Skilled manpower for hospitality hits focus

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Both the government and local tourism entrepreneurs need to focus more on developing manpower for the hospitality industry, as the number of luxury hotels is increasing fast to cater to growing domestic tourism.

Against the backdrop of continued growth in the local hospitality sector, analysts at a discussion asked the government to formulate a policy to ensure private sector investment in the right direction.

"Eleven leading international hotel chains are expected to enter Bangladesh by 2016, adding 1,700 more rooms in Dhaka, Chittagong and Cox's Bazar. Skilled manpower will be of utmost importance then," said Raquib Siddiqi, chief editor of The Bangladesh Monitor, a fortnightly travel journal.

"So we should take preparation beforehand to utilise the upcoming growth, and the government and local entrepreneurs should find ways to train manpower to serve tourists form home and abroad," he added.

Siddiqi was presenting a keynote at a discussion on hospitality industry coorganised by The Bangladesh Monitor and Pan Pacific Sonargaon Hotel on the latter's premises in Dhaka.



Faruk Khan, civil aviation and tourism minister, speaks at a discussion on the hospitality industry co-organised by The Bangladesh Monitor and Sonargaon Hotel at the hotel in Dhaka yesterday. Kazi Wahidul Alam, editor of The Bangladesh Monitor, and EJ MacEwan III, general manager of Sonargaon, were also present.

The upcoming international hotels are Siddiqi. Hilton, Hotel Sheraton, two Le Méridien hotels -- one on Airport Road and other in invest in building hotels, but it now has a Banani, two Westin hotels -- one more in Dhaka, and one in Chittagong, Six Seasons, Platinum Suites 2, Heritage Hotel, Doreen Suites and Hotels, FARS Hotel, ASCOT, Marriot Court Yard, said

"Now the government does not need to great responsibility as a facilitator and regulator in guiding the sector."

in undesirable and unplanned growth of the industry. This unplanned growth is

likely to create various problems -including ecological and commercial -- in near future," he said.

Mohammad Noor Ali, managing director of Westin Dhaka, urged the government to take necessary measures to reduce bureaucratic hassles that are one of the biggest setbacks for the industry.

He also urged the government to take steps to attract more tourists from across the world and take bigger plans to entertain them with local culture and heritages.

Faruk Khan, civil aviation and tourism minister, said the government has been working hard to develop manpower for the hospitality industry, and it has taken steps to set up training institutes under Bangladesh Parjatan Corporation in all divisional towns.

Also, the government has provided on-arrival visa facility for 40 countries to help foreign tourists enter the country easily, he said.

Kazi Wahidul Alam, editor of The Bangladesh Monitor, moderated the discussion, while EJ MacEwan III, general manager of Pan Pacific Sonargaon, Azeem Shah, general manager of Westin Dhaka, also spoke.

Abdul Hakim, managing director of "Because, failure thus far, has resulted Hotel Agrabad Chittagong, MN Karim, chairman and managing director of Ocean Paradise Ltd, and Aktaruzzaman



company's 12th anniversary organised by its

local service centre in Biyani Bazar of Sylhet

recently. Mahbubul Mowla, Sylhet divisional in-

BASIS gets new president

charge, was also present.

STAR BUSINESS DESK

...... The Bangladesh Association of Software and Information Services has elected AKM Fahim Mashroor chief executive of



AKM Fahim Mashroor

bdjobs.com, as its president. Russel T Ahmed, chief executive of Team Creative, has been elected secretary general, the software and ICT trade body said in a statement yesterday.

The executive council election for the term 2012-

Maersk Line CCO due today

STAR BUSINESS DESK

...... Lucas Vos, chief commercial officer of Maersk Line, is scheduled to arrive in Dhaka today to take part in the 20th anniversary celebrations of the

company's Bangladesh operations.

A global shipping company, Maersk Line has over 25,000 employees across 325 offices in more than 125 countries. A part of AP Moller - Maersk Group, the company has over 600 container vessels and more than 3.5 million containers.

Vos started his career with P&O Nedlloyd and Royal Nedlloyd. He joined Maersk Line in 2006 as area manager for France, Iberia and Maghreb offices.

The Dutch 44-year-old holds a master's degree

Get in line: one Apple store per 216m Chinese

REUTERS, Shanghai

Apple Inc has more retail stores in Pennsylvania than in all of China - where it earns a fifth of its revenue - and a slow pace of expansion may cost the firm more than just sales.

Apple's six stores in Greater China are routinely packed, and customers often wait in long lines for iPhone repairs. Scalpers are known to camp out to be first in line for new products, which they then resell for a tidy profit.

The California company is notoriously fastidious when it comes to its flagship stores, and has said it is taking its time in China to ensure it secures the right locations. But its retail expansion has fallen well short of its own goals.

In 2010, Ron Johnson, then-Apple's retail head, forecast the company would have 25 stores in China by this year. "There's certainly more demand than Apple can serve with their store footprint currently," said Torsten Stocker, a partner at business strategist Monitor Group.

The clamour for Apple products has spawned a bustling grey market where smuggled goods are peddled by unauthorized re-sellers. Co pycat Apple stores have popped up in smaller cities that don't

Facebook, Yahoo tie up, settle lawsuits

REUTERS, San Francisco

Facebook Inc and Yahoo Inc agreed to forge a broad Internet advertising and licensing partnership on Friday, laying to rest their dueling patent lawsuits.

The pact settles accusations of technology patent infringement that began under the stewardship of ex-Yahoo CEO Scott Thompson, ousted after a scandal erupted over inaccuracies in his resume. Sources tell Reuters interim CEO Ross Levinsohn is now the front runner for the top job.

Facebook's and Yahoo's strategic deal -- which expands an existing multi-year tie-up that involved mainly allowing Facebook users to share Yahoo content -- encompasses cross-licensing of patents and collaboration on advertising offerings during major media events such as the Olympics or annual Super Bowl.

"I'm pleased that we were able to resolve this in a positive manner and look forward to partnering closely with Ross and the leadership at Yahoo," Sheryl Sandberg, Facebook's Chief Operating



Atiur Rahman, governor of Bangladesh Bank, attends a seminar on 'IT security in today's global banking' arranged by Bankers' CTO Forum, IBM and TISL at Sonargaon Hotel in Dhaka on Thursday. Anil Menon, director of marketing and communication at IBM Software Group, was also present.

IKEA hits snag with India venture

managing director, was also present.

REUTERS, New Delhi/Stockholm

India has rebuffed a request by IKEA to relax rules on buying goods locally, a government source said on Friday, raising the prospect of a delay in the world's largest furniture maker entering the Indian retail market.

IKEA, famous for its selfbuild flatpacks and huge stores, said last month it would invest 1.5 billion euros (\$1.86 billion) and open 25 outlets, throwing a lifeline to the government in India where economic growth has slowed sharply.

But the Swedish company sought a 10-year window to comply with rules that foreign retailers source 30 percent from local small and mediumsized firms, a requirement which overseas companies say discourages investment.

When contacted by Reuters, IKEA said a short delay in its formal application to enter the Indian market would not affect its decision to open stores, and hoped to start operations soon.

ing director, was also present.

Dry taps, open sewers: welcome to Índia's Millennium City

REUTERS, Gurgaon

HBM Iqbal, chairman of Premier Bank, attends the bank's half yearly managers'

conference at the Radisson Blu hotel in Dhaka yesterday. KAM Majedur Rahman,

..... Sarika Kapoor lives in a spacious home in one of the wealthiest cities in India. But something as simple as having a shower is fraught with problems.

Most days there is just a trickle of water from the taps and sometimes even that dries up before noon. The 56-year-old has often had to scurry to a neighbour across a potholed road to borrow a bucket of water and haul it back to her rented \$300,000 home, sweat rolling down her face.

"Every morning I have to decide whether I want the upper half of my body clean or my lower half. With the amount of water we get, it's impossible to take a full-body bath," Kapoor said, sitting in her large, well-lit living room.

Welcome to Gurgaon, a city of wealthy urban professionals with gleaming shopping malls, fivestar hotels and sprawling golf courses on the southern outskirts of New Delhi that is a symbol of newly affluent India.

But crippling power and water shortages, crater-riddled roads and open sewage drains have made it an extreme example of the poor infrastructure that is constraining growth in Asia's

PREMIER BANK

third-largest economy. "Gurgaon is just a symbol of beautiful buildings. Otherwise it's rubbish," said PK Jain, the founder-president of the Gurgaon Chamber of Commerce and Industry. "Ultimately, the town is going to collapse."

Alongside the towering residential condominiums are glass and steel office blocks. The India offices of some of the world's best known companies are here, including Microsoft Corp, Google Inc and agribusinessgiantCargillInc.

But public infrastructure has failed to keep pace with the rapid growth unleashed by landmark economic reforms in 1991.

The provision of essential services is so bad that many companies and residents rely on expensive diesel generators to beat power cuts, pay private water tankers to deliver door-todoor when the taps run dry.

But demand outstrips supply, and with long power outages of up to eight hours a day, even welloff citizens are sometimes forced to have dinner by candlelight.

This week, residents erupted in anger over the lack of water and power during the hottest summer in the region for three decades. They took to the streets in protest and set tyres on fire to block traffic.

Nevertheless, Gurgaon has some of the fastest growing property prices in the world, with rates for some upscale homes nearly doubling to 21,000 rupees a square foot in 2011 from about 11,000 rupees in 2008, according to a report by Citibank.

At current prices, a 2,000 square foot apartment in those areas would cost \$760,000. At the very top end, huge 5,500 square foot apartments set around a golf course sell for about \$3 million.

Like many other Indian cities, Gurgaon is made up of two parts. The highway to New Delhi separates the new from the old, which is still a traditional market town

serving farmers in the region.

The new Gurgaon shot up out of farmland two decades ago, mainly to cater to the overflowing population of the nearby capital. It is now India's third-wealthiest city by percapita income, and its population has climbed to more than 1.5 million from just 900,000 in 2001.

Gurgaon has also become one of the hubs for the IT and outsourcing boom that drove India's economic growth from the 1990s, giving it the name "Millennium City".

Experts say the boom caught local authorities unawares, and they did not plan adequately for the power and water needs of a rapidly expanding population.

A company like DLF, which has been buying up chunks of land in Gurgaon since the 1970s to convert into residential compounds, commercial hubs and shopping centres, has set up its own private infrastructure network.

Pockets of Gurgaon developed by DLF have their own back-up power plant, water recycling



SHAHJALAL ISLAMI BANK Anwer Hossain Khan, chairman of Shahjalal Islami Bank, attends the bank's half yearly managers' conference in Dhaka yesterday. Md Abdur Rahman Sarker, manag-



BANGLALION Neil Graham, chief executive of Banglalion Communications, and Syed Mohammad Kamal, CEO of SSL Wireless, exchange documents of an agreement in Dhaka on July 27 to provide online purchase of prepaid and postpaid cards for the Banglalion subscribers through www.easy.com.bd, the online recharge portal.