

BB reviewing home loan rules to make scheme effective



A view of Japan Garden City, the largest housing block in the capital. Bangladesh Bank is reviewing its low-cost housing loan rules for the middle and lower income group.

SAJJADUR RAHMAN

Bangladesh Bank is reviewing its low-cost housing loan rules for the middle and lower income group due to the failure of financial institutions to disburse less than 8 percent of the money available for the year.

According to the central bank sources, during July 2007-April 15, 2008 period, only Tk 7.79 crore was disbursed out of Tk 100 crore available for FY 2007-08 till June. The scheme worth Tk300 crore is for a period of three years.

"We have got recommendations from different banks and non-bank financial institutions on the issue," a senior BB official told The Daily Star. "We are considering those recommendations to facilitate the loan scheme," the official said.

Banks' suggestions include among others bringing government employees under the scheme, raising the salary ceiling and repayment period and refinancing of the amount lent in one month instead of quarterly basis, BB sources said.

The BB in July last year launched the Tk 300 crore refinancing scheme. Borrowers are entitled to get maximum Tk

20 lakh loans at 10 percent interest. The amount is repayable in maximum 20 years time with one-year grace period.

Any person with a monthly income of less than Tk 30,000 will only be eligible to loan up to Tk 20 lakh from commercial banks and non-bank financial institutions either for buying or constructing an apartment of maximum 1,250 square feet in six divisional cities including Tongi, Gazipur, Narayanganj and Savar areas.

The BB will refinance the money to the lenders for disbursing loans under the scheme titled 'Reinvestment Scheme in Housing Sector' within the following quarter.

The scheme has barred government employees and others who are entitled to get housing loans from their respective organisations, no matter what the amount is.

People working with the private companies that have housing loan scheme for their employees also will not get the loan. Besides, the loan is only for those who or their relations (wife/husband and children) do not own any house or apartment in the designated areas.

If a person has already taken housing loans from a bank or financial institution will also

not be brought under the scheme.

Officials in different banks and housing loan providers said they get huge number of applications every month, but find most of them ineligible because of the stringent criteria set by the central bank.

"Government employees are lucrative customers for us because of security concern. But they are not included because they get a meagre housing loan of Tk one to two lakh," an official of the National Housing Finance and Investment Limited (NHFIL) said.

Salary bar on Tk 30,000 a month is also a major obstacle to the home loan scheme, an official of the National Credit and Commerce Bank Limited said. Because, he said, if one loans Tk20 lakh, he/she has to pay about Tk 20,000 a month for 20 years to repay the loans.

BB Governor Dr Salehuddin Ahmed last week said disbursement under the scheme is poor so far. "I hope the bank will come up with providing more loan to the target group," said the governor.

He said the BB is actively considering a review of the rules to make the scheme more effective.

sajjad@thedailystar.net



The newly executive committee members of Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FBCCI) met Chief Adviser Dr Fakhruddin Ahmed in Dhaka yesterday.

Bangladesh can have a stake in global market for multimedia games

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Bangladesh has a huge potential for establishing multimedia games industry, as the industry occupies a significant global market share, said Stephan Natkin, an IT expert, yesterday.

"Majority of young people in Bangladesh, which has a large population, love games, which creates a good prospect for this sector in the country," said Stephan, professor of Computer Science at Conservatoire National des Arts et Métiers (CNAM) in Paris, France.

"The global market for multimedia games has expanded to US\$ 44 billion, which is bigger than the market for cinema and music, and creating new games is much cheaper than producing a film," he added.

He was speaking at a luncheon meeting, arranged by the France Bangladesh Chamber of Commerce and Industries (CCIFB), in Dhaka.

Stephan said the domestic market for multimedia games in Bangladesh has been expanding in size and new products in last few years.

He said new generation talents in Bangladesh have created potentials for developing new games, adding that the process of developing games is also very easy and could be done with minimal cost.

Stephan said new training institutes should be established to train new generation talents, who are working in the field of graphics and animation, with the aim to develop the sector.

Alamgir M Rahman, president of CCIFB, said the

programme was arranged to encourage development of the multimedia games and IT industry, adding that the country needs independent investments in the sector.

He said CCIFB would arrange a workshop by the end of this month for training talented local graphic designers and animators with the help of Stephan and Paris Chamber of Commerce.

Rafiqul Islam Rawly, former president of BASIS, said development of multimedia games industry would also create employment opportunities for the new generation.

Sophie Clavelier Khan, deputy trade commissioner of French embassy in Bangladesh, and Dr Rifat Rashid, director of CCIFB, were also present at the programme.



Stephan Natkin, professor of Computer Science at Conservatoire National des Arts et Métiers (CNAM) in Paris, France, speaks at a luncheon meeting, arranged by the France Bangladesh Chamber of Commerce and Industries (CCIFB) in Dhaka yesterday.



Dr MA Momen, managing director and chief executive officer of Biman Bangladesh Airlines Ltd, and Glen A Green, regional director of US plane-maker Boeing, sign a deal in Dhaka yesterday. Under the deal, Biman will procure eight new-generation aircraft at \$1.265 billion (Tk 8,728 crore) from Boeing. Mahubul Jamil, special assistant to the chief adviser for the civil aviation and tourism ministry, is also seen at the signing ceremony. (Story on page 1)

Currency swap facility at int'l airports in Bangladesh

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

The central bank yesterday issued a circular allowing foreigners and non-resident Bangladeshis (NRBs) to convert local currency into any foreign currency at the amount of highest \$100 while departing through any international airports in Bangladesh.

The Sonali Bank has already opened a booth at the outer lounge at the Zia International Airport to provide passengers with the facility. Foreigners and the NRBs while leaving Bangladesh through the airports will be able to change Bangladeshi currency in the booths showing necessary documents.

As per the previous rules, foreigners and the NRBs had to convert local currency into their preferred currency at the same money exchange company or banks from where they bought the currency.

S'pore Airlines offers holiday destinations

Singapore Airlines and SilkAir (the regional wing of Singapore Airlines) have jointly launched 'great Asian holiday destinations offers' from April 12, 2008, says a press release.

The destinations are: Hanoi in Vietnam, Langkawi and Penang in Malaysia, Cebu and Davao in Philippines, and Shenzhen in China.

Potatoes in Munshiganj cold storage rot

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Munshiganj

Around five thousand tonnes of potatoes, stored in a cold storage in Munshiganj, have rotted due to a collapse of its cooling system.

On April 12, ammonia gas pipe of Faiz Cold Storage in Taltola under Sirajdikhan Upazila of Munshiganj district got busted due to the negli-

gence of the cold storage authorities, according to the local government officials.

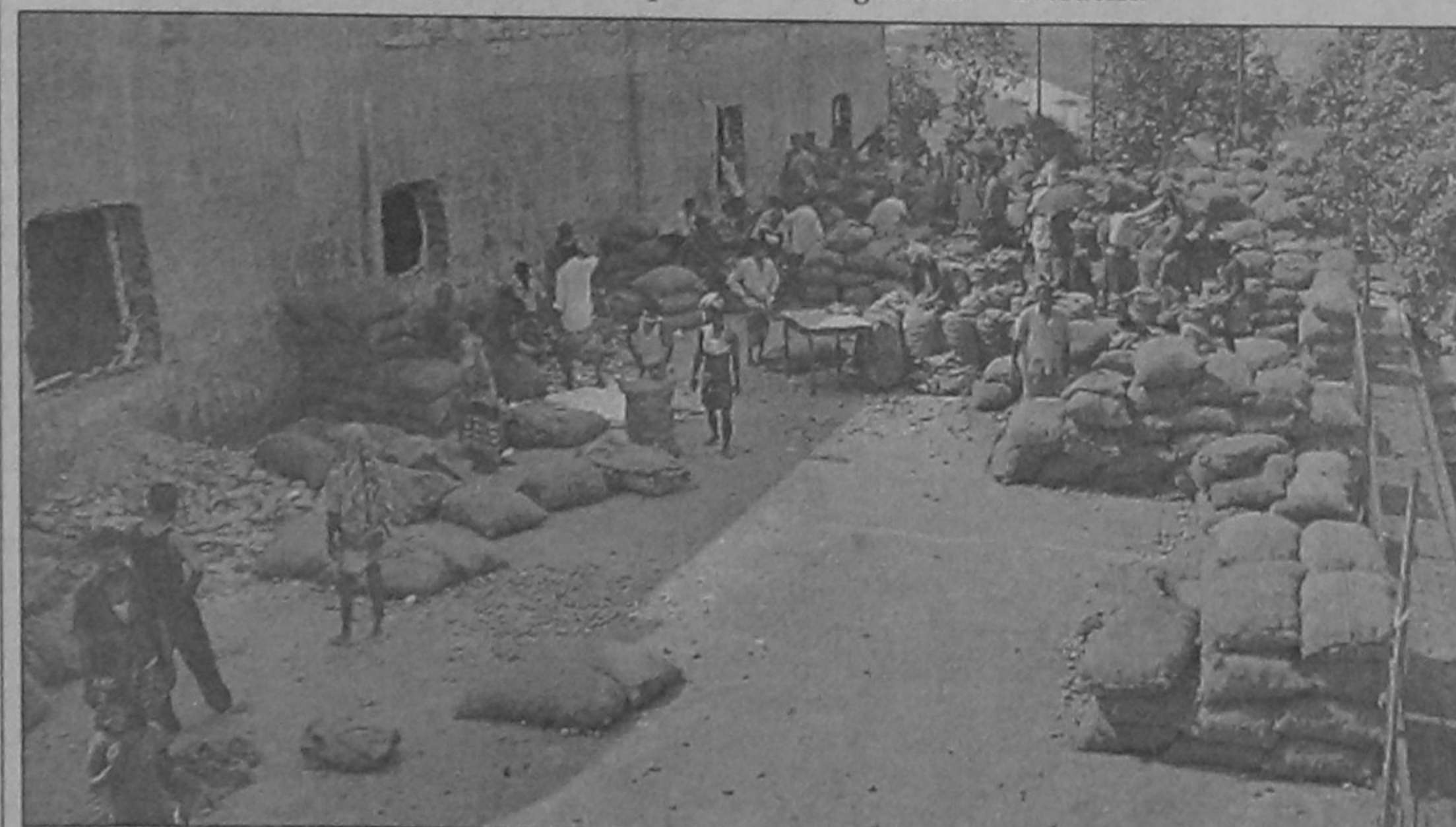
The storage had a total of 72,000 sacks of potatoes, each of the sacks weighing 85 kgs.

Of these 72,000 sacks of potatoes, only 7,000-8,000 sacks could be saved as the ammonia gas had made the cold storage overheated and pressurised.

Seed potato and general

potato require different levels of temperature for preservation. Dr Mohammad Hossain, chief technical officer of the local office of Bangladesh Potato Research Institute, said in the cold storage both varieties were preserved under the same temperature that resulted in the accident.

The owners of the cold storage went into hiding after the accident.



Workers are recovering rotten potatoes from a cold storage in Munshiganj recently as the cooling system of the cold storage collapsed.

Probe body formed to find reasons behind rod price hike

UNB, Dhaka

A 7-member probe committee with housing and public works secretary as convenor was formed yesterday for investigating price hike of MS rod and working out remedies.

The committee was asked to submit its report to the commerce ministry within April 30.

On the committee are joint secretary from industries ministry, one member from the National Board of Revenue (NBR), Sector-B commander from Chittagong Joint Forces Brigadier General Mohammad Hasan Nasir, commander of Chittagong Dockyard Newmooring M Jasim Uddin Bhuiyan, one representative from FBCCI and Joint Secretary of Commerce Ministry AKM Fazlur Rahman.

The committee will collect information on the matter after visiting relevant organizations/factories, bazaars and all necessary places.

GMG to add another Boeing 747 to fleet

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

GMG Airlines, the country's first private carrier, is going to add another Boeing 747 to its fleet soon, ATM Nazrul Islam, director (human resources and PR) of GMG, told a press conference in Dhaka yesterday.

"Within the next two years we will expand our routes to Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Abu Dhabi, and Muscat," he added. Now, the airline has 7 aircraft for its six international and three domestic routes.

The official was speaking at the briefing organised to mark the 10th founding anniversary of the airline. were also present.

Samsung chief to step down

AFP, Seoul

South Korea's most powerful businessman announced Tuesday he is stepping down after 20 years at the helm of the Samsung group, following his indictment for tax evasion and breach of trust.

A sombre Lee Kun-Hee made the shock announcement at a press conference called to announce reforms to the scandal-tainted group, which employs 200,000 people and last year accounted for more than 20 percent of the nation's exports.

Bank Asia

Limited

Corporate Office (Registered Office), Tea Board Bhaban (1st floor)
111-113 Motijheel C/A, Dhaka-1000

NOTICE OF THE NINTH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Notice is hereby given to all members of Bank Asia Limited ("the Company") that the Ninth Annual General Meeting of the members of the Company will be held on Sunday, the 1st June 2008 at 10.30 a.m. at City Grand Hall, Basement-1 & 2, Bashundhara City, 13/Ka/1, Panthapath, Dhaka-1215 to transact the following business and to adopt necessary resolutions:

AGENDA

- To receive, consider and adopt the Profit and Loss Account of the Company for the year ended 31st December, 2007 and the Balance Sheet as at that date together with the Reports of the Directors and the Auditors thereon.
- To declare dividend out of the profits for the year ended December 31, 2007.
- To elect Directors in accordance with the provisions of law and the Articles of Association of the Company.
- To appoint Auditors of the Company for the term until the conclusion of the next Annual General Meeting and to fix their remuneration.
- To transact any other business with the permission of the Chair.

By order of the Board

(Aminul Islam)
Company Secretary

Dated: Dhaka
April 23, 2008

Notes:

- The Record Date (instead of book closure) of the Company is 30th April, 2008. Trading of the Company's shares in the Stock Exchanges will remain suspended on the Record Date.
- The shareholders whose names will appear in the Register of Members of the Company as at the close of business on the Record Date will be entitled to attend and vote at the annual general meeting and to the dividend declared in the AGM, if any.
- Any member of the Company entitled to attend and vote at the annual general meeting may appoint a proxy to attend and vote on his/her behalf. The proxy must be a member of the Company.
- The instrument appointing a proxy duly signed by the Member and stamped must be submitted at the Share Department of the Bank at 82 Mohakhali C/A, Dhaka-1212, at least 48 (forty eight) hours before the meeting.
- Election of Directors will be held in the vacant offices of Directors. Election schedule will be displayed in the notice board at the Registered Office in due course. Election rules will be available at the Registered Office of the Company.
- Members are requested to notify change of address, if any, to the Company.