

Saifur tells BB to protect clients from fake notes

BSS, Dhaka

Finance and Planning Minister M Saifur Rahman yesterday asked the central bank to put in place more vigilant activities to save innocent bank clients from being cheated through payment of fake notes.

The finance minister issued this instruction to central bank officials following a surprise visit to the bank. Finance Secretary Zakir Ahmed Khan was also present, an official release said.

He also asked the central bank

officials to work for improving the quality of client services by scheduled banks.

The finance minister specially reminded them to strengthen the bank's inspection and supervision activities for ensuring better control and monitoring of the overall banking system. The finance minister visited the central bank at a time when the Eid festival is only a few weeks from now bringing pressure on bank transactions.

He went round the central bank's cash counters and other sections.

During the inspection, the finance minister was disappointed at the way the file keeping has been maintained. He was also critical of the mismanagement in different sections.

Saifur Rahman told the bank officials that for a sound banking, the entire system should be established on a dynamic basis.

The central bank should play more active role in terms of controlling the banking system and giving guidance to scheduled member banks, he emphasised.



PHOTO: CITY BANK

Sadeque Hossain Khoka, mayor of Dhaka City Corporation and minister for Fisheries and Livestock, inaugurates Uttara Branch of City Bank in the city on Thursday. Chairman of the bank Deen Mohammad, Vice Chairman Aziz Al-Kaiser, Directors Rafiqul Islam Khan and Ahmed Rajeeb Samdani and Managing Director Abbas Uddin Ahmed are also seen in the picture.

KAFCO operating profit up by 8pc

Despite low international market prices, the Karnaphuli Fertiliser Company Limited (KAFCO), a joint venture project, posted US\$5.3 million or more than eight per cent operating profit in the 2001-2002 fiscal over the previous financial year, says a press release.

The profit has been achieved despite the fact that this fiscal year was also a turnaround year for the plant when it was shutdown for almost 39 days as part of KAFKO's scheduled biennial overhaul and maintenance programme, the 21st annual general meeting (AGM) of KAFCO Board, held at a city hotel recently, was told.

The ammonia plant of the factory also recorded the longest continuous operation in the history of plant at almost 270 days and that the production rate of the ammonia plant reached to 1600 metric tons per day since last April, a 7 per cent supplement of original designed capacity of 1500 metric tons a day.

Europe, Japan vague on farm subsidy issues

Canadian trade official says

Reuters, Ottawa

European and Japanese proposals about how to reform farm subsidies at upcoming World Trade Organisation negotiations "lack specificity" that's needed to move talks forward, a Canadian trade official said on Friday.

"Progress to date has been modest," the senior trade official told reporters in a technical briefing ahead of a special negotiating session of the WTO agriculture committee next week in Geneva.

"None of the proposals are suggesting fundamental change as to how we approach the rules in agriculture. It's really about how deep and how fast we're going to go in the reform process," the official said.

The committee is under pressure to have the basic text of its agreement ready by March 31, including agreements on the depth of cuts to farm subsidies and deadlines for implementing the cuts, officials said. Sticking points will be

discussed by agriculture ministers in September.

"The agricultural negotiations are really at the heart of the development agenda," the trade official said, noting that developing countries want to see farm reforms before addressing other trade issues under the WTO.

Developing countries complain that massive European and US subsidies distort world agricultural trade, and they are unwilling to provide more access to their markets without major subsidy cuts, the official said.

The United States has proposed cutting all export subsidies over five years, slashing agricultural tariffs worldwide from 62 per cent to 15 per cent and reducing the ceiling on trade-distorting subsidies by more than \$100 billion.

"We don't agree with some of the elements of the US proposal, but at least they've put ideas forward," the Canadian official said, complaining the Europe, Japan, and Korea have been short on details.

City Bank opens Uttara branch

The City Bank Limited opened a new branch at Uttara in the city Thursday, says a press release.

Mayor of Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) and Fisheries and Livestock Minister Sadeque Hossain Khoka inaugurated the branch at Rabindra Sarani at Uttara Model Town as chief guest.

In his speech Sadeque Hossain Khoka said private banks have an important role in the overall development of the country. And, City Bank is the bank of the first category in the private sector.

Presided over by Chairman of the bank Deen Mohammad, the function was addressed, among others, by the Vice Chairman of the bank Aziz-Al-Kaiser, Managing Director of the bank Abbas Uddin Ahmed, Ward Commissioner of the area Dr Hafizul Islam Kusum.

Deen Mohammad said, City Bank initiated multipurpose schemes for better service of its clients.

Abbas Uddin Ahmed mentioned that the bank had introduced a number of schemes like lease financing, consumer credit, multi-purpose loan and education credit schemes in order to improve life-style of people.

China's new leaders inherit growing economy, risks

AFP, Shanghai

Newly anointed Chinese Communist Party boss Hu Jintao and his eight new colleagues on the all-powerful Politburo Standing Committee are inheriting an economy humming at annual growth rates of nearly eight per cent.

But even as China seems to have skirted the recessions currently crippling most of the world's economies, its heady growth masks a series of problems that could quickly see things grind to a halt, analysts say.

Longtime heir in waiting Hu and eight others, including current Vice Premier Wu Bangguo and Wen Jiabao, were named to the new nine-man Politburo Standing Committee unveiled in Beijing Friday, after the end of the party's 16th National Congress the previous day.

China's new leaders face a host of difficulties -- ranging from rural and industrial joblessness to massively insolvent banks and a largely bankrupt state enterprise sector -- that outgoing "economics czar" Premier Zhu Rongji has failed to

tackle with any great success.

"Agriculture, laid off workers, state-enterprises -- all these problems are connected with each other," said Shanghai University of Finance and Economics professor Jiang Hong.

Crucial to the Hu-led team's success will be the maintenance of China's strong economic growth rates while keeping a lid on these major structural problems, experts say.

"The most important thing is to maintain the current seven to eight per cent economic annual growth rate, because currently there are a lot of problems," said Jiang.

Beijing had set an official growth target of seven per cent for the year, a figure it has been long assumed Asia's second-biggest economy would easily exceed. However, the achievement is deeply undercut by China's banking debt, experts say.

By Western accounting standards, China's four main commercial banks are effectively insolvent thanks to decades of handing out easy loans to government-owned companies.

CURRENCY

Following is yesterday's forex trading statement by Standard Chartered Bank

Selling	Currency		Buying		
	BC	TT Clean	OD Sight Doc	OD Transfer	
59.2000	59.2500	USD	58.3000	58.1314	58.0629
60.5900	60.6769	EUR	58.1508	57.9674	57.8908
94.4134	94.4554	GBP	91.4265	91.1600	91.1054
34.2059	34.2305	AUD	32.1344	32.0420	31.9618
0.4948	0.4949	JPY	0.4793	0.4791	0.4781
41.0806	41.1051	CHF	39.8261	39.7316	39.6471
6.6569	6.6620	SEK	6.4325	6.4149	6.3989
37.5626	37.5871	CAD	36.5904	36.4967	36.4135
7.5978	7.5991	HKD	7.4703	7.4526	7.4352
33.730	33.7518	SGD	32.9285	32.8847	32.7700
16.2481	16.2618	AED	15.7360	15.7141	15.6956
15.9099	15.9283	SAR	15.4286	15.3919	15.3737

Exchange rates of some currencies against US dollar

Indian rupee	Pak rupee	Lankan rupee	Thai baht	Nor kroner	NZ dollar	Malaysian ringit
48.18	58.325	96.3	43.45	7.24385	0.4995	3.8000

Local Interbank FX Trading:

The local interbank foreign exchange market subdued as the international market was closed on Saturday. BDT ended unchanged against the US dollar at 58.95/59.00. Matched dollar supply kept the taka flat against the greenback.

Local Money Market:

Demand for overnight borrowing at call was moderate. Call money rate remained almost unchanged and ranged between 6.90 and 7.00 per cent yesterday compared with 6.70 and 7.00 per cent Friday.

International Market

International market was closed on Saturday. The dollar fell on Friday as mixed US economic data gave investors little reason to buy the greenback while pre-weekend short-covering

rejuvenated the Euro after days of losses. The dollar's declines on Friday partially eroded gains put on this week following surprisingly good US retail sales numbers and Iraq's acceptance of UN conditions. October retail sales report showed a growth of 0.7 per cent followed by the news that University of Michigan's preliminary consumer sentiment index for November rose to 85.0 from 80.6 in the prior month beating the expectations. But the news that industrial production for October fell by more than expected 0.8 per cent eroded the gain of the greenback. On Friday, Bundesbank president and ECB board member Ernst Welteke said weak economic growth and a stronger euro were likely to dampen Euro-zone inflation, a dovish stance on price pressures that added to the speculation of easing of rate by ECB.

This memorandum is issued by Standard Chartered Bank and is based on or derived from information generally available to the public from sources believed to be reliable. While all reasonable care has been taken in its preparation no responsibility or liability is accepted for errors of fact or any opinion expressed herein.

ReadyCash Raffle Draw Winners

The latest ReadyCash Raffle draw of the fortunate prize winners took place at Malancha, Hasnahena in the city on Thursday, says a press release.

Respective manager of the shop chose the winners in a lucky draw. This is part of the commitment ReadyCash undertakes to reward valuable and loyal cardholders.

Prizes for new cardholders

Prizes	Name of Winners	Card No
China Junction Chinese Free Lunch for Two	Jotima Shaha	504798000044840
Meal in the Box Free Lunch for Two	Md Shaleh Ahammed	504798000044838
Dhan Shri Restora Free Lunch/Dinner for Two	Md Enamul Haq Jony	504798000044809
Body Shop Free Gift Box	Tauhid Hshan	504798000044858
CD Care, Free 4 CD	Md Mozammel Hoque	504798000044749

Winners can collect their prizes from the Executive of Promotion of ReadyCash, within 30 days of this news circulation by producing their ReadyCash card transaction vouchers.

ReadyCash encourages its cardholders to read The Daily Star and the Daily Prothom Alo on every Sunday or call our Customer Service at: