

# Ctg trade fair to get permanent venue

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Chittagong

A permanent venue will be allocated for holding Chittagong International Trade Fair (CITF) in the port city soon, said the minister for environment and forest on Tuesday.

A 35-acre plot held by the Water Development Board in Halishahar area will be allotted for the purpose, Hasan Mahmud said.

Mahmud spoke as the chief guest while addressing the concluding ceremony of the 20th CITF 2012 at the pologround in Chittagong.

The minister appreciated the efforts of the leaders of Chittagong Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCCI) for arranging the fair for the 20th time, and said the show would help the chamber build the country's first World Trade Centre in the port city.

The showcase would provide the trad-

ers and businesspersons from home and abroad with an opportunity to enrich their business, said Murshed Murad Ibrahim, the CCCI president.

The main aim of the fair was to attract foreign investors and help local industries to improve the quality of their products, said Mahbul Alam, senior vice president of the chamber.

Later, Ibrahim distributed awards and certificates among the winners of the fair's participants in different categories.

In Premier Gold Pavilion category, Sanowara Group of Companies secured the first place while Hamko Industries Ltd bagged the award for best Mini Mega Pavilion.

The month-long fair began on February 24 and was scheduled to end on Saturday. But the CCCI put an end to the show to clear the ground for a rally of Awami League-led ruling alliance on March 28.

# Easier rules for migration, remittance on cards

UNB, Dhaka

The government is taking steps for Bangladeshi migrant workers to let them send up to \$500 dollars to the country without any fee, said the expatriates' welfare minister yesterday.

"Migration of workers and the flow of remittance are important for the country's economy," said Khandker Mosharraf Hossain at a meeting at his ministry with the officials of Bangladesh Labour wings abroad.

Remittance contributes around 13 percent to the GDP [gross domestic product]," he said

He asked the labour wing officials to work sincerely to increase the flow of remittance and resolve the problems of migrant workers.

Mentioning that around 80 lakh Bangladeshis are now working in different foreign countries, he also asked the officials to be more proactive to explore labour market abroad for more man-

power export.

The minister said the cost of migration from Bangladesh is much higher than that of other countries. "The migration cost shouldn't be higher than 2-4 months' salary of a worker."

Hossain directed the officials concerned to carefully examine the migration cost and the salary of the workers before approving their visas.

He also asked them to ensure security of women migrant workers and take steps so that they can communicate with their family members over phone any time without any hassle.

"You'll have to ensure that the recruiting agencies register their (women workers) names for insurance."

Terming the recent killing of Saudi Embassy official Khalaf Al Ali unexpected, the minister said it will not affect the country's labour market abroad.

The government is investigating the case sincerely and stern action will be taken after the investigation, he added.



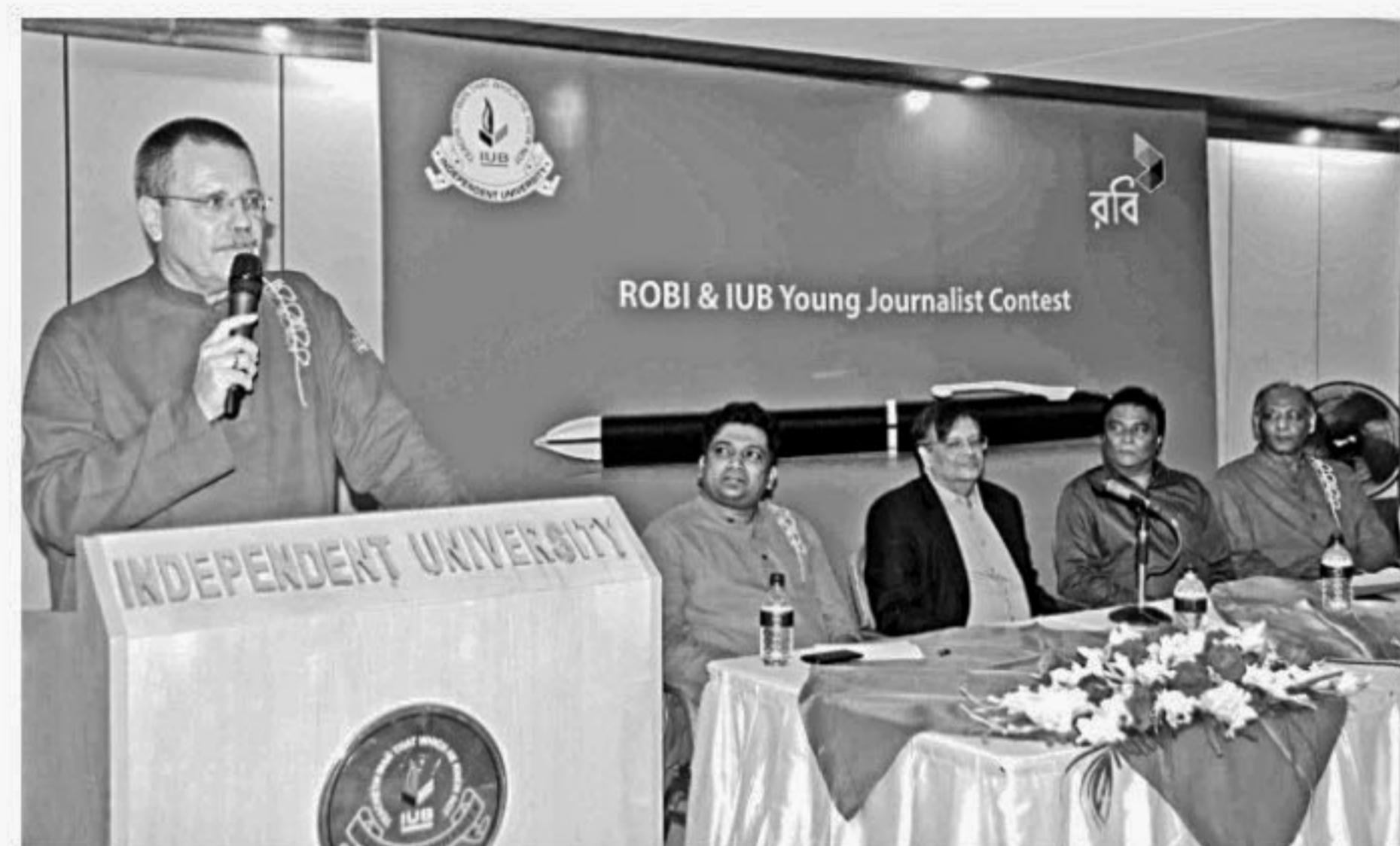
YUNUS CENTRE  
Jose Graziano da Silva, director general of UN's Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), shakes hands with Nobel Laureate Professor Muhammad Yunus after a meeting at the latter's office in Dhaka on Monday. Silva came with a request to Professor Yunus to join former Brazilian President Lula in an FAO committee on reducing hunger in the world. Silva and Yunus discussed various social business ventures in operation, particularly in Brazil.

**ANNUAL MARKETING & SALES CONFERENCE 2011**  
Venue: Bangabandhu International Conference Centre, Agargaon, Sher-E-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka. Date: March 21, 2012

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The ACME Laboratories Ltd.  
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Nasir-Ur-Rahman Sinha, chairman of ACME Laboratories, and Mizanur Rahman Sinha, managing director, attend the Annual Marketing and Sales Conference 2011 of the company at Bangabandhu International Conference Centre in Dhaka yesterday.



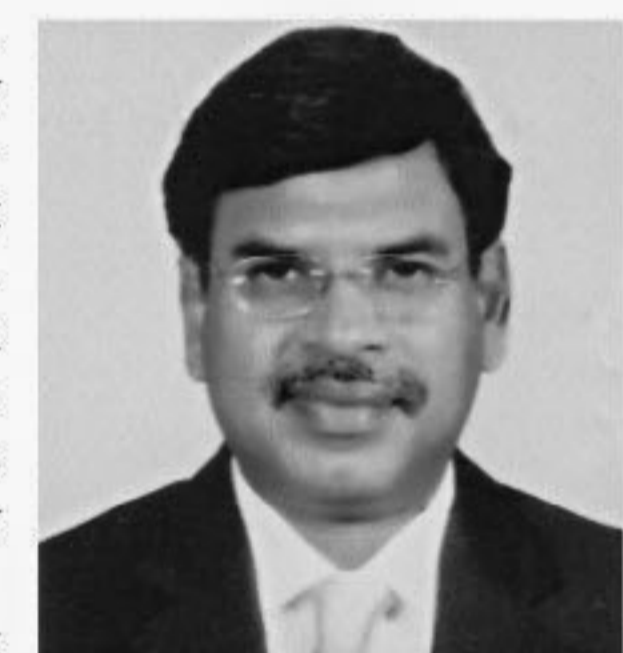
ROBI  
Michael Kuehner, managing director of Robi Axiata Ltd, speaks at the launch of an event -- Robi-IUB Young Journalist Contest 2012 -- at the Independent University campus in the capital yesterday. Professor M Omar Rahman, vice chancellor of the university, was also present.

# Garments accessories makers assoc re-elects president

STAR BUSINESS DESK

Rafez Alam Chowdhury has recently been re-elected as the president of Bangladesh Garments Accessories and Packaging Manufacturers and Exporters Association, the body said in a statement.

The election took place at the association's meeting at Kakrail in the capital recently, according to the statement.



# A great saver for textile units

FROM PAGE B1

During January-September of 2011, the company produced 14 percent more fabrics than the same period a year ago, but consumed gas, electricity and water less by 18 percent, 13 percent and 13 percent respectively.

"Financial savings were nearly \$200,000 (Tk 1.5 crore) in nine months from gas and electricity only. The amount will be higher by around three times if savings of water, steam and compressed air are taken into account," said Jabbar.

Before the adoption of the CP concept, the company did not know how much carbon dioxide (CO2) its factories used to emit. Even the company had no clear idea of its energy use.

Not only DBL Group, 11 other apparel makers -- ABA Group, Comptex Bangladesh, Cosmopolitan Industries, Fakir Knitwear, Interstoff Apparels, Knit Concern, Liberty Knitwear, Multifabs, SF Fashion, Tarasima Apparels and Utah Knitting & Dyeing -- have taken up the CP practices for their textile processing units.

"We have invested Tk 1.44 crore for the CP technology,

which is helping us save Tk 11 lakh a month," said Kamruzzaman Khan, director (merchandise) of Knit Concern.

Khan stressed competitiveness, as a difference between prices by only one cent also matters a lot to buyers.

The IFC report said the 12 factories saved a total of 1.33 gigawatt-hour of electricity, about 6,200 million cubic metres of gas, 75,000 million cubic metres of water and 11.67 million tonnes of CO2 as a result of the CP practices.

Apparel industry has been the main export sector and a major source of foreign exchange for Bangladesh since mid 1980s. The country earned \$23 billion from exports in fiscal 2010-11, of which nearly 80 percent were from the apparel sector.

But the textile processing industries are very water intensive by nature. Energy is another important resource used. Also, the factories -- discharge a huge quantity of pollutants.

According to the IFC report, 1,700 washing, dyeing and

finishing factories are discharging 5.6 crore tonnes of toxic water every year affecting 60 lakh people.

The report said, if improvements are not made, buyers may opt for imported fabrics, which would reduce value addition, foreign currency earnings and increase lead time and costs.

A senior IFC official said cleaner production is urgent for Bangladeshi factories to remain competitive as it helps cut costs and attract buyers who emphasise environment-friendly production.

"It was not so easy to introduce the concept as there was no case study available for guidance and steering purposes. However, buyers' engagement has helped us to introduce the CP practices," said Mrinal Sircar, programme manager, advisory services in South Asia of the SEDF.

Encouraged by the outcome of the 12 factories, the SEDF has now partnered with another six units to help them adopt the CP practices by this year.

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# Western Marine sets another milestone

FROM PAGE B1

The ship builder signed a contract with Grona Shipping in November 2008 for making eight ice class vessels.

Commerce Minister GM Quader was the chief guest at the function. Vice Chairman of Export Promotion Bureau Shubhashish Bose, Dutch Ambassador to Bangladesh Alphons Hennekens, German Deputy Head of Mission Dr Ralf Reusch, FBCCI President AK Azad and The Daily Star Editor and Publisher Mahfuz Anam were special guests.

Each of the vessels has a capacity of 5,200 deadweight tonnage and cruising speed of 12 nautical miles per hour.

The minister said he would take steps to implement the government's decision to launch a refinancing fund worth Tk 200 crore to offer loans to the shipbuilders at a single-digit interest rate.

He said another Tk 200 crore was supposed to be added to this amount for the shipbuilding sector.

Quader congratulated Western Marine for bringing pride for the country by making ice class vessels for a very technologically developed nation like Germany.

He also thanked Markku Vedder, the representative of the German owner of the ships, for their confidence in a Bangladeshi company.

Bangladesh has got an advantage over its competitors due to low production

costs and cheap labour in the country, the minister said.

Shubhashish Bose of the EPB said the government has identified shipbuilding as a thrust sector in the current export policy due to its immense export potential and prospect of substantial growth.

Although shipbuilding started commercial journey in 1960s, exports of ocean-going vessels to high-end markets such as Denmark started in 2008, competing with the Chinese and Vietnamese shipbuilders.

Export earnings from ships, boats and floating structures were worth \$12.73 million in fiscal 2008-09, \$9.34 million in 2009-10, and \$40.44 million in 2010-11, Bose said.

German Deputy Head of Mission Dr Ralf Reusch said shipbuilding has become a booming sector in Bangladesh with more than 400 percent growth in export from 2010 to 2011.

He hoped, by 2015 the shipbuilding industry will contribute 4 to 5 percent to the national gross domestic product.

Reusch said Germany has been the second largest export market for Bangladesh for many years, mainly for readymade garments, jute products and leather goods.

As an export-oriented country, Germany relies heavily on ships as a means of transporting goods, he said, adding that cooperating with the German shipping

companies offers tremendous opportunity for Bangladeshi shipyards.

Markku Vedder thanked the shipbuilder to deliver the eight ships in time, which he said would not be possible in Europe, India or China.

Vedder also said the previously delivered six ships are giving good service.

The Daily Star Editor and Publisher Mahfuz Anam said Western Marine began its journey with a pride for the country; then they acquired knowledge, which gave them skill and ability to perform and thus they achieved confidence of their buyer.

He said many people talk about the image of Bangladesh.

"But we should worry about performance at first, and image will follow," he added.

Chairman of Western Marine Saiful Islam said they are now building passenger ferries for Denmark.

After 50 years the Danish Maritime Authority allowed ship owners in Denmark to build passenger vessels outside the country and they have chosen Bangladesh.

"Two months back we have delivered two passenger ferries to Karachi Port," he said.

Western Marine Managing Director Sakhawat Hossain and Bank Asia Managing Director Md Mehmood Husain also spoke.

# Japan garment buyers look to Bangladesh

FROM PAGE B1

Simultaneously, export orders for RMG items are shifting to Vietnam and Bangladesh from China, where wages increase by 15 percent every year, due to a higher production cost.

According to the Export Promotion Bureau (EPB), the knitwear sector earned \$5.8 billion in the July-February period of the current fiscal year, up by 43.93 percent than the same period in 2010-11.

In July-February this fiscal year, woven garment exports grew 37.95 percent to \$5.13 billion.

Export of Bangladeshi woven garment products and knitwear items to Japan grew nearly 43 percent to \$247.51 million in 2010-11, according to the EPB data.

"Apart from being a textile and apparel fair, this business matching conference is the first event of a unique kind for businessmen in both countries," said Jun Tanaka, sales director of Nankai.

"The main objective of the initiative is to dig out the opportunities both parties may get from each other."

In December, Hiroshima Shinkin Bank conducted a

research among its clients and found out that 90 percent of them buy garment items from China.

However, majority of the clients were unhappy about the increasing costs of Chinese garment products and were looking for alternatives.

Be it in terms of cost of production or the ability of local manufacturers to make diverse items, Bangladesh fits the bill, said Kazuhiko Katsura, general manager of Hiroshima Shinkin Bank.

This is why 16 Japanese garment items buyers visited Bangladesh, said Katsura.

The team visited the factory of

Euro Bangla Textile, and found the quality of products very satisfactory, he said. Now, these Japanese companies are looking forward to getting orders done on time, Katsura said.

As Japanese companies import products through banks, the business team was accompanied by three banks: Hiroshima Shinkin Bank, The Gifu Shinkin Bank and Shinkin Central Bank.

Hirofumi Niwa, advisory officer of Shinkin Central Bank, said the bank would consider starting operations in Bangladesh in future if business between these two countries grows fast.



PRIME EXCHANGE CO  
Mostafa Hasan, chief executive officer of Prime Exchange Co Pte Ltd Singapore, a fully owned subsidiary of Prime Bank, and Harish H Engineer, executive director of HDFC Bank, India, attend a programme where the two organisations signed a rupee drawing agreement at the head office of HDFC Bank in Mumbai to facilitate non-resident Indians living in Singapore to send money to India.