

Central bank moves to bring more remittances in formal channels

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

The central bank is trying to bring remittances in formal channels to offset the shocks of the global economic crisis that starts hurting the country slowly.

"We are encouraging banks to net more remittances through their channels," Bangladesh Bank Governor Dr Salehuddin Ahmed told reporters after a meeting with Mike Foster, UK minister for international development yesterday at his office.

"Banks have also been asked to open overseas branches and tie up with more exchange houses to channel remittances," Ahmed said.

Expatriates send home money through formal and informal channels. Bangladesh bagged about \$8 billion last year only through the formal channel.

Analysts say formal banking channels in Bangladesh still account for a far lower share of the remittance than it came through informal way.

The remittance market is expanding as an important source

of revenue for the commercial banking sector. The market continues to attract new entrants, including new banks, card companies such as VISA and various entrepreneurs and non-government organisations (NGOs).

Despite new entries and relatively faster services of banks, the business of 'hundi' (the informal channel) is not wiped out, BB officials said, pointing out an ample scope for the improvement in such a situation.

"We have taken a number of initiatives, including allowing banks

to tie up with NGOs, to render faster delivery of remittances to beneficiaries," said BB Deputy Governor Ziaul Hasan Siddiqui.

He said remitters would also be offered some facilities for their investment.

Banking payment system is being made automated to provide better services to clients, he said.

The majority of the Bangladeshi remitters are unskilled labourers. As these labourers are poorly educated, they often prefer informal channels to avert difficulties in formal channel.



Commerce Minister Faruk Khan visits a stall after the inauguration of the Made in Thailand Exhibition 2009 in Dhaka yesterday.

Minister stresses reducing Thai-Bangla trade gap

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

The commerce minister has said Bangladesh's businessmen should take initiatives to take more hold on business with Thailand and reduce trade gap between the two countries.

"We have a friendly relation with Thailand, yet we have a trade gap with the country. It's high time for the local businessmen to increase export and bridge this gap," Faruk Khan told the inaugural of the Made in Thailand Exhibition 2009 in Dhaka yesterday.

The Department of Export Promotion of Royal Thai Government organized the four-day fair.

"The exhibition would pave the way for the local businessmen to exchange ideas about

our exportable products and services that might have demand in Thailand," the minister hoped.

Chalermpol Thanchitt, Thai ambassador in Dhaka, suggested that Bangladesh government should conduct a joint study to pinpoint products that would help reduce the Thai-Bangla trade gap.

"I have proposed to the commerce minister to go for a joint study to assess the Thai demand for some 15 to 20 Bangladeshi products," he said.

The trade between Bangladesh and Thailand was close to \$600 million last year, with exports from Thailand accounting for more than 90 percent of this amount, said the envoy.

He also said a Thai delegation is planning to visit

Dhaka to explore the possibility of importing 10 million sets of jute sags from Bangladesh.

Bangladesh is one of the major Thai export destinations. The exportable items include rice, auto parts and accessories, leather, fashion accessories, cosmetics, healthcare and beauty products.

The products Thailand imports from Bangladesh are vegetables, toys and non-cotton and synthetic garments items among others.

The Thai fair that began at the Pan Pacific Sonargaon Hotel in the capital would continue up to March 14.

About 45 Thai exporters are showcasing products and services in 52 stalls.

The fair will be open to public from 10am to 3pm, but visitors can stay back till 8pm.



A DCCI delegation, led by its president Zafar Osman, meets Finance Minister AMA Muhith at his office in Dhaka yesterday.

DCCI demands bailout plan for RMG sector

STAR BUSINESS DESK

The Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry has demanded that the government come up with a bailout plan for the readymade garment sector.

It also sought subsidy on the imports of capital machineries and industrial raw materials.

The demands were raised when a DCCI delegation, led by its president Zafar Osman, met Finance Minister AMA Muhith at his office in Dhaka yesterday, according to a press release.

The minister advised the chamber to get ready to face the fallout from the global financial crisis in the coming years.

The Chamber team stressed among other things creating a private sector-friendly environment and developing infrastructure and technological facilities to attract foreign investment.

DCCI Senior Vice President MS Shekil Chowdhury and directors Waliur Rahman and M Shahjahan Khan were present among others.

Call for extension of BSCIC rural project

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Around 300 terminated employees of a project of Bangladesh Small and Cottage Industries Corporation (BSCIC) yesterday urged their reappointment and extension of the project.

The terminated employees of the BSCIC project, Revitalisation of Rural Economy through Development of Rural Industry, at a press conference in Dhaka said as the project performed satisfactorily creating employment in rural areas, the caretaker government initiated a move to shift the project to revenue sector.

But instead of taking the project to revenue sector it was shut down, they said.

Under the project, BSCIC

employed 53,182 and trained 35,437 persons, while 25,435 cottage industries were established in 111 upazilas across the country during the 1999-2004 period.

The achievement rate of the project is 98 percent of the target, said the leaders of the terminated employees.

They said as the interest rate of loans in the programme was very low than any other microcredit operators and usurers, the project was getting popularity among the rural people.

The leaders also said during the tenure of the previous elected government, the Implementation, Monitoring, Evaluation and Development (IMED) wing of the government recommended taking the project under revenue sector.

The project was launched in 1999 and was scheduled to run until 2004, but for a satisfactory performance it continued until 2007.

The leaders said the authorities closed the programme without making any suitable arrangement for the employees and the networked people and as a result, a huge amount of money, which was provided as loan to the rural people, is yet to be collected.

Because of the sudden closure of the project, the terminated employees are suffering and the networked people under the project are unable to join other microcredit operators to take loan.

The rural people who took loan under the project had to sign agreement over not joining any private organisation or NGO for loan.

Master plan soon to boost tourism

BSS, Dhaka

Civil Aviation and Tourism Minister GM Qader yesterday said a master plan would be undertaken for boosting the tourism sector and making it attractive.

To this end, a time-befitting tourism policy is being formulated, he said while presiding over a meeting on tourism policy at his ministry here.

"There is immense potential for tourism in Bangladesh, and tourist spots will be developed by identifying those to attract local and foreign tourists," the minister said.

Shafique Alam Mehdi, chairman of Bangladesh Parjatan Corporation, Sardar Abul Kalam, joint secretary of the ministry, and other high officials were present.

Tourism fair today

UNB, Dhaka

A three-day international tourism fair titled 'Dhaka Travel Mart 2009' begins today at the Winter Garden of Dhaka Sheraton Hotel.

Minister for Civil Aviation and Tourism GM Qader will formally inaugurate the fair.

A total of 43 organisations from home and abroad will

showcase their products and services in 55 stalls and five booths, said a press release.

The participants include airlines, hotels, resorts, tour operators, aviation school and travel kit manufacturers. They will offer very special discounts on their products and services during the fair.

The exhibition will remain open from 10am to 8pm everyday.

Airlines offer discount

STAR BUSINESS DESK

Kuwait Airways has announced an offer of 25 percent fare reduction in its USA route at Dhaka Travel Mart beginning today.

The three-day international fair is scheduled to be held at Hotel Sheraton Winter Garden.

The bookings have to be made at the airline's booth at the fair to avail the offer.

UNB adds: Etihad Airways Bangladesh, a fast growing

private airliner in Bangladesh, is also offering an exclusive 12 percent discount on their market fares at the fair.

The offer is exclusively applicable for the duration of the Travel Mart only, according to a press release.

Interested passengers have been requested to visit the Etihad booth at Dhaka Sheraton Hotel to confirm their booking to avail the discount or fax a reservation form to the Etihad Airways office at 8831269.

Ctg chamber members to visit UK at ease

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

The members of Chittagong Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCCI) intending to visit the UK for business or travel purposes will now be able to get visa at their ease.

A memorandum of understanding (MoU) to this effect was signed Tuesday between the CCCI and UK Border Agency (UKBA) of British High Commission.

Stuart Percival, operations manager (Bangladesh) of the UKBA, and MA Latif, CCCI president, signed the MoU.

Under the MoU, the UKBA in Bangladesh will process the visa applications made by the applicants from companies that are members of the chamber.

The member companies will have to procure a supporting letter from the CCCI to be enclosed with other relevant documents of the applicants and submit the same to the VFS office at the chamber house in Chittagong to be processed quickly for visa issuance.

The VFS office will handle the applications on priority basis and place on UKBA's 'visa-express' list.

The MoU mentioned the UKBA would consider an application within 24 hours of receipt.

"The first-time applicants should apply for 6-month visas. Applicants who have travelled to the UK earlier can apply for 5-year multiple entry visas," the MoU said.



Tahniyat Ahmed Karim, head of human resources of BRAC Bank, and Saiful Islam, director of Square Hospitals Ltd, exchange documents after signing a memorandum of understanding (MoU) recently. Under the MoU, the hospital will provide discounted facilities on various diagnostics and services for staffs and their family members of the bank.

IFC wing, BKMEA to conduct study to set up Knit Village

STAR BUSINESS DESK

IFC Bangladesh Investment Climate Fund (IFC-BICF) and Bangladesh Knitwear Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BKMEA) have recently signed a cooperation agreement to conduct a pre-feasibility study for setting up a special economic zone styled 'Knit Village' for the knitwear sector, said a statement.

The objective of the partnership is to help the BKMEA develop the Knit Village based on a proper feasibility study, which includes market demand forecast, and financial and economic viability.

Fazlul Hoque, president of the association, and from IFC-BICF, Thomas Davenport, senior manager of the Foreign Investment Advisory Services of World Bank Group, and James Crittle, head of IFC in Bangladesh, were present at the signing ceremony.

Hoque said knitwear is the biggest export earning sector of the country where the current growth rate is 27 percent. Bangladesh's knitwear export volume is in the third position and only China and Turkey are ahead of the country in the global market, he added.

More than three hundred new factories join the

sector each year, Hoque said, adding that Bangladesh has a great potential for becoming the top knitwear exporter in the world, and needs to plan ahead and maximise output through public-private partnership.

James Crittle said the basic criteria for an economic zone are the site, access to transportation, utilities, benchmarking, financial and economic analysis. IFC has extensive global experience in providing such technical assistance and has already completed a feasibility study in Sylhet, Crittle said.

Economic zones are not a choice between agriculture and industry, but an excellent tool to integrate industrial, agricultural and services sectors, said Davenport.

The proposed Knit Village will house all kinds of knit-related factories in a selected area. These factories will be eligible to complete all the production stages such as knitting, printing and dyeing at the same place, reducing cost and time.

A common effluent treatment plant will be constructed in the area and a separate energy plant would provide uninterrupted power supply to the entire village.



Abdul Mazid, chairman of National Board of Revenue, sits with a delegation of Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry, led by its President Abdul Hafiz Choudhury, at the NBR Conference Hall in Dhaka yesterday. (Story on B1)

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
 Directorate General of Health Services
 National Tuberculosis Control Programme
 Mohakhali, Dhaka-1212

Memo No.5-34/TB-Lep/GFATM/09/420 Dated: 8/03/2009

Vacancy Re-Announcement

National Tuberculosis Control Programme, Directorate General of Health Services, Mohakhali, Dhaka-1212 is seeking applications from Bangladeshi nationals to support strengthening of various aspects of the National Tuberculosis Programme as:-

Technical Support Staff (3 posts)

a) **Consultant TB-Laboratory (No. of Post-1)** Educational Qualification: Graduate in Medical Science (MBBS or equivalent) or must have a Post Graduation Degree or Diploma in Microbiology/Pathology, Masters in Public Health (MPH) or Diploma in Tuberculosis & Chest Diseases (DTCD) will be considered as an additional value.

Experience: Must have at least 5 years of working experience in the field of communicable disease control or Public Health Field or must have 3 years working experience in laboratory services.

b) **Consultant Epidemiology and Surveillance (No. of Post-1)** Educational Qualification: Must be Graduate in Medical Science (MBBS or equivalent) with Master in Public Health preferably in Epidemiology.

Experience: Must have at least 5 years working experience in the field of communicable disease control or Public Health Field or 3 years working experience in disease epidemiology.

c) **Consultant Procurement (No. of Post-1)** Educational Qualification: Must be Graduate in Medical Science (MBBS or equivalent) or must have Masters in Biological Science (Pharmacy), Master in Public Health or Master/Diploma in allied subject will be considered as an additional value.

Experience: At least 5 years of working experience in the field of procurement and supply, working experience in procurement services with national or international organization will be considered as an additional value.

Administrative and Logistic Support Staff (1 post)

Procurement and Store Management (PSM) Assistant (No of Post-1) Educational Qualification: Must have Bachelor degree with Commerce/Finance background from any recognized university.

Experience: Must have at least 3 years of working experience in office management. Working experience in PSM in any in Division/District level organization including educational institute preferably TB programme will be counted as an additional value.

Applications are invited from qualified Bangladeshi nationals. The application must accompany i) 2 PP size recent photographs, ii) a detailed CV which should include a) personal information (name, father's/husband's name, date of birth, sex, full address with email & contact number), b) educational qualification with year of passing, c) employment history with position, duration and job responsibilities, d) other experiences, e) major publications (if any, where applicable), f) two referees with their contact address, telephone number, email address.

Applicants are advised to send their applications by courier/registered mail to the address mentioned below. Vacancy announcements are also available in NTP website (www.ntpban.org). Please mention the name of the post applied for at the top of envelope. Only short listed candidates will be notified. Those who have applied earlier do not need to apply. Age: Not more than 55 years (age limit may be considered in case of highly experienced candidate).

Period of Contract: Yearly contract basis (subject to renewal).

Reporting to : Line Director, TB/Leprosy Control.
 Designation of the official inviting : Director MBDC and Line Director TB/Leprosy.
 Address of the official inviting : Office of the Director, MBDC & Line Director, TB/Leprosy Control, Leprosy Hospital Compound, TB Gate, Mohakhali, Dhaka-1212, Bangladesh.
 Contact details of the official inviting : Telephone: 088-02-9884656, Fax: 088-02-9884657
 E-mail: ntpban@cyberbangla.com, drpravatbarua@hotmail.com

The authorities reserves the right to accept or reject all applications.
 Closing date and time of application : 31/03/2009 at 5pm.

Prof. Dr. Pravat Chandra Barua
 Director, MBDC and Line Director
 TB-Leprosy Control Programme
 DGHS, Mohakhali, Dhaka

GD-1325