

Swisscontact to promote improved jute cultivation

The Zurich-based foundation teams up with BJRI and DAE

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Swisscontact has recently signed a two-year tripartite agreement with Bangladesh Jute Research Institute (BJRI) and the Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE) for promotion of improved jute cultivation and retting practices.

Manish Pandey, regional director for South Asia and country director for Bangladesh of Swisscontact; and Md Kamal Uddin, director general of BJRI; and Md Abu Hanif Miah, director general of the DAE, signed the agreement, Swisscontact said in a statement yesterday.

Under the agreement, Making Markets Work for the Jamuna, Padma and Teesta Chars (M4C) will help the DAE and BJRI to promote improved jute cultivation and retting practices in the chars of 10 districts of northern Bangladesh.

M4C is mandated by Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation and supported by LGRD and cooperatives ministry

and implemented by Swisscontact and Practical Action in collaboration with Rural Development Academy, Bogra.

The collaboration aims to utilise the expertise of BJRI for training relevant sub-assistant agricultural officers and using the local network and resources of DAE and M4C, according to the statement.

The alliance will also work to demonstrate and disseminate knowledge on improved cultivation and retting practices through farmers' trainings and field demonstrations, so that poor char farmers can earn more profits from high-yield and quality fibres.

Swisscontact simultaneously signed another agreement with BJRI and Bangalink Digital Communications Ltd to promote the same through agricultural helpline of Bangalink Krishik Jigyasha 7676.

Manish Pandey of Swisscontact, Md Kamal Uddin of BJRI, and Ziad Shatara, managing director and chief executive of Bangalink Digital Communications, signed the agreement.



Parvin Sultana, owner of Luminous, attends the launch of the salon and beauty bar in Gulshan-2, Dhaka recently.

Owners of Ollo get nod for merger

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"We will definitely support all our existing clients as well as provide clear growth path for them to switch to our newly developed LTE network which will be launched soon."

ISP licences are usually "technologically neutral", which means the operators can choose from LTE and WiMax technologies, she said.

So New Generation Graphics and Bangladesh Internet Exchange can now use the LTE technology in their operations, she said.

The country's largest mobile operator Grameenphone has 32.5 MHz spectrum in three bands: 22.5 MHz spectrum in 900 MHz band and 1,800 MHz band, and 10 MHz in 2,100 MHz band, said Mahmud Hossain, chief corporate affairs officer of the operator.

The spectrum was offered to Bangladesh Internet Exchange through an auction in 2008 but the operator did not take it then. In 2013, the company received a wireless broadband licence and took the allocation of 20 MHz spectrum from the regulator at Tk 246 crore, which was equivalent to the 2008 auction price.

The other 7 MHz spectrum in 3,500 MHz band of Bangladesh Internet Exchange came with its ISP licence for free long before the auction, according to officials of Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission.

Merger of the two companies or their spectrum is legal but the companies are not allowed to sell their allocated airwave, said a legal consultant of BTTC.

The regulator will examine the present market condition before allowing Ollo to provide LTE services, so that a level-playing field is ensured, said BTTC Chairman Sunil Kanti Bose. He had earlier said Ollo will not be allowed to offer voice services. However, mobile operators have criticised the regulator's decision to provide the 20 MHz spectrum to Bangladesh Internet Exchange without calling a fresh auction.

They said in a statement that they were interested to take more spectrum to offer LTE services in future.

WiMax operators Banglalion and Qubee also have LTE licences. An operator can provide faster internet services than 3G through the LTE technology. Ollo has currently 25,000 WiMax customers and the company recently became a member of GSMA, an association of global system of mobile communication, according to its website.

Ollo also has plans to change its brand name next year, said an official of the operator.

Asia Insurance elects top officials



Yussuf Abdullah Harun

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Yussuf Abdullah Harun was re-elected chairman of Asia Insurance, the company said in a statement yesterday.

Mohammed Jahangir Alam was elected vice chairman.

Harun is a member of parliament and has twice served as president of FBCCI, and also as chairman of Southeast Bank. He was a director of Infrastructure Development Company and Infrastructure Investment Facilitation Centre.

Jahangir Alam is chairman of MI Cement and Crown Power Generation, and also serves as managing director of GPH Ispat, GPH Power Generation and Chartered Life Insurance.

Most promises still unmet

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"Such a threat of retaliation by a spokesperson of the Bangladeshi government is shocking behaviour, particularly in the current context in Bangladesh where violent acts of retaliation against trade unionists continue," Raina said.

In specifically naming a number of Bangladeshi trade union leaders, the minister has put their safety at risk, sending a clear signal to employers and other actors that violence is an acceptable response to legitimate trade union activity, he said.

The unions, however, said there has been progress in Bangladesh since the Rana Plaza tragedy.

More than 180 global clothing brands have signed the Bangladesh Accord, a legally binding agreement on fire and building safety.

The Accord inspection team has surveyed more than half of the 1,600 factories supplying garments to Accord signatories, with inspections on target to be completed by October.

Intensive efforts by IndustriALL's Bangladeshi affiliates have succeeded in organising more than 50,000 workers in 150 factories, the statement said.

Meanwhile, the campaign to raise the minimum wage from \$67 continues, following union gains in securing an increase from \$38 in 2013, it said.

However, Hedayetullah Al Mamoon, senior secretary to the commerce ministry, protested the statement, saying Bangladesh has progressed a lot over the last one year in improving workplace safety and labour rights.

"We have done a lot after the Rana Plaza building collapse. Many international organisations, including the United States Trade Representative, have already praised our progress in improving workplace safety and labour rights," Mamoon said.

He said the government has amended the labour laws allowing full freedom of association and the cabinet approved the draft EPZ law, which will pave the way for unionism in such specialised industrial zones.

The government has also started recruiting additional factory inspectors, he said.

"The inspection agencies have completed inspection of half the factories within a short period," Mamoon said.

Widening BoP surplus puts central bank in tight spot

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The uptick in remittance pushed the foreign currency reserve to a historic high of \$21.24 billion on July 15.

Meanwhile, the BOP surplus and the mounting foreign currency reserves mean the central bank has a tricky job in hand over keeping the exchange rate stable and containing inflationary pressures.

To stabilise the exchange rate such that the exporters and remitters are not adversely affected, BB has been purchasing dollars from banks almost every day, with the amount coming to \$5.15 billion at the end of the fiscal year.

Conversely, the central bank's buying spree means the banks are flush with local currency, raising their tendency to lend to non-productive sectors and, in turn, increase inflation.

"In this context, the next monetary policy will be a major challenge for us. We have to keep the exchange rate stable and at the same time check inflation," said a central bank official upon condition of anonymity.

Meanwhile, the other contributing factors to the rise in surplus were the increase in both long-term and short-term foreign loans and decrease in net trade credit and trade deficit during the period.

Trade deficit slid 1.88 percent to \$6.18 billion, while net trade credit dropped by \$1.29 billion.

Retailers in rush to open stores as Eid nears

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Beximco-owned Yellow, Bata and Jennys, one of the fastest growing footwear brands, also opened stores at the shopping centre this month.

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The retailers though are hopeful that sales will pick up once the shopping centre is officially inaugurated.

Across the city, Infinity Mega Mall, owned by Lubnan Trade Consortium that owns the brand along with Lubnan and Richman, opened a store in Bailey Road, another busy shopping district, in the middle of Ramadan.

Kay Kraft, a popular boutique brand, has opened a store in Jamuna Future Park, re-launched its store in Aziz Super Market and shifted its store in Mirpur to a new and spacious building.

"Lots of people live in Mirpur. So, we want to cater to them as well," said Khalid Mahmood Khan, of the brand.

He said the sales are good so far, and hopes it would get better as the festival nears.

Business Review Meeting

Chittagong Division



United we achieve | UCB

Muhammed Ali, managing director of United Commercial Bank, presides over the bank's half yearly managers' conference at Chittagong Club in the port city recently. M Shahidul Islam, additional managing director, was also present.

LR Global honoured as top asset manager

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BNP Paribas Partners Indonesia, HSBC Saudi Arabia, Western Asset Management Singapore and T Rowe Price US, it said.

The award was evaluated based on the performance in the past year including financial statures, investment policies and vision, long-term strategies and risk management techniques, it said.

LR Global Bangladesh has become the second largest asset management firm in Bangladesh and manages six mutual funds with portfolio of approximately \$120 million across equity and fixed income securities, it said.



Solaiman Alam, marketing director of Bangalink, and Salma Adil, chief financial officer of Masthead PR, attend the signing of an agreement for holistic PR solutions, at Bangalink's head office in Dhaka recently.



Officials of Etihad Airways cut a ribbon to launch the airline's daily flights on the Perth-Abu Dhabi route recently. Perth is the airline's fourth destination in Australia after Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Ministry of Planning
Implementation Monitoring & Evaluation Division (IMED)
Central Procurement Technical Unit (CPTU)

Sher-e-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka-1207

No.21.351.028.10.00.472.2014-703

15 July 2014

Invitation for Application for Procurement Trainer

The People's Republic of Bangladesh (IMED, Ministry of Planning) has received a credit from the International Development Association (World Bank) for the implementation of the Public Procurement Reform Project-II (Additional Financing). The project includes inter alia, a component for furthering policy reform and capacity development under which about 13,200 persons including public servants and other stakeholders will be received training in various areas of public procurement over the project life. To deliver this training program, CPTU's existing trainer's pool is going to be expanded with the intake of some new trainers.

This is to invite interested persons from the public and private sector, universities and other institutes to express their interest and apply as an applicant to be prospective trainer of the CPTU's trainer's pool. The interested persons may also contact CPTU (IMED) for further information and to obtain prescribed application form.

Since trainers will be required to teach various segments of public procurement, thorough knowledge of public procurement is the main prerequisite for the applicant. The selected persons will receive ToT on thematic and pedagogical competencies at predetermined dates. The successful trainers will have the opportunity of eventually being recognized as National Certified Procurement Trainers. Interested persons need to meet the following criteria:

a) **Education:** University degree in Economics, Engineering, Law, Accounting, Business, Statistics, Science, Public Administration etc. or related field;

b) **Age:** Applicant should be between 30 and 60 years old.

c) **Professional Knowledge and Skills:** Comprehensive knowledge in public procurement including up-to-date knowledge of PPA, PPR and Standard documents is essential. Applicants must also have at least three years experience in planning, execution or activities related to the procurement operations within their organizations or in imparting procurement training;

d) **Procurement Training:** Applicant must have training in Public Procurement with the duration of 3 weeks or above;

e) **Characteristics:** Ability to communicate clearly in Public, High capacity to learn, High analytical capacity, Accurate and precise-High level of emotional control, Capacity to work in a team, physically fit and in good health;

f) **Working Languages:** Fluent spoken and written English and Bangla.

4. Applications will be scrutinized by a selection committee, which will establish a short-list of candidates on the basis of the above criteria. The short-listed candidates may be convoked for a test and interviewed for the final selection.

5. Selected applicants will be required to submit a written commitment from their employer to participate in various procurement training events that will take place in Bangladesh.

6. Interested applicants may obtain information and application forms from CPTU or download forms from CPTU website (www.cptu.gov.bd). A complete application should be submitted by interested applicant at the office mentioned below by 18 August 2014 at 2.00pm at the latest. Electronic Submission of the applications can be sent to info@cptu.gov.bd.

Md. Sefail Alam
Director General

Central Procurement Technical Unit (CPTU)

& Project Director, PPR-II (AF)

IMED, Ministry of Planning

CPTU Bhaban, Sher-e-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka-1207

Phone: 02-9144250, E-mail: info@cptu.gov.bd



MA Kalam, managing director of Excelsior Group, inaugurates an outlet of shoe brand Zeil's at Jamuna Future Park on Pragati Sarani in Dhaka recently. Zahir Uddin Tarik, chairman of Zeil's Shop Ltd, was also present.



Ilias Kanchan, executive director of Walton, inaugurates the company's mobile smart zone in Kazipara of Mirpur, Dhaka recently. Md. Humayun Kabir, executive director (PR and media), was also present.

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