

New JB system to quicken remittance from Canada

UNB, Dhaka

Janata Bank will introduce a new system from today for quick delivery of remittances from Canada.

The bank will launch Electronic Fund Transfer system in collaboration with 'Janata Exchange Incorporation, Toronto, Canada' for collecting remittance from the Bangladeshi expatriates and quick delivery to the recipients in the country.

With the introduction of the new system, Bangladeshis living in Canada will be able to send their money to the recipients at any corner of Bangladesh within the shortest possible time, said a JB press release.

Shrimp Hatchery Association to implement QAP

Shrimp Hatchery Association of Bangladesh (SHAB) at a meeting held in the city recently decided to initiate implementation of Quality Assurance Protocol (QAP), says a press release.

The QAP is in conformity with the trend of globalisation and global norms and standards driven by consumer choices and preferences, it said.

SHAB's QAP will reinforce the Seal Of Quality (SOQ) programme now being pursued by ATDP-II for the shrimp industry of Bangladesh.

SHAB members resolved to adopt and apply the SOQ programme in conjunction with SHAB's own QAP.

SHAB members producing Black Tiger shrimp postlarvae for the shrimp farmers of Bangladesh hope that in application of QAP and SOQ in the hatcheries, similar and coherent steps will also be taken by shrimp farmers, processors and exporters regarding food safety, environmental protection, traceability and good management practices which may increase Bangladesh's Black Tiger shrimp production and exports.

They also resolved that an interim consultative committee comprising the hatcheries, growouts, processors and exporters may be formed to iron out a globally acceptable mechanism of production and marketing of the Black Tiger shrimp from Bangladesh.

Dubai shopping bonanza begins today

AFP, Dubai

The affluent Gulf emirate of Dubai is confident that relative proximity to Iraq and fears of a US-led war will count for nothing when its annual shopping feast is launched Wednesday.

"A carnival will crown the whole of Dubai," proclaims the January 15-February 15 Dubai Shopping Festival (DSF) 2003 slogan at hotels, shopping centres and main streets of the city-state.

DSF, with the theme of "One World, One Family, One Festival", is a "message of peace that shows our faith in humanitarian and moral values, as well as promoting Dubai as a tourist destination of choice," said festival co-ordinator Said al-Naboodah.

"Obviously, if there were a war in Iraq, events will be restricted to cultural activities," Naboodah told AFP, adding that he expected a great turnout despite the ever-looming US war drums over Iraq's alleged weapons of mass destruction.

New Vanik MD



Sayyed Hussain Jamal has joined Vanik Bangladesh Limited (VBL) as its managing director, says a press release.

He took over the charge of the new position on Wednesday. Prior to his joining VBL, he was the Managing Director of Uttara Finance & Investments Ltd for about eight years.

Jamal started his banking career with United Bank Ltd now called Janata Bank as probationary officer in early 1964.

Cargo flights from Ctg begins January 18

BSS, Chittagong

Preparations are afoot to introduce cargo flights from the port city to different destinations particularly those in the East Asian cities for boosting trade and businesses.

Goods in export-import category are the prime targets for such cargo flights, business circle said.

State Minister for Civil Aviation and Tourism Mir Mohammad Nasir Uddin told BSS Monday that the cargo flight from the Shah Amanat International Airport (SAIA) will be formally inaugurated on January 18.

Before the inauguration, a high powered meeting of senior officials and business community leaders will be held in the port to devise ways and means for smoother operation of the cargo flights and overcoming possible obstacles.

Meanwhile, a 7-member Thai Cargo agents delegation based in Chiangmai arrived the port on Sunday on a four-day visit to have an on the spot assessment of the arrangement including infrastructures, security and other logistics as well as business prospects before dispatching of cargoes by air is initiated.

Arthorn Dhamabutra, Manager (Cargo Mails & Sales) of the Thai Airways, is leading the delegation that comprises leading cargo operators and Thai Airways officials.

The delegation has already visited the SAIA to see for themselves the infrastructure facilities for the cargo handling and held formal talks with the officials of Chittagong Customs House.

They are scheduled to meet the leaders of trade circle to gather information about prospects and obstacles in this regard, delegation sources said.

They also visited different export oriented factories particularly those in the garments and seafood sectors located in the city and in the Chittagong Export Processing Zone (CEPZ).

Mohammad Ataulah, Manager (Cargo) of Thai Airways Bangladesh, who is accompanying the delegation, told BSS that the delegation has shown their keen interest in promoting business between Chiangmai and Chittagong through air cargo operation.

He pointed out that the existing cargo terminal at SAIA is too small and there is hardly any noticeable

security arrangement for the incoming or outgoing cargoes.

"It should have been done much earlier as there are huge possibilities of business," Ataulah said.

The state of the art SAIA was built with the Japanese assistance, having a cargo terminal building of only 2700 sq meter area and a 312 sq meter cargo agents building, has no cargo warehouse, which is a must for keeping export-import cargoes safely for the time taken before and after delivery and documentation, airport sources said.

Manager of SAIA Mohammad Khurshed Alam Sarker said preparations are on to make a good start for the cargo flight from here but what was needed is necessary skilled manpower, requisite equipment and policy guideline as the Civil Aviation Authority may be assigned to operate the cargo terminal instead of Bangladesh Biman which at present is handling the cargo village at ZIA.

Official sources said Customs officials are already posted there and a counter of Sonali Bank also set up at the cargo terminal building for assessment of duties and help documentation of cargoes.

The port city's business circle see huge prospect of increasing trade and business particularly in the export-import sector between Bangladesh and some East Asian and Middle Eastern countries through introduction of cargo flight at SAIA against the backdrop of inauguration of flight operations by four separate aviation companies -- Bangladesh Biman, Silk Air, Fuket and Thai Airways to different destinations of those countries.

Chittagong Chamber of Commerce and Industry President Amir Humayun Mahmud Chowdhury said besides reduction of carrying costs, it would tremendously help boosting trade with some neighbouring countries.

Bangladesh Clearing and Forwarding Agents Association President M Salmullah said that it would help prompt export-import of garments products, raw materials and accessories, emergency medicine and also help find new markets in exporting perishable goods and sea foods of greater Chittagong region.

Local engrs repair vital units of Ghorashal power plant

RAFIQ HASAN, back from Ghorashal

Local engineers have successfully repaired two vital power generation units at the Ghorashal power plant, the largest in the country with 950 MW capacity.

The power generation units, 4 and 6, at the plant resumed operation on January 6 after remaining closed for several months. The state minister for power Iqbal Hasan Mahmud formally launched operation of the repaired units on Sunday.

The PDB officials said whenever any component of such a huge machine faltered, local engineers would not even dare to open it due to various complexities. But the daring move this time, they said, saved the country at least Tk 85 crore in overhauling charge.

Normally, they would call the local agent of the company and float tender for repairing and overhauling the machine which involved crores of taka each time.

But when the power generation unit, 4 and 6, at the Ghorashal power plant defaulted in July last year, local engineers thought differently. They cancelled the tender and

took the risk of opening the huge machine installed by Russian engineers in 1970s.

Taking all the risk of losing their jobs, a group of engineers started repairing the machine with the local raw materials and technical know how, PDB officials said.

They said, the team had finally succeeded after six months of hard work. The power generation unit number 4 and 6 started operating again.

"Today I am very proud of leading an active group of people and it has generated tremendous confidence in our local engineers," an emotion choked minister told a group of journalists. The minister along with the journalists visited the plant and saw the repairing work done by the local engineers.

"We have to add another 3,000 MW power to the existing production level to meet the demand after the year 2007, and it needs around \$ 2.8 billion investment," the state minister said.

Appreciating the role played by the local engineers, the minister also asked the Power Development Board (PDB) authority to declare

whatever incentives they can provide with the capacity of the board.

Speaking on the occasion, Power Secretary A KM Shamsul Islam said the power sector is suffering from fund crisis. "This is a very big problem for us to overhaul and to maintain the 40 to 60 year old power plants."

"With the resumption of unit 4 and 6, all six units at Ghorashal power plant came into operations," said MA Matin, chief engineer of the plant.

A vital section of the huge turbine had broken down and the local engineers repaired the turbine in consultation with the local workshops, the chief engineer said.

He claimed that a total of around Tk 85 crore had been saved through this overhauling.

The PDB chairman S A Mueyed said that the PDB is fully prepared to face the demand of power next summer. "We would try our best to keep load shedding at a tolerable stage next summer."

S'pore vessel owners seek to get rid of flagships rule

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Chittagong

Chittagong Feeder Trade Committee (CFTC), a Singapore-based organisation of feeder vessel operators, is lobbying the Bangladesh government, seeking waiver of a rule on foreign flagships.

According to the rule, foreign ships are required to obtain a 'no objection certificate', known as general waiver, from the office of DG shipping in transporting cargo under a rule of the Flag Protection Ordinance promulgated in the year 1982 to protect the interests of the national flag carriers.

According to the ordinance, foreign flag vessels are not entitled to carry cargoes in the routes where Bangladeshi flag vessels ply and also need prior permission from the authority to load goods from

Bangladeshi ports if any local flag vessel is berthed at the port.

"The Ordinance was promulgated 'to provide protection for the Bangladesh flag vessels'. Bangladesh Ongoing Shipowners Association (BOGSOA) had filed a writ petition in the High Court which in its judgement on November 11, 2002 said the rule of general waiver was not issued in accordance with the provision of the Ordinance.

The High Court judgement was stayed for two months from December 1 following an order from the Supreme Court as per an appeal by DG shipping. As per the order of the Supreme Court, the stay order is scheduled to expire on January 31.

The general waiver allows the foreign vessels operating to and from Bangladesh ports, restriction-

free lifting of import and export of goods despite the presence of national flag carriers, shipping and port officials said.

However, a five-member delegation of CFTC headed by its secretary S.C. Lim arrived in Bangladesh Saturday on a four-day visit to convince the government for scrapping the waiver requirement rule.

The delegation members have already met the high ups of concerned ministries to lobby for scrapping the rule, concerned sources said. The leader of the delegation S.C. Lim exchanged views with the local shipping agents of feeder vessels at a local hotel on Sunday.

Speaking at the function Lim said that foreign ship owners would be reluctant to expand their services to Bangladesh under any restriction.

Bank Asia EGM held

An extra-ordinary general meeting (EGM) of the shareholders of Bank Asia was held on Sunday in the city, says a press release.

M Syeduzzaman, chairman of the bank, presided over the meeting. Vice-Chairman, A Rouf Chowdhury, Managing Director Syed Anisul Huq, other directors and shareholders were present at the meeting.

The meeting approved certain amendments to the Memorandum and Articles of Association of the bank which included, among other things, raising of the authorised capital of the bank from Tk 800 million to Tk 1200 million.

Cisco seminar on Jan 21- 22

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Cisco Systems, the worldwide leader in networking, is planning to hold a two-day seminar showcasing state-of-the-art networking solutions in Dhaka from January 21 to 22.

The event would be the first ever Cisco event in Bangladesh where Cisco experts will demonstrate solutions and conduct sessions on contemporary technologies such as Wireless, IP Telephony, Security etc.

The focus of the seminar will be on discussing and demonstrating the latest in networking technologies and solutions from Cisco on converged IP Networks, Wireless Networking and Network Security. The seminar will also feature a special session on creating communication solutions for banking and finance companies.

Cisco is also organizing a CXO Meet on January 20, 2003 at Dhaka. Manoj Chugh, President (India & SAARC) Cisco Systems will deliver the keynote paper at the Cisco CXO Meet on "Managing Profitability & Productivity in a Challenging Business Scenario".

Sudhir Narang, Vice President, Cisco Systems (India & SAARC) said the two-day session is an opportunity to showcase how Cisco has been working with corporations, service providers & public institutions to enable them to drive greater efficiency and performance into their processes.

SIA now GP corporate client

Singapore Airlines (SIA) recently signed an agreement with GrameenPhone Ltd under GP corporate sales package initiative to use mobile phones and other services, says a press release.

Under the agreement, SIA has been provided with GP subscriptions for their operations in the country.

Azizur Rahman, chairman of MAAS Travels & Tours, the GSA of Singapore Airlines (SIA), and Mehboob Chowdhury, director-Sales and Marketing of GrameenPhone Ltd, signed the agreement on behalf of their respective organisations.

Joseph Chia, GM-Bangladesh, Yameen Kabir, manager-Sales of Singapore Airlines, Intekhab Mahmud, AGM-Marketing, Mahboob Hossain, AGM-Distribution, and Hasan Md Zahid, head Corporate Sales of GrameenPhone, were present at the signing ceremony.



M Syeduzzaman, chairman of Bank Asia, presides over an extra-ordinary general meeting of the bank in the city on Sunday. A Rouf Chowdhury, vice-chairman, Syed Anisul Huq, managing director, directors and shareholders are also seen in the picture.

Govt to help IT companies get CMM certification: Khosru

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Commerce Minister Amir Khosru Mahmud Chowdhury yesterday said the government is ready to extend any kind of support required for achieving the 'capability maturity model (CMM) certification' which will enable Bangladeshi IT companies to tap software businesses abroad.

"As it is necessary to export software products, government will surly help in this sector," the minister said while speaking at a seminar on 'CMM and ICT in Bangladesh', organised by the Bangladesh Computer Society (BCS) yesterday.

The seminar held at the ongoing BCS Computer Show venue at the Bangladesh-China Friendship Conference Centre at Sher-e-Bangla Nagar in the city.

Secretary of Planning Division

Badir Rahman was present as special guest at the seminar where Joint Chief of the Executive Committee of National Economic Council (ECNEC) SASM Taifur, BCS President Sabur Khan and Internet Service Provider Association of Bangladesh (ISPAB) President Aktaruzzaman Manju were present.

Citing success of garment sector the minister said young generation of the country has enough potentials to earn huge foreign currency from the software sector. "Illiterate garment workers are producing export quality garments and this is a glaring example of the skills of our manpower," the minister said.

About infrastructure problem, he said it is a shame that a citizen of the country still faces harassment to get a phone connection.

Badir Rahman said there is

some influential people at different government levels, who never want transparency in complementing any project of the government because they would not be able to make money if transparency is ensured.

SASM Taifur said Japan International Co-operation Agency (JICA) recently presented a project proposal to the government for setting up a nationwide Internet connectivity. He also made a brief presentation on ICT activities of the government at the seminar.

SM Iqbal, chairman of the seminar sub-committee of the fair, made a presentation on CMM certification on the occasion. According to him, there are five levels in this certification system like ISO 9001 certification.

He said CMM certification is necessary for exporting software products to any country.



A press-conference on launching of Hi-Path 3000, the first digital PABX system in Bangladesh, was organised by Siemens Bangladesh Ltd at Siemens House in the city on Sunday. Picture shows (from L to R) Peter Gartenberg, executive vice-president of Siemens Ltd, India, Marghobur Murshed, chairman of BTRC, Dr Peter E Albrich, managing director and CEO of Siemens Bangladesh Ltd, and Khalesh Shams, general manager of Telecom and IT Division of Siemens Bangladesh Ltd, at the press conference.

Computer Samity awards top software developers

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

The Bangladesh Computer Samity (BCS) yesterday awarded three software developers for producing best software at the BCS Computer Show 2003.

BCS organised the software-developing contest to promote the software developers.

26 software programmers submitted their product to the authorities. The software includes games, equation plotter, loan repayment scheduler, quiz and examination systems, fun modules, database software, medical care, billing system, store maintenance, share management, buying house management, fire detector and learning module.

A newly developed computer language was also submitted for the contest.

Md Anwar Salam won the first prize in the contest for developing 'Bangla Word Processor'. Emran Hasan and Zakaria Bin Abdur Rauf bagged the second and third prizes for developing 'Quiz System 2' and 'Bangla Typing Box' respectively. The prizes have been sponsored by Scholastic Netpreneurs.

The software, which bagged the prizes, will be displayed before the computer show audience during the exposition.

A programming contest was held at the fair venue yesterday. Twenty-four teams from city's different schools and colleges participated in the contest. A large number of female students also took part in the contest.

Notre Dame College, comprising Manzur Rahman Khan, Raian Kamal and Mohammad Tanvir Al-Amin received Tk 10,500 as the first prize, sponsored by Daffodil Computers Ltd. Maple Leaf International School and Institute of Information Technology (IIT) received the second and third prizes respectively in the contest.

According to the fair authority around 15 thousand people visited the fair yesterday, which is going on at the Bangladesh-China Friendship Conference Centre at Sher-e-Bangla Nagar in the city.

Bangladesh Computer Samity (BCS) also organised a seminar on 'CMM and ICT in Bangladesh' yesterday.

A seminar on 'Bridging the Digital Divide: Application of ICT in Bangladesh Perspective' was also held yesterday at 10:00 am in the

seminar hall. The seminar was telecast 'live' at www.baishakhi.tv and www.ranks-bd.net.

The speakers at the seminar suggested that steps should be taken to face problems, which may be created by technological divine.

Internet Service Providers Association of Bangladesh (ISPAB) will organise a seminar on 'VoIP as Small Investment' at 11:00 am at the fair seminar room.

Board of Investment Executive Chairman Mahmudur Rahman will attend the seminar as chief guest, while Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industries (FBCCI) President Yussuf Abdullah Harun will be present as special guest.

Red Tone will also organise a seminar on 'Community Based Pay Phone' at 5:30 pm at the same venue.

116 computer firms from home and abroad are participating in this year's exhibition. The firms include software developer companies, hardware sales firms, Internet Service Providers (ISPs), information technology based magazines and other firms.



Azizur Rahman, chairman of MAAS Travels & Tours, the GSA of Singapore Airlines (SIA), and Mehboob Chowdhury, director-Sales and Marketing of GrameenPhone Ltd, sign an agreement on behalf of their respective sides in the city recently. Under the agreement, SIA has become a GP corporate client.

CCCI celebrates decision on commercial capital today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

The Chittagong Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCCI) is organising a rally and a colourful procession here this morning to celebrate the declaration of Chittagong as the commercial capital and the allocation of land for the CCCI proposed World Trade Centre (WTC).

The programme would be organised at the Chittagong outer stadium premises at 10:30am.

On the eve of the occasion, CCCI leaders told newsmen at a press conference that 30 gates has been erected in the city for the rally.

CCCI President Amir Humayun

Mahmud Chowdhury said ministries concerned have been directed by the higher authorities for urgent implementation of 15 development required to turn Chittagong into the commercial capital.

The recommendations include construction of the World Trade Centre, a third bridge on the Karnaphuli river, direct rail link from Luksham to Dhaka, construction of Marine Drive around Chittagong through Muhury embankment, making Foy's Lake a park, shifting headquarters of some commercial banks to Chittagong, modernisation of the Chittagong port, strengthening the head offices of different authorities that already exist in

Chittagong, setting up a 1000-seat theatre hall, construction of an international convention centre and shifting the railway headquarters to Chittagong.

About the progress of these projects, the CCCI president said a feasibility study is going on to shift the railway headquarters to Chittagong and process is underway to make Foy's lake a park under a joint initiative with Thailand.

The process is also underway for constructing the third bridge on the Karnaphuli under joint initiatives of two Dutch and Swiss consortiums and the bridge would be inaugurated by March.