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ADB assures Bangladesh of continued support

UNB, Davos, Switzerland

Asian Development Bank President H Kuroda Thursday assured Bangladesh of the Bank's continued support for infrastructure and power and energy sector development.

He also appreciated the performance of the caretaker government for its various reforms in political, administrative and economic sectors.

The ADB President's appreciation came during a courtesy call on Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed at Congress Center on the sidelines of the World Economic Forum meeting.

"I'm greatly impressed with your government's performance, particularly the reforms brought about in governance and economic sectors," he said.

Foreign Adviser Dr Iftekhar Ahmed Chowdhury, CA's Press secretary Syed Fahim Munaim and Permanent Representative to the UN in Geneva Ambassador Debapriya Bhattacharya were also present.

The chief adviser sought ADB's support for the construction of the proposed Padma Bridge as well as cooperation in the power and energy sectors.

The ADB chief said the banks would look into it and hoped that big countries will also come forward to finance these sectors.

MANPOWER EXPORT Foreign adviser happy with outcome of Abu Dhabi dialogue

UNB, Davos, Switzerland

Foreign Adviser Iftekhar Ahmed Chowdhury, who is also in charge of expatriate welfare ministry, has said he is happy with the outcome of the Abu Dhabi dialogue between Asian labour-sending and labour-receiving countries which agreed on a set of partnerships between the two groups.

The dialogue, attended by the foreign adviser, concluded in the UAE capital, resulting in the Abu Dhabi declaration.

Chowdhury, who is accompanying Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed to the World Economic Forum meeting in Davos, said Bangladesh workers in the Gulf would be benefited from the declaration, which seeks to put an end to exploitation by both recruiting agents and employers, and improve the condition of workers.

There are over 7,00,000 Bangladeshi workers in the UAE alone. In the last month of 2007, there were nearly 27,000 new arrivals.

The foreign adviser said, "Gulf will continue to be a major market from Bangladesh, particularly if we can upgrade the skills."

Indian inflation edges up

AFP, New Delhi

India's inflation edged upward, official data on Friday showed, but analysts said this week's US interest rate cut made it more likely the Indian central bank could follow suit.

Annual inflation quickened to 3.83 percent for the week ended January 12 from 3.79 percent a week earlier, according to the wholesale price index, India's main cost-of-living monitor.

Inflation stood at 6.15 percent in the same period the previous year.

Inflation rose on the back of rises in manufactured goods and food prices such as rice and maize, the government data showed.

But it remained below the Reserve Bank of India's ceiling of close to five percent for the current fiscal year to March 31, 2008.

Analysts had expected the Indian central bank -- wary about the impact of sharp rises in global oil and commodity prices -- to keep its interest rates on hold this year.

But anxiety over a global slowdown triggered by a possible US recession and the sharp US rate cut had changed the picture, they said.

The US Federal Reserve's unprecedented three-fourths of a point cut in its base short-term interest rate to 3.50 percent Tuesday was aimed at stimulating an ailing US economy, battered by a severe housing slump and tight credit.

CA asks foreign investors to become Bangladesh's 'investment ambassadors'

Overseas investment leaders want reforms in financial sector

UNB, Davos, Switzerland

As Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed has urged foreign entrepreneurs to work as 'investment ambassadors' of Bangladesh, representatives of the foreign companies who have already made investment in the country called for implementing reforms in the financial sector to attract more overseas investment.

The foreign companies want to see the actual implementation of reforms so far undertaken by the government in the financial sector, according to Bangladesh Permanent Representative to UN offices in Geneva Ambassador Dr Debapriya Bhattacharya who is accompanying the CA to the annual meeting of the World Economic Forum (WEF) at Davos.

Fakhruddin and the CEOs of seven leading business companies made the interactions during a dinner at a hotel in this snow-covered hilly resort town of Davos.

Business leaders and CEOs

who attended the dinner include President and CEO Yakir Mahmood of Habib Bank Ltd of Pakistan; Jasbir Singh, CEO of Standard Chartered of UK; Bruno Lafont, chairman and CEO of Lafarge, France; Jasmine M Whitbread, CEO of International Save the Children Alliance, UK; Martina Roth, CEO of Intel, Germany; and Prakash Hinduja of Hinduja Group of India.

The chief adviser apprised them of the political and economic background before the incumbent caretaker government took over as well as administrative and economic reforms undertaken by his government in past one year.

The business representatives appreciated the government's reforms agenda and ongoing anti-corruption drive. They said power generation is one of the fundamental elements to attract foreign investments and wanted to know if coal and gas in Bangladesh are adequately being exploited.

They also suggested time-

bound decision on investment and equal treatment for foreign companies like national companies.

On the question of image crisis of Bangladesh, the CEOs observed Bangladesh's image is better than many other countries in the world but they apprehended vulnerability of the country's economy.

The foreign company representatives also wondered whether a credible political leadership would be in place through reforms after the next elections. A national consensus is needed on reform measures and sustainability of a participatory democracy, they observed.

The chief adviser mentioned the caretaker government is trying hard to create an enabling atmosphere for foreign investment saying that Bangladesh has lot of potential for investment.

Foreign Adviser Iftekhar Ahmed Chowdhury and CA's Press Secretary Syed Fahim Munaim were also present at the dinner.

High prices of feed take toll on Rangpur poultry farms

RAFIQUE SARKER, from Rangpur

High prices of poultry feed are taking a huge toll on poultry farms in Rangpur.

Owner of Rangpur Poultry Farm Noor Mohammad Sirajul said in the face of soaring feed prices he has to spend extra Tk 1000-Tk1500 on feeding his 2500 chickens a day. "Now I need to sell all the birds to get rid of the losses. Prices of farm birds are also falling sharply in the market due to avian influenza fear."

Poultry feed ingredients such as soybean cake, rice wastage (particles of rice left after husking) and protein of all brands are being sold at higher prices in the market.

According to market sources, soybean is now being sold at Tk 1750 to Tk 1800 per bag (50 kg) against Tk 1200 to Tk 1300 in January-February last year, and rice wastage at Tk 750 per bag (50 kg) against Tk 600 last year.

Around 25 to 30 percent poultry farms in Rangpur district were shut down in the last six months due to high prices of poultry feed, and many are on the verge of closure, sources at the District Livestock Offices said.

Owner of Farm Line at Boldipukur under Mithapukur upazila Shah Enamur Rahman said if the prices of feeds do not come down, they have to close farms.

"Although feed prices are rising, prices of eggs remain same compared to last year's," Enamur said, adding that the prices of meat of poultry birds are decreasing due to avian influenza fear.

Poultry feed trader of Rangpur municipality market Jahangir Alam Khan said prices of some proteins increased by 100 percent.



A file photo of a poultry farm. Farmers in Rangpur district say high prices of poultry feed are forcing them to close their venture.

For example, he said dicalcium phosphate, the main protein ingredient used in poultry feed, is being sold at Tk 1200 to Tk 1250 per bag (25 kg) against Tk 600 to Tk 650 last year. Livestock department of the district fears that all the mid-size poultry farms will be closed in a few months if the prices of poultry feed and protein do not come down.

District Livestock Officer of Rangpur Dr Roushanuzzaman said, "We are really anxious about the situation prevailing in the poultry farms in the district. The farmers cannot make up the loss they are incurring everyday."

A majority of entrepreneurs will be forced to shut down their businesses unless the government provides subsidy for poultry feed ingredients, Moshir Rahman, convener of Bangladesh Poultry Industries Co-Ordination Committee, comprising representatives from nine associations of the industry, told The Daily Star recently.

The prices of poultry feed ingredients such as maize, soybean have been rising in the international market on increased use of bio-fuel instead of fossil fuel, he said.

"We are now producing 40 lakh (4 million) of one-day old poultry

chickens a week instead of 65 lakh (6.5 million) a year ago," he said, adding that the sales of poultry chickens now stood at about 35 lakh per week.

With Tk 5500 crore in total investment till mid-December 2007, the sector, supporting five million people directly or indirectly through 1.5 lakh poultry farms, constitutes 1.6 percent of Bangladesh GDP, according to the South Asia Enterprise Development Facility (SEDF), a multi-donor facility managed by the International Finance Corporation of the World Bank Group.

Dhaka International Trade Fair



The photo shows a handicraft stall at the month-long Dhaka International Trade Fair at Sher-e-Bangla Nagar in the capital yesterday. Handicraft producers say they need government support and easy access to loans to improve their production base for international markets.

Handicraft industry needs to break barriers to boost export

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Lack of proper marketing facilities, shortage of skilled manpower and dearth of information about international markets stand in the way of export growth of local handicraft industry.

Handicrafts such as wooden showpieces, traditional quilts, wax and metal showpieces and jute-made fashionable bags have a huge demand in the international markets, but the industry needs to break the barriers to boost the export, industry people said at the Dhaka International Trade Fair (DITF) 2008.

"We need government support and easy access to loans to improve our production base for international markets," said M Alauddin, proprietor of Karu Karma, a Khulna-based wood-made handicraft producer.

International buyers usually

order huge quantities of goods at a time, but in many cases local producers struggle to supply products in large quantities, Alauddin added.

He also said demand for Bangladesh products is rising in the international markets.

Set up in 1989, Karu Karma's annual sales volume now stands at Tk 36 lakh-Tk 48 lakh.

"I started this business along with my wife after receiving a six-month training from BSCIC (Bangladesh Small and Cottage Industries Corporation). Now, I supply around 135 products to both local and international market," Alauddin added.

Karu Karma exports goods worth Tk 15 lakh-Tk 20 lakh a year. Local producers are also getting good responses from foreign buyers these days. "It was very difficult to export goods only 5-6 years ago.

The situation has changed now. Our products are making inroads into India, US and Australia markets," said an official of Sohag Jute and Handicrafts.

The local market for handicrafts should also be expanded, the official said. "We need to change our mindset. In Bangladesh, customers always prefer foreign goods, although the quality of local goods is fine," he said.

In 2006-07, the country exported handicrafts worth US\$ 8.16 million. The target for handicraft export has been fixed at \$10 million for current 2007-08 fiscal year.

The DITF is a yearly programme of Bangladesh government, which mainly aims to showcase local products to foreign buyers. The Ministry of Commerce and Export Promotion Bureau (EPB) are jointly organising the fair at Sher-e-Bangla Nagar in the city.

Davos adopts caring face of capitalism

AFP, Davos, Switzerland

Corporate responsibility rather than profit took centre stage in Davos on Friday, as the annual get-together of business chiefs turned its attention to issues of health, aid and development.

Rock star activist Bono, billionaire philanthropist Bill Gates and UN chief Ban Ki-moon steered the conversation away from the global economy and geopolitics, towards issues such as malaria eradication, poverty alleviation and climate change.

The Davos event has long prided itself on showing the caring side of capitalism, although participants have often been criticised for trumpeting big ideas on big issues in public,

while actually expending most of their energy on corridor schmoozing and backroom deals.

Gates announced 306 million dollars (208 million euros) of grants to develop farming in poor countries, marking a major push into agriculture by his charitable foundation which has previously focused on public health.

"If we are serious about ending extreme hunger and poverty around the world, we must be serious about transforming agriculture for small farmers, most of whom are women," Gates said.

The cash injection is to fund projects to improve soil quality, milk production, irrigation and seed development in a host of poor African and Asian countries.

A perennial participant at Davos, Gates on Thursday pitched a new form of capitalism to forum delegates that would better serve the neglected poor.

"The challenge here is to design a system including profit and recognition to do more for the poor," he said, calling for a new form of "creative capitalism."

He was to be joined by Bono, Ban and British Prime Minister Gordon Brown for a debate later on progress -- or the lack thereof -- in reaching the UN Millennium Development Goals.

Brown, in an early public interview in front of delegates, called for the World Bank to take on an environmental role to fight climate change in addition to its

development mission.

The world should move directly to creating the "World Bank for the environment as well as for development," he said.

This year's Davos event has drawn nearly 30 heads of state or government, more than 110 cabinet ministers and several hundred corporate titans.

The first day was taken up with talk of a looming US recession -- a subject that was to be revisited on Friday with a round-table discussion on the theme of "Global Economic Shocks: Perfect Storm Ahead?"

Thursday saw the focus of debate switch to the situation in the Middle East and efforts to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Bangladeshis in Malaysia now can remit thru' BRAC Bank

Bangladeshi workers and expatriates in Malaysia will be able to send their money home through the branches of BRAC Bank Ltd.

A remittance agreement to this effect was signed recently between the bank and Merchante Asia Sdn Bhd (Merchantrade), a Malaysian remittance service provider, says a press release.

Nausad Hussain, head of Probashi Banking Service of the bank, and Ramasamy Veeran, managing director of Merchante, among others, were present at the signing ceremony.

Oil higher in Asian trade

AFP, Singapore

World oil prices continued higher in Asian trade Friday as global stock markets firmed but underlying worries over the US economy remained, dealers said.

In afternoon trade, New York's main contract, light sweet crude for delivery in March, rose 57 cents to 89.98 dollars per barrel.

The contract jumped 2.42 dollars to close at 89.41 dollars Thursday during floor trading on the New York Mercantile Exchange.

Brent North Sea Crude for March delivery was 53 cents higher at 89.60 dollars per barrel, after shooting up 2.45 dollars to 89.07 dollars in London on Thursday.

Key regional bourses continued their rebound Friday after a quick agreement by US leaders on a stimulus package for the US economy.



Models pose for photographs with a China-made Great Wall brand Wingle pickup at a launching ceremony in Dhaka on Thursday. The prices of the pickup range between Tk 12.75 lakh and Tk 14.50 lakh. ACE Autos has formally launched some other Great Wall brand vehicles in the local market. The prices of pickup Sailor are from Tk 9 lakh to Tk 10.5 lakh, SUV (sport utility vehicle) Sing Tk 19.80 lakh and CUV (crossover utility vehicle) Hover from Tk 22 lakh to Tk 24 lakh.

ক্যান্টনমেন্ট বোর্ড
ঢাকা ক্যান্টনমেন্ট
দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি

ঢাকা ক্যান্টনমেন্ট বোর্ডের নিম্নোক্ত কাজের জন্য ক্যান্টনমেন্ট বোর্ডসমূহের তালিকাভুক্ত প্রথম শ্রেণীর ঠিকাদার/প্রকৃত সরবরাহকারী প্রতিষ্ঠানের নিকট হতে সীলমোহরকৃত দরপত্র আহ্বান করা যাচ্ছেঃ-

ক্রমিক নং	কাজের বিবরণ	আর্নেস্টম্যানি	দরপত্রের মূল্য (অফেরতযোগ্য)	কার্য সমাপ্তির সময়সীমা
(১)	বারিধারা ডিওএইচএস এলাকার রোড নং-২, ৩, ৪, ৫, ৬, ৭, ৮, ১০ ও ১১ এর কর্তনকৃত রাস্তা ও বিভিন্ন রোডে পটহোল মেরামতসহ কাপেটিং কাজ।	১৭,০০০/- টাকা	৪০০/- টাকা	৩০ (ত্রিশ) দিন
(ক)	দরপত্র সিডিউল ২৫ জানুয়ারি, ২০০৮ তারিখ হতে ২৪ ফেব্রুয়ারি, ২০০৮ তারিখ পর্যন্ত অফিস চলাকালীন নির্ধারিত মূল্যে ঢাকা ক্যান্টনমেন্ট বোর্ডের রাজস্ব শাখা হতে এবং ২০ ফেব্রুয়ারি, ২০০৮ তারিখ হতে ২৪ ফেব্রুয়ারি, ২০০৮ তারিখ পর্যন্ত অফিস চলাকালীন নির্ধারিত মূল্যে স্টেশন সদর দপ্তর, ঢাকা সেনানিবাস হতে জর্য করা যাবে।			
(খ)	দরপত্রসমূহ আগামী ২৫ ফেব্রুয়ারি, ২০০৮ তারিখ বেলা ১২.০০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত নিম্নাঙ্কনকারীর অফিসে বন্ধিত টেন্ডার বাস্কে গৃহীত হবে এবং ঐদিনই বেলা ১২.৩০ মিনিটের সময় দরপত্রদাতাদের উপস্থিতিতে (যদি কেহ উপস্থিত থাকেন) খোলা হবে। দরপত্র খোলার দিন কোন দরপত্র বিক্রয় করা হবে না।			
(গ)	দরপত্রের সাথে ঠিকাদারগণকে উল্লেখিত আর্নেস্টম্যানি যে কোন সিডিউল ব্যাংক হতে ব্যাংক ড্রাফট/পে-অর্ডারের মাধ্যমে 'ক্যান্টনমেন্ট একজিকিউটিভ অফিসার, ঢাকা ক্যান্টনমেন্ট' এর অনুকূলে জমা করতে হবে। অন্যথায় দরপত্র বাতিল বলে গণ্য হবে। দরপত্র সিডিউল সংক্রান্ত বিস্তারিত তথ্যাদি অত্র দপ্তরের প্রকৌশল শাখা হতে অফিস চলাকালীন সম্বন্ধ করা যাবে।			
(ঘ)	দরপত্র জয়ের আবেদনের সাথে ঠিকাদারগণকে তাদের ফর্মের স্বপক্ষে ভাট নিবন্ধনকরণের নিবন্ধনপত্র এবং জালিকাসূচি হালনাগাদ নবায়ন এবং আয়কর বিটানের সত্যায়িত অনুলিপি সংযোজন করতে হবে।			
(ঙ)	কর্তৃপক্ষের নির্দেশে কাজের পরিমাণ হ্রাস বা বৃদ্ধি করা যাবে।			
(চ)	দর অনুমোদনের ১০ (দশ) কার্যদিবসের মধ্যে অনুমোদিত মূল্যানুমানের উপর ১০% কার্য সম্পাদন সিদ্ধিউরিটি যে কোন সিডিউল ব্যাংক হতে ব্যাংক ড্রাফট/পে-অর্ডারের মাধ্যমে ক্যান্টনমেন্ট একজিকিউটিভ অফিসার, ঢাকা ক্যান্টনমেন্ট এর অনুকূলে জমা করতে হবে। অন্যথায় দর-রেসপন্সিভ হিসেবে আর্নেস্টম্যানি বাজোয়াসহ অন্যান্য আইনানুগ ব্যবস্থা নেয়া হবে। সে ক্ষেত্রে দ্বিতীয় সর্বনিম্ন দরদাতাকে অফার প্রদান অথবা পুনঃ দরপত্র আহ্বান করা হবে।			
(ছ)	কোন কারণ দর্শানো ব্যতিরেকে যে কোন অথবা সকল দরপত্র গ্রহণ কিংবা বাতিল করার ক্ষমতা কর্তৃপক্ষ সংরক্ষণ করে।			

মোঃ হামিদুর রহমান
ক্যান্টনমেন্ট একজিকিউটিভ অফিসার
ঢাকা ক্যান্টনমেন্ট
জিডি-৪১১