

BB expects remittance income to cross USD 11bn mark this fiscal

The Financial Express, Sunday January 31, 2010

Bangladesh Bank expects the inward remittance to record more than USD 11bn by the end of the current fiscal year as a special move has already been made to increase its flow from different parts of the world. The latest figure shows that despite the slowdown of overseas jobs, inflow of remittance has maintained a robust growth -- a continuation of the trend in last fiscal year when remittance grew 22.41%, the BB officials said.

http://www.thefinancialexpress-bd.com/more.php?news_id=91094

SCBs lose market to private banks

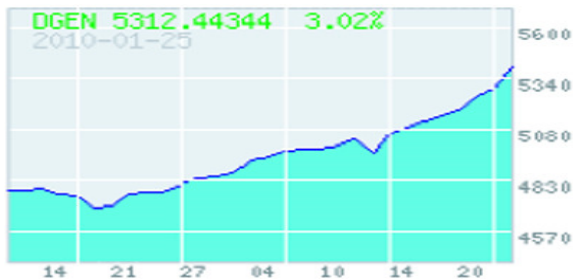
The Financial Express, Wednesday January 27, 2010

The market share of state-owned commercial banks (SCBs) has declined while that of the private commercial banks (PCBs) increased gradually, officials said. "In 2008 the SCBs held 31.1% of the total industry assets against 33.1% in 2007. PCBs' share rose to 54.2% in 2008 against 51.4% in 2007," the central bank said in its annual report for the fiscal 2008-09, released Sunday. The SCBs held 33.1% of the total industry assets in 2007 against 32.7% in 2006 while PCBs' share rose to 51.4% compared to 47.7% of the previous year, according to the central bank statistics.

http://www.thefinancialexpress-bd.com/more.php?news_id=90661

Mutual fund stock riot at DSE

Institutional investors dominate scene
The Financial Express, Tuesday January 26, 2010



Dhaka stocks saw the steepest rise Monday, moving up more than 3.0%, with the turnover crossing BDT 15.0bn-mark (USD 217.2mn) and benchmark index 5300-mark for the first time. The market began to climb sharply from early trading with little bumps riding on Grameenphone and mutual funds, spurred by the news that the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) will not go for writ petition challenging the High Court's verdict allowing closed-end mutual funds to raise their size by issuing bonus and right shares.

http://www.thefinancialexpress-bd.com/more.php?news_id=90617

BB pins much hope on global economic recovery

Lists six downside risks
The Financial Express, Monday January 25, 2010

The central bank has found strong link between the performance of the Bangladesh economy in the current fiscal year and the pace of recovery of the global economy from deep recession. In its annual report (for fiscal year 2008-09) released Sunday, the Bangladesh Bank expressed the fear that Bangladesh might have to make some downward revision in its medium-term economic forecasts in the event of the third wave of recession. It has also

listed the stabilization of inflation as a major challenge for the policymakers. The report said the outlook envisaged in the Medium Term Macroeconomic Framework (MTMF) faces several near and medium term downside risks and uncertainties originating from probable adverse effects of the global financial crisis on exports and workers' remittance inflows, continuous return of migrant workers laid off in recession-ridden host countries, weakening in investment momentum, risk of exacerbating domestic inflation if unexpectedly faster global recovery takes hold, and floods and other natural disasters and climate change.

http://www.thefinancialexpress-bd.com/more.php?news_id=90513

Procurement rules

Government gives in to WB pressure, finally

The Financial Express, Saturday January 23, 2010

The government has given in to the World Bank's pressure by sidelining its own procurement laws in favour of the lender's guidelines to purchase goods, works and services for projects financed by the donor, officials said Friday. The government initially rejected the World Bank's reservations and demands that it revised the aid deal and use the lender's guidelines in USD 2.5bn worth of projects now in various stages of implementation. The donor in the statement in mid-November said introduction of lottery system, offer of development works costing up to BDT 20mn (USD 289.6 thousand) to inexperienced contractors, rejection of bids with price above or below 5.0% of the official estimate, and single stage two-envelope method for procurement of goods and works are not consistent with some fundamental provisions of the Bank's guidelines.

http://www.thefinancialexpress-bd.com/more.php?news_id=90321

Economy shows signs of pick-up

High-profile meeting reviews indicators today
The Daily Star, Sunday January 31, 2010

The rise in collection of VAT and imports of capital machinery and industrial raw materials in the first six months this fiscal year showed clear signs that increased trade and commerce and investments are helping domestic economy pick up, officials say. Data shows July-December earnings from value-added tax have marked 24% growth, while opening of letters of credit for the imports of capital machinery has grown by 28% and raw materials by 22%. However, these indicators were negative a month back.

<http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=124140>

New subsidy scheme to boost farming

BDT 1.49bn (USD 21.6mn) project to help farmers buy agricultural tools; Matia proposes additional BDT 14bn (USD 202.8mn) farm subsidy
The Daily Star, Sunday January 22, 2010

The government will give farmers a 25% subsidy on the cost of buying agricultural implements to boost crop production and minimise wastage. An Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (ECNEC) meeting chaired by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday approved a BDT 1.49bn (USD 21.6mn) project to that end. Titled "Enhancement of Crop Production through Farm Mechanization," the project will primarily be introduced to 237 upazilas under 25 districts, said a planning ministry official. Meanwhile, the agriculture ministry has proposed a BDT 14bn (USD 202.8mn) increase in farm subsidies in the revised budget for the current fiscal year.

<http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=122905>

Stock Market News

'SEC-RJSC merger to ensure coordination in proper monitoring of companies'

The Financial Express, Monday February 8, 2010

The Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) says that a merger between the stock market regulatory body and the Registrar of Joint Stock Companies and Firms (RJSC) will help bring coordination in the proper monitoring of a huge number of companies, both public and private. At present there are 236 listed companies and around 60,000 private companies.

In an internal evaluation report, the SEC said that the establishment of a strong bond market, offloading of shares of government-owned and multinational companies, will help develop the country's stock market. The establishment of a 'Financial Reporting Council' will help bring transparency in the accounting statements of the companies, SEC mentioned in the report.

http://www.thefinancialexpress-bd.com/more.php?news_id=85553

Trading of DBH First Mutual Fund starts February 7

The Financial Express, Sunday February 7, 2010

Trading of the DBH First Mutual Fund unit will begin on February 7 on both stock exchanges of the country. It will be the 22nd mutual fund in the country's growing stock market. DBH, the leading home loan provider financial institution sponsored the DBH First Mutual Fund to extend its role to the capital market of the country.

IPO of DBH First Mutual Fund was oversubscribed by about 13 times. A total of BDT 5.30bn (USD 76.92mn) was deposited against BDT 400mn (USD 5.8mn) public subscription, which was the largest ever subscription for a mutual fund public offering in Bangladesh. LR Global Bangladesh Ltd. is the Asset Manager of DBH First Mutual Fund.

http://www.thefinancialexpress-bd.com/more.php?news_id=91731

0.115mn BO accounts opened in January

The Financial Express, Saturday February 6, 2010

More than 115,000 Beneficiary Owners (BO) accounts were opened in January by investors, which is a record figure in a normal situation of the market, Central Depository Bangladesh Limited (CDBL) said. The CDBL said that more than 200,000 BO accounts were opened in the month when the Grameenphone went public. In the last six months of calendar 2009, more than 530,000 Beneficiary Owners (BO) accounts were opened by investors.

The number of BO accounts on June 30, 2009 stood at over 2.124mn, which is about six times the BO accounts opened up to June, 2005. However, CDBL has said that many BO accounts are not operative for not paying fees and duplication.

http://www.thefinancialexpress-bd.com/more.php?news_id=91665

Two companies get nod for direct listing

The Daily Star, Friday February 05, 2010

The Securities and Exchange Commission allowed two private companies -- Ocean Containers Ltd and Khulna Power Ltd -- for direct listing on condition of using the book building method for price discovery of shares. However, no more private companies will be allowed to list directly as the finance ministry on November 5 last year decided that only state-run companies will be able to offload shares under the direct listing method.

Ocean Containers, an entity of Summit Group, submitted the direct listing proposal on June 23, 2009 and Khulna Power, another concern of the same group, on October 1. Ocean Containers will offload 19mn shares of BDT 10 (USD 1.45) each, while Khulna Power will offload 52.1mn shares of BDT 10 (USD 1.45) each.

<http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=124896>

SEC trims loan margin

The Financial Express, Thursday February 4, 2010

The Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) has narrowed the loan margin to 1:1 from 1:1.5 for the merchant banks in a move to tighten the flow of fund into the stock market. The loan margin will be effective from February 7. The SEC in a directive Wednesday said the merchant bankers should not extend credit facilities to their approved clients beyond 1:1 under the Margin Rules, 1999.

http://www.thefinancialexpress-bd.com/more.php?news_id=91494

SEC revises margin loan criteria to cool down overheated market

The Financial Express, Tuesday February 2, 2010

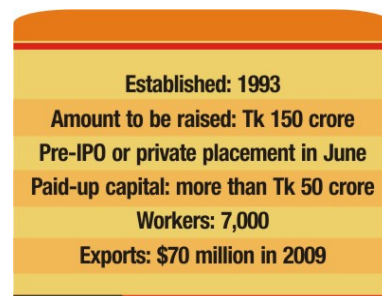
The Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) has revised the margin loan criteria against listed securities in its latest move to cool down the overheated market. The brokerage houses from now on will provide margin loans at the ratio of 1:1.5, revised upward from 1:2, and investors buying shares of a company, the maximum PE (price-earning) ratio of which is 50, will be eligible for the margin loans. Earlier, the maximum PE ratio required for securing a margin loan was 75.

The SEC also directed both the bourses of the country to submit their reports on the capital balance of the brokerage houses by February 10. The existing rule says no client will receive more than 25% of the net capital balance of a brokerage house.

http://www.thefinancialexpress-bd.com/more.php?news_id=91297

SQ Celsius to go public

The Daily Star, Monday February 1, 2010



SQ Celsius, a concern of SQ Group, a major high-end garment exporter, will list on bourses in June. The company initially plans

to raise BDT 1.5bn (USD 21.7mn) from the public. The size of the IPO may go higher as per the company's massive expansion requirement.

<http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=124331>

RAK holds road show for investors
Ceramics maker first to go public under book building method
The Daily Star, Sunday, January 31, 2010

RAK Ceramics, a Bangladesh-UAE joint venture, will offer primary shares to institutional investors in the next three weeks after discovering the price of each share using the book building method. The company will go for a public offer in 25 days from the closure of institutional bidding, officials and issue managers said.

RAK will offer 34.5mn shares of BDT 10 (US 1.45 cents) each using the book-building method. Of the shares, 20% will be sold to institutional investors, 10% has been reserved for mutual funds, and 10% for non-resident Bangladeshis and 60% will be offered to the public. An indicative price for each RAK share has already been built at BDT 40 (US 58 cents) through bidding by seven institutions from four sectors.

Now in the price discovery phase, bidders cannot quote 20% more or less than the indicative price, meaning they will have to offer between BDT 32 (US 46 cents) and BDT 48 (US 70 cents) for each share. Fixing the indicative price is required to obtain regulatory approval. The institutions will not be allowed to sell shares in the first 15 trading days under the lock-in system. RAK's paid-up capital is BDT 1.95bn (USD 28.2mn). As of December 2009, the company's net asset value was BDT 13.69 (US 1.98 cents) per share and earnings per share were BDT 1.83 (US 0.02 cents). Foreign entrepreneurs own 90% of the company, while local entrepreneurs own the remainder, but local ownership will become 20% after the IPO. RAK started business in Bangladesh in 2001. Presently, the company holds an 80% market share in the sanitary-ware market and around 35% in the ceramics market. The company also holds 58% shares in RAK pharmaceuticals, 57% in RAK Power, 35% in RAK Security, 40% in RAK Paints, 51% in RAK Foods and 51% in Classic Porcelain.

The book building mechanism, a widely practiced price fixing mechanism for IPO, was introduced in March, aiming to encourage private-sector entrepreneurs to list their large and profitable companies on bourses at fair prices. In line with the book building mechanism, institutions bid for shares through which the price is discovered. A weighted average price is fixed based on the highest and lowest price and shares are allotted for institutions at the weighted average price. The lowest price is considered a cut-off price for public offers or general investors.

<http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=124141>

ACI bond subscription starts on January 31
The Daily Star, Sunday, January 31, 2010

The subscription to ACI zero-coupon bonds begins on January 31, as the company plans to raise more than BDT 1.33bn (USD 1926mn) for product diversification. Of the amount, the company will raise over BDT 800mn (USD 11.6mn) through private placement and the rest from public offering. ACI is offering the bond for BDT 3,743 (USD 54.2) and the investors will get back BDT 5,000 (USD 72.4) after four years at maturity. The investors can also convert 20% of their bonds into the regular shares of the company on an optional basis.

Investors, however, should submit applications for a market lot of five bonds, costing 18,715 (USD 271). One can submit two applications. The second should be under joint names. The subscription offer will remain open until February 4 for local investors, but non-resident Bangladeshis can apply until February 13.

<http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=124142>

Trust Bank First Mutual Fund debuts tomorrow
The Daily Star, Tuesday, January 26, 2010

Trust Bank First Mutual Fund will make trade debut on January 27. The size of the 10-yearly Trust Bank First Mutual Fund is BDT 2bn (USD 28.9mn), of which sponsors funded BDT 400mn (USD 5.7mn), while BDT 1.2bn (USD 17.3mn) was raised through pre-IPO private placement and the rest BDT 400mn (USD 5.7mn) through IPO (initial public offering). Per unit price of the fund is BDT 10 (US 1.45 cents).

<http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=123459>

SEC mulling compulsory listing of large, medium private companies
The Financial Express, Tuesday, January 26, 2010

The Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) has decided in principle to make it compulsory for private companies having paid-up capital of BDT 500mn (USD 7.2mn) and above to go public. However, offloading of stakes by such companies would vary, depending on the size of their respective paid-up capital. SEC would be required to bring about necessary changes in its existing rules to make its decision effective.

If the SEC decision is approved, a company having a paid-up capital between BDT 500mn (USD 7.2mn) and 750mn (USD 10.8mn) would have to offload a minimum of 40% of its stakes. On the other hand, a company, which has a paid-up capital of more than BDT 750mn (USD 10.8mn) to BDT 1.5bn (USD 21.6mn), could offload a minimum 25% of the paid-up capital or BDT 300mn (USD 4.32mn) worth of shares, or whichever is higher. A company, which has a paid-up capital of more than BDT 1.5bn (USD 21.6mn), could offload a minimum 15% or BDT 400mn (USD 5.8mn) whichever is higher in terms of its paid-up capital.

http://www.thefinancialexpress-bd.com/more.php?news_id=90816

Errant listed companies to be driven out of market
The Financial Express, Wednesday, January 27, 2010

The Finance Minister said that to make the stock market vibrant, 83 listed companies identified as errant will have to be driven away. Errant companies are cheating the investors by not holding annual general meetings, or paying dividends to shareholders and caring less about rules and regulations, he added. The government initiatives will compel the bad companies to go away from the market, or to improve themselves.

http://www.thefinancialexpress-bd.com/more.php?news_id=90699

SEC clears clouds over mutual fund dividends
The Daily Star, Monday January 25, 2010

Mutual fund managers will now be able to declare dividends, as the Securities and Exchange Commission has decided not to

challenge a High Court verdict on a long-running case. "The commission took the decision after analyzing the legal aspects of the verdict and considering the interests of the market and investors," said Mansur Alam, member of SEC. "All directives, which were made in the verdict, will be followed appropriately," he added.

<http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=123309>

Stocks on scary ride

The Daily Star, Monday January 25, 2010

Index	Closing	Opening	Rise in points	Rise in percent	Year to date
DGEN	5156.62	5095.21	61.41	1.21%	13.69%
DSI	4254.92	4204.07	50.85	1.21%	13.54%
DSE-20	2839.74	2824.92	14.82	0.52%	8.66%

The stock market rides a thermal upward and continues its record-breaking trends both in the key index and turnover, with experts warning that the sustainability is questionable without supply of new securities. The market is expected to see price corrections. The market is also floating on a tsunami of liquidity that has engendered a huge demand for securities, and so share prices are getting overvalued. The overall market P/E (price earning) is increasing gradually, which indicates that the investment is getting more risky. At the end of December 2009, the overall market P/E stood at 25.65, which were 18.42 a year earlier.

The benchmark index of Dhaka Stock Exchange crossed 5,000 points last week and reached 5,156 points yesterday, while the single-day turnover hit a new record at BDT 14.52bn.

<http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=123307>

SIBL's share face value down

The Financial Express, Sunday January 24, 2010

The shareholders of Social Islami Bank Limited (SIBL) have approved a proposal for split of face value of its shares from BDT 100.00 to BDT 10.00. The approval came at the sixth extraordinary general meeting (EGM) of the bank recently.

http://www.thefinancialexpress-bd.com/more.php?news_id=90397

Banking

BB asks banks to go online by year-end

The daily Star, Thursday February 04, 2010

The Bangladesh Bank (BB) has directed all commercial banks to go online by December 31 of this year so that clients across the country can make transactions from any location. The central bank move is aimed at bringing all branches of the banks under Inter Branch Connectivity Network (IBCN) to introduce e-commerce all over the country. A BB circular issued on February 3 asked the banks to install Core Banking Solution (CBS) software by December 31, through which all banking activities will be automated.

<http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=124832>

Second Indian bank sets foot in Bangladesh

The daily Star, Thursday February 04, 2010

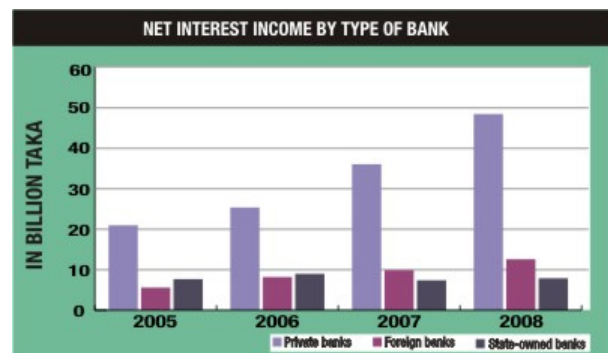


United Bank of India (UBI), a public sector bank, has entered the Bangladesh market with the launch of its representative office in Dhaka on February 3. Initially, the bank's Dhaka office will help promote trade between the two next-door neighbors. UBI has a unique presence in the northeastern part of India. UBI was the result of the merger in 1950 of four banks: Comilla Banking Corporation (founded in 1914), Bengal Central Bank (founded in 1918), Comilla Union Bank (founded in 1922) and Hooghly Bank (founded in 1932). Headquartered in Kolkata, UBI is predominantly seen in the eastern and northeastern parts of India. Nearly two-thirds of the bank's 1,505 branches are located in those areas. State Bank of India, another state-owned bank from India, has long been operating in Bangladesh.

<http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=124834>

Banks experience high growth on interest income

The Daily Star, Wednesday February 3, 2010



The banking industry has been witnessing an incredible growth in net interest income (NII) since 2005, mainly because of the high interest rate that private and foreign banks charge on loans. Such income in a period stretching from 2005 and 2008 has more than doubled. The figure stood at BDT 70.9bn at the end of 2008.

The recent BB annual report shows that advances constitute 63.6% of the aggregate assets of banks, while deposits account for 77.3% of their liabilities. Meanwhile, spread still remains over 5%, despite BB's mounting pressure for a cut.

<http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=124629>

10 SOEs owe public sector banks BDT 12bn

The Financial Express, Monday February 1, 2010

Ten state-owned enterprises (SOEs) owe Sonali, Janata, Agrani and Rupali-four state-owned commercial banks (SCBs) BDT 12.03bn (USD 174.4mn) in bad loans as of 2009. The amount of bad loans has increased by about BDT 1.1bn (USD 15.9mn) over

that of 2008. The largest amount of the bad loan, BDT 7.13bn (USD 103.4mn), lies with the Sonali Bank Ltd., followed by BDT 2.70bn (USD 39.2mn) with the Rupali bank Ltd, BDT 1.19bn (USD 17.3mn) with the Agrani Bank Ltd., and the remaining BDT 980mn (USD 14.2mn) with the Janata bank Ltd. The Bangladesh Jute Mills Corporation (BJMC) is at the top of the list of 10 defaulting SOEs as the total bad loan of the corporation to four banks stood at BDT 7.25bn (USD 105.1mn) at the end of 2009.

Other major defaulting SOEs are the Bangladesh Textile Mills Corporation with BDT 2.83bn (USD 41mn) in bad loans followed by the Bangladesh Chemical Industries Corporation with BDT 860mn (USD 22.5mn), the Bangladesh Steel and Engineering Corporation (BSEC) with BDT 370mn (USD 5.36mn), the Bangladesh Agriculture Development Corporation with BDT 210mn (USD 3.04mn), and the Bangladesh Sugar and Food Corporation (BSFIC) with BDT 200mn (USD 2.9mn).

http://www.thefinancialexpress-bd.com/more.php?news_id=91201

BB tightens rules for banks to appoint directors
The Daily Star, Friday January 29, 2010

The Bangladesh Bank (BB) has directed all commercial banks to verify if a person is a loan defaulter before appointing him or her as a director in the bank's board. The banks will have to get the verification from the Credit Information Bureau (CIB) of the central bank. The BB in a circular issued on January 28 said the bank concerned must send to the central bank the updated declaration of CIB report attested by the chairman of the bank before selecting any person as director.

<http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=123914>

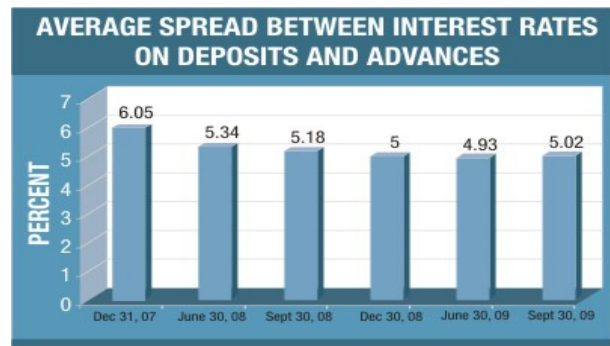
Bangladesh Bank prioritizes branchless banking
The Daily Star, Thursday January 28, 2009

Aiming at the speedy financial inclusion of rural people, Bangladesh Bank (BB) will give banks and other related organisations more support to expand branchless banking. The BB Governor has said that with technological advancements, including the expansion of mobile phone coverage and effective partnerships among banks and technology service providers, branchless banking would become a great success. The central bank is supporting banks and some other financial institutions to operate branchless services to cater to the major banking need of rural and urban people.

A number of services are already in operation, facilitating utility bill payments and delivery of remittances from Bangladeshi workers abroad to their families at home. Other branchless banking services like smartcards and point of sale (POS) terminals are at various stages of implementation.

<http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=123781>

Bank spread comes down
The Daily Star, Thursday January 28, 2009



The overall spread in the banking sector has come down to 5% following a central bank directive, but it is still above the cap in 19 private and foreign commercial banks. As of September 2009, the overall spread in 48 commercial and specialised banks was 5.02%, which was 5.18% in September 2008 and 6.05% in December 2007. Among the private commercial banks, the highest spread of 8.72% is of BRAC Bank and among the foreign banks Standard Chartered Bank has the highest at 11.38%. The spread is between 2% and 4% in the state-owned commercial banks and specialised banks.

The central bank capped the lending rate at 13% except for consumer credit and credit cards early last year in a bid to cushion the blow of global recession and cut the costs of business. Most of the banks following the central bank directive brought down their average lending rate below 13%. They also lowered the spread by cutting the deposit rate.

<http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=123775>

Banks shift focus to home loans



Commercial banks are increasingly coming forward to provide home loans, which they feel are more secure than other forms of loans. The banks' outstanding home loans have doubled to BDT 123.6bn (USD 1.8bn) in fiscal year 2009 from BDT 64.0bn (USD 923.5mn) in fiscal year 2006. Private banks led the tally with BDT 74.9bn (USD 1.08bn) outstanding loans to the housing sector as on June 30, 2009, against just BDT 35.1bn (USD 506.5mn) three years ago. Private bank lending to the sector increased by over 113% in the three years to fiscal year 2009. Housing loans from four state-owned banks also rose by over 42% in the same period. Outstanding housing loans by the four banks were BDT 25.8bn (USD 372.3mn) in fiscal year 2006, which rose to BDT 36.7bn (USD 529.5mn) at the end of fiscal year 2009.

Banks also become more interested in extending loans to the sector in the past few years as they consider it safer. The central

bank introduced a low-cost refinancing scheme for housing loans in 2007. Recently, BB increased the fund to BDT 70.0bn (USD 1.01bn) to meet growing demand.

<http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=123634>

Recession pares down BB profit

The Daily Star, Monday January 25, 2010



The global financial crisis has taken a heavy toll on Bangladesh Bank's profit, although the central bank's prudential measures have helped commercial banks avoid losses during the recession period. BB's operating profit declined by 20.6%, or BDT 6.50bn, in fiscal year 2008-09 compared to that of a year ago. This is mainly due to lower interest rates globally. The central bank earned BDT 25.0bn in operating profits in fiscal year 2008-09. The profit was BDT 3.15bn in 2007-08.

<http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=123311>

ICB hands over BDT 13.5mn (USD 195,369) to government as dividend

The Financial Express, Monday January 25, 2010

The Investment Corporation of Bangladesh (ICB) handed over BDT 13.50mn to the Finance Ministry in dividends. The dividend was approved at the 33rd Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the company on November 21, 2009. The AGM had approved the cash dividend at a rate of BDT 5 (US 7.2 cents) per share of BDT 100 (USD 1.45) each and 1:1 bonus share for the year ended on June 30, 2009. The government share is 27% as of November 4, 2009, and the government has been entitled for receiving BDT 13.50mn (USD 195,369) in cash dividends and 27, 00,000 bonus shares against the holding.

http://www.thefinancialexpress-bd.com/more.php?news_id=90471

Food and Agriculture

Commercial orange farming expanding fast

The Daily Star, Monday, February 8, 2010

Orange farming has been expanding fast in Panchagarh and Thakurgaon where tea farming has already got a stronger footage. At present there are over 80,000 orange trees in 93 orange orchards occupying 104 hectares of land in four upazilas in Panchagarh and for Thakurgaon the number of such trees is 30,000 in 48 hectares. Besides, concerned agriculture departments and organizations have planted more 10,000 orange plants in the exhibition plots to popularize its large-scale farming. Around 50 tonnes of orange are now produced annually in the districts and the amount will surely increase by 2011 to meet the local demand.

<http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=125377>

Rice output up, so is the price

The Daily Star, Monday, January 25, 2010



The Ministry of Agriculture has estimated a record aman output at 13.1mn tonnes this season, while millers claim a paddy supply shortfall pulls the staple price up. The rice price has seen an uptick since early September 2009. Coarse rice was BDT 26-28 (US 38-41 cents) and medium quality rice was BDT 30-34 (US 43-49 cents) on January 24, 2010. In September 2009, coarse rice was BDT 20-22 (US 29-32 cents) and medium quality rice was BDT 24-26 (US 35-38 cents), recording a 28% rise, according to the Trading Corporation of Bangladesh (TCB).

Economists say such a rise in aman output is welcome, but if the Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE) estimates are correct, rice prices should not go up. The DAE aman production estimates showed that aman output exceeded the target of 12.7mn tonnes in fiscal year 2009-10, which is 12.8mn tonnes (2.34% higher). Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS), which recorded aman production at 11.6mn tonnes in FY 2008-09, is yet to publish its estimate for the current fiscal year.

<http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=123308>

Textiles

Modern Dyeing announces layoff

The Daily Star, Tuesday, February 2, 2010



Modern Dyeing & Screen Printing Ltd. has announced a layoff because of low gas pressure and failure to get an environment clearance certificate from the government for running the factory. The company also blamed low efficiency of its ageing textile dyeing, printing and finishing machinery. The announcement,

posted on the Dhaka Stock Exchange (DSE) website, weakened investor confidence with the company shares, ending 4.19% lower at BDT 559.25 (USD 8.1) on February 1, 2010.

<http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=124436>

RMG looks to good times

The Daily Star, Sunday, January 31, 2010



The contribution of readymade garments (RMG) to national export increases with the rebound of orders from international buyers following a recovery in the global economy. The share of RMG products reached 77.17% in the July-November period from 77.15% in July-October of the current fiscal year. During the July-November period, the country exported woven garments worth BDT 146.97bn (USD 2.13bn) and knitwear items of BDT 178.71bn USD 2.59bn totaling BDT 325.68bn (USD 4.72bn). The share of woven garments in the total exports of the country was 34.84% and that of knitwear (including sweater) was 42.34%. During the five-month period, the total national export was worth BDT 420.9bn (USD 6.10bn). In fiscal year 2008-09, the RMG contribution was 79.33% while woven segment added 38.02% and knitwear items 41.30%.

<http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=124138>

Spinners back in the black

The Daily Star, Tuesday, January 26, 2010

The spinning industry has been experiencing good business for the past several months, showing signs of overcoming a situation close to the collapse it faced since 2008. Such revival is attributed to the rise in demand from local knitters and recovery of the global recession as well. A market survey suggests the price gap between Uzbek and Indian cotton has now come down to 3 cents from last year's 10 cents per pound, which also help spinners overcome bad time. The spinning sector was facing an abnormal situation between a period stretching from November 2008 to October 2009, which threatened its survival. A considerable number of such mills were closed down and many had cut their production by 30%-50% at the beginning of 2009.

<http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=123454>

Telecom & IT

Bharti Airtel moves to clear Warid debt

The Daily Star, Monday, February 8, 2010

Bharti Airtel is ready to pay out Warid Telecom's liabilities of BDT 2.31bn (USD 33.5mn) to local financial institutions as part of its investment plan that includes massive network expansion. Warid's new partner presented its investment plans in response to the telecom regulator's orders and said it is ready to start operations in Bangladesh in a month. The company also announced a plan to invest BDT 20.7bn (USD 300mn) initially, which will be increase to BDT 69.0bn (USD 1.0bn) later. BTRC approved the acquisition move asking Bharti to submit its investment plan by February 4, 2010.

<http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=125373>

GP, AKTEL tie up to share network

The Daily Star, Monday, February 8, 2010

Following Banglalink's footsteps, AKTEL on February 7, 2010 joined forces with Grameenphone to share network infrastructure, aiming to present low-cost services to the untapped rural market. Network sharing among the three big players will help them minimize infrastructure costs by utilizing resources together. This initiative will mutually benefit both operators in terms of providing faster and cost-effective services to valued subscribers.

Mobile penetration rate in Bangladesh is only 34% which is mainly urban-dominated. The operators are unwilling to roll out their rural networks due to poor business returns. Each operator will have to spend a minimum of BDT 40,000 (USD 580) to a maximum of BDT 80,000 (USD 1160) a month to run a single base transceiver station (BTS), which can handle around 3,000 calls at a time. BTS operation costs are increasing by the day because of electricity constraint and increasing petroleum prices in using generators for power backup. To minimize operational costs, the telecom regulator introduced an infrastructure sharing guideline in 2009 under which operators can share their excess network capacity.

<http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=125380>

GP, Banglalink team up for low-cost rural links

The Daily Star, Wednesday, February 3, 2010

Mobile operators Grameenphone and Banglalink have joined forces to share network infrastructure to take services at low costs to the untapped rural market. The partnership will help Banglalink expand its outreach via GP's infrastructure. Network-sharing between the two big players that occupy a combined 70% share of the six-operator market will help both minimize infrastructure costs by utilizing resources together. Infrastructure to be shared includes BTS, spectrum, antenna, feeder cable, radio access network, microwave radio equipment, billing platform, switching centers, router, base station controller, optical fiber access and backbone transmission network and database.

<http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=124627>

Banglalink to raise BDT 4.25bn (USD 61.6mn) in bonds

The Daily Star, Wednesday, January 27, 2010



Banglalink moves to raise BDT 4.25bn (USD 61.6mn) through bonds in a bid to shore up its foothold in Bangladesh's growing telecom market. The second largest mobile phone operator has already taken steps to raise the debt capital through private placement to meet capital expenditure mainly for strengthening its network. It offers 13.5% interest per annum for its five-year tenure bond of BDT 10mn (USD 144,927) each, which is proposed to be redeemed by 2014 through amortization of principal amount on a year-on-year basis. The Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) has already given a go-ahead to the Banglalink plan to raise funds through secured bonds.

<http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=123633>

Tourism

Govt takes all measures to promote tourism sector: GM Kader

The Financial Express, Wednesday February 3, 2010

Civil Aviation and Tourism Minister GM Kader on February 2 said that the government has undertaken all possible initiatives to project and promote the country's tourism sector to local and foreign visitors. "We have completed necessary surveys and assessments during our first year in power," the minister said while inaugurating the month-long 'Beautiful Bangladesh Festival' that starts on February 2.

The Civil Aviation and Tourism Ministry and Bangladesh Parjatan Corporation (BPC) have organized the tourism festival at Suhrawardy Uddan in the city as part of their month-long tourism promotion campaign in Dhaka and Cox's Bazar. "We are determined to establish that Bangladesh is no longer a country of hunger, poverty or poor infrastructure, but a land of immense natural beauty, and our ministry will now promote this beauty to the world," he said.

http://www.thefinancialexpress-bd.com/more.php?news_id=91349

National tourism policy on cards

The Daily Star, Monday January 25, 2010

Bangladesh Parjatan Corporation is set to place a draft of national tourism policy to the government, the civil aviation and tourism secretary Shafique Alam Mehdi has said. "A draft law to preserve tourist sites and a proposal to form a Bangladesh Tourism Board now await the cabinet's nod. If this draft is signed into a law, Cox's Bazar will become the most valuable tourist spot in the country," he said a press conference in Dhaka on January 24.

The press meet was arranged to announce a month-long tourism festival on the Central Public Library premises in the capital on

February 1. The festival, eyeing foreign visitors of the SA Games 2010, will have about twenty stalls where the Tour Operators Association of Bangladesh (TOAB), Association of Travel Agents of Bangladesh (ATAB), Pan Pacific Sonargaon Hotel, and other stakeholders of the tourism industry will participate.

<http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=123317>

Aviation

Biman flies to London non-stop

The Daily Star, Sunday February 7, 2010



Biman opened its non-stop Dhaka-London flight on February 6 with 297 travellers onboard. It was a journey without a break, officials said. An aircraft, 323-seater Boeing 777-200 ER, leased by the state-owned carrier, took off from Zia International Airport at 9:20 am, said a senior Biman official.

The carrier will operate three non-stop flights a week on the Dhaka-London route. Also, it will fly to London via Dubai once a week. Biman officials said the introduction of non-stop flights between Dhaka and London would cut travellers flying hours to 11 hours on average from about 15-hour travel.

Biman initiated the non-stop flights between Dhaka and London after Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina inaugurated the airline's new logo and livery, coloured in the Boeing 777-200ER and Boeing 737-800 NG. Biman has leased these planes to operate on long-haul and short-to-mid haul routes.

<http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=125207>

Biman to receive Airbus in first week of Feb

The Financial Express, Wednesday January 27, 2010

State-controlled Biman Bangladesh Airlines is going to receive its much-awaited Airbus-310-300 aircraft in the first week of February, aiming to restore its suspended operation to the middle-range international destinations.

The newly-leased airbus is expected to join Biman's fleet and commence operations to mid-haul destinations, namely Europe, the Middle East and Far-East countries, Biman's Chief Executive Officer and Managing Director Air Commodore (Retd) Muhammad Zakiul Islam told the FE.

http://www.thefinancialexpress-bd.com/more.php?news_id=9070

Biman to resume Delhi, Bangkok flights

The Financial Express, Thursday January 28, 2010

Biman will resume Dhaka-Delhi and Dhaka-Bangkok flight operations by the first week of February, using a newly leased Boeing 737-800 aircraft that arrived on January 25. Biman took the aircraft for five years on a dry lease, enabling it to operate the passenger carrier with its own pilots and crew.

Random flight cancellations, mainly due to an acute shortage of aircrafts, forced Biman Bangladesh Airlines to cut its international operations in September 2009, temporarily suspending flights to these two destinations.

http://www.thefinancialexpress-bd.com/more.php?news_id=90829

Biman gets new look on January 28

The Financial Express, Thursday January 28, 2010

Biman will show off its new look on January 28 as the national flag carrier rebrands to emerge as a commercially viable airline by winning the hearts of domestic and international travellers, officials said. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina is expected to unveil the new logo and livery of Biman, which offers promises to improve both the onboard and ground services. The premier is likely to see for herself the two leased aircraft -- Boeing 777-200 ER and Boeing 737-800 -- with the new livery and logo at Zia International Airport, said Muhammad Zakiul Islam, managing director and chief executive of Biman Bangladesh Airlines.

The Biman MD said that the new livery and modified logo of Balaka will be seen in the aircraft to be inducted in the coming days through lease and purchase. Three leased planes, which are likely to join Biman fleet this year, will get the new look. However, DC-10, Airbus and F-28 planes will bear the legacy of the previous look of the 38-year old carrier. Under the rebranding move, Biman comes with the promises of offering what it calls 'hospitality', 'safety', 'reliability' and 'world class' services.

<http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=123778>

Energy

Roadshows raise hope for multibillion dollar investment in energy, says PM's adviser after NY, Singapore shows

The Daily Star, Friday February 5, 2010

Roadshows in New York and Singapore have called for investment worth USD 7bn (BDT 483.7bn) in Bangladesh's energy and power sector, the prime minister's energy adviser said on February 4. A large number of investors took part in the roadshows and showed keen interest in investing in Bangladesh, said Toufiq-e-Elahi Chowdhury.

Chowdhury said there were no specific commitments on the investment to be made, but the roadshows raised hopes for huge investment in the power sector. He briefed reporters at the power, energy and mineral resources ministry on the outcomes of the roadshows. Bangladesh investment conferences and roadshows were held in Singapore on January 25-26 and in New York on January 28 to attract investment in the power and energy sector.

Chowdhury said foreign experts would visit Bangladesh in March to discuss liquid natural gas (LNG) imports. The government plans to install an LNG terminal in the Bay of Bengal, considering the country's ongoing and future gas crisis, at a time when several gas-based power and industrial units are installed.

<http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=124905>

Power

PM urges IAEA to help set up N power plant

The Financial Express, Tuesday January 26, 2010

Prime Minister (PM) Sheikh Hasina requested that the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) help Bangladesh in manpower and infrastructure development in the atomic energy sector, as the country prepares to set up a nuclear power plant. She made the request when Ana María Cetto, IAEA Deputy Director-General and Head of the Department of Technical Cooperation, met the Prime Minister at her Jatiyo Sangsad office on January 25.

Briefing newsmen after the meeting, Deputy Press Secretary Nazrul Islam said that PM Hasina told Ana María that Bangladesh already has had a good base in the atomic sector, as a vast land of 260 acres has been allocated for building the Nuclear Science Institute.

http://www.thefinancialexpress-bd.com/more.php?news_id=90629

Japan keen to support power sector

Says JICA representative

The Daily Star, Friday February 5, 2010

Japan is keen to provide support to Bangladesh after the completion of formulating the ongoing comprehensive power development master plan for attaining stable power supply up to 2030. The Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) is conducting the formulation of the master plan on the basis of diversification of fuel resources. JICA started the work in October 2009 and is expected to complete it by the end of this year. JICA representative Tatsuhiko Sunouchi on February 4 said necessary technology transfer from Japan would be carried out during the formulation of the master plan.

Earlier, the government had requested the Japanese government to formulate the master plan on the basis of fuel diversification promotion policy in the power sector to reduce excessive pressure on gas as a source of power.

<http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=124980>

Efficient lighting scheme to save 500MW

ECNEC Okays project targeting June 2011

The Daily Star, Wednesday February 3, 2010

The Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (Ecneec) has approved a project titled Efficient Lighting Initiative for Bangladesh with an aim to save some 500-megawatt electricity by June 2011. The Ecneec at a meeting held in the NEC Conference Room on February 2 with its alternate chairman Finance Minister AMA Muhith in the chair also approved seven other development projects.

The Efficient Lighting Initiative for Bangladesh (Part-1 & Part-II) project under the power division will be implemented at a cost of

BDT 2.79bn (USD 42.98mn), including government of Bangladesh (GoB) amount of only BDT 30mn (USD 434153.4). The rest of the project cost of around BDT 2.76bn (USD 39.94mn) will come from the World Bank as a soft loan.

The Rural Electrification Board is the lead implementation agency of the project while PDB, DESCO, DPDC and WZPDCL are the other implementing agencies. Under the first part of the project (August 2009-June 2010), some 10.5mn Compact Fluorescent Lamps (CFL) will be distributed free of cost among the PDB, DESCO, DPDC and WZPDCL residential consumers replacing their incandescent lamps, which is expected to save around 200MW power in the evening (6:00 pm to 10:00 pm).

In the second part of the project (July 2010 to June 2011), some 17.5mn CFL bulbs will be distributed among the PDB, DESCO, DPDC, WZPDCL consumers, which is also expected to save around another 300MW electricity during the evening peak hours.

<http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=124656>

PDB finally signs three rental power contracts

The Daily Star, Friday February 5, 2010



A view of Bheramara rental power site. Its works have begun before contract signing.

The Power Development Board (PDB) after many months of delay signed contracts for three rental power projects totaling 265 megawatt capacity with two local companies on February 4. These projects are Bheramara 105 MW diesel-fired plant, Thakurgaon 50 MW diesel-fired plant and Noapara 105 MW furnace oil-fired plant. The Bheramara and Noapara plants will be installed by Otobi and the Thakurgaon plant by Rahim Afrooz.

<http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=124944>

Tenders for nine power plants likely in February

The Financial Express, Wednesday February 03, 2010

Under a mega plan to bring the country to a zero load-shedding level from present nagging crisis, the government is likely to invite tenders within the current month to set up more than nine power plants having a total capacity of about 4,000 MW. The proposed plants include Meghnaghat 300-450 MW phase-2 (dual fuel), Meghnaghat 300-450 MW phase-3 (dual fuel), Meghnaghat 500-650 MW phase-4 (coal-fired), Bhola 150-225 MW (gas-fired), Savar 100-150 MW (dual-fuel), Kaliakoir 100-150 MW (dual-fuel),

Chittagong 1000-1300 MW (coal-fired), Mongla 1000-1300 MW (coal-fired) and Jajira 500-650 MW (coal-fired).

Bids for another 10 plants of total 830 MW capacity, to be set up in public sector, are in the evaluation stage. Process is under way to invite the qualified bidders to submit their final offers for a large plant -- Bibiyana 450-MW combined cycle.

http://www.thefinancialexpress-bd.com/more.php?news_id=91399

Sikalbaha 55 MW Power Plant

Power generation to start on February 11

The Daily Star, Monday February 8, 2010

After more than seven months of delay and missing two deadlines, the Sikalbaha 55 MW furnace oil-fired rental power plant is expected to be launched on February 11. Private company Energies Power Corporation set up the plant at a cost of BDT 2.6bn (USD 37.63mn) with German equipment at Sikalbaha, on the bank of the Karnaphuli, under Patiya upazila in Chittagong. Talking to The Daily Star, Energies Managing Director Javed Hossain claimed that when in full production, the plant would be able to generate 73.8MW of power, which will be supplied to the Chittagong region under the Power Development Board.

<http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=125362>

Gas

Chevron told to boost gas supply as reserve of Bibiyana doubles

The Financial Express, Sunday February 7, 2010

The government has asked Chevron to boost supply from Bibiyana after it officially accepted latest reserve projection of the gas-field that doubled the amount of hydrocarbon available in the structure, officials said on February 6. The acceptance clears the way for digging new wells in the field and a daily additional supply of around 600 million cubic feet of gas within the next two years at a time when the country was desperately searching for new energy sources.

In early 2009, US oil giant said the Bibiyana gas field in northeastern Bangladesh has a 5.50 trillion cubic feet (Tcf) of new recoverable gas, up from the previous projection of 2.40 Tcf. Dallas-based petroleum consulting firm DeGolyer & McNaughton (D&M) made the estimation in 2009, putting proven reserve of gas at 4.40 Tcf, which is also more than double from the previous estimate.

http://www.thefinancialexpress-bd.com/more.php?news_id=91770

Infrastructure

Faridpur-Barisal-Kuakata railway

Govt to conduct survey soon

The Financial Express, Tuesday January 26, 2010

Communications Minister Syed Abul Hossain has told the Jatiya Sangsad that the government would soon conduct a survey on setting up the Faridpur-Barisal-Kuakata railway. The present government of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina had given priority to expanding and improving railway communications in the country, he said adding that transportation and journey by railway was much more comfortable and safe, he said.

http://www.thefinancialexpress-bd.com/more.php?news_id=90607

Co-financing body on Padma Bridge meets Feb 1-3 River training design yet to be approved

The Financial Express, Wednesday January 27, 2010

Experts of the Padma bridge project are yet to approve the most vital river training design with only a week left to start negotiation on funding with development partners. A co-financing monitoring committee comprising all development partners and the government sits on February 1-3 to set the areas of donor financing in the project.

http://www.thefinancialexpress-bd.com/more.php?news_id=90701

Govt turns to Padma bridge consultant for services on expressways

The Financial Express, Monday January 25, 2010

The government has decided to appoint the Padma bridge consultancy firm as consultant of the Dhaka elevated expressways (DEE) project. Officials said the Bangladesh Bridge Authority (BBA), the implementing agency of the country's first public-private-partnership (PPP) project, took the decision to appoint the Padma bridge consultancy firm Mausell AECOM Ltd. as the DDE consultant to speed up the preparatory work before handling the bidding process, including selecting a bidder in the next three months.

The elevated expressways will be constructed in three phases. In the first phase, 10.80 km road will be constructed from Tejgaon Old Airport to Jatrabari via Sonargaon and Moghbazar. Later two roads will be connected with it.

http://www.thefinancialexpress-bd.com/more.php?news_id=90524

Shipbuilding & Port

Shipbuilding shows signs of pick-up

The Daily Star, Sunday February 7, 2010



A vessel built by Western Marine Shipyard in Chittagong is up for delivery.

Two local firms gear up to resume the construction of shipyards expecting foreign orders for vessels, as demand has showed signs of a pick-up with recovery from the global recession. Khan Brothers Shipbuilding Ltd and Narayanganj Shipbuilders Ltd

stalled work to establish shipyards after the global financial crisis depressed global demand for new ships.

Khan Brothers, which plans to develop the shipyard on about 50 acres, began building shipyards to build vessels in early 2008, inspired by global demand for vessels at around 10,000 units by 2012. Small and medium vessels account for about 55% of the projected 10,000 ships, insiders said.

According to shipyard operators, Bangladeshi shipyards can tap global demand with small and medium-sized ships, as traditional shipbuilding nations, such as China and Korea, focus on large ships. Two leading local shipmakers -- Ananda Shipyard and Slipways Ltd and Western Marine Shipyard Ltd -- have bagged orders to make over 40 small vessels of about USD 600mn (BDT 41.46bn), mainly from European buyers.

<http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=125205>

BB fund for shipbuilders

The Daily Star, Monday February 8, 2010

Bangladesh Bank (BB) has decided in principle to form a BDT 2.0bn (USD 28.94mn) refinance fund to facilitate growth of the export-oriented shipbuilding industry, a central bank official said on February 7. Under the scheme, shipbuilders are expected to get loans against their working capital requirement for making vessels for foreign buyers. A maximum 50% of the loan a bank lends to any shipbuilder can be refinanced from the BB fund at 5% interest, while a vessel maker will be charged 10% interest.

<http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=125381>

Western Marine inks deal with Dutch firm

The Daily Star, Wednesday February 3, 2010

Leading shipbuilder Western Marine Shipyard has signed a deal with Dutch company Winteb VOF to import equipment to build eight multipurpose cargo vessels for a German company. Under the deal, Western Marine will import 'Air-Vent Heads' from Winteb to build ships having capacity of 5,200 dead weight tonnage (DWT). All the ships are expected to be delivered to the buyer by March 2011, an official said.

<http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=124631>

Netherlands keen to work with Bangladeshi shipbuilding industry

The Financial Express, Sunday January 31, 2010

The Netherlands expressed its keen interest to work together with Bangladesh to expand the shipbuilding industry at a time when the world's shipbuilding industry faces a setback due to the financial crisis. The interest was shown at a 'matchmaking seminar' for the 'Shipbuilding Sector of Bangladesh and the Netherlands' at a city hotel, said a Dutch Embassy press release. Ananda Shipyard and Shipways Limited (ASSL) and the Netherlands Embassy jointly organised the seminar backed by Holland Marine Equipment, a Dutch business group.

The seminar aimed at introducing Dutch companies to Bangladeshi shipbuilding companies and exploring areas of co-operation. Participating Dutch companies were Vuyk Engineering Groningen, Dagin Marine Technology, Heatmaster, Rubber Design, Winteb, Eurovalve, Neddeck Marine, HRP and Gea Bloksma.

http://www.thefinancialexpress-bd.com/more.php?news_id=91052

**Plans on ports unveiled in JS
PM says Chittagong, Mongla ports to be ready for use by neighbors, deep-sea port to be constructed**
The Daily Star, Thursday February 4, 2010

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on February 3 in parliament unveiled her government's massive plans to develop and modernize all sea, river and land ports of the country in addition to setting up a deep-sea port to boost Bangladesh's economy. She said Chittagong and Mongla ports will be prepared for the use of neighboring countries by implementing various plans, including construction of a new container terminal, purchasing modern equipment for the two ports, and carrying out capital dredging from Sadarghat to the third Karnaphuli Bridge.

The government also plans to construct new river ports at Noapara, Bhairab-Ashuganj and Barguna and a new inland container terminal at Pangaon. In addition, land ports at Teknaf, Hili, Banglabandha and Bibirbazar will be made operative after development work, Hasina said in her scripted answer to a query.

<http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=124796>

Mongla port ready for neighbors: Officials
The Daily Star, Monday January 25, 2010

Mongla seaport is equipped enough to take the loads of goods that may come to the port once it is opened up to India, Nepal and Bhutan, officials said on January 24. The port now can accommodate at least 33 seagoing vessels per day and is capable of handling 65 lakh tonnes of cargos and 50,000 TEU (twenty equivalent units) containers, they said.

<http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=123314>

Two new land ports on Indian border soon
The Financial Express, Wednesday February 3, 2010

Bangladesh is creating two new land ports on its border with India in an effort to boost bilateral trade with northeastern states of the neighbouring country. A high-powered inter-ministerial team of experts recommended that the government set up two new land customs stations (LCS) at Thegamuk in Rangamati and Ramgarh in Khagrachari after conducting a feasibility study in January 2010. The seven-member team, comprising senior officials of ministries of commerce, home, foreign, finance and land port authority (LPA), has suggested that the government improve infrastructure for maximum utilization of those ports.

The seven relatively unexplored and isolated Indian states include Assam, Nagaland, Tripura, Meghalaya, Manipur, Mizoram and Arunachal Pradesh. Bangladesh will be able to initiate bilateral trade with Mizoram and Sabrum of Tripura through Thegamuk and Ramgarh land ports.

http://www.thefinancialexpress-bd.com/more.php?news_id=91346

Manpower

Remittance on the rise
The Daily Star, Thursday February 4, 2010

Remittances increased by 21% in the first seven months of the current fiscal year and stood at USD 6.48bn (BDT 447.77bn) at the end of January. Remittance inflows amounted to USD 950.92mn (BDT 65.71bn) in January, while the amount was USD 876.33mn (BDT 60.55bn) in December. The recent negative trend in manpower exports so far has not been able to cast any shadow on remittance inflows.

A Bangladesh Bank official said remittance earnings went up as semi-skilled manpower export increased. Also banks have taken steps to boost the remittance inflows, the official said.

<http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=124835>

PNG urged to recruit manpower from Bangladesh
The Financial Express, Wednesday February 3, 2010

President M Zillur Rahman Monday urged Papua New Guinea (PNG) to recruit skilled and semi-skilled manpower from Bangladesh who could contribute in the development of both the countries. The President made the call when newly appointed High Commissioner of PNG to Bangladesh Tarcisius Adrian Eri, based in New Delhi, presented his credentials at Bangabhaban.

http://www.thefinancialexpress-bd.com/more.php?news_id=91357

Set up cuisine training institutes for overseas jobs
The Daily Star, Saturday February 6, 2010

Setting up cuisine training institutes in the country could open up a new opportunity of huge overseas jobs with handsome salaries for Bangladeshi youths as the British curry industry now has a demand for 30,000 skilled cooks and kitchen staffs. "The globally-acclaimed UK's curry industry is now suffering from the shortage of cooks and kitchen staffs. Bangladesh could easily take over the opportunity if cuisine training institutes are set up," president of the UK-based Bangladesh Caterers Association (BCA) Bajloor Rashid said in an exclusive interview with BSS.

He said considering the industry's substantial contribution to the UK's economy, the British government has recently simplified the immigration rules allowing foreign skilled kitchen staffs into Britain. The shortage occupation list has been amended in the simplification after BCA's strong lobby with the British government that paved the way for recruiting foreign kitchen staffs, he said.

Asked about the reason behind the shortage of employees, he said post of cooks and kitchen staffs have remained vacant as a good number of kitchen staffs went on retirement and some others are going to be retired in the curry industry in the UK. The BCA has decided to replace the vacant posts with young and energetic people but there is a compulsion of necessary training on cooks and kitchen. Thus, he said, setting up cuisine training institutes is inevitable to cater the demand for cook staffs sooner than the other competing countries such as India and Pakistan in Britain.

Rashid, however, recommended that the government take steps to set up training institutes through the initiative of the Public Private Partnership (PPP). There can be a state-level bilateral accord to take over the jobs in the UK's curry industry, and if the government comes forward to initiate the process of setting up

cuisine training institutes through the PPP, the BCA is ready to cooperate with the government in doing so, Rashid said.

The BCA at its own initiative has undertaken a plan to set up a training institute dubbed 'London School of Curry (LSC) in the UK' and which already has the UK government's approval. Rashid also advocated that the government initially set up a training institute with an introductory two year course so that intending Bangladeshi graduates can then study in the LSC.

The BCA represents some 1,200 Bangladeshi restaurants with over 5,000 active members, and the industry is almost entirely operated by Bangladesh-origin entrepreneurs and contributes 3.5 billion pound sterling to the British economy. The UK has become the fourth largest source of remittances to Bangladesh next to Saudi Arabia, the USA and the UAE. Some five lakh Bangladeshis living in the UK have remitted more or less 1000 million US dollars or 15% to Bangladesh during 2008-09.

<http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=125071>

Manpower export declines in Jan

All sources non-responsive to fresh recruitment

The Financial Express, Wednesday February 3, 2010

The country's manpower export sector started the calendar year with a decline, as all traditional destinations, except one, remained almost non-responsive to fresh recruitment. The largest remittance generating sector of the country witnessed a 33.15% fall in January 2010 against the same month of the previous year, an Expatriate Welfare and Overseas Employment Ministry source told the FE.

http://www.thefinancialexpress-bd.com/more.php?news_id=91344

Insurance

JS body for introducing crop insurance for farmers

The Financial Express, Monday February 1, 2010

The agriculture ministry has been directed to take necessary steps to introduce crop insurance for the farmers so that they can get assistance along with agriculture loans during natural calamities. The Parliamentary Standing Committee on agriculture ministry gave the directive at a meeting in the city on January 31 with committee Chairman Shaukat Momen Shajahan in the chair.

http://www.thefinancialexpress-bd.com/more.php?news_id=91173

Cement

Confidence Cement to double capacity amid diversification

The Financial Express, Tuesday January 26, 2010

Confidence Cement Ltd. plans for a massive expansion, doubling its current annual production capacity to 500,000 metric tonnes to meet the growing demand of the item. The company also plans for diversification of businesses in other sectors also.

Imran Karim, director of the company, said consumption of cement, one of the key backward linkages of the construction and real estate sectors, is expected to witness phenomenal growth in Bangladesh in the coming months as major infrastructure projects like Padma Bridge, Dhaka-Chittagong four-lane highway and Elevated Expressways are in progress.

http://www.thefinancialexpress-bd.com/more.php?news_id=90575

Indian SC stays limestone mining in Meghalaya

Lafarge cement plant in Chhatak to be affected

The Daily Star, Saturday February 6, 2010

The Indian Supreme Court on February 5 restrained the French cement giant Lafarge from carrying out the mining of limestone in Meghalaya for its cement plant in Bangladesh, saying that mining cannot be allowed in the eco-fragile area. The 255-million dollar Lafarge Surma Cement project at Chhatak, Sunamganj is wholly dependent on the limestones extracted from East Khasi Hills of Meghalaya. Limestone is transported from the Indian state to Bangladesh in a 17-km-long conveyor belt.

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