) at a programme in Italy for its success in engineering and construction works. Rashed Mahmud, chief executive officer of Dipon Group, and Jesus J. Moran, president and CEO of World COB, attended the programme.

## Uttara Bank re-elects vice chairman

STAR BUSINESS DESK

Iftekharul Islam has recently been re-elected vice chairman of Uttara Bank.

The election took place at the bank's 516th board meeting in Dhaka recently.



## Samsung unfolds stylish handset

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Samsung Electronics has launched a new handset, E2530, in Bangladesh yesterday.

"With the launch of E2530, we hope to further strengthen our leadership in the stylish folding phone category in the market of Bangladesh," said KH Lee, managing director of Samsung Electronics, at a launching ceremony at Dhaka Regency Hotel.

The phone has social networking applications, music and camera multimedia functions, which will certainly bring usability and enjoyment to users, Lee said.

The Tk 4,990 set features a 1.3 Mega pixels camera, video recording and a 3.5mm earphone that enhances the music experience. There are options of Facebook and Tweeter and free-of-charge network services with Bluetooth messenger. It boasts dual display -- two-inch large main display and one inch front cover display.

Specially designed for women, Samsung said the phone set comes in two colours -- red and white.

The head of Samsung Dhaka office's mobile division, Hasan Mehdi, said it is a stylish phone with ultra compact look. Among others, Sanghwa Song, Samsung's general manager for Dhaka, was also present.

## Singapore Airlines to set up new low-cost carrier

AFP, Singapore

Singapore Airlines (SIA) said Wednesday it will launch within one year a new budget airline using wide-body aircraft to tap into growing consumer demand for low-cost travel over longer distances.

SIA already runs a short-haul mid-price airline called SilkAir and owns 32.9 percent of budget carrier Tiger Airways but said it decided to establish the new subsidiary after "an extensive review and analysis" of the market.

It did not give a name for the future airline, saying more details will be announced "in due course" including its branding, services and routes.

"Operations are expected to begin within one year. The airline will be wholly owned by Singapore Airlines, but will be operated independently and managed separately from SIA," the company said in a press statement.

SIA said the new carrier will "enable the airline to serve a largely untapped new market and cater to the growing demand among consumers for low-fare travel."

The move will put the new carrier in competition with AirAsia X, the long-haul affiliate of Malaysian budget carrier AirAsia and British tycoon Richard



**BRAC BANK**  
Tamara Abed, director of BRAC Bank, and Syed Mahbubur Rahman, managing director, open the 250th ATM booth of the bank at Aarong Centre at Tejgaon in Dhaka on Tuesday. Mohammad Mamdudur Rashid, deputy managing director, was also present.



**CITYCELL**  
David Lee, chief operating officer of Citycell, and Mashrur Arefin, deputy managing director of City Bank, have recently signed a deal in Dhaka under which American Express credit cardholders will enjoy zero percent interest and extra benefits while purchasing Citycell Eyetrack package.

# US smart grid to cost billions, save trillions

REUTERS, New York

A planned modernisation of the US national power grid will cost up to \$476 billion over the next 20 years but will provide up to \$2 trillion in customer benefits over that time, according to industry experts.

The so-called "smart grid" will save energy, reduce costs and increase reliability by delivering electricity from suppliers to consumers using two-way communication that can control appliances, the charging of electric vehicles and the flow of power from renewable sources at customers' homes.

"The implementation of the smart grid is a continuous process. As new technology is developed and becomes cost effective, it is being used to find the most effective way to meet supply and demand," Matt Wakefield, smart grid program manager at the Electric Power Research Institute (EPRI) said in a conference call on Tuesday.

To make the power system of the future a reality, EPRI, a non-profit electric research and development company, said power companies need to invest between \$17 and \$24 billion a year over the next two decades. Much of those costs will be passed onto consumers.

"We need to tell power customers there is going to be an improved power system that will result in reduced costs even if they do not see an immediate reduction in their bill," said Clark

Gellings an EPRI Fellow.

By the year 2050, EPRI estimated the average electric bill will probably go up by about 50 percent if the smart grid is deployed. If not, Gellings said, the average electric bill could go up by almost 400 percent.

Some of the biggest technology firms in the world are competing to supply the smart grid infrastructure, including International Business Machines, General Electric, ABB, Siemens, Google, Toshiba, Cisco and Microsoft.

Last week, Japanese multinational Toshiba agreed to buy Swiss smart grid

company Landis+Gyr for \$2.3 billion.

The giant technology firms want to manufacture the devices and software needed to enable generating facilities to communicate with the equipment that uses electricity.

In addition to the giant technology firms, all sorts of firms in the power, renewable, appliance and auto industries can use the smart grid to interact with their customers.

Power retailers, like NRG and Consolidated Edison's ConEdison Solutions, can use the smart grid to sell more demand response and other services.

Appliance manufacturers, like Whirlpool and Haier Electronics, can sell more energy efficient appliances, and auto manufacturers, like Ford Motor and General Motors, can use the smart grid to power up their electric cars.

**The so-called "smart grid" will save energy, reduce costs and increase reliability by delivering electricity**

# India to oppose tariff harmonisation on Doha Round

PALLAB BHATTACHARYA, New Delhi

India will oppose the developed countries' attempt for harmonisation of tariffs between them and emerging economies at the informal Trade Ministers' Meeting on Doha Round of talks on an international trade agreement.

India, which will be represented by its Commerce and Industry Minister Anand Sharma at the meeting, is likely to push for protecting the gains already achieved in Doha round, and the country is determined that negotiations must continue to build on the progress already made.

India also made it clear that attempts to re-open issues on which a lot of progress has been made would be counterproductive.

With such a complex agenda to be negotiated amongst 154 members, the Doha Round cannot be rushed through. Much time and effort have gone into it over the last 10 years and the results must not be lost, Indian officials said yesterday.

Ahead of his visit to Paris for the meeting, Sharma said: "This is a good opportunity to discuss on what lies ahead in Doha, after the WTO director general and the negotiating chairs brought out the comprehensive reports of April 21. The reports map the progress made so far while pointing to the wide gaps that remain unresolved across all WTO issues."

India made it clear that reports by the WTO official and negotiating chairs are by no means revised negotiating texts and that are not meant to change the basis for future negotiations.

India views as unacceptable and shift-

ing of goal posts developed countries' efforts to rebalance the perceived "disparity" in the contribution between developed and emerging countries and to achieve, if not equalisation, a harmonisation of their tariffs.

Sectoral Initiatives were always intended to be a non-mandatory top-up to industrial goods access liberalisation. After the aggressive cuts by developing countries through the Swiss formula, it would be difficult to accept a mandatory top-up. "Developed countries must appreciate our sensitivities, our autonomous liberalisation, the development dimension and the impact on our local industries," Sharma added.

Sharma expressed concern over attempts to shift the discourse from development to purely mercantilist issues, most of them having scant relevance for developing countries.

"The Doha Development Agenda is one of the most ambitious attempts at ensuring that the issue of development is firmly at the core of the multilateral trading system. The critical interests to be served are those of protecting the food and livelihood security of farmers and vulnerable industries of the developing countries."

At the recent India-Africa Trade Ministers' Meeting in Addis Ababa also, the trade ministers emphasised the development mandate of Doha Round of negotiations and called for speedy conclusion of the round and the establishment of a strong multilateral system based on mutually beneficial and balanced outcomes in agriculture.



**IFIC BANK**  
SM Moniruzzaman, general manager of Bangladesh Bank, and Mohammad Abdullah, managing director of IFIC Bank, attend IFIC Bank's agriculture loan distribution programme at Ganna Union in Jhenidah recently. The bank through its Kaliganj SME/Agri branch disbursed the loan to 60 local flower growers.



**SWAPNO**  
Syed Alamgir, executive director of ACI Ltd, launches a programme to renovate all the outlets of the company's retail shop Swapno at the shop's Uttara outlet in Dhaka recently.

## Nokia to launch its first Window phone

REUTERS, Taipei

Nokia planned to launch its first smartphone using Microsoft's Windows Phone 7 at the end of the year, according to Taiwan's Commercial Times, which did not identify a source.

The newspaper also said Taiwanese handset contract maker Compal Communications was the sole company to receive orders for Nokia's Window phones and would start shipment in the fourth quarter.

Two models of Window phones were on Nokia's plan -- one with a full touch screen and another sleek one with a keypad.

The world's largest handset maker announced in February it would use Microsoft's Windows phone software in all of its smartphones, and said it would