

Air Asia set to take off from Dhaka in March

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Air Asia, one of the biggest low cost carriers in Asia, is set to begin flights from Dhaka on March 12 with an intention to tap migrant workers and other travellers seeking cheap tickets to save money as recession bites.

The carrier said it would operate daily flights on the Dhaka-Kuala Lumpur route, offering low fares compared with the full-service carriers, many of which now feel the pinch of a drop in travellers amid global financial meltdown.

"We are hopeful to remain unaffected even if recession hits the earnings of many. Rather there is a possibility of shifting of travellers to low cost carriers from legacy carriers," said Noman Chowdhury, chief executive of Dahmashi Tours & Travels Ltd, Air Asia's sales agent in Dhaka.

Chowdhury's conviction on having incremental passengers coincided a prediction of Sydney based Centre for Asia Pacific Aviation (CAPA) that low cost carriers will outpace the traditional ones 'in terms of traffic growth and earnings in 2009', as people migrate from the full-service amid global financial trauma.

Earlier, IATA (International Air Transport Association) said the airline industry might lose \$2.5 billion in 2009 after facing a loss of \$5.0 billion in 2008.

Airlines worldwide have cut back growth plans and axed loss-making routes to weather the dampening travel demand.

But Chowdhury said Air Asia would

offer fares less than 40 percent of what the existing full-service carriers now charge the Dhaka-Kuala Lumpur route.

"It will be a very much of help to Bangladeshi migrant workers, local and foreign tourists as well as other travellers," he said.

With the entry of faster expanding carrier AirAsia, which currently fly 108 international routes, total number of airlines on the Dhaka-Kuala Lumpur will stand at five, up from present Biman Bangladesh Airlines, GMG Airlines and Best Air and Malaysia Airlines.

Pointing to the fact that the existing

carriers, all full-service ones, depend mainly on Bangladeshi workers with jobs in Malaysia and charge between Tk 32,000-44,000 for a Dhaka-Kuala Lumpur-Dhaka ticket, the official of Air Asia's GSA said. "Our both way-fares will hover from minimum Tk 15,000 to maximum Tk 23,000."

The 72-fleet carrier, however, said it would place a promotional fare starting from \$29 on Dhaka-Kuala Lumpur route. The special fares will be applicable for limited number of seats and booking for the promotional fare will remain open from February 9 to February 15, according to Chowdhury.



Noman Chowdhury, chief executive of Dahmashi Tours & Travels Ltd, Air Asia's general sales agent in Dhaka, speaks at a press conference in the capital yesterday.

Global slump hits German trade

AFP, Frankfurt

Germany, a powerhouse in the world economy, said on Monday that its key export sector flagged in December when imports surged in a sign its recession may have deepened at the end of last year.

"The export data seamlessly fit into the series of recent ugly industrial figures," commented UniCredit Group analyst Alexander Koch.

An export slowdown is especially bad news for Germany because exports are its main engine of growth, and the data showed that they were still losing steam at the end of the year.

With French economic activity set to contract in early 2009 amid a record French trade deficit, the eurozone's two biggest economies are both struggling to cope with the global economic downturn.

Germany said its 2008 trade surplus fell sharply, amid weak global demand for automobiles and machine tools.

The surplus usually posted by Germany, the biggest European economy, shed 8.7 percent from the level in 2007 to 178.2 billion euros (226.8 billion dollars).

Analysts said that trade would thus weigh again on overall economic output, estimating that the German economy, the biggest in Europe, could contract by another 2.0 percent in the fourth quarter of 2008, worsening an already deep recession.

Total exports increased by 2.8 percent, while imports gained 5.8 percent, the Destatis statistics service said.

Last week, data showed that industrial output suffered its biggest decline in December since records for a reunited Germany began in 1991.

Take measures for more overseas jobs

Wahiduddin urges govt



Prof Wahiduddin Mahmud, PKSF chairman, speaks at a discussion on Financial Assistance for Overseas Employment for the Extreme Poor in North Bengal, organised by PKSF at its auditorium in Dhaka yesterday.

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

The government should take necessary measures for more overseas employment to reduce poverty and earn increased remittances, said eminent economist Professor Wahiduddin Mahmud yesterday.

"Overseas employment is important for a poor country like ours, it is not only a way of earning remittance but also a means to eliminating poverty," said Mahmud, also the chairman of the governing body of Palli Karma-Sahayak Foundation (PKSF).

"Therefore the government should explore new markets to export manpower and also take steps to remove hurdles in this regard," he added.

He was speaking at a views exchange meeting on Financial Assistance for Overseas Employment for the Extreme Poor in North Bengal, organised by PKSF at its auditorium in Dhaka.

In May 2008, PKSF and the Bureau of Manpower Export and Training (BMET) signed a memorandum of

understanding (MoU) to assist the unskilled and semi-skilled workers in the munga-affected (near famine situation) areas to go abroad.

Under the MoU, the PKSF will organise training programmes for these workers and give them financial assistance with regard to their airfare, while BMET will arrange employment.

Under this programme, 27 people have been sent abroad for employment, mainly to Malaysia, Dubai and Abu Dhabi.

Professor Mahmud lauded the role of PKSF for assisting the programme by disbursing loans at seven percent interest rate among the extreme poor in the munga-affected (near famine situation) areas to support overseas employment.

"The loan and the rate of interest are convenient to the extreme poor in that region to pay back in three years," he said. "People who already travelled abroad have begun sending money back to their families, to pay back their loan commit-

ments."

"Commercial banks of the country can be encouraged to disburse loans at low interest, among the poor and extreme poor of the Munga-hit areas," he added.

Dr Quazi Mesbah Ahmed, managing director of PKSF, said the foundation initially allocated Tk 10 crore for this project.

He said PKSF is assisting these people to go abroad by organising orientation programmes, health check-up and issuing passports.

Hazrat Ali, additional director general of BMET, said the BMET ensures that these people are only charged the rate fixed by the government, which stands at Tk 84,000.

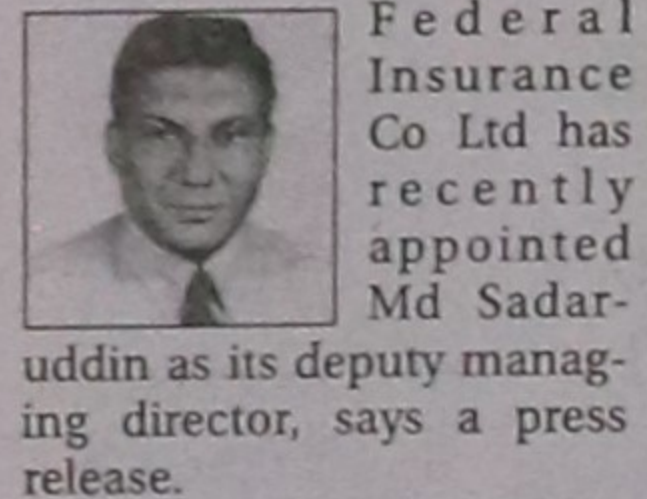
BMET will also help these people bypass the hassles often created by the recruiting agencies, he added.

Nine partners of PKSF, now working in the northern region, are also supporting this project.

Dr Jashim Uddin, programme coordinator of PKSF, was also present at the meeting.

Federal Ins gets new DMD

STAR BUSINESS DESK



Federal Insurance Co Ltd has recently appointed Md Sadaruddin as its deputy managing director, says a press release.

Prior to this responsibility, he was the senior executive vice president.

Sadaruddin, a graduate from Chittagong University, joined the insurance company in 1987 and served in various positions throughout his career.

Fifth training course on public procurement begins

STAR BUSINESS DESK

As part of institutionalising capacity development under the Public Procurement Reform Project-II, the fifth three-week training course on public procurement of goods, works and services organised by the Central Procurement Technical Unit (CPTU), IMED of the Ministry of Planning, began at the Engineering Staff College Bangladesh (ESCB) at Bausia in Munshiganj district on Sunday, according to a press release.

Amulya Kumar Deb Nath, CPTA director general, ARM Anwar Hossain, dean of the Faculty of Procurement and Supplies, ESCB, Liam Heavin, team leader, and Khaja G Ahmed, deputy team leader, were present at the inaugural session.

Earlier four such courses were organised at the ESCB where officials from different procuring entities of the government were trained on different aspects of public procurement.

The fourth three-week training course ended on February 5. The fifth three-week training, which will conclude on February 26, is the part of 108 such courses to be held in next three years.

The Local Government Engineering Department (LGED), Roads and Highways Department (RHD), Bangladesh Water Development Board (BWDB) and Rural Electrification Board (REB) are the four target agencies under this reform project.

Follow BB rules to give loans to women entrepreneurs

Governor asks banks

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Bangladesh Bank (BB) Governor Dr Salehuddin Ahmed yesterday advised the scheduled banks to appropriately follow the rules and regulations of the central bank while disbursing loans among women entrepreneurs so they do not face any hassle.

At a workshop on "bankers role in getting access to loans by women entrepreneurs" at Bangladesh Bank Training Academy in Dhaka, the governor also informed the participants of different BB steps taken to ensure women's access to bank loan.

He thanked the organisers of the workshop, saying such programmes would help change the mindset of the commercial banks and bankers, ensure gender sensitivity, and accelerate bank finance process for women.

SME Foundation and Bangladesh Bank Training Academy jointly organised the workshop, which was presided over by Selima Ahmed, director of SME Foundation, said a statement.

A total of 35 bankers from different scheduled and commercial banks and five BB officials participated in the workshop.

Rokia Afzal Rahman, president of Bangladesh Federation of Women Entrepreneurs, presented a keynote paper on "When Women are Entrepreneurs", highlighting the overall condition of the women entrepreneurs of the country.

BB General Manager M Abdul Hye presented a keynote paper on "BB regulations for the development of women entrepreneurship", while Mamun Mohammed Shah, deputy managing director of Eastern Bank Ltd, presented a paper highlighting the bankers' role in the development of women entrepreneurs in Bangladesh.

15 nations warn on protectionism: Japan

AFP, Tokyo

Fifteen nations including Japan and Brazil have launched an appeal against trade protectionism to underline their concern over how countries are responding to the economic crisis, Tokyo said Monday.

The group -- which also includes South Korea, Taiwan and Turkey -- issued the emergency statement at the World Trade Organisation in Geneva, Japanese foreign ministry official Akihiro Okochi said.

"Given the unprecedented economic crisis and potential rise in protectionist sentiment, WTO mem-

bers need to be aware of a possible increase in anti-dumping actions and to avoid the unwarranted use of such measures," the statement said.

Among recent policies to have been criticised as protectionist are French President Nicolas Sarkozy's suggestion of government help to its auto industry to keep factories at home, and a "Buy America" clause in a US stimulus plan, which has since been watered down.

Other nations or territories signing the statement last week in Geneva were Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Hong Kong, Israel, Mexico, Norway, Singapore,

Switzerland and Thailand, the official said.

The 15 are known as the "anti-dumping friends," as they are pressing the United States to change its method of calculating anti-dumping duties which they see as skewed to protect domestic products.

Negotiations over rules of trade -- including anti-dumping measures and subsidies -- are part of the Doha Round of multilateral trade talks which started in the Qatari capital of Doha in 2001.

The round has been deadlocked mostly due to disagreements between rich and developing nations over agriculture.



Nagai Chi Leung Max, chairman of Yester Accessories Company (BD) Ltd, hands over gifts among garments and buying house owners at the company's launching ceremony in Adamjee EPZ recently.

ATN Electronics dealers' confce held

STAR BUSINESS DESK

ATN Electronics Ltd recently organised a dealers' conference and product introduction programme, says a press release.

ATN Bangla Chairman Dr Mahfuzur Rahman was present as chief guest at the programme that took place at Prince Restaurant in Sobhanbagh in Dhaka on Saturday.

Four new models of the 21-inch high technology colour television, a new model ATN refrigerator and ATN ovens are some of the new products of ATN Electronics.

Dealers from all over Bangladesh were present at the programme. Attractive offers, such as a world tour and discount package, were declared for the new dealers. ATN Electronic product buyers will enjoy discounts ranging from Tk 2,000 to Tk 11,000.

ATN Electronics Ltd Director Nesar Ahmed and ATN Bangla Chief Adviser Saiful Bari were present among others.

Singer Suvrudev, Robi Chowdhury, ATN Star Rezwan and Chumki performed at the programme.

Moody's lowers ratings for eight S Korean banks

AFP, Seoul

International agency Moody's said Monday it had downgraded ratings for eight South Korean banks, citing their dependence on the government to secure foreign currency funding.

The foreign currency long-term senior debt ratings of the eight banks, including the country's largest lender Kookmin Bank, were cut to "A2."

The revised ratings carry a stable outlook, except for state-run Korea Development Bank, which has a negative outlook.



Mahfuzur Rahman, chairman of ATN Bangla, speaks at the Dealers' Conference and Product Launching Ceremony of ATN Electronics in Dhaka recently.

Invitation for Re-Tenders			
Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh			
1	Ministry/Division	Ministry of Science & ICT.	
2	Agency	N/A	
3	Procuring entity name	N/A	
4	Procuring entity code	Not used at present	
5	Procuring entity district	Dhaka	
6	Invitation for	Goods	Multiple lot
7	Invitation Ref No	MOSICT/Section-4/equipment-16/2008/69	
8	Date	05/02/2009.	
KEY INFORMATION			
9	Procurement method	Open Tendering Method.	
FUNDING INFORMATION			
10	Budget and source of funds	Revenue Budget	GoB
11	Development partners (if applicable)	Not applicable.	
12	Project/programme code (if applicable)	Not applicable.	
13	Project/programme name (if applicable)	Not applicable.	
14	Tender package no	Not used at present.	
15	Tender package name	Not used at present.	
16	Tender publication date	Date: 05/02/2009.	
17	Tender last selling date	Date: 22/02/2009.	
18	Tender closing date and time	Date	Time
19	Tender opening date and time	26/02/2009	2.00PM.
20	Name & address of the office(s)	Address: 26/02/2009 2.30PM.	
	- Selling tender document (principal)	Ministry of Science & ICT, Building No. 6, 9 th floor, Bangladesh Secretariat, Dhaka.	
	- Selling tender document (others)	Bangladesh Computer Council (BCC), BCC Bhaban, 1 st floor, Agargaon, Dhaka.	
	- Receiving tender document	Joint Secretary (Admin), Room No: 905, Ministry of Science & ICT, Building No. 6, 9 th floor, Bangladesh Secretariat, Dhaka.	
	- Opening tender document	Joint Secretary (Admin), Room No: 905, Ministry of Science & ICT, Building No. 6, 10 th floor, Bangladesh Secretariat, Dhaka.	
INFORMATION FOR TENDERER			
21	Eligibility of tenderer	As described in STD.	
22	Brief description of goods	Lot-A: Computer-9, Printer-7 & UPS-9, Lot-B: Photocopier-1.	
23	Brief description of related services	Not applicable.	
24	Price of tender document	Tk 700/- (seven hundred) non-refundable.	
	Lot no	Identification of lot	Location
25	1	Lot-A	Dhaka
	2	Lot-B	Dhaka
			Tender security amount (Tk)
			Completion time in weeks/months
			4 weeks from signing of contact
			4 weeks from signing of contact
PROCURING ENTITY DETAILS			
27	Name of official inviting tender	Mohammad Liaquat Ali.	
28	Designation of official inviting tender	Joint Secretary (Admin)	
29	Address of official inviting tender	Room No: 905, Ministry of Science & ICT, Building No. 6, 9 th floor, Bangladesh Secretariat, Dhaka.	
30	Contact details of official inviting tender	Tel No: 7166687 Fax no: 716906	
31	The procuring entity reserves the right to reject all tenders or annul the procurement proceedings.		
GD-750			
Mrs Zannat-ul-Ferdaus Assistant Chief Phone: 9555011			