

EMBASSY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

PUBLIC AFFAIRS SECTION

TEL: 880-2-883-7150-4

FAX: 880-2-9881677, 9885688

E-MAIL: DhakaPA@state.gov

WEBSITE: <http://dhaka.usembassy.gov>



PRESS RELEASE

**US AMBASSADOR DAN MOZENA VISITS
SMC BLUE STAR OUTLET IN NAOGAON**

DHAKA, FEBRUARY 28 -- Today U.S. Ambassador Dan Mozena has visited SMC Blue Star Outlet at Naogaon where 20-25 clients come every day to receive basic medical services. Blue Star is a brand name of the Social Marketing Company (SMC), which USAID Bangladesh has supported since 1974. SMC is a major provider of maternal and child health products in Bangladesh and is the largest privately managed not-for-profit social marketing organization in the world.

Later, Ambassador Mozena met the pharmacy owner Mr. Abu Taleb who is a Blue Star Provider practicing in Merina Pharmacy for last 27 years. He has been trained by SMC on Family Planning counseling, Injectable contraceptive and Tuberculosis. Like Taleb, approximately 17,000 health providers receive training from SMC annually to strengthen their knowledge and skills in health services, including counseling of couples on family planning topics.

In support of the Bangladesh Government's goal of increasing access to family planning services, USAID has looked to private-sector solutions to expand knowledge, access, the use of modern contraception and basic medical services. USAID funded SMC's "Blue Star" Program is an all-out effort to bring the private sector health providers into the National Family Planning Program.

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Note: A Bangla translation of this press release is also available at the American Center. If you are interested in the translation, please call the American Center Press Section, Tel: 8837150-4, Fax: 9885688; e-mail: DhakaPA@state.gov; Website: [http:// dhaka.usembassy.gov](http://dhaka.usembassy.gov)