

# Showcasing brands

The Daily Star launches four-day Brands Expo in Chittagong



Middle, Prof Anwarul Azim Arif, vice-chancellor of Chittagong University, inaugurates the Brands Expo organised by The Daily Star at MA Aziz Gymnasium Stadium in Chittagong yesterday. Tore Johnsen, CEO of Grameenphone; Abu Sayeed Chowdhury, director of Baizid Steel; M Firoze, head of business development of BSRM; Mahfuz Anam, editor and publisher of The Daily Star, are also seen.

In the show, renowned brands that originated from Chittagong will showcase their corporate profiles, including their present activities, the past and future plans

ARUN BIKASH DEY and MINHAJ UDDIN

**M**ARKETING is a warfare and a warlike situation exists in the competitive world market where branding is the best way to

make a position, said Professor Anwarul Azim Arif, vice chancellor of Chittagong University.

He spoke at the inauguration of the four-day Brands Expo as the chief guest at MA Aziz Stadium in

Chittagong yesterday.

"Branding is a way to acquire competitiveness, and this exposition of introducing and familiarising our brands in the global market is a very timely initiative," Arif said.

"We have to concentrate on how we can brand our products in the international market."

Arif thanked The Daily Star for organising the Odommo Chattagram festival to project the potential of the port city to the nation. The brand expo is a unique addition to the fiesta, he said.

Mahfuz Anam, editor and publisher of The Daily Star, said: "Those who have come to the exposition and put stalls are building an image for themselves."

"When a country like Germany buys ships from Bangladesh, it recognises Bangladesh. That means German people have trust in our products," Anam said.

"When the people of the whole world will have trust in your products, your

products will be branded," he said.

"All of you who are exhibiting your products here are actually building national confidence," Anam said.

Tore Johnsen, chief executive officer of Grameenphone, said he was really proud to take part in the exposition. He said people are the main asset of the company and the company has a great respect for them.

In the show, renowned brands that originated from Chittagong will showcase their corporate profiles on video that will include their present activities, the past and future plans at the session of Corporate Presentation.

The participating companies will highlight job opportunities and offer employment to eligible candidates at a session -- The Daily Star-Odommo Chattagram Career Fair -- supported by Prothom Alo Jobs.

Jobseekers will get the opportunity to drop their curriculum vitae at the pavilions, mini-pavilions and stalls of

the companies.

The companies will also organise spot interviews to select their desired candidates in the fair.

A human resource session with a direct question and answer session with the audience will be held tomorrow. It will help jobseekers know more about how to get prepared for job interviews.

United Commercial Bank, BSRM, AKS, Grameenphone and S Alam Group are showcasing their corporate activities at pavilions, while Western Marine, Pushti, Eastern Bank, City Homes occupy the mini pavilions.

Baizid Steel, Pedrollo, Agrabad Hotel, Southern University, Prothom Alo Jobs and Sun Energy are also taking part in the show.

M Firoze, head of business development of BSRM; Mir Moinuddin Ahmed, general manager (marketing) of S Alam Group, and Abu Syeed Chowdhury, director of Baizid Steel, also spoke.



## Cautious Wal-Mart missing out on Russia's retail boom

REUTERS, Moscow

**R**ETAILER Wal-Mart Stores Inc has let caution thwart its ambitions in Russia, and will find profits harder to come by if it delays getting a foothold in the vast market catering to 140 million people.

Fearful of getting hamstrung by Russia's complicated and time-consuming bureaucracy, the world number one retailer has been outmaneuvered by its European peers - Auchan AUCH.UJ and Metro have become the third and fourth biggest food retailers in the \$300 billion-plus market.

It has missed out on the 30 percent sales growth currently enjoyed by Russian retailers - now likely to slow as companies start to realise that further growth will depend on expansion into Russia's less wealthy provinces. Most shoppers in Russia's cities have embraced supermarkets and malls since the fall of Communism over 20 years ago, overcoming suspicions about freshness and quality.

However, people in Russia's sprawling countryside or smaller towns may not be so easy to win over. Any transition there will be costly and difficult due to low incomes, and poor quality roads and warehouses. Intensified competition in major cities also means it will take longer for new stores to break even.

"Now there is more risk, but more

return," said Alexei Krivoschapko, director at Prosperity Capital Management, one of the biggest investors in Russian stocks with \$4 billion under management.

"Later there will be lower returns, more cash for entry, but less risk because it will be about buying a mature business."

Wal-Mart could also see competition from other foreign retailers if it tries to buy a local player in Russia, with accession to the World Trade Organisation in 2012 making Russia's import-heavy retail sector even more appealing for international players by simplifying the import process.

The low-cost US giant has been expanding internationally since the early 1990s to counter a slowdown in its saturated home market, and Russia has long been a target alongside China, India and Brazil.

But several attempts to enter Russia have been thwarted over the past decade, both greenfield and via acquisition.

After studying the market, Wal-Mart ruled out starting from scratch due to the dominance of local players and bureaucratic obstacles such as bribery and excessive red tape - a difficulty which Swedish retailer IKEA says held back its expansion.

Wal-Mart closed its Moscow office of 35 people in December 2010 after top Russian food-to-everyday items retailer X5 Retail Group bought discount chain Kopeika -- a target Wal-Mart had eyed.

## Chittagong foods win hearts

The Daily Star organises a three-day food festival in the port city

PRABIR BARUA CHOWDHURY, Ctg

**A** special food item can define the identity of a locality as well as the country, said the president of Chittagong Women Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

Each local food can act like an ambassador to win the hearts of people with its different taste, Monwara Hakim Ali said.

Monwara spoke at the three-day Odommo Chattagram Food Festival organised by The Daily Star at MA Aziz Stadium in Chittagong. The food festival ended yesterday.

"Food provides a great opportunity to introduce a country from a different angle, as tourists eat local foods when they visit an area, Monwara said.

"We have some local dishes like *mezban* meat, different dishes of *shutki* (dry fish), fish dishes and indigenous dishes known for good taste."

SM Shahab Uddin, general manager of Well Park Residence in the port city, said he was upbeat on the prospects of Chittagong food items.

"Foods like *shutki* have great demand in local and international food markets," he said, adding that many foreign visitors to his hotel love to have local dishes made of dry fish.

"*Shutki* and Chittagong are synonymous. So if we make a campaign for one of them it will spread the fame of both."

Shahab said *mezban* meat is popular among foreign tourists in Chittagong as well.

Different kinds of fish are available in the region, as it is situated off the Bay of Bengal,



A view of the Odommo Chattagram Food Festival, organised by The Daily Star, in Chittagong. The food festival ended yesterday.

he said, adding that visitors from different countries also look for fish dishes while staying at his hotel.

The Chittagong food industry that has potential to flourish needs more promotional activities, Shahab said. "It is part of tourism but there is no government initiative to tag it with tourism."

He also stressed the need for more research into the local food industry.

At the show, many entrepreneurs of the port city echoed the opinion of Monwara about the marketing of Chittagong food.

One of the visitors thanked The Daily Star

for the show and said now Chittagong foods require a joint effort of the government and private sectors to give a boost to the sector.

Ivy Hasan and Amina Rahman, who participated in the food festival with indigenous dishes, said food items from hill tracts also have great demand among foreign visitors.

Tourists also have a fascination for indigenous foods such as Kura Kabang which is prepared using bamboo. Industry leaders called for more government focus on these dishes to enrich the tourism industry.