



From left, singer Topu, actor Opi Karim, singer Tishma, and models Sharmin Lucky and Nobel, and Transcom Foods Executive Director Akku Chowdhury cut a cake to mark the sixth anniversary of Pizza Hut in Bangladesh yesterday.

Pizza Hut marks sixth anniversary

STAR BUSINESS DESK

Pizza Hut, an international restaurant chain, celebrated its sixth anniversary in Bangladesh yesterday.

To mark the event, Akku Chowdhury, executive director of Transcom Foods Ltd, led a cake-cutting ceremony at its first outlet in Gulshan, Dhaka.

Transcom Foods, a subsidiary of Transcom Group, started Pizza Hut operations on December 6, 2003.

In the last six years, Pizza Hut opened four outlets -- three in Dhaka and one in Chittagong.

"This is truly a moment of merriment. I am grateful to my colleagues, partners and above all the customers for their contribution and love for this brand," said Chowdhury.

Eminent media personality Aly Zaker, models Sharmin Lucky and Nobel, singer Topu and Tishma and actor Opi Karim were also present.

On its journey, the franchise has served six-lakh customers, said other speakers at the ceremony. About 5,500 daily walk-in customers is a sign of its success.

Pizza Hut and KFC are brands of the world's largest international restaurant company Yum! International.

LDCs press for maximum trade benefit

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Commerce Minister Faruk Khan said yesterday Bangladesh wants the Doha round to be implemented by 2010 to help the least-developed countries gain duty-free and quota-free (DFQF) access to the advanced countries.

He said almost all leaders of LDCs have asked the advanced countries to implement the Doha round by next year, so that they can get the DFQF access to those countries.

Khan briefed reporters on the issue after returning from the seventh World Trade Organisation (WTO) Ministerial Meeting held in Geneva from November 29 to December 2.

The minister said Bangladesh also asked the leaders of the advanced economies to minimise discrimination against the country has been affected by the facilities given to Pakistan and Sri Lanka as "disproportionately affected" countries (DAC).

"We want the advanced countries to consider the issue of DACs we have been affected due to such facilities," Khan said. Moreover, Bangladesh will continue negotiations with the developed countries to include the major exportable products in the 97 percent duty-free category promised at the Hong Kong Ministerial Meeting in 2005.

He said he held several meetings with the leaders of other LDCs and leaders of the advanced countries on the sidelines of the WTO meeting.

Earlier, Khan led a 14-member delegation to the WTO meeting in Geneva.

In the position paper of Bangladesh, the minister emphasised five broad areas including DFQF, global financial recession, DAC, MODE-4 or free movement of natural persons to the developed world and the issue of removing any restriction on the exports of food items to LDCs to avert any food crisis in poor countries.

Automated CIB promises to cut cost of fund

Project launched, trial operations will start in six months

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Banks' cost of funds may come down with the automation of the credit information bureau (CIB) of Bangladesh Bank, officials said yesterday.

"The automation of CIB services should reduce the cost of credit. Data will be provided online to banks easily," BB Governor Atiur Rahman told The Daily Star after addressing the launch of a project on CIB's automated services, at Dhaka Sheraton Hotel.

Rahman believes business will be much easier with the introduction of the online system. Speaking to The Daily Star, managing directors of different commercial banks echoed the governor.

They said the move would help the financial sector improve the industry's efficiency in rendering

faster and reliable services to consumers.

International Finance Corporation (IFC), a member of the World Bank Group, is managing the automation of the central bank's CIB, with funding from the UK's Department for International Development (DFID). The cost of the project is \$5.6 million.

In general, the price of a loan is based on the lender's cost of funds plus a risk premium. Businessmen say the cost of credit is one of the highest in the world. Banks charge 15-16 percent for loans and the rate reaches up to 20 percent for consumer and SME credits.

The CIB is overburdened with thousands of requests from 48 commercial banks operating here. Often, it takes up to 30 days to get a credit report on a customer,

according to bankers. Ultimately, the delay contributes to the cost of funds, bankers said.

"Loan processing will be speedier and quicker thanks to automation," said SA Farooqui, managing director and chief executive officer of Standard Bank, a third generation private bank.

SA Chowdhury, managing director and CEO of the country's largest bank Sonali, also believed the cost of credit would come down, however slightly, after the automation of the CIB.

"This is a quantum leap in BB services," said Anis A Khan, managing director and CEO of Mutual Trust Bank.

Khan said the new system would provide real-time access to information and fast-track credit disbursement.

But SM Aminur Rahman, man-

aging director of state-owned Janata Bank, the country's second largest bank, is unsure about a possible reduction in the cost of funds. It depends largely on the BB, he said.

In his written speech, Governor Atiur Rahman said the capacity of the existing CIB is under strain because of the current volumes of credit information requests.

Rahman said the upcoming expansion of SME and farm lending will make handling of credit information unmanageable without upgrading the existing capacity.

He said the full automation would take six months to start operations on trial. The governor hinted that the trial period would be between July and October 2010.

A bank pays Tk 50 for a credit report of a client under the present manual system.

Thousands call for sharia to stem corruption in Indonesia

AFP, Jakarta

Thousands of hardline Muslim protesters staged rallies in Indonesia on Sunday urging the government to apply Islamic law as the only way to tackle widespread corruption.

Members of Hizbut Tahrir demonstrated in several cities including the capital Jakarta, venting anger at a 700-million-dollar bank bailout at the centre of a corruption scandal that has put high-level officials under fire.

In Jakarta, thousands of protesters took to the streets with their families and children, carrying banners condemning the capitalist system as the root of corruption.

"The Bank Century scandal proves the failure of capitalism system," read one big banner. "By adopting sharia under Islamic caliphate, Indonesia is free from corruption," said another.

Lawmakers are probing allegations of corruption linked to the bailout last year of Bank Century after the country's top auditor found strong indications of "violations."

"The capitalist system has ruined our economy. That's the source of all problems in our country," Hizbut Tahrir spokesman Muhammad Ismail Yusanto declared at the rally.

Hundreds of members of the group also rallied last week on World AIDS Day to demand the implementation of sharia law to prevent the spread of HIV rather than condom use.

Nearly 90 percent of Indonesia's 234 million people are Muslim and most practice a moderate form of the religion.



Trust Bank gets new MD

STAR BUSINESS DESK

Trust Bank Ltd has appointed M Shah Alam Sarwar as its new managing director and chief executive officer recently, the bank said in a statement.

Sarwar started his career as management trainee at ANZ Grindlays Bank in 1982 and also served at Standard Chartered Bank, American Express Bank, United Commercial Bank and Premier Bank Ltd.



Citi South Asia exec due today

STAR BUSINESS DESK

Julia Zilberman, head of public affairs for Citi South Asia, arrives in Dhaka today for an official visit, it said in a statement.

During her stay, she will meet key community partners, media representatives and other important stakeholders.

Zilberman started her career at Citi in 2007 in its public affairs office in Russia and joined the current post in October 2009.

Yanzhou bid for Felix Resources okayed

AP, Beijing

Chinese regulators have approved a bid by state-owned Yanzhou Coal to take over Australian miner Felix Resources Ltd., the company said in a statement.

The statement said China's National Development and Reform Commission issued an approval letter.

The offer values Felix at 3.5 billion Australian dollars (\$3.2 billion), making the deal China's biggest investment yet in the Australian minerals sector.

Felix shareholders approved the deal in August and the Australian government gave it the green light in October.

Taiwan's Ma may slow China policy after local vote

AFP, Taipei

Taiwan President Ma Ying-jeou may slow down an aggressive push for improved ties with China after the island's voters showed disquiet with his policies in local elections, analysts said.

Seventeen counties and cities were contested in Saturday's poll, and Ma's Kuomintang (KMT) party lost control of two, while the opposition Democratic Progressive Party (DPP), which favours formal independence, gained one.

"Ma will have to adjust or slow down the pace of his policy of boosting China ties," said Hsu Yung-ming, a political scientist at Soochow University in Taipei.

The election was widely seen as a proxy referendum on Ma's performance since he assumed office in May 2008, ending eight years in opposition for the KMT.

Ma was elected on a promise to improve the economy for the island society of 23 million, mainly by pursuing closer relations with the booming mainland.

His win was widely seen as a sign of disaffection after years of stale and unproductive tensions with the China

under the DPP but the poll could suggest that the pendulum is now swinging back.

"Ma will become more cautious and conservative if he interprets the people's dissatisfaction as mistrust of his China policies," said George Tsai, an expert on China affairs at Taipei's Chinese Culture University.

China and Taiwan have been governed separately since the end of a civil war in 1949, but Beijing still considers the island part of its territory and has vowed to take it back, by force if necessary.

The balance of power -- both economic, political and military -- is tilting ever more in China's favour, and Ma's policy is seen as an attempt to secure the best possible conditions in the face of the mainland giant.

His administration has announced its intention of signing a wide-ranging Economic Cooperation Framework Agreement, or ECA, with the mainland next year, arguing it will boost employment on the recession-hit island.

However, the DPP has warned the agreement could erode Taiwan's de facto independence, and may not reap the benefits promised by the KMT.



Dr Atiur Rahman, governor of Bangladesh Bank, speaks at a programme styled Setting CSR Priorities and their Modalities for Materialisation organised by Prime Bank Foundation in Dhaka yesterday. Azam J Chowdhury, chairman of Prime Bank Ltd and Prime Bank Foundation, is also seen.

Fears of Greek bankruptcy unfounded

AFP, Athens

Fears that Greece faces imminent bankruptcy are unfounded but the country must take "harsh" measures to shore up its economy, Eurogroup chairman Jean-Claude Juncker said on Sunday.

"I am surprised, if not angry, with news stories spreading (the impression) to the public and markets that Greece is entering a condition of bankruptcy," Juncker told the Eleftherotypia daily in an interview.

"Yes, Greece must take harsh measures, but under no condition is it under a state of bankruptcy," he said.

"I am a bit concerned... (but) I am confident that the government, which faces a tragic situation, will take responsibility for the necessary measures."

Greece's widening public deficit and a huge official debt has unsettled European market watchers, particularly regarding the standing of Greek government debt bonds.

The concern intensified after the recent debt crisis in Dubai.

Greece has been singled out for its last-minute revelation of a public deficit expected to surge to 12.7 percent of output this year, and a ballooning debt which amounts to 113 percent of gross domestic product.



Md Abdur Rahman Sarker, managing director of National Bank Ltd, inaugurates the bank's 115th branch at Gauripur in Comilla recently.

বিসিআইসি পুনঃ দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি	
(বিসিআইসি'র পণ্য শিল্পায়নে জাতীয় অগ্রগতির প্রতীক)	
ব্যবস্থাপনা পরিচালক, পলাশ ইউরিয়া ফাটলিআজার ফ্যাট্টারী লিঃ, পলাশ, নরসিংদী কর্তৃক হারস হ্যাভলিং ও আভ্যন্তরীণ পরিবহন সংক্রান্ত কার্যাদি (দরপত্র তফসীল বর্ণিত) সম্পাদনের নিমিত্তে অগ্রহীত ঠিকাদারদের নিকট হতে OTM পদ্ধতিতে সীলমোহরকৃত পুনঃ দরপত্র আবেদন করা যাবে।	
১	দরপত্র নং ও তারিখ
২	দরপত্রের বর্ণনা
৩	দরপত্র দাখিলের মূল্য
৪	দরপত্র প্রাপ্তির স্থান
৫	দরপত্র দাখিলের স্থান
৬	দরপত্র বিক্রয়ের সর্বশেষ তারিখ
৭	দরপত্র দাখিলের তারিখ ও সময়
৮	দরপত্র খোলার স্থান, তারিখ ও সময়
বিঃ দ্রঃ (ক) অনিবার্য কারণবশতঃ নির্ধারিত তারিখ ও সময়ে দরপত্র গ্রহণ ও খোলা সম্ভব না হয় তবে পরবর্তী কার্যদিবসে একই সময়ে গ্রহণ ও খোলা হবে। (খ) কর্তৃপক্ষ কোন কারণ দর্শানো ব্যতিরেকেই যে কোন দরপত্র বা সমুদয় দরপত্র বাতিল করার পূর্ণ ক্ষমতা সংরক্ষণ করেন।	
(মোঃ এনায়েত হক) ব্যবস্থাপক (ভাড়া/এমপিআইসি) ব্যবস্থাপনা পরিচালক-এর পক্ষে।	