



## Hartwig Schafer WB regional vice president due today

STAR BUSINESS DESK

World Bank Vice President for the South Asia region, Hartwig Schafer, is scheduled to arrive in Dhaka today to further deepen the longstanding partnership between Bangladesh and the World Bank Group.

In his first visit to Bangladesh since assuming his position on July 1, 2018, Schafer will also discuss how to help the country cope with the Rohingya crisis.

"Bangladesh has a remarkable story of cutting extreme poverty to half in record time. Other countries can learn from Bangladesh's many development innovations and successes," Schafer said.

"Despite its own challenges, Bangladesh has shown great generosity by sheltering nearly one million Rohingya people. The World Bank is working closely with the government to help address the needs of the Rohingya until their safe return to Myanmar and help build the country's capacity to deal with the crisis."

Schafer will also visit the Rohingya camps and meet with local government officials, civil society and non-governmental organization representatives in Cox's Bazar.

# Trade thru' Benapole port suspended

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Benapole

Trade through Benapole land port remained suspended from yesterday as businesses in India's Petrapole refused to send any truck to Bangladesh in a protest to a rise in a fee, which was collected as a tip for the labourers.

However, the trade suspension did not affect passengers' movement through the two ports and loading and unloading activities inside Benapole port.

The clearing and forwarding agents of Benapole port has been collecting the tip at a much higher rate than the amount agreed in a meeting between the representatives of the two ports last week, said Kartik Chandra, general secretary of an association of staffs of the organisations, which use Petrapole port.

"That's why businessmen who use Petrapole port in India stopped doing import and export through Benapole."

However, Nasir Uddin, general

secretary of Benapole C&F Staff Association, said no extra money had been realised from the Indian trucks.

"We followed the meeting's decision and collected the money at the prescribed rate. The allegation of realising extra money is baseless."

No truck from India entered Benapole port since yesterday, keeping several thousands of trucks stranded at the entry points of the two ports, said Uttam Chakma, assistant commissioner at Benapole Custom House.

## Green garment factory owners left frustrated

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Md Fazlul Hoque, managing director of Narayanganj-based Plummy Fashions, the platinum-rated knitwear factory, and Siddiquir Rahman, president of the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association, echoed the same.

"There is no special privilege for the green garment factories; only the

buyers' priority," Rahman said, adding that the buyers do not even want to quote a higher price for factory remediation as recommended by the Accord and Alliance experts.

Although the buyers do not pay additional money for the virtue of sourcing from a green factory, there is a room for bargaining for a little more price per unit due to the green

factories, Hoque said.

For instance, if the price of a T-shirt from a normal-compliant factory is \$3, it is possible for green factories to get 10 cents more.

"The buyers though do not pay high prices to green factories out of their own volition," Haque added.

Regardless, the prices of Bangladeshi-made garment items has declined 40 percent over the last



**Officials cut a cake at Lakeshore Hotel in the capital yesterday when general sales agent Tune Aviation announced that Thai Lion Air, a low-cost private airline of Thailand, would be flying on the Dhaka-Bangkok route from next month with round trips starting at Tk 16,083.**

STAR

## Indian fabric makers eye Bangladesh

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Kaviya spoke while taking part in the 19th Textech Bangladesh International Expo 2018, at International Convention City Bashundhara in Dhaka.

Around 1,200 foreign companies, including some 92 textiles related firms, took part in the four-day fair.

Ayma Creations is a Gujarat-based manufacturer of suiting fabric and exporter to Gulf countries.

Kaviya said he would not have known about the demand of fabric in Bangladesh had he not taken part in the event.

"I discussed with a number of garment manufacturers in Bangladesh and they showed interest to purchase our products," he said.

Ayma Creations is also thinking about importing a huge volume of garment items from Bangladesh as prices are cheap compared to those in Vietnam and Indonesia, he said.

"The quality is also very good," Kaviya told The Daily Star.

He said another advantage of importing garment items from Bangladesh is that Ayma Creations will not have to pay duty as Bangladesh has duty-free access to Indian market.

This offers a good chance to garment manufacturers to boost their exports to India, Kaviya said.

Rajesh Kumar Somani, director of Ramkumar Textiles Pvt Ltd, sees a good future for the Indian fabric manufacturers in Bangladesh thanks to increasing

demand for Indian fabric.

He lauded the entrepreneurs of Bangladesh for developing the garment sector.

Somani said the fabric manufacturing sector is yet to develop in Bangladesh compared to India largely because of non-availability of raw materials.

Ramkumar Textiles exports to Latin American and Gulf countries. The fair has opened the door to export its products to Bangladesh, Somani said.

Hanish Vikmani of AM Industries Ltd, an exporter of premium shirting and suiting fabric, said he is hopeful to start exporting products to Bangladesh as a number of customers have shown interest.

Rawalwasia Yarn Dyeing Pvt Ltd, a manufacturer and exporter of woven and knitting fabrics, is trying to enter the market in Bangladesh.

And Pradip Marathe, head of customer service of the company, believes that Rawalwasia Yarn will get a good market share as it manufactures high quality products.

Babita Singh, proprietor of Ashok Vatika, a Kolkata-based fashion house, said she is looking for partners to set up joint venture in Bangladesh.

Ashok Vatika will provide technical support along with fabric.

"Our products have big demand among the fashion-lovers in Bangladesh. During Eid-ul-Fitr, a huge quantity of our products is imported to Bangladesh. So, I am confident about capturing a share of the market."

## HSBC felicitates top exporters

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Established in 1998, Etafil Accessories is a concern of Tamishna Group, a manufacturer and exporter of sewing thread, garment accessories and yarn dyeing.

Western Marine Shipyard Ltd won the award in the traditional and emerging sectors category for an annual export turnover of \$5 million.

Set up in 2000, it builds ocean-going vessels. Currently, it is making 30 ships, which include deep-sea fishing trawlers, port utility vessels, tugs, inland container ships, inland tankers and passenger ships.

Mazen (Bangladesh) Industries, an export-oriented manufacturing company, became the exporter of the year in the SMEs category for a turnover of less than \$5 million.

The company produces optical frames and sunglasses with a production capacity of 500,000 pieces per month. It has 3,800 workers. Products are exported to the US, the UK, Italy, Germany, Denmark, the Netherlands and France.

Walton Hi-tech Industries won the inaugural excellence in import substitution category for reducing or substituting imports to a value of \$10 million or more.

Established in 1994, Walton produces electrical and electronics appliances and automobiles. The group has more than 21,000 employees and runs through more than 4,000 retail outlets, exclusive distributors and dealers.

MA Jabbar, managing director of

DBL Group; Md Sakawat Hossain, managing director of Western Marine Shipyard; Gulzar A Chowdhury, managing director of Etafil Accessories; Xue Fel Claire, head of administration of Mazen (Bangladesh) Industries; SM Shamsul Alam, vice-chairman of Walton Hi-Tech Industries, and Asif Ashraf, CEO of Urmii Group, received the crests on behalf of their respective companies.

Speaking as the chief guest, Tofail Ahmed said the government has taken a lot of initiatives to diversify the country's product base and export destinations.

"We have increased both the amount and the number of sectors that receive cash incentives," he said.

Bangladesh Bank Governor Fazle Kabir said the central bank is encouraging, enabling, facilitating and supporting exporters.

Apart from the garment sector, the shipbuilding and the light engineering sectors are now globally renowned, he said.

He said Bangladesh will have to be prepared to face different challenges after 2024 when the country will graduate to a developing country from the category of least developed countries.

Stuart G Tait, regional head for commercial banking at HSBC Asia-Pacific, reflected on the bank's business in Bangladesh and the role the country plays within the Asia-Pacific region. "And it's a very positive story," he said.

"HSBC has been in Bangladesh

for just over 22 years now, and in that time we have been privileged to bear witness to the incredible growth of Bangladesh's economy. As the economy grows it also diversifies."

Tait said Bangladesh's long-established and up-and-coming exporters are perfectly placed to reap the rewards of the Asian Century.

Francois de Maricourt, chief executive officer of HSBC Bangladesh, said Bangladeshi entrepreneurs have been at the forefront in fuelling the country's steady economic growth.

"At HSBC, we are honoured to recognise and encourage these entrepreneurs for their perseverance and hard work."

Md Mahbub ur Rahman, deputy CEO and country head of wholesale banking of HSBC Bangladesh, said export plays a major role in Bangladesh's economic prosperity.

"We would like to thank our entrepreneurs for their relentless efforts for taking the Bangladesh brand global."

Launched in 2010, the award takes into consideration the companies' corporate social responsibility practices, regulatory compliance, sustainable business practices, commitment and contribution to the local economy.

The Daily Star, Prothom Alo, Nielsen Bangladesh and KPMG are the programme partners of this year's awards. HSBC Bangladesh helps to export products to over 100 countries each year. More than 10 percent of Bangladesh's global trade is channelled through the bank.



MERCANTILE BANK

**Kazi Masihur Rahman, CEO of Mercantile Bank, hands over Tk 5 lakh as a donation to extend Nilphamari Diabetic Association's hospital building, to Dr Md Mazibul Hasan Chowdhury Shahin, the association's general secretary, at the bank's head office in the capital last Wednesday.**

## Shwapno trains farmers on pesticide use

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"We have been using pesticides for years to grow vegetables and were unaware that residues of chemicals remain in the crops unless we wait," said 40-year-old Rabiul Islam, who grows beans and pointed ground.

"Now, we wait for up to 10 days before harvesting some of the vegetables," said the farmer, who cultivates one bigha of land at Shahbazpur village in Jashore, one of the country's major vegetable-producing districts.

He is not alone. As many as 40 vegetable farmers in the locality have been trained on Shwapno's "Good Agricultural Practice".

The move comes amidst heightened concerns over food safety and presence of pesticide residues in fresh produce as growers tend to use excessive toxic chemicals to protect crops from pests and profit from the market.

Agricultural workers and scientists said many farmers apply plant protection chemicals and harvest vegetables with no idea of the health effects it would ultimately have on consumers.

They mainly apply pesticides to avoid losses and ignorance is one of the main reasons behind improper use and untimely harvests, according to agriculturists.

Islam said he learnt about Pre-harvest Interval (PHI) and Good Agricultural Practice from a training under a project named

"SHUDDHO", initiated by Shwapno with support from the USAID's Agricultural Value Chains (AVC) project.

"Now, I am growing crops and harvesting them after certain intervals so that pesticide residues do not remain in my crops," he said when a delegation led by USAID Mission Director Derrick Brown visited his village on September 20.

Shwapno said it collects vegetables from the trained farmers at the local market price to encourage them to follow the best practices and ensure the cultivation of vegetables and fruits fit for consumption.

The retail chain sells the produce through its stores, mainly in Dhaka, under the brand Shuddho to ensure that its customers get safe food.

"This is a win-win situation for farmers and consumers," said Sabbir Hasan Nasir, executive director of ACI Logistics, which runs Shwapno.

He said farmers were getting higher yields and using less amounts of pesticide which in turn reduces their production cost. "On the other hand, consumers are getting safe green vegetables from us," he said.

ACI in a statement said Shuddho was a 100 percent safe and traceable agricultural crop brand that promises complete compliance of local good agricultural practice standards in the farming process.

## Seven banks in 'red zone'

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The FSD also advised the departments concerned at the central bank to take special measures to supervise six other lenders in the yellow zone as their financial health worsened significantly in recent times. The banks are Agrani, Janata, Prime, Islami, Shahjalal Islami and First Security Islami.

Bangladesh Krishi Bank, Rajshahi Krishi Unnayan Bank and ICB Islamic Bank are not included in the BHI report as their financial health is "too bad", the BB official said. Shimanto Bank was also excluded as it received licence in 2016.

## Thai Lion Air enters Dhaka next month

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The fare for a Dhaka-Bangkok-Dhaka trip starts from Tk 16,083 with a free baggage allowance of 20 kilograms.

Founded in 2013, Thai Lion Air operates 12 domestic flights in Thailand, two cross-region flights and 20 international flights. Don Mueang is one of the two international airports serving greater Bangkok. It is also one of the oldest commercial airports in Asia. The other one is Suvarnabhumi International Airport.



NAF GROUP

**Luigi Milini, founder chairman of MS Italy, and Shahaneewaz Chowdhury, managing director of NAF Group, pose for a photo at a "Digital Textile Printing Seminar" jointly organised by the two entities at Le Méridien Dhaka last Thursday.**



JAMUNA BANK

**Shafiqul Alam, CEO of Jamuna Bank, and Redwan ul Karim Ansari, director, launch its mobile app "JUSTPAY" at the lender's head office in the capital recently, enabling customers to access account information, statements, fund transfers etc.**