

# BRAC Bank sees South Asian Youth Convention a vehicle to propel growth

## *Re-financing package on SMEs should be expanded*

**Special Correspondent**

BRAC Bank Ltd, the largest SME bank in the country sees the LEAD 2012 as a very good initiative to make the regional economy vibrant.

"It is a very good initiative from SAARC Chamber to arrange LEAD 2012 with the theme 'youth in rising south Asia: Promises and dreams' as we feel it could open the opportunity space to interact more to develop trade and commerce through the young generations," Syed Mahbubur Rahman, managing director & CEO of BRAC Bank told the FE in an interview recently.

LEAD 2012, a two-day South Asian Youth Convention arranged by SAARC Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI) in collaboration with Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI) ends today (Sunday) in the city.

LEAD 2012 is a platform for the youth and business community who would be hearing achievers share their stories along with special focus on their battles, challenges, priorities, South Asian identities, roles and their evolution.

The BRAC Bank chief executive said since the young generation will take the future leadership of about 1.5 billion population of South Asia in near future, the Dhaka conference will make an important contribution through greater understanding among the

teeming millions.

Commenting on the pioneering role of BRAC Bank in developing the economy through SME, Mr Mahbub said the bank is trying to reach the rural people with innovative SME ideas.

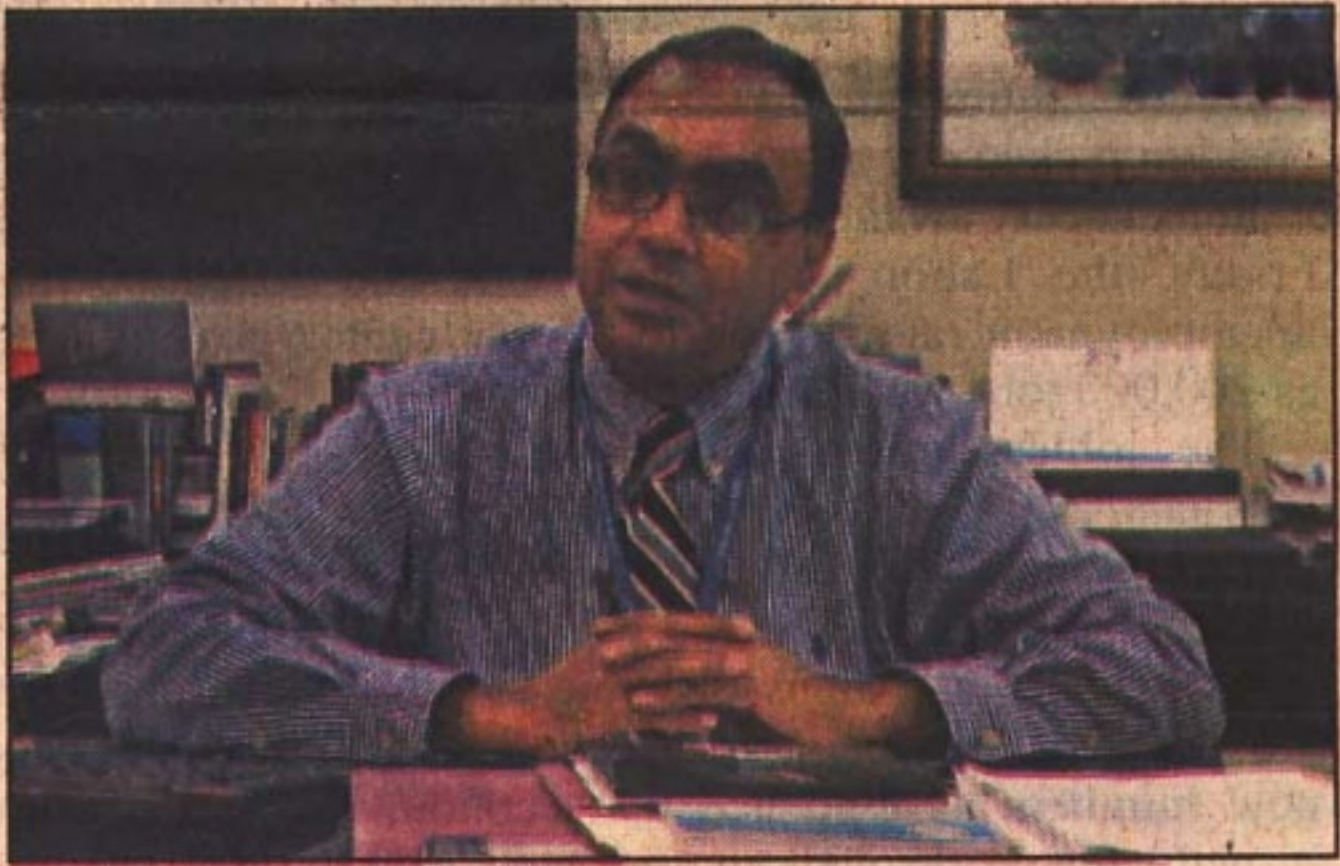
During its 10-year operations, BRAC Bank provided more than more than Tk 150 billion SME loan to 365,000 SME entrepreneurs. As of now in its 10-year operations, 7,800 women entrepreneurs got Tk 3.5 billion from BRAC Bank.

"We are desperately trying to catch the teeming millions in a more structured and focussed way as far as SMEs are concerned," Mr Mahbub added.

and moreover the definition of SME should be changed.

"Now SMEs are defined on the basis of asset and number of employments, but turnover should be taken into account to define the SMEs in the backdrop of its thriving growth potential," the BRAC Bank CEO asserted. BRAC Bank Ltd was founded on a philosophy of keeping trust on the hopes and dreams of Bangladeshi entrepreneurs - and majority of these entrepreneurs have been beyond the conventional banking reach.

The business model was simple: to mobilize funds from the urban towards financing the entrepreneurial initiatives in rural. This is a



**Syed Mahbubur Rahman**

He said the existing re-financing package on SMEs should be expanded to bring more people under the SME network.

He said the sector-wise list of SME should be broadened

key solution towards financial inclusion.

BRAC Bank, being the youngest, today stands among the top quarter in the industry, that too with double digit growth in profits every year.