

SESSIONS AND MEETINGS

Eighth Session of the Council of the IJSG

Eighth Session of the Council of the International Jute Study Group (IJSG) was held at its Secretariat in Dhaka on 2-3 May 2007.



The Council, the highest authority of the IJSG, discussed establishment matters as well as administrative and financial matters of the Group. A series of important issues including membership of the Group, development of market for jute products, observance of the International Year of Natural Fibres 2009, assessment of world jute situation and other related matters to formulate appropriate strategies for the growth of the world jute sector were also discussed during the Session. The Council stressed upon the need for continuous and collective efforts by the present Members to take diplomatic initiatives to persuade potential member countries to become Members of the Group to strengthen its activities. The Council focused on the interest and participation of the private sector and underscored the need to make Private Sector Consultative Board (PSCB) more effective and a vibrant Body by increasing the number of Associate Members which can contribute to the improvement of the jute economy.

The Council appointed Mr. Sudripta Roy as the Secretary General of the International Jute Study Group for a period of three years with effect from 1 September 2007.

Ms. Elisabeth Andrea Bösch Malinen, Deputy Head of Mission, Embassy of Switzerland (ex-officio) and Jute Commissioner, India

were re-elected as Chairman and Vice-Chairman, respectively, of the IJSG Council for the jute year 2007/2008.

Alongwith all Members of IJSG - Bangladesh, India, Switzerland, and European Community-EC (representing its 27 Member States) and Associate Members, the representatives of Pakistan, Indonesia, Morocco, Myanmar, Thailand, Malaysia, The Russian Federation, Vietnam and FAO attended the Session as Observers. In the inaugural ceremony on 2 May 2007, Mr. Md. Abdur Rashid Sarkar, Secretary, Ministry of Textiles and Jute, Govt. of Bangladesh delivered the inaugural speech on behalf of the Chief Guest - Mrs. Geeteara Safiya Choudhury, Honourable Advisor to the Caretaker Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh and in-charge of the Ministry of Textiles and Jute. Mr. A.F.M. Sarwar Kamal, the Secretary General of the IJSG spoke on the occasion. Ms. Elisabeth Andrea Bösch Malinen, Deputy Head of Mission, Embassy of Switzerland and Chairman of the IJSG Council presided over the ceremony.

Speakers urged upon all the potential member countries to come forward in joining the IJSG to help achieve the mandate of the Group and make the organisation an effective forum for international cooperation and to work for the betterment of the global jute sector. The speakers also stressed on producing innovative diversified products to go with the consumers' choice and build new market opportunities. It was also highlighted that IJSG which is now five years old, should be the international resource centre to provide relevant information on jute sector to all concerned and undertake more promotional activities.

Seventh Meeting of the Committee on Projects (COP)

Seventh meeting of the Committee on Projects (COP) of the International Jute Study Group (IJSG) was held on 13-14 November 2006 at the IJSG Headquarters, Dhaka under the Chairmanship of Mr. Golam Mostaqim, Joint Secretary (Administration), Ministry of Textiles and Jute, Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh.

Mr. A.F.M. Sarwar Kamal, the Secretary General of the IJSG made a statement on IJSG's activities related to projects on the opening day. In the meeting, the reports of the recently completed projects such as, A New Road Map for Jute Industry, Implementation of IJO Standard 98/01 for Food grade Jute Bags, Productivity Improvement in the Jute Industry (A Workshop in Pakistan) were reviewed. The committee was informed of the progress of the on-going projects like Jute Reinforced Polyolefines for Industrial Applications: Phase II: Material Optimisation and Process Up-scaling for Commercialisation, Small Scale Entrepreneurship Development in Diversified Jute Products, Design Workshop (Phase II), Printing of a Catalogue/Publicity Brochure for Jute Diversified Products, A Publication on Jute and Kenaf etc. The updated positions of the approved pipeline projects like Development and Application of Potentially Important Jute Geo-textiles, Production of a Video

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Film on Jute, Low Cost Retting of Jute/Kenaf/Mesta for Quality Up gradation etc. and the positions of the approved unfunded projects were discussed in the meeting. Some new project proposals/concepts/activities like Collaborative Research Projects, Market Promotion of Diversified Jute Products, Observance of the International Year of Natural Fibres 2009 were also presented by the IJSG Secretariat for consideration of the COP.



The meeting suggested IJSG Secretariat to take initiative to formulate a priority-wise programme based on the recommendations of the Road Map Report in harmony with the mandate and strategy of IJSG. The Committee emphasised on production of high quality jute fibre, diversified jute products, machinery up-gradation and market promotion of jute products. The Committee elected Jute Commissioner, Ministry of Textiles, Government of India as Chairman, and Joint Secretary, Ministry of Textiles & Jute, Government of the Peoples' Republic of Bangladesh as Vice-Chairman of the COP for the jute year 2006 - 2007.

The meeting was attended by the delegates from India, European Community, Bangladesh and representatives of Associate members of IJSG.

Sixth Meeting of the PSCB

The Sixth Meeting of the Private Sector Consultative Board (PSCB) of the International Jute Study Group (IJSG) was held on 24-25 November 2006 in Kathmandu, Nepal. Mr. Sanjay Kajaria, Chairman of the PSCB chaired the meeting. Dr. Ram Saran Mahat, Honourable Minister for Finance, Government of Nepal inaugurated an international workshop on Jute Cultivation and Manufacturing in Nepal: a Challenge and the Sixth PSCB meeting as the Chief Guest. Mr. A.F.M. Sarwar Kamal, Secretary General of the IJSG was present in the meeting and made a statement.

Honourable Minister for Finance, Government of Nepal emphasized the importance of jute in the social life of Nepal and remarked that growth of jute sector in Nepal would generate employment and alleviate poverty to a great extent. Nepal should endeavour to adopt new technologies for the production of better quality fibre and diversified jute products, he added. In this context he stressed on the necessity of co-operation among the producing countries. He hoped that appropriate recommendations will emerge from the meeting.

The Secretary General, IJSG in his statement remarked that PSCB is the direct linkage between the IJSG and the Private Sector which provides a forum to discuss various challenges faced by

the jute industry. Mr. Kamal hoped that the delegates would come up with productive ideas and proposals for the overall improvement of the jute sector and make the PSCB more effective. He urged the Government of Nepal to consider becoming a Member of the IJSG for the benefit of poor farmers, and to generate employment, particularly for women and for the overall growth of the global jute economy.

During the Business Session, Dr. Deva Bhakta Shakya, Executive Director, Agro Enterprises Centre-FNCCI presented a paper on Jute Production in Nepal: Prospects and Problems. Another paper on Challenges faced by Jute Industries in Nepal was presented by Mr. Prakash Mundhra, Vice President, Nepal Jute Mills Association (NJMA).

In the Sixth PSCB meeting important issues like harmonisation of raw jute standards, cooperation between buyers'/consumers' organizations, strategy for promotion of technical textiles including geo-textiles, improvement of processing machinery and overall strategy for the jute sector etc. were discussed.

The Chairman of the PSCB in his speech drew attention to some basic issues like necessity of good quality seed and fibre, improvement of processing machinery, market promotion etc. He pointed out that attempts should be made to popularize technical textiles, geo-textiles so that bulk quantity of jute could be utilised.

Mr. Diwakar Golchha, First Vice President of FNCCI highlighted the Jute Industries in Nepal. Mr. Bharat Bahadur Thapa, Secretary, Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Supplies, Government of Nepal and Mr. R.K. Poddar, Chairman of the Indian Jute Mills Association (IJMA) spoke in the inaugural Session. Mr. Imtiaz Ahmed, Ambassador of Bangladesh in Nepal also attended the function.



Among others Mr. Humayun Mazhar, Vice-Chairmen of the PSCB & Chairman, Pakistan Jute Mills Association (PJMA) and representatives of various jute related Associations and Jute Mills of Bangladesh, India, Nepal and Pakistan were present in the meeting.

Meanwhile, Mr. A.F.M. Sarwar Kamal, the Secretary General of the IJSG met separately with Mr. Bharat Bahadur Thapa, Secretary, Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Supplies, and Mr. Ganesh Kumar K.C., Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives, Government of Nepal to discuss among others, Nepal's joining the IJSG as a Member and the outcome of the discussion was encouraging. It may be mentioned that Nepal was an active Member of the erstwhile International Jute Organisation (IJO).

PROJECTS/ ACTIVITIES

Completed Projects/ Activities

Design Workshop for Jute Diversified Products (Phase II)

The objectives of the project was to promote new, innovative, unconventional/diversified jute products, to provide inputs in terms of designs, dyes & dyeing, printing, finishing techniques to the jute diversified products manufacturers and to establish links among the designers, experts and the jute diversified products manufacturers.

National Centre for Jute Diversification (NCJD), India implemented the Design Workshop (Phase II) at Ahmedabad, India in collaboration with National Institute of Design (NID). A two weeks training on different techniques of tie & dye, batik, block printing and other hand-on techniques on jute fabrics, preparation of colour chart using different natural dyes and mordants was conducted under the project for potential entrepreneurs.

Jute Diversification Promotion Centre (JDPC) implemented the project in Bangladesh. A number of training workshops were conducted among the producers of diversified jute products for providing technical /design supports and to upgrade skills in producing quality jute diversified products. Buyers-Sellers meets were also organised under the project to improve market prospect and facilitate marketing of the products.

Design and Market Development of Handloom based Jute Floor Coverings

The project aimed at creating opportunity and access of technology processes and designs to the weavers of rural areas in producing jute based floor coverings and to revitalize the handloom clusters through promoting jute based activities in different traditional handlooms of the rural people especially women of specific areas for additional income generation/poverty alleviation. It was intended to encourage and train rural craft persons to use jute as a substitute for other raw materials (e.g. coarse cotton/sheep wool, etc.), upgrade skills and bring in design innovations in jute-based floor coverings. The project exposed the producers/small entrepreneurs to the market of handloom floor coverings and provide them opportunity of marketing their produce.

The project was implemented by NCJD and JDPC to provide adequate practical trainings to cluster of weavers so as to enable the weavers of India & Bangladesh respectively to attain the required skill for producing attractive jute floor coverings of marketable quality. NCJD implemented the project through a cluster-based approach in eight states of the North-Eastern region of India and JDPC implemented the project in the greater Rangpur and Narsingdi areas of Bangladesh with the aim of imparting skill development to handloom weavers, providing design & market support services, organizing buyers-sellers meets and fair/exhibition and making advocacy campaigns.

Printing of a Catalogue/Publicity Brochure for Jute Diversified Products

This project was undertaken to prepare/print an attractive Catalogue/Brochure of international quality with adequate necessary information, photos, codes of the products, manufacturers /suppliers list for promotion of jute diversified

products and expansion of both local and international markets. NCJD has printed the Catalogue and sent requisite copies to IJSG. The Secretariat is awaiting the final version of the Catalogue from the JDPC.

Study in the Residual Silica/Silicate in Raw Jute and Scope for Elimination/Reduction

The study was initiated by the IJSG on receipt of information from a European raw jute importer (M/s WG Clasen) regarding presence of silica in raw jute fibres much above the permissible limit (0.02%). In view of serious concern of the speciality paper pulp producers in Europe, who use jute fibres for making speciality paper, IJSG felt it necessary to conduct a study.

The Consultative Committee of CFC agreed to provide fund for the study submitted by the IJSG Secretariat in pursuance of COP decision, as a Fast Track Project. Bangladesh Jute Research Institute (BJRI) and Institute of Jute Technology (IJT), Kolkata, India implemented the project.

On the basis of the final technical /financial reports of the project implemented in India and Bangladesh received from IJT and BJRI respectively, IJSG Secretariat prepared the Project Completion Report (PCR) and has submitted it to CFC. The study has revealed and confirmed that the intrinsic silica content in jute is very negligible. That jute sometimes contains silica above acceptable limit of 0.02% is mainly due to external contamination. This is again possible to be reduced by simple washing and a simple sequence of chemical treatments, which has been described in the Project Completion Report (PCR) and also in the aforementioned Protocol.

On-going Projects

Small Scale Entrepreneurship Development in Diversified Jute Products

This project is intended to increase the use of jute fibre in domestic and export markets and assist in diversification of jute products in the home textiles sector, based upon jute/cotton blended yarns. It was also aimed at introducing new small-scale technology, training and support services to the rural community and to develop a culture of entrepreneurship at the local level.

The Project is funded by the Common Fund for Commodities (CFC) and is being implemented by the NCJD and JDPC. Under this project, Raw Material Banks (RMB) and Jute Entrepreneurs Service Centres (JESC) have been established at different places of the participating countries through which entrepreneurs are provided with raw materials such as fibre, yarn, fabric etc. for production of various jute products and they are being trained to upgrade the skill in various aspects of jute processing including bleaching, softening, dyeing, printing etc. Expert designers are providing training to the entrepreneurs on the products design suitable to the market demand.

Jute Reinforced Polyolefines for Industrial Applications: Phase II: Material Optimization and Process Up-Scaling for Commercialization

The project Agreement has been signed between the PEA, CFC and IJSG and the project activities started from August 2004. The kick-off meeting of the project was held in January 2005 at A&F. Collaboration Agreements between the PEA & Azip Pipes Limited of Bangladesh and the PEA & Birla Corporation Limited of India,

the private sector partners of Bangladesh and India respectively have been signed.

Following the development of the technologies, initial commercial trial at private industries in Bangladesh has been done and in India it will be conducted soon. Different household items/products like cloth hanger, buckets, crates/boxes, etc. other industrial applications will be produced. Glass fibre will be replaced and jute and polypropylene will be used in 50:50 proportions to make jute reinforced composites.

Designing of New Metallic Card Clothing for Jute Cards

A Project Agreement between the IJSG and the Indian Jute Industries' Research Association (IJIRA) was signed for implementation of the project. An Agreement between the IJIRA and Milltex Engineers (P) Ltd., Coimbatore, India was also signed for developing the design and manufacturing of the metallic card clothing. The IJSG Secretariat has received a Joint Report on "Preliminary trials carried out on jute finisher card mounted with metallic card clothing" at the factory of Milltex Engineers (P) Ltd. Coimbatore.

Low Cost Retting of Jute/Kenaf/Mesta for Quality Up-gradation

The IJSG Secretariat received a project proposal entitled "Low Cost Retting of Jute/Kenaf/ Mesta for Quality Up-gradation" from the Jute Corporation of India Ltd. (JCI), who developed a cost effective low level technology of retting to upgrade the quality of raw jute. The IJSG Secretariat revised the project proposal in CFC's prescribed Format incorporating necessary activities/information and inputs for involving BJRI in the project and placed it in the Thirty Eighth Meeting of the Consultative Committee of CFC with a request for funding. Considering the importance of the proposal the Consultative Committee of CFC agreed to recommend the proposal for approval subject to reformulation of the proposal as per their suggestions. Subsequently CFC has approved the revised proposal for funding from its Fast Track Project facility. A Fast Track Implementation Agreement (FTIA) of the project has been concluded among CFC, IJSG and JCI, the PIA (Project Implementing Agency) to start implementation of the project shortly.

Publication on Jute and Kenaf

This project is intended to bring out a comprehensive publication in the form of a user-friendly reference book on jute/kenaf and allied fibres covering the whole gamut from agriculture to final products, essential statistics/ information on trade/marketing, etc. within a certain amount of details for the people particularly interested in this sector.

IJSG Secretariat invited write-ups/articles from all possible resource persons/experts/specialists on different fields of jute /kenaf and allied fibres from all over the world as their contribution to this publication. To expedite the whole process of this publication IJSG Secretariat organized two meetings one in Dhaka and the other in Kolkata with the Editorial Board members and a couple of experts of respective countries to discuss various aspects like expected target readers, intended message for the readers, size/volume of the book, style of writing, possible contents, selection and identification of authors, role of the editors/editorial board members etc.

Observance of the International Year of Natural Fibres 2009

The International Jute Study Group (IJSG) as the International Commodity Body (ICB) for Jute, Kenaf and Allied Fibres will be playing an important role in accomplishing various activities related to the observance of the International Year of Natural Fibres (IYNF) 2009. The IJSG Secretariat placed a proposal in the Seventh COP meeting held on 13-14 November 2006 and the COP approved US\$ 5000 from the IJSG Special Account. The IJSG Secretariat has contributed the fund to FAO for the purpose of preparing a Communication Plan for observing IYNF. The Secretariat placed a proposal in the Eighth Council Session held on 2-3 May 2007 for sanctioning US\$ 65000 from the IJSG Special Account for making contribution to FAO on behalf of the Group and for undertaking various activities by IJSG.

The Council of IJSG instructed the Secretariat to play its due role as an International Commodity Body in observing the International Year of Natural Fibres 2009 and approved a budget of US\$ 11,000 for the year 2007. The Council also instructed to submit the detailed plan of actions and proposed budget for the years 2008 and 2009 in the next Council Session.

NEWS

Steering Committee Meeting of the Project on Small-Scale Entrepreneurship Development in Diversified Jute Products held in Dhaka

The first meeting of the Steering Committee of the project entitled "Small-Scale Entrepreneurship Development in Diversified Jute Products" project was held on 12 November 2006 at the IJSG Headquarters, Dhaka under the Chairmanship of the Secretary General of IJSG Mr. A.F. M. Sarwar Kamal. The Project Executing Agency (PEA) Mr. Fazlul Huq presented the Project Implementation Report for the first year and the draft Annual Work Plan and Budget for the second year of the project.



Mr. Abdus Salam and Mr. A.K. Khastagir, the Project Managers of Bangladesh and India respectively presented the status of Project Implementation in Bangladesh and India. Representatives of Bangladesh Jute Research Institute (BJRI), South Indian Textile Research Association (SITRA) and Institute of Jute Technology (IJT), India expressed their views on the technologies to be provided for successful implementation of the project. Entrepreneurs from Bangladesh and India shared their experiences. Mr. Sietse van der Werff, Senior Project Manager of Common Fund for Commodities (CFC) was also present in the meeting and delivered his observation and comments on different related issues.

United Nations General Assembly Resolution 2009 Declared International Year of Natural Fibres

2009 was declared the International Year of Natural Fibres (IYNF) on December 20, 2006 by the United Nations General Assembly meeting in New York. The IYNF will help to develop the efficiency and sustainability of agricultural industries that employ millions of people, contribute to food security and provide economic development opportunities.

The International Jute Study Group (IJSJG) welcomes the UN General Assembly resolution adopted on 20 December 2006 declaring 2009 the International Year of Natural Fibres (IYNF). IYNF will contribute to the Millennium Development Goals by further developing the agricultural industries that provides employment opportunities to a large number of people in some of the worlds poorest countries, according to the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). The UN decision follows a request by the biennial Conference of FAO in November 2006.

Millions of people around the world, among them some of the poorest people in some of the poorest countries depend on the production and processing of natural fibres for their livelihood. Natural fibres contribute to food security and economic advancement for these farmers.

The International Year of Natural Fibres will raise consumer awareness of natural fibres and strengthen demand for natural fibre products improving the livelihoods of the farmers who produce them and revenues for countries which export them, says FAO. At the same time, promoting the use of natural fibres will enhance the environment.

The wide range of natural fibres includes cotton, wool, jute, flax, silk, sisal, coconut fibre and many others. Some are produced from plants, others from animals, and they are used in clothing and other consumer goods, as well as in industrial applications. Virtually every country in the world produces some natural fibres.

According to FAO, there is almost no limit to the type of activities that might form part of the International Year of Natural Fibres. Fashion shows, exhibitions, conferences, production of TV documentaries and books, and competitions for school children, could all be developed in the many countries expected to take part. Under the general guidance of an International Steering Committee, FAO would be the coordinator of activities in the Year of Natural Fibres, with many activities being undertaken by partner organisations.

It was agreed upon at the meeting that all the parties involved are required to provide their specific comments to arrive at a consensus on how to go ahead with the establishment of Fibre Treatment Plant and Mini Spinning Plant as these technologies are not being used commercially at the moment. It was decided to assess loan component of the project taking into consideration the change of configurations of the machinery and their source of origin in terms of technical feasibility, economic viability and commercial profitability as well. Collaborating institutions would ensure that the entrepreneurs are ready to take up the technologies. Incomplete activities of the first year should be included in the Work Plan of the second year along with its budget in a manageable and transparent way. It was also agreed that NCJD and JDPC should exchange between each other the manuals and other printed materials developed under the project for Training/Awareness/Skill Development and should formulate appropriate Business Plans to make Jute Entrepreneurs Service Centres (JESC) and Raw Material Banks (RMB) sustainable beyond project period. It was decided that the project activities should be expedited through effectively addressing the issues/constraints to complete the project within the stipulated period and attain the objectives.

Seminar on Jute and Kenaf held in Myanmar

A seminar on jute and kenaf was held in Yangon, Myanmar on 7 February 2007 jointly organized by the Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation, Myanmar Jute Industries (MJII) and the International Jute Study Group (IJSJG).

In the inaugural ceremony, Mr. Tin Htut Oo, Director General of the Department of Agricultural Planning gave the opening speech on behalf of H.E. Major General Htay Oo, Minister for

Agriculture and Irrigation, Myanmar. The Secretary General of the IJSJG, Mr. A.F.M. Sarwar Kamal made a comprehensive statement. Mr. Ye Hpone Myint, Managing Director of the MJII also spoke on the occasion.

Mr. Tin Htut Oo said that the demand for the new forms of jute and kenaf based products in the area of textile and paper industries are in increasing trend. It is high time for the jute industry of Myanmar to modify this sector along the lines of the global market and it is also the right time for closer collaboration with IJSJG. He also emphasised on the need to strengthen the areas of research and development (R&D).



Mr. A.F.M. Sarwar Kamal said that IJSJG has continuously been endeavouring to involve jute producing and consuming countries who are not members of the Group for the overall growth of the jute sector and for the promotion of jute and jute products. He informed with contentment that the seminar is the first ever International event on jute/kenaf in Myanmar that has been organised by the IJSJG jointly with the MJII.

The Secretary General hoped that Myanmar as one of the important jute/kenaf producing countries, and whose production is constantly increasing, will join IJSG as an active member. He also expected that MJL and other jute related agencies of Myanmar would become Associate Members of IJSG to play important role in this sector.

In the first technical session of the seminar, the papers were presented on Policy and Prospect of Jute and Allied Fibres (JAF) with Special Reference to Bangladesh by Dr. Mohammad Mahbubur Rahman, Secretary of Ministry of Textiles and Jute, Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh and Jute/Kenaf Diversified Products Other Than Traditional Uses: An Indian Experience by Mr. Rajesh Kumar Pathak, Deputy Jute Commissioner, Ministry of Textiles, Government of India. The session was chaired by Dr. Myint Thein, President, Myanmar Academy of Agricultural, Forestry, Livestock and Fishery Sciences.

In the second technical session, the papers were presented on Recent Agricultural Development in Jute, Kenaf and Mesta through Traditional and Biotechnological Approaches by Dr. Asma Khatun, Chief Scientific Officer of Bangladesh Jute Research Institute (BJRI) and Cultivation and Production of Environment-friendly Jute/Kenaf Fibres in Myanmar and Review on Diversified Application of Jute/ Kenaf by Daw Soe Soe Aye, Deputy General Manager of Myanma Jute Industries. The session was chaired by Dr. Kyaw Than, Vice President, Myanmar Academy of Agricultural, Forestry, Livestock and Fishery Sciences.

Among others the Ambassador of Bangladesh in Myanmar, H.E. Mr. M. Khairuzzaman and other officials attended the seminar.

A field visit was also arranged by the Myanma Jute Industries for the IJSG officials and the resource persons of the seminar at the Dawbon Carpet Products Factory and Okkyin Jute Mill in Yangon on 8 February 2007.

Fair on Diversified Jute Products in Dhaka

The inaugural ceremony of the second Jute Entrepreneurs' Service Centre (JESC) established at the Bangladesh Jute Research Institute (BJRI), Dhaka under an IJSG project entitled "Small Scale Entrepreneurship Development in Diversified Jute Products" was held on 20 February 2007 at the Committee Room of BJRI, Dhaka. The project is being implemented by the Jute Diversification Promotion Centre (JDPC) under the supervision of the International Jute Study Group (IJSG).

A 12-day fair on diversified jute products has also been organised at the BJRI premises to encourage the small entrepreneurs and introduce their diversified jute products in the marketplace.

Mr. M. Abdul Aziz, ndc, Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture, Government of Bangladesh inaugurated the JESC and the Fair. Mr. A.F.M. Sarwar Kamal, Secretary General of the IJSG was present on the occasions. Mr. Md. Abdur Rashid Sarkar, Secretary, Ministry of Textiles and Jute, Government of Bangladesh chaired the inaugural ceremony of the JESC.

Mr. Aziz highlighted the importance of coordination among the IJSG, research institutes, Government of Bangladesh and entrepreneurs for the development of the jute sector. The Secretary General of the IJSG stressed upon the need for arranging more fairs and expositions for the market promotion to create an opportunity for the buyers and sellers to meet and interact. He also called for taking initiatives to ensure availability of raw materials, provide necessary loans to small entrepreneurs.

Mr. Sarkar remarked that the people around the world have

developed likings to go back to the nature. He further remarked that the present trend of increased price of jute is definitely a welcome sign for the natural fibre as well as the marginal farmers. Various diversified jute products which included a variety of bags, wall hangings, tapestry, cushion cover, curtains, home textiles, handicrafts etc. are being displayed in the 40 stalls of the fair.

Daylong design workshop held in Dhaka

Jute Diversification Promotion Centre (JDPC) organised a daylong design workshop for the development and expansion of the diversified jute products on 26 February 2007 at the Committee Room of the Bangladesh Jute Research Institute (BJRI), Dhaka.

The Secretary General of the IJSG, Mr. A.F.M. Sarwar Kamal was present on the occasion as the Chief Guest and inaugurated the design workshop. Executive Director of JDPC Dr. A.B.M. Abdullah presided over the function. Mr. Sarwar Kamal remarked that the jute products need to be produced and marketed in such a way that it matches with the changing demand of the customers' aesthetic choice and contemporary style. High-quality design of the products would widen the market opportunities. The Secretary General ensured utmost cooperation on behalf of the Group at all times.

In the business session, Mr. Alaluddin Ahmed, former Chief Designer of BSCIC and Professor, Department of Fine Arts, University of Development Alternative presented a paper on the importance of the design development to generate market opportunities. Mr. Mohiuddin Faruque, former Director of Bangladesh Television and Professor, Stanford University chaired the session.

Workshop on Development of Jute Entrepreneurs held in India

A daylong workshop on Development of Jute Entrepreneurs and Lifestyle Jute Products under the IJSG sponsored and Common Fund for Commodities (CFC) funded project entitled Small-Scale Entrepreneurship Development in Diversified Jute Products was jointly organised by the National Centre for Jute Diversification (NCJD), Kolkata, Ministry of Textiles, Govt. of India and the Development of Hessian Articles Research and Training Institution (DHARTI) held on 13 March 2007 at the Hotel Jayaram in Puducherry, India.

Mr. N. Rangasamy, the Honourable Chief Minister of Puducherry inaugurated the workshop. Among others Dr. Latifa Binte Lutfar, Operations Officer, International Jute Study Group (IJSG) and Mr. Md. Fazlul Huq, Project Executing Agency (PEA) of the above project were present and spoke on the occasion. The Honourable Chief Minister said that Puducherry has got immense potential and manpower which are suitable for jute industry. He assured all possible support relating to training or development activities which provides employment opportunities especially to women entrepreneurs. A large section of women entrepreneurs participated in the workshop.

In the Technical Session of the workshop Mr. A.K. Khastagir, Project Manager, NCJD, Mr. R. Chandran, Assistant Director, HM&SEC, Office of Development Commissioner for Handicrafts, Dr. Ramesh, Environmental Engineer, Puducherry Pollution Control Committee, Mr. Tara, Textiles Technologist, Mr. P. Ramasamy, General Manager, District Industries Centre, Puducherry, Mrs. Rajamani, Project Officer, SJSRY, Puducherry Municipality, Officials from the Bank of Baroda and Indian Bank, Mr. T. Ayyappan, Market Promotion Officer, JMDC, Chennai, Mr. L. Ponnarasu, Team Leader, Jute Service Centre, PSG Tech, CBE

