

## BGMEA to set up fashion and technology varsity

The apex body of country's garments manufacturers and exporters BGMEA has been forward to set up a private university in a bid to meet the growing demand for specialized manpower in textile and apparel industries, reports BSS.

The industry leaders today made a formal request for an approval to Adviser for Education and Commerce Dr Hossain Zillur Rahman at his secretariat office here.

President of Bangladesh Garments Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA) Anwarul Alam Chowdhury told BSS today that they are likely to name the university as BGMEA University of Fashion and Technology (BUFT), which would be located at Uttara, an area where BGMEA now runs a fashion institute for diploma courses.

"We have the initial infrastructure to operate as a fully fledged university campus," he said adding the existing BGMEA Institute of Fashion and Technology (BIFT) might initially provide the foundation to develop it into the proposed university.

He said the education adviser has agreed in principle to the BGMEA proposal and suggested that they should wait until the revised private university act has been announced. The BGMEA would set up the university at its own cost.

"This may happen within a month," Chowdhury quoted Hos-

sain Zillur as saying.

Strongly pleading for the university, he said, the need for specialized manpower in textile and garment sector was on rise. At least 5,000 foreign experts are currently working in garment industry from production managers to designers to other levels due to lack of local experts, he added.

The garment industry, Chowdhury said, offers at least 25,000 jobs at present at expert level and most of them are coming from overseas recruitment, as the country is not producing highly skilled expertise locally.

The proposed university will not only reduce dependence on external manpower but also contribute to reduce the outflow of huge foreign currency spent for salary and other benefits to outsiders, Chowdhury said.

He referred to the present status of BIFT, which is run under National University and said that

garments related teaching and technology were quite different from the core focus of the National University.

Chowdhury said the garment sector is part of the global industry and it is the time to set up the university to equip the garment industry to face emerging global market challenges and changed buyers' demand.

They have every necessary backup support from different global organizations to run the university, he said. The BGMEA has already signed an agreement with a German agency for collaboration in developing fashion and textile.

It has a similar arrangement with an Australian agency, he said. BGMEA is moreover, scheduled to sign an agreement in October with a UK-based fashion institute. All these are aimed at bringing about qualitative improvement in fashion design.