

# Dhaka, Colombo to strengthen bilateral cooperation

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka and Colombo have agreed to further strengthen bilateral cooperation in trade, economy, politics, culture, health, education and shipping.

The announcements came from separate meetings when Foreign Secretary Shahidul Haque called on senior Sri Lankan ministers during his three-day visit to Colombo.

Haque reached Colombo on Sunday and also held second Foreign Office Consultation with his Sri Lankan counterpart Karunatilaka Amunugama on Tuesday.

Haque also met Sri Lankan Economic Development Minister Basil Rajapaksa and discussed the opportunities for enhanced trade, economic, health, education and

agricultural collaboration between the two countries.

They also highlighted the possibility of greater interaction and collaboration on countries around the Bay of Bengal, the foreign ministry said in a statement yesterday.

Haque also called on Lankan Commerce Minister Rishad Bathiuddin on Tuesday, and discussed issues related to reduction of tariffs and removal of non-tariff barriers and para-tariff measures.

The foreign secretary also paid a courtesy call on Lankan External Affairs Minister GL Peiris, who expressed his happiness at the successful Foreign Office Consultation.

Peiris also reiterated his ministry's support to implement the decisions taken on enhancing maritime connectivity and trade.

# Non-tariff barriers hinder trade of rice seeds between Bangladesh and India

PALLAB BHATTACHARYA, *New Delhi*

Tariff and non-tariff trade barriers are coming in the way of trade in rice seeds between Bangladesh and India, analysts said.

Bangladesh imports 90 percent of its requirement of rice seeds from China, though importing it from India would have cost the country far less, say the experts from India and Bangladesh.

But they feel it is the trade barriers between the two neighbours that are coming in the way of open trade.

Supporting India as trade partner, Deputy High Commissioner of Bangladesh to India Abida Islam said import of rice seeds from India would be cheaper but for the lack of formal trade.

"There exists informal trade

in rice seeds between the two neighbours and that needs to be formalised as farmers on both sides are suffering from the lack of formal trade and marketing channels," she said.

Under an initiative by the Jaipur-based CUTS International, various organisations from India and Bangladesh have come together on a joint platform to address trade barriers and formalise informal trade in rice seeds happening on both sides of the border.

Bangladesh is a net rice seed importer with an estimated import market size of \$5.9 million in 2010-11.

According to figures from the International Trade Centre, China meets more than 90 percent of rice seed orders from Bangladesh.

India's exports to Bangladesh remain negligible,

accounting for less than 3 percent of its total exports.

Sudhir Chandra Nath, head of agriculture and food security programme of BRAC Centre in Bangladesh, said they are mostly importing hybrid rice seed varieties from China, which has higher yield than Indian varieties.

However, many of those varieties are not suitable to consumption patterns in Bangladesh.

"There is scope for importing aman and aush varieties from India to Bangladesh and boro varieties from Bangladesh to India," Nath said at a recent meeting in Kolkata.

He demanded strong political commitment to agricultural cooperation between the two countries so that there are long-term, sustainable solutions to food security challenges faced by both.



DBBL

Rubaba Dowla, head of m-commerce of Airtel; Korvi Rakshand, founder of Jaago Foundation; and Mir Mominul Huq, head of the mobile banking division of Dutch-Bangla Bank, attend a programme recently when the companies signed a deal. People having mobile banking accounts with DBBL will be able to donate money to Jaago Foundation for the education of underprivileged children.



AB BANK

M Fazlur Rahman, president and managing director of AB Bank, and Md Ibrahim Bahar, president of Hajj Agencies Associations of Bangladesh (HAAB), exchange documents of a deal at a programme recently. Agencies under HAAB will collect money of hajj pilgrims countrywide through the bank's online banking services.

# Call for deep cuts in internet prices

FROM PAGE B1

The BTRC director also suggested forming a broadband commission to consult the government for internet-related issues.

The lack of content in Bangla has been slowing down the growth of internet in the country, according to Aktaruzzaman Manju, president of Internet Service Providers Association of Bangladesh (ISPAB).

"Why should a boy or girl subscribe to internet services if they do not have anything to do with it other than logging on to Facebook?"

He complained that the government has contributed to the higher costs of internet by creating middlemen between the submarine cable and internet service providers (ISPs) by way of internet gateways and fibre cable transmission companies.

Manju cited the 15 percent value-added tax as a considerable barrier to internet penetration, adding that government would receive far higher than the Tk 42 crore it now receives annually from the sector if it eliminates the tax.

He suggested creating a model thana or village in every district where all functions would be conducted online and others would be tempted to follow suit.

The cost of transmission accounts for 70 percent of ISPs' costs, said Almas Kabir, vice-president of ISPAB.

"This cost will have to come down for internet costs to reduce at the end user level."

Md Monwar Hossain, managing director of Bangladesh Submarine Cable Company Limited, too, urged the government

to reduce VAT and taxes on internet and internet-related equipment.

"We will have to move to the villages with all of our resources and distribute those equally to reduce the digital divide between the rural and urban people," said Mostafa Faruque Mohammed, ICT minister.

"If we go to the villages with our laptops and chargers, change is bound to happen."

Internet is badly needed for the country's advancement, said Mahfuz Anam, editor of The Daily Star.

"The world is moving very fast by the blessings of the internet, so we will have to have dynamism to reach the goal. Still we are just using one forth of our total internet capacities that is 200 gigabits per second."

He requested the participants of the workshop not to forget the discussion after the meeting ends.

The country's over population is not a hindrance but a source of strength, said Salehuddin Ahmed, managing editor of The Daily Star.

"It's just that we failed to leverage them properly."

"We will succeed if we can utilise the educated people within the ICT sector, just as we did with the unskilled people for the readymade garment sector," said Md Abdul Wadud, chairman of the parliamentary standing committee on the ICT ministry.

He suggested a taskforce be formed to work out how best to use the Tk 571 crore The World Bank is providing for ICT development in the country.

# Banker steps into the role of superhero

FROM PAGE B4

Within those constraints, though, Carney offered a cautiously optimistic view of the world economy.

"The important development in our opinion over the course of the last 12 months or so, is that the quality of private-sector growth in the United States has picked up," he said. "The US is moving towards that class of advanced economies that have well-functioning financial systems where private credit is growing and where there is reasonably solid investment growth."

That is good news for Canada, as Carney said, and it is also good news for the rest of the world.

Carney believes that a crucial element in restoring sustainable global growth is finishing the job of repairing global finance and the regulatory framework in which it operates. As the head of the Financial Stability Board, set up by the Group of 20 major economies in the aftermath of the financial crisis, he is one of the leaders in that effort.

A major focus is repairing the gap that

was revealed in the emergency response to 2008 -- the existence of "too big to fail" banks, whose owners and executives pocket profits in the good times but get a state bailout when things go awry. Over the next few days in Washington, during the spring meetings of the IMF and the World Bank, Carney and other central bankers and finance ministers will continue to hammer out a way to let banks die without requiring taxpayers to foot the bill.

The recent crisis in Cyprus gave a messy preview of how that sort of resolution might work.

Carney hopes that global guidelines -- and they need to be simple enough, he said, to be usable in the time frame in which the authorities in the real world must often operate -- will make future resolutions cleaner and more predictable.

That game plan, he believes, should include bail-ins, or making stakeholders in the banks pay most of the costs.

"Bail-in broadly speaking -- not bail-in as it was performed a couple of weeks

ago in Cyprus -- but bail-in as a component of addressing systemic risk," Carney said, "is an absolutely necessary element. It doesn't solve everything, but it's absolutely necessary."

Having lost our faith in the private sector and the bankers who dominated so many Western economies before 2008, some are looking to government bankers like Carney.

One of the analytical mistakes before the financial crisis was believing that efficient markets were perfect and that private bankers could police themselves.

Refreshingly, Carney is not making the same error in reverse. He is a believer in regulation and has embraced it at its most complex, global scale. But he said regulators need to be watchful of the unintended consequences of their rules and mindful of the feedback loops between their actions and private markets.

Chrystia Freeland is the editor of Thomson Reuters Digital.



TRUST BANK

Major General Rezanur Rahman Khan, area commander of Jessore, and Ishtiaque Ahmed Chowdhury, managing director of Trust Bank, attend a programme on Monday to disburse a loan of Tk 2 crore to women entrepreneurs at Jessore under Trust Sukonnya, a joint collaboration of the bank and SME Foundation.

# Dhaka Bank elects new chairman

STAR BUSINESS DESK

Abdul Hai Sarker has recently been elected as the chairman of Dhaka Bank, the bank said in a statement yesterday.

Sarker completed his post-graduation from Dhaka University in 1970, according to the statement.

A former president of Bangladesh Textile Mills Association, he is also a former vice chairman of Bangladesh Association of Banks and a former director of the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry.

He is the founder trustee of Independent Uni-



# Biman to carry hajj pilgrims without hassle: MD

FROM PAGE B1

On intervention from political high-ups, Steele said he has met the civil aviation minister and the Biman board who gave him complete authority. He said he is yet to meet the prime minister but he is sure that she will have the same opinion.

"If there is any form of intervention, I would deal with it on a commercial basis. We have to be a professionally-run airline and that is my aim."

The Biman MD also mentioned several steps the airline is going to take, like keeping a standby aircraft, reopening the Delhi and Hong Kong routes and setting up a call centre and email address to respond to customer queries.

The airline will also launch a new website with which a customer will be able to book a specific seat number or order a special meal and get various other services.

He said the management and the Biman's collective bargaining agency will be signing an agreement

# First batch of workers flying to Malaysia amid high hopes

FROM PAGE B1

Of the \$14.17 billion remittance sent by Bangladeshi expatriates last year, workers in Malaysia alone sent around \$800 million, it added.

Around 1.5 million aspirants registered online in January for the Malaysian jobs. Of them, 10,000 were selected and given technical training at 23 centres across the country.

The Malaysian High Commission in Dhaka later issued visas to 200 of the applicants last week, said Shamsun Nahar, adding that they expect to get confirmation for visas for 500 more workers soon.

On landing in Malaysia, the workers will sign a renewable two-year job contract and get a salary of 900 ringgit (equivalent to Tk 25,000) a month.

Their employers will bear expenses for accommodation, while the workers will have to pay for their food. The employers will also bear the workers'

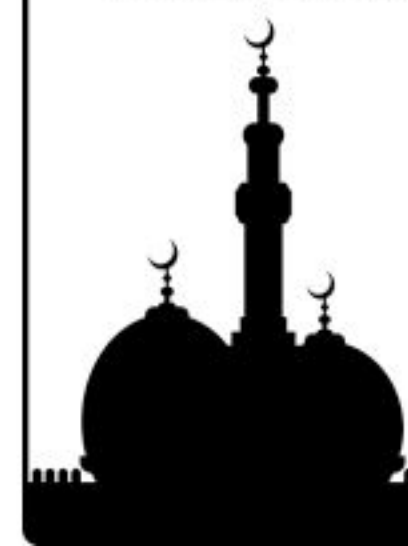
## ATTENTION GARMENT MANUFACTURERS

A Hong Kong based company supplying fabrics, trims, garments and leather accessories also provides logistic support for consolidation of orders from nominated suppliers based in China and HK against deferred letter of credit. Interested manufacturers call: +852 9521 4821 or E-mail: [bravima.international@gmail.com](mailto:bravima.international@gmail.com)

from  
**BDT 685,000**  
17 NIGHTS PACKAGE  
FOR  
HAJJ 2013

**FIVE STAR DELUXE HAJJ PACKAGE BY JTCL**  
Last day of booking 25 May '13

Package Includes:  
5\* Hotel at Makkah, Hilton Tower, adjoin Masjed-e-Haram.  
4\* Hotel at Modina, 3 Minute walking distance from Masjed-e-Haram.  
3 times meal at Makkah, Modina and Ziyaraats (excursions) in Makkah and Modina.  
Return economy class Air Ticket with all the Taxes and Transfers.  
Free Hajj training by experienced Scholars & reliable Hajj Guide book will be provided.  
06 Nights Makkah Hilton Tower 06-12 October with full board Buffet Meals.  
05 Nights Hajj - Mina 12-17 October Mina / Muzdalifa, Meals: Self.  
02 Nights Makkah Hilton Tower 17-19 October with full board buffet meals.  
04 Nights Modina Elaf Al Huda / Mubarak Al Modina 19-23 October with full board buffet meals.  
Back home on 23 October.



**Jaas Travel Corporation Ltd.**

Plot-15, Road # 17, Flat-C5-6, (5th Floor) Banani C/A, Dhaka-1213, Bangladesh.  
Tel: 9822351, 9822352, 9821932, Cell-01711-546475, 01711-535754,  
01611-012664, 01819-280760

Join us: facebook.com/pages/Jaas-Travel-Corporation-Ltd/ email:  
support@jttholidays.com jasqattl@gmail.com sirajirh@gmail.com  
asemhossain@gmail.com jasqattl@gmail.com

visit us: [www.jttholidays.com](http://www.jttholidays.com)



GSK

M Azizul Huq, managing director of GlaxoSmithKline Bangladesh, chairs the 40th annual general meeting of the company at Hotel Agrabad in Chittagong on Tuesday. The company declared 150 percent dividend for 2012.

# Another shock for garment

FROM PAGE B1

"There is no doubt it will have a negative impact on the sector."

"We are already struggling to offset the impacts of the devastating fire at Tazreen Fashions in November last year and the recent political crisis," said Abdus Salam Murshedy, another former president of the trade body.

"We are yet to assess the future impact on the sector."

The factories in Rana Plaza were -- Ether Tex, New Wave Bottoms, New Wave Style, Phantom Apparels and Phantom Tac, according to the BGMEA.

The directory also showed that 377 workers were supposed to be in Ether Tex, 526 in New Wave Bottoms, 1,073 in New Wave Style, 739 in Phantom Apparels and 407 in Phantom Tac.