

# Women entrepreneurs need training on marketing skills

Experts say at SME Foundation's seminar

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Women entrepreneurs need training on how to produce quality products and market those properly to excel in life, owners of small and medium enterprises opined yesterday.

Despite having the potential to produce a variety of products, women refrain from going for production because of the struggles they always face at the time of selling the items, they said.

To solve the problem, the government could take up a project to establish a link between such entrepreneurs and the market, they said.

The observations came at a seminar titled "Non-financial challenges faced by women entrepreneurs in SMEs" organised by SME Foundation at Bangabandhu International Conference Centre in the capital.

"We need to initiate specific district-wise training to create entrepreneurs, where foreign trainers can impart knowledge on making quality products," said Rokia Afzal Rahman, president of the Bangladesh Federation of Women Entrepreneurs.

When a few get the training, the knowledge will be shared among others so the training will have a huge impact on society, she said, adding, "We have such experience in fishing, poultry farms and fruit farming."

She said the training would fail to



KM Habib Ullah, chairperson of SME Foundation, speaks at a seminar on "Non-financial challenges faced by women entrepreneurs in SMEs" organised by the foundation at Bangabandhu International Conference Centre in Dhaka yesterday. Md Abdul Halim, industries secretary, and Rokia Afzal Rahman, president of the Bangladesh Federation of Women Entrepreneurs, were present.

leave its expected impact if the marketing aspects were not introduced to women entrepreneurs afterwards.

"Establishing women entrepreneurs in the marketing is a good way to ensure their success," she said as the programme's chief guest.

Prof Momtaz Uddin Ahmed, director of SME Foundation, echoed the same, saying women needed proper training and an entrepreneurial mindset from the very beginning.

The government can introduce a topic in the education system delineating ways

for becoming entrepreneurs and it should be continued in higher education, he said, adding, "Entrepreneurs are not born but arise through a grooming process."

SME Foundation Chairperson K M Habib Ullah said they had plans to

ensure training for women to give them a good foundation in their arena.

"We are also trying to introduce trained women to the marketing process. However, we have limited options as our funds are too little compare to our needs," he said.

The government provided Tk 200 crore to the foundation in 2008. The foundation gets Tk 12-16 crore every year as interest of the amount and disburses it as loans among entrepreneurs through banks.

"The government now understands that the amount is too small," said Ullah.

Industries Secretary Abdul Halim said the government was trying to provide proper training. "However, training does not make entrepreneurs but it can improve their quality," he said.

A number of women entrepreneurs spoke out about their problems in the seminar. Most involved not getting support from their families, facing social obstacles, lacking product quality, having problems in marketing and lacking ICT knowledge.

Nazneen Ahmed, senior research fellow at the Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies, said women entrepreneurs were seriously constrained by limited market access, especially due to a lack of local sales centres.

"Good quality products do not get the best price, as many of the entrepreneurs do not have good marketing skills," she said.

## Exxon reduces gasoline output at Baytown Texas refinery after fire

REUTERS, Houston

Exxon Mobil Corp cut back gasoline production at its 560,500 barrel per day (bpd) Baytown, Texas, refinery after a hydrotreater fire on Saturday, said sources familiar with plant operations.

There were no injuries reported in the blaze at the Hydrofining Unit 9 on Saturday, the sources said.

In an emailed statement, Exxon said it had now contained the fire, which started at about 12:30 p.m. local time (1730 GMT). It confirmed no injuries had been reported.

"We are cooperating with necessary regulatory agencies, and a thorough investigation will be conducted to determine the cause of this incident," Exxon said.

The unit uses hydrogen and a catalyst to remove sulfur from gasoline in compliance with US environmental rules.



Praveen Rawal, managing director for India and Southeast Asia at office furniture and innovative workspace solutions provider Steelcase, and Mizanur Rahman Chowdhury, managing partner of Workspace Technology, Steelcase's partner in Bangladesh, open Steelcase's first showroom in the country at Banani in Dhaka recently.

## Sheltech starts housing fair to mark anniversary

STAR BUSINESS DESK

Leading real estate company Sheltech has organised a housing fair to mark 31 years of its service and success in the country.

The 12-day anniversary fair started at Sheltech Lounge in the capital's Panthapath on March 12.

At the fair, the company is showcasing its fully ready condominium project Sheltech Bithika situated in Mirpur.

There are 184 apartments, 12 commercial spaces and community facilities such as a swimming pool, two separate gymnasiums and a commu-

nity event centre inside the project.

Clients booking during the fair will get free electrical appliances, including air conditioner, refrigerator, television, geyser, washing machine and microwave.

Sheltech Renu-Kabir Tower in Gulshan-1, which houses 115 apartments, is also being presented in the fair.

The customers can also book apartments in company's lakeside luxury projects in Dhanmondi 32, New Eskaton (near Hatirjheel), and in Banani.

Several other projects across the capital are being presented in the fair.

With 31 years of experience and over

3,700 apartments all around Dhaka city, Sheltech has become a trusted brand in the real estate industry, the company said in a statement.

The company has become the first realtor in Bangladesh to be awarded with the ISO 9001: 2015 certificate thanks to its continuous efforts for innovation in design and construction and quality management systems.

All Sheltech projects are approved by the Rajdhani Unnayan Kartripakkha, the capital development authority, and built according to the Bangladesh National Building Code 2006, the company said in the statement.

## Apple Watch detects irregular heart beat in large US study

REUTERS

The Apple Watch was able to detect irregular heart pulse rates that could signal the need for further monitoring for a serious heart rhythm problem, according to data from a large study funded by Apple Inc, demonstrating a potential future role for wearable consumer technology in healthcare.

Researchers hope the technology can assist in early detection of atrial fibrillation, the most common form of irregular heart beat. Patients with untreated AF are five times more likely to have a stroke.

Results of the largest AF screening and detection study, involving over 400,000 Apple Watch users who were invited to participate, were presented on Saturday at the American College of Cardiology meeting in New Orleans.

Of the 400,000 participants, 0.5 percent, or about 2,000 subjects, received notifications of an irregular pulse. Those people were sent an ECG (electrocardiography) patch to wear for subsequent detection of atrial fibrillation episodes.

A third of those whose watches detected an irregular pulse were confirmed to have atrial fibrillation using the ECG technology, researchers said.

Some 84 percent of the irregular pulse notifications were later confirmed to have been AF episodes, data showed.

"The physician can use the information from the study, combine it with their assessment ... and then guide clinical decisions around what to do with an alert," said Dr. Marco Perez, one of the study's lead investigators from Stanford School of Medicine.

The study also found that 57 percent of participants who received an alert on their watch sought medical attention.

## Bank of Spain sees no risk of recession

REUTERS

The governor of the Bank of Spain Pablo Hernandez de Cos said there is currently no risk of recession in Europe or Spain, though he warned that political instability could hold back necessary reform in Spain.

"According to the economic models, which are not perfect, at the moment we do not see any risk of a recession in the euro zone, and much

less so in Spain, but the determining factors for the future (Brexit, foreign trade etc.) are downward," Hernandez de Cos said in an interview published on Sunday by Spanish newspaper El Pais. Hernandez de Cos, who earlier this month was appointed chair of the Basel Committee on Banking Supervision, reiterated that Spain needs to continue reforms and fiscal consolidation and that parliamentary fragmentation could threaten this.

"My concern is that the political uncertainty may end up slowing decision-making on issues of political economy that we are all aware need to be taken: preparing public finances for the next recession, reducing public debt and passing necessary structural reforms."

On April 28, Spain will hold its third general election in five years, while polls show that no single party is likely to command a parliamentary majority.

## Stock investors stare at losses as firms fold

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The Dhaka Stock Exchange is aware of the two companies' situation.

Mazumdar declined to accept any responsibility over the state of affairs of the two companies. "Our job as issue manager was legally complete the moment the listing process ended."

It is up to the Bangladesh Securities and Exchange Commission or the investors now to take initiatives to recover the money.

"Investors can go to the court demanding liquidation as the companies have huge amounts of lands -- they would benefit from it," he added.

General investors hold 62.19 percent of C&A Textiles stocks and institutional investors 15.67 percent.

C&A Textiles shares, whose face value is Tk 10, traded at Tk 3.4 on

Thursday, meaning the general and institutional investors stand to lose Tk 185.5 crore.

In Tung Hai Knitting, general investors hold 64.34 percent of the shares and institutional investors 5.62 percent. The company's stocks traded at Tk 3.9 on Thursday, meaning Tk 74.60 crore stand to be written off of the investors.

"A decision will be taken -- whatever it is -- at the next board meeting and we will send it to the BSEC," said KAM Majedur Rahman, managing director of the DSE. The regulator has many tools in hand to handle non-functional companies.

"All we can do is delist the companies or suspend the trading of the companies' shares," Rahman said, adding that the BSEC should take the

final call on the two companies' future. Delisting though is not a solution when a company becomes non-functional, according to Kamal Hossain, a stock investor of LankaBangla Securities.

The BSEC can come up with management change.

"It would be helpful for general investors. Otherwise, they will lose money," he added.

BSEC's Spokesperson Saifur Rahman said the regulator will take a decision after hearing out the DSE's recommendation.

Asked whether BSEC would go for management change, he said: "We have to think long and hard before taking such a step. But, investors always have the option to force liquidation of the companies."

## BASIC drowning in default loans

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"This squeezed our earnings," the veteran banker said.

The bank is facing a deposit crisis: at the end of December its loan-deposit ratio stood at 109 percent, which is way past the Bangladesh Bank-imposed ceiling of 85 percent.

Its deposit growth was 8 percent in the negative at the end of December and its loan growth 4.70 percent.

Last year, its deposit base shrank 7.92 percent to Tk 13,181 crore and its capital shortfall widened 22.09 percent to Tk 3,394 crore.

The bank has been without a managing director for five months now after Muhammad Awal Khan stepped down from the post in November last year.

The delay in appointing his successor has weakened BASIC's deposit collection and lending activities, said a senior executive of the bank.

"The government process for appointing a managing director is almost done. The bank will get a new MD soon," Majid said.



Abul Khair, chair of Bengal Foundation, actor Jaya Ahsan and Luva Nahid Choudhury, chairman of Aranya Crafts Ltd, open the company's third outlet on Sonargaon Janapath Road in the capital's Uttara on Saturday.

ARANYA