



National Bank's new addl MD

STAR BUSINESS DESK

National Bank Limited has appointed AFM Shariful Islam as its new additional managing director recently, the bank said in a statement. Prior to his appointment, Islam was chief executive officer of Dhaka Stock Exchange Ltd.

He started his career as probationary officer in Arab Bangladesh Bank Ltd in 1986.

Nestlé posts 3.5pc growth in six months

STAR BUSINESS DESK

Within the first six months of 2009, Nestlé achieved an organic growth of 3.5 percent, including 0.5 percent in real internal growth.

Divestitures, net of acquisitions, reduced group sales by 0.7 percent, whilst the currency effect resulted in a 4.3 percent reduction due to the strength of the Swiss franc (CHF) compared to many other currencies, the company said in a statement.

These factors resulted in a decline in Nestlé Group sales of 1.5 percent, to CHF 52.3 billion.

"With 3.5 percent organic growth and a 30 basis point EBIT margin improvement, Nestlé delivered a combination of growth and increased profitability in the first half of the year, and this in a very challenging business environment. The success of our efficiency initiatives enabled increased investment in consumer-facing marketing and R&D, which leads me to expect an acceleration in organic growth in the second half of 2009," said Paul Bulcke, chief executive officer of Nestlé.

Food and Beverages' sales reached CHF 48.3 billion, with organic growth of 3.4 percent, including real internal growth of 0.1 percent.

Nestlé net profit margin increased in July as trade volume rose and imports surged, government data showed Thursday in a report suggesting the economy is pulling out of recession.

The Commerce Department reported the trade gap jumped to 32.0 billion dollars, from a revised 27.5 billion dollars in June.

US trade gap widens

AFP, Washington

The US trade deficit increased in July as trade volume rose and imports surged, government data showed Thursday in a report suggesting the economy is pulling out of recession.

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Bangladesh eyes frozen food exports to Russia

BSS, Dhaka

Bangladesh may start exporting frozen food, including shrimps, to Russia this year opening a new market.

A Russian veterinary delegation has recently visited Bangladesh and saw seafood plants. The delegation has initially selecting four plants to export shrimps and seafood to the Russian market.

Delegates have also issued export permission and necessary guidelines for processing the merchandise for Russian buyers. The fisheries department has sent a memorandum to the ministry for approval before signing it with the Russian importers.

Bangladesh exports frozen foods to 16 countries including the US, EU, UK and UAE. Russia will be the new export destination of the country's frozen food, Abul Bashar, an official of Bangladesh Frozen Food Exporters Association (BFFEA), told the news agency.

He said the association is also working on a scheme to increase export of frozen food to countries like Australia and Canada where expatriate Bangladeshis are living in large numbers.

Bashar said the delegation visited seafood-processing units at Chittagong and Khulna and were impressed by their high standards. In the process, they selected Apex Foods

Ltd and ARK Sea Foods of Chittagong, Fresh Foods Ltd of Khulna and Bagerhat Sea Foods for opening export to Russia.

Explaining how frozen food processing facilities achieved impressive hygienic standard over the recent years working on earlier improvement, Bashar said a food and veterinary delegation of EU which visited Bangladesh recently offered 10 more local processing plants the export permission to EU market.

With it, the number of frozen food plants now exporting to the EU market stands at 68 including 27 in Chittagong and 41 in Khulna region. Moreover, the number of fish plants now operating having BFFEA licence is 145.



Md Abdul Kuddus, deputy managing director of First Security Islami Bank Ltd, inaugurates the bank's Patuakhali branch yesterday. Shafiqur Rahman Chan Mia, president of Patuakhali Chamber of Commerce and Industry, was also present.

Sarkozy pushes ahead with unpopular carbon tax

AFP, Culoz, France

French President Nicolas Sarkozy on Thursday unveiled a new carbon tax to help combat global warming, calling it a "fiscal revolution" and overriding strong public opposition to the plan.

The new levy on oil, gas and coal consumption by households and businesses will come into effect next year, making France the biggest economy yet to impose a straight-up carbon tax.

"It is time to create green taxation," Sarkozy said in an address in Culoz, a town near the French border with Switzerland.

"This is a major fiscal shift, an important innovation," he said. "It is the first step of a fiscal revolution that will be developed."

Sarkozy set the new carbon tax at 17 euros (25 dollars) per tonne of carbon dioxide (CO2) and said it would be gradually increased to penalise only those who refuse to abandon their wasteful ways.

The president insisted the



French President Nicolas Sarkozy (2-R) and Ecology, Energy and Sustainable Development and Climate Negotiations State minister Jean-Louis Borloo (C) visit a factory of the Ciat group in Culoz yesterday.

new tax was not a ploy to fill state coffers hit by a gaping deficit, and the additional revenues will be put back into taxpayers' pockets through other tax cuts and "green cheques".

The carbon tax will not apply to electricity which in France is produced mostly from nuclear reactors that are not a major source of greenhouse gas emissions.

In practice, the 17-euro tax will push up the average household heating bill by

strapped for cash.

France has set a target of slashing its CO2 emissions by 75 percent by 2050 and support for environmentally-friendly measures generally runs strong among the French.

But a TNS Sofres survey released Thursday showed two-thirds of voters were against the tax and 73 percent believed it would not prompt consumers to reduce use of polluting energies.

France's Socialist opposition has also warned against penalising low-income families with a flat levy on fuel, especially those in out-of-town areas who have no choice but to use cars.

Greenpeace France slammed Sarkozy's plan, saying it will "change nothing in terms of behaviour" and will not help develop sources of renewable energy.

Greens leader Cecile Duflo welcomed some gains but said "there is a real problem with the fact that electricity is not part of the package" and does not encourage consumers to use it wisely.



Shwapno, a retail chain shop from ACI Logistics Ltd, has signed an agreement with the Centre for Food Science & Biomedicine, an institution specialised in assessing the quality of food and nutrition, recently. Under the deal, the institute will examine and certify the quality of products to be sold in Shwapno outlets.

JS body reviews insurance

UNB, Dhaka

The parliamentary standing committee on finance ministry in a meeting at Sangsad Bhaban yesterday discussed different affairs of insurance and legal measures for streamlining the business.

Chaired by Committee Chairman AHM. Mostafa Kamal, the meeting reviewed the Insurance Control Authority Act 2009

and the Insurance Act 2009.

The lawmakers also finalised report along with recommendations for necessary addition, modification and amendment to different clauses and sub-clauses of the bills for placing those in the House.

Committee-member Prof Mohammad Ali Ashraf, AKM Maidul Islam, Lutful Hye and Begum Farida Rahman attended the meeting.

Philippines July exports fall 25.4pc year-on-year

AFP, Manila

Philippine exports plunged 25.4 percent to 3.31 billion dollars in July from a year earlier, indicating a continued slump in global demand that could hit domestic growth, analysts said Thursday.

The decline "suggests that the external sector will remain a drag on the economy in the third quarter," Simon Wong, an economist at Standard Chartered Bank said.

"There's no clear sign of improvement by destination, suggesting further weakness in intra-regional trade," he added.

June Nery, an economist with BPI Securities, noted that the decline indicated a global recovery "remains on the fragile side."

"In short, it will weigh on growth in the coming quarter," Nery told AFP. "The decline (in July exports) was worse than expected."

Nery said weak exports will prevent economic growth from accelerating beyond the 1.5 percent recorded in the three months to June.

AFP, Sydney

Australia's unemployment rate held steady at 5.8 percent in August, beating forecasts and demonstrating the economy's resilience in the global financial crisis, analysts said Thursday.

Official data showed the loss of 21,100 jobs over the month was offset by a fall in the number of people actively looking for work. Analysts had tipped a 5.9 percent jobless rate.

The number of full-time positions fell by 30,800, while part-time jobs rose 3,800, the Australian Bureau of Statistics said.

"That is a very, very good

response (by the jobs market)," Craig James, chief economist with stockbroker firm Commsec told Sky Business.

"Over the last five or six months, unemployment has only edged up from 5.7 to 5.8 percent. Full employment in the Australian economy is about 5.0 percent, so it just shows how well we've survived through this crisis."

James said it appeared the unemployment rate would peak at about 6.0 percent as the country emerges from the global downturn, significantly better than government predictions of 8.5 percent made in the budget in May.

US new jobless claims fall to 550,000

AFP, Washington

New US jobless claims fell to 550,000 in the past week, the government reported Thursday in a sign of further healing in the critical labor market.

The seasonally adjusted number of claims fell by 26,000 in the week to September 5, the Labor Department reported.

The figure for weekly claims was better than analyst expectations for 560,000.

The four-week moving average, which smooths out week-to-week volatility, was 570,000, a decrease of 2,750 from the previous week's revised figure.

The insured unemployment rate was 4.6 percent for the week ending August 29, a decrease of 0.1 percentage point from the prior week as the number of people receiving jobless benefits fell by 159,000 to 6,088,000.

Shell, China Shenhua working on clean coal tech

AFP, Shanghai

Anglo-Dutch oil group Shell said it has signed an agreement with a unit of China's largest coal company Shenhua Group to jointly develop clean coal technology.

Shell China and Shenhua Coal to Liquid and Chemical will develop advanced technology to convert coal into gas, Shell China said in a statement.

The two companies will also discuss the possible application of carbon capture and storage, according to an agreement signed on Wednesday.

"We will work together to provide China with the cutting-edge clean coal technology in order to help meet the country's growing demand for energy and chemicals in a more sustainable way," said Lim Haw-Kuang, executive chairman of Shell Companies in China.



A model poses with handsets from the brand "Ten," recently introduced in Bangladesh by True Services Ltd. The handsets, namely C-100, C-110, M-200 and X-500, come with a wide range of options and with a user-friendly interface. The prices of the new arrivals range from Tk 2,300 to Tk 6,550.

China to maintain stimulus push: Wen

AFP, Dalian, China

Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao said on Thursday his nation's economic recovery remained fragile and that it was too soon for Beijing to reconsider its current stimulus policy.

"The recovery momentum of the Chinese economy is not yet stable, nor is it consolidated or balanced," Wen said in a speech opening the World Economic Forum's annual meeting of "new champions" in the Chinese port city of Dalian.

"Downward pressures on foreign demand (for Chinese products) remain enormous, while there are many factors restricting the expansion of domestic demand in the short term," said Wen.

"We should not change our policy direction at an inappropriate time," he told the audience of foreign and domestic business executives and government officials.

China last year unveiled an unprecedented four-trillion-yuan (580-billion-dollar) stimulus package aimed at boosting

domestic demand as exports plunged and economic growth slowed.

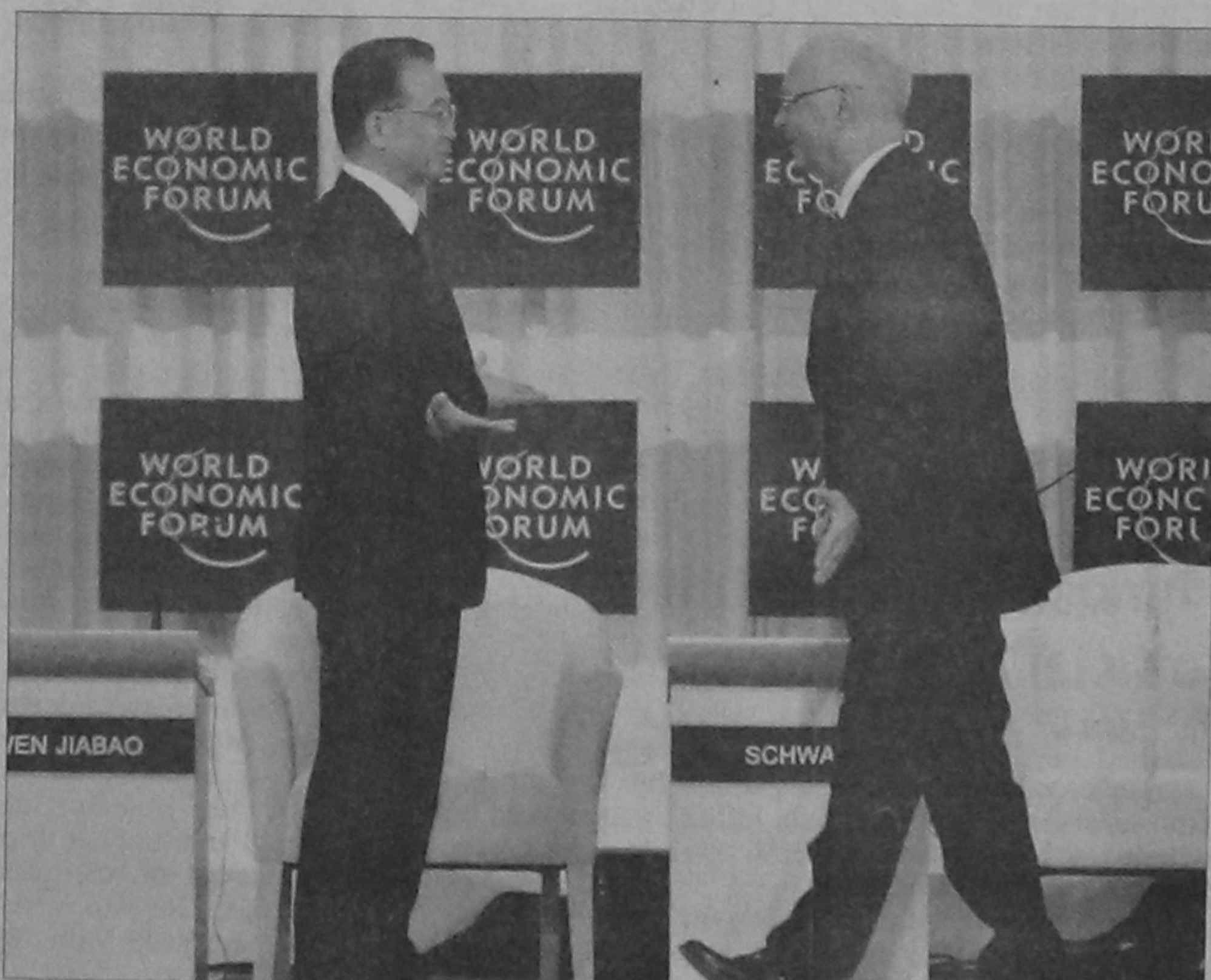
The world's third-largest economy expanded by 7.9 percent in the second quarter of 2009, up from 6.1 percent in the first quarter, mainly as a result of massive government investment.

However, growing concern has emerged over possible asset-price bubbles and higher inflation.

But Wen said China would maintain its loose monetary policy aimed at promoting fast economic growth, noting that these policies had helped "curb a downward trend".

"We will continue to keep maintaining stable and fast economic growth as our top priority, firmly implement a proactive fiscal policy and moderately loose monetary policy, and fully implement and constantly improve the stimulus package," he said.

Wen also called for global coordination on climate change and urged developed nations to slash carbon dioxide emissions.



Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao gestures to World Economic Forum (WEF) founder Klaus Schwab (R) on stage at the Dalian World Expo Centre, in northeast China's Liaoning province yesterday during the opening ceremony of the WEF's Annual Meeting of the New Champions, known as the "Summer Davos in Asia". Wen opened the annual meeting which will focus on tangible business priorities to transform and revitalise the global economy in a sustainable manner.