

Call for ensuring right to housing for posterity

Ctg REHAB fair opens



Chittagong Development Authority Chairman Shah Mohammad Akhteruddin takes a tour of a real estate fair in the port city yesterday.

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

A housing fair began here yesterday with a call for ensuring the fundamental right to housing for the next generation.

The Real Estate and Housing Association of Bangladesh (REHAB) organised the 3-day fair at the Chittagong Club for the third time.

Chaired by REHAB President Tanveerul Haque Probal, the inaugural was attended by Chittagong Development Authority (CDA) Chairman Shah Mohammad Akhteruddin.

emphasised the need for affordable housing so that people from all income groups get a home.

"At least 20 thousand flats are needed in Chittagong city a year, as around 75 thousand add to the city population every year," the CDA chairman observed.

A public-private sector partnership is imperative to rebuild a nation, Akhteruddin said, adding that the CDA is mulling developing a town in the Bay of Bengal in cooperation with foreign investors.

Tanveerul Haque Probal sought government support for the housing association

to reduce the ongoing housing crisis.

Developers as well as three financial organisations will display their products and services at the 69 stalls in the fair.

According to organisers, discounts and lucrative gifts including laptop computer, refrigerator and air-conditioner are on offer for the buyers of flats and plots.

The fair will remain open for the visitors from 10.00am to 8.00pm today and tomorrow. The entry fee is Tk 20 a person and Tk 50 for a season entry.

The fair will come to an end Sunday.

RRC suggests changes in foreign exchange rules

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

The Regulatory Reforms Commission (RRC) yesterday suggested the government amend the Foreign Exchange Regulation Act and relax some rules of the labour law.

RRC Chairman Akbar Ali Khan said the first recommendation came after a section of businesspeople had asked for amending the foreign exchange regulation law to help ease currency transactions with other countries.

"But it needs a lot of research before taking the final decision," Khan said in a press briefing at his office in Dhaka after holding the commission's 11th board meeting.

Khan, also a former adviser to the caretaker government, said the RRC would submit its previous recommendations along with the fresh ones to the government next month.

"The government should conduct a thorough research into the probable changes to the Foreign Exchange Regulation Act. I hope the government will implement our recommendations," Khansaid.

The RRC also recommended a minor change in the labour law, which makes it mandatory for a small shop owner with five employees to maintain several ledgers.

"This is a kind of harassment," the RRC chief said.

In line with the current law, inspectors can visit and question any factory or shop with employees for five workers and above, Khansaid.

Replying to queries from reporters, Khan said the government had implemented 45 percent of the recommendations made by the RRC.

"RRC is a well-established organisation and will welcome any change by the new government."

Chinese premier defends forex policy

AFP, Berlin

Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao on Thursday defended the yuan exchange rate as "reasonable and balanced" against US accusations that Beijing was manipulating its currency to boost exports.

Wen made the remarks after talks with Chancellor Angela Merkel on the second leg of a European tour dominated by discussions on a response to the crisis ravaging global economies.

"In light of the current economic situation, we are of the opinion that the exchange rate of the renminbi (yuan) is being maintained at a reasonable and balanced level," Wen told reporters.

He acknowledged that global currencies were facing dramatic fluctuation -- comparing the ups and downs to a "rollercoaster" -- but sharply rejected charges that China was exercising undue influence over exchange rates.

"The fault is not with China," he said.

Rental power the best short term solution: Aggreko

SHARIEF KHAN

Leading international rental power provider Aggreko believes that Bangladesh would have to rely on the rental power system as the best short-term solution for the next few years until it could bring some large power projects online.

Debajit Das, managing director (Asia) of UK based Aggreko, said he sees inevitable load shedding of 700-2000 mw this year even after the addition of 742 mw new generation capacity.

The capacity can ease the problem if it turns to rental power schemes, a new concept here, suggested Das, now on a trip to Dhaka from his Singapore office to tap business opportunities. Aggreko has been operating a

40mw diesel-based rental power plant in Khulna since June last.

As the government seems to be highly committed to ensuring smooth irrigation for the agriculture sector, it might consider installing rental power system for a period of six months to cover the irrigation season. "In that case, the government should begin the process from February," Das added.

Debajit Das also eyes harnessing the market potentials with the country's industrial sector, now faced with unreliable power supply.

"We have learnt that more than 80 industrial units near Dhaka are unable to install their own power plants because of gas constraints. Gas supplies may improve in future, but we can address the

problem in a short time," Das maintained.

"We don't need any three-year or 15-year contract. We can work for a very short term," said Das, an Indian national hailing from Sylhet, "for an example, we can quickly mobilise installing and supplying 200 mw plant in just one month if the plant site is ready and if there is a power transformer to handle that load."

"We are operating in 100 countries and providing power and temperature control solutions. Every day we are implementing new projects somewhere around the world. We were touching events like Beijing Olympics and US presidential inauguration in providing extra power for a term as short as one day. Most of the times, we are

responding to emergencies," Das noted.

The Khulna plant is Aggreko's first venture in Bangladesh. Das said, the experience of which gave it an insight about the challenges a power company might face in fast project execution in the country.

The British company is generating 6000 mw of power around the world. Aggreko's power generator uses Cummins engine, but the whole package is designed and developed by the company itself. As the design follows a "plug and play" policy, installing a plant for Aggreko is just a matter of mobilising equipment to one place to another.

"Bangladesh has power problem and we believe we have a role to play," Debajit Das observed.

Trade with Canada to reach \$1b this year

UNB, Dhaka

Canadian High Commissioner to Bangladesh Robert McDougall yesterday hoped that the trade between Bangladesh and Canada would reach \$1 billion this year if the global recession does not take its toll on it.

The Canadian High Commissioner said this when he met Foreign Minister Dr Dipu Moni at her office.

During the meeting, they discussed bilateral issues, including the importance of diversifying the trade on

both sides, said a handout.

Bangladesh's export to Canada is mostly ready-made garments (95 percent) and Canada's export to Bangladesh is mostly food (65 percent).

The minister reciprocated the sentiment of the Canadian foreign minister for expressing his willingness to work for greater collaboration, both bilaterally and multilaterally.

The foreign minister for assuming office and handed over a message to her from Canadian Foreign Minister Lawrence Cannon.

Export, import activities halted for six hours

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Export, import, clearance and forwarding activities remained suspended for six hours at three customs zones yesterday as customs agent employees abstained from their work in protest against the alleged misconduct by the Clearance and Forwarding (C&F) agents.

Several hundred employees, Customs Sarker, at Kamalapur Internal Depot (ICD), Dhaka Export Processing Zone (DEPZ) and Dhaka International Airport also staged demonstrations in the customs zones.

According to sources, the C & F agents forced out some of these employees from a dinner party at Rajarbagh Party House on Wednesday, arranged on the occasion of the annual conference of the C & F Owners Association.

The angry Customs Sarkers staged demonstration from 10 in the morning abstaining from their duties.

They also submitted a seven-point demand, which includes punitive measures against those who misbehaved with them.

They also demanded raising their salaries and issuing appointment letters to them.

Over 13,000 employees



Employees shout slogans against alleged misconduct by clearance and forwarding agents in Dhaka yesterday.

are engaged in three customs zones where over 800 agents are involved and the government earns a Tk 25 crore revenue everyday.

When contacted, Mostafa Hossain Patwary, vice president of the C & F Owners Association, told The Daily Star, "The Wednesday's incident is nothing but a misunderstanding."

Jasim Uddin, general

secretary of Customs Agent Employees Association, said they went back to their works after 4:00pm at the assurance of the owners to fulfil their demands.

Meanwhile, Wahida Rahman Chowdhury, joint commissioner of customs at Kamalapur ICD, however, denied any hamper to their normal functioning saying: "It was an isolated incident."

Loan waiver sought for state-owned jute mills

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

A people's commission on jute and jute industry yesterday demanded exemption of loans of state-owned jute mills to allow the factories to regain foothold and reopen.

The commission also urged unconditional disposal of the cases filed against the jute mill workers who were engaged in the movement for realising their arrears previously.

"Workers who were forced out of their jobs must be reinstated," demanded Shah Alam, member secretary of the commission at a press conference in Dhaka.

The press briefing was organised to share a report of the commission on jute sector, prepared to hand it over to the prime minister soon.

The commission, headed by former justice Ghulam Rabbani, also opposed the government move to lease out the state-owned jute mills.

"We demand reopening

of all the jute mills. These mills should be modernised and provided with adequate working capital," said Shah Alam.

The commission plea for reopening the jute mills came as the government attempted to lease out three closed factories under Bangladesh Jute Mills Corporation (BJMC). In 2008 the BJMC, which now owns 24 jute mills, leased out five mills to private sector.

"There is a bright prospect of jute industry as demand for jute is rising against synthetic fibre," said Anu Muhammad, professor of economics at Jahangirnagar University.

Referring to outstanding loans of state-owned jute mills, he said the government should take steps to waive their banks loans and allocate funds for them.

According to official data, outstanding loans of BJMC as of June 30, 2007 stood at Tk 2,315.46 crore, while its total classified loan at Tk 570.48 crore.

Increase remittance business: BB chief

STAR BUSINESS DESK

The Bangladesh Bank (BB) governor has urged Janata Bank to increase the flow of remittance business by providing better customer services.

Dr Salehuddin Ahmed was speaking at the state-owned bank's annual conference for the year 2009 at a city hotel yesterday, according to a press release.

SM Aminur Rahman, chief executive officer and managing director of Janata Bank Limited, focused on the bank's future strategic plans in his inaugural speech.

An inductive reward for recovery, all target-achiever branch chiefs were awarded by the respective executives and officers at the function.

Finance Secretary Mohammad Tareque was also present as special guest.

Suhel Ahmed Choudhury, the chairman of the bank, advised the bank officials to acquire co-ordinated professional skills and establish the bank as a leading commercial bank in Asia.



Dr Saleh Uddin Ahmed, governor of Bangladesh Bank, speaks at the Annual Conference 2009 of Janata Bank Limited in Dhaka yesterday.

Army Headquarter, EME Directorate
Dhaka Cantonment

Invitation of Tender
2nd Time

1. Sealed tenders are hereby invited by Army Headquarter, Master General of Ordnance Branch (EME Directorate) purchase of following A-in-U items attended by All Log Area/DGDP enlistment supplier:

Ser No.	Tender No. & date	Nomenclature	Qty	Last date of selling tender schedule	Opening date of tender
a.	A-in-U/28 Date: 20 Jan 2009	Scissor lift jack	05 (as per specification mentioned in the schedule)	25 Feb 2009	26 Feb 2009

2. Tender schedule showing terms & conditions with technical specifications are available on payment at a specified rate during working hours at Army Headquarter, Master General of Ordnance Branch (EME Directorate), Dhaka Cantonment. 2.5% earnest money of the total tendered amount shall be deposited in the form of Bank Draft/Pay-Order along with the tender in favour of DEME, Army Headquarter, Master General of Ordnance Branch (EME Directorate), Dhaka Cantonment.

3. Participating firms must have past experience of supplying A-in-U items & mentioned items quantity may be increase or decrease.

4. Tender must be dropped before 1100 hrs on 26 Feb 2009 in the tender box kept at the reception room of AHQ, Agrajatra Gate.

5. Authority reserves all the right to accept or reject any or all the offers of the tender without assigning any reason thereof.

DADEME
AHQ, EME Directorate
Dhaka Cantonment

ISPR/Army/09/1940
GD-526

DW & CE (Navy)
Lalasarai Nabik Colony
Mirpur-14, Dhaka-1206

Invitation for Tenders
Notice No. 605/BN/2/139/E-6 Dated: 25 Jan 2009

Military Engineer Services

Reference:
A. This Dte Ltr No. 605/BN/2/65/E-6 Date: 14 Dec 2008.
1. Advertisement for the following work published in different national dailies are hereby amended partially as under:
a. Name of work:

Lot No	Identification of Lot	Location	Price of tender document (Taka)	Tender security amount in the form of Bank Draft/Pay-Order in favour of DW & CE (Navy) Dhaka Cantt (Taka)	Completion time in weeks/ months
a.	Replacement/ Renovation of CNS secretariat main building (Bldg No. 53) with CNS Secretariat at NHQ area Dhaka (Phase-I)	NHQ Naval area	3,000/-	3,20,000/-	06 (six) months

a. **Read**

*9	Selling of tender will commence from	01st Feb 2009
*10	Selling of tender will close on	09 Feb 2009
*11	Last date and time of submission of tender	10th Feb 2009, 12.00 hrs
*12	Date and time of opening of tender	10th Feb 2009, 12.30 hrs

a. **For**

*9	Selling of tender will commence from	31st Dec 2008
*10	Selling of tender will close on	22nd Jan 2009
*11	Last date and time of submission of tender	25th Jan 2009, 12.00 hrs
*12	Date and time of opening of tender	25th Jan 2009, 12.30 hrs

2. In all other respect advertisement referred above will remain unchanged.
3. * Serial numbers of advertisement published earlier.

SO-II (Works)
For DW&CE(Navy)
Dhaka Cantonment

ISPR/Navy/09/703
GD-507