

# EU team inspects shrimp plants

QUAZI AMANULLAH, Khulna

A European Union (EU) team has shown interests in the import of frozen foods after visiting various centres in Khulna and Bagerhat.

Members of the EU Food and Veterinary Office arrived in Khulna on Monday to know about the prevailing situation of the country's freshwater shrimp in the two districts.

The three-member team visited fish processing factories, fish landing centres, depots and fish inspection and quality control centres in the districts.

The delegation also had long discussions

with the officials of the Fisheries Department and Khulna chapter of Bangladesh Frozen Food Exporters' Association (BFFEA).

"They were satisfied with the ways of growing and processing shrimps and also matters relating to maintain its quality in hygienic condition," said Humayun Kabir, director of BFFEA.

Freshwater shrimp export, the country's second-biggest foreign-currency earner, resumed on January 11 after a six-month suspension on detection of health-hazardous antibiotic Nitrofurantoin in shrimps.

# REHAB fair begins in Chittagong today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

A three-day housing fair begins in the port city today.

The fourth version of REHAB Fair Chittagong 2010 is being organised by the Real Estate and Housing Association of Bangladesh at Chittagong Club.

ABM Fazle Karim Chowdhury, chairman of the parliamentary committee on housing and public works ministry, Nasrul Hamid, member of the committee, are scheduled to be the chief and special guests respectively, REHAB members told a press conference yesterday.

A total of 94 real estate companies and building material suppliers and three financial institutions will

take part in the fair. Jamshed Hasan, convener of the fair and chairman of REHAB's Chittagong chapter, read out a written statement at the conference.

A total of 637 REHAB members are now working to solve the housing problems in the country by building planned urban areas, considering the increasing population, he said.

Abdur Rahim Khan, REHAB vice president, Murad Iqbal Chowdhury, fair standing committee chairman, Jahid Hossain, press and media committee chairman, and Md Shamsul Alam, REHAB joint convener, were also present.

A total of 14 firms are cosponsoring the fair: Amin

Mohammad Foundation, Asain Land Development, Bio Properties, Building Technologist and Ideas, Chowdhury Modern City, Concord Real Estate and Building Products, Equity Property Management, Jumaira Holdings, Mishmak Development, Navana Real Estate, Sagufta NM Housing, Sanmar Properties, Subasati Properties and Trust Alliance Technologies.

Organisers said the fair would be open to all from 10am to 8pm on the last two days, while people will be able to visit on the first day from 3pm, after the inaugural ceremony.

The entry fee for a single visit has been fixed at Tk 50 and Tk 100.



Choong Whan Kim, chairman of Korea Bangladesh Parliamentary Friendship Association, receives a chamber crest from SM Kamaluddin, president of Korea Bangladesh Chamber of Commerce and Industry and chairman of Concord Group, at a reception organised by the chamber in Dhaka on Tuesday.

# ITU urged to help make Digital Bangladesh

STAR BUSINESS DESK

Foreign Minister Dipu Moni has called upon the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) to partner with Bangladesh in its journey to build a Digital Bangladesh by 2021.

She was speaking at a meeting with Hamadoun I Touré, secretary general of ITU, in Geneva on Monday.

Touré lauded the steps taken by the present government of Bangladesh in taking mobiles and broadband connectivity to people's doorsteps, even in remote villages.

"It was encouraging to see that Bangladesh brought Information and Communication Technology (ICT) at the centre of its development planning, and this could be a role model for others," said Touré.

He also referred to tax structure reforms by the government that attracted substantial investment in the mobile phone sector.

The foreign minister also sought the union's policy, advisory and technical support to expedite several ICT programmes undertaken by the government.

The possible ITU help in setting up a National Emergency Communication Plan for better disaster management also came up for discussion during the meeting.

Touré is scheduled to visit Bangladesh in March, at the minister's invitation.

The secretary general also expressed his willingness to host the Connect Asia Summit in Bangladesh in 2011.

He also invited Bangladesh to contribute to the governance of ITU as well as to its ongoing work on developing a regulatory framework for the industry to ensure sustained development in the coming years.

Bangladesh will continue to actively participate in ITU activities and has already started working on its candidature to the ITU Governing Council for the term 2010-14, added the minister.



AMM Saffiullah, vice-chancellor of Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (Buet), inaugurates the ATM booth of Sonali Bank's Buet branch, in Dhaka recently. SA Chowdhury, managing director and chief executive officer of the bank, is also seen.



Branch managers and other high officials of Butterfly Marketing Ltd pose at the company's annual marketing conference 2009 at Langkawi Island in Malaysia recently. MA Mannan, chairman and managing director of the company, was also present.

# PM urges Japan investment

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday urged the Japanese government and entrepreneurs for investing more in Bangladesh's various development sectors, including the apparel industry.

She made the call when Japanese Ambassador Tamotsu Shinotsuka paid a courtesy call with her in her official residence Jamauna in the evening.

The Prime Minister also sought Japanese increased cooperation in accelerating Bangladesh's socio-economic development.

In response to the PM's

call, the Japanese envoy assured of his country's continued cooperation and support for the development of Bangladesh.

Sheikh Hasina's probable visit to Japan also came up for discussion during the meet.

The Prime Minister and the Japanese envoy also discussed the much-expected Padma Bridge and government-sponsored river dredging project.

Ambassador at-Large Mohammad Ziauddin, PM's Principal Secretary MA Karim and PM's Press Secretary Abul Kalam Azad were also present.

# ICT conference kicks off

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

The 15th conference of the South Asian Network Operators Group (Sanog) started at the Dhaka University Senate Hall yesterday.

The eight-day Sanog conference is taking place in Bangladesh for the third time in three separate segments -- workshop, training and conference.

Due to the presidential election in Sri Lanka, Sanog authorities moved the conference venue from Colombo to Dhaka.

The Internet Service Providers Association of Bangladesh (ISPAB) and Institute of Information

Technology (IIT), Dhaka University, co-organised the conference with support from ICT Business Promotion Council (BPC) under the commerce ministry.

Hasanul Haq Inu, chairman of the parliamentary standing committee on post and telecommunication ministry, inaugurated the conference at a ceremony. Prof AAMS Arefin Siddique presided over the event.

Inu asked internet service providers to set the monthly charge at Tk 500 to materialise the vision -- 'internet for all'.

About 100 technology experts -- mostly from Bangladesh and other Saarc countries -- will take part in the event.

# Asian shipping firms face challenges

AFP, Singapore

Asian shipping firms face "significant" challenges this year due to weakened earnings and limited access to capital, international ratings agency Fitch said Wednesday.

"Weakened earnings, high committed capex (capital expenditures) and restricted access to capital remain challenges for a number of rated shipping companies," it said in a statement.

The majority of the seven Asian shipping companies under Fitch's ratings coverage "will continue to face significant operating and credit challenges in 2010," the agency said.

Three companies are either on "negative outlook" or "negative rating watch", among them Indonesia's PT

Arpeni Pratama Ocean Line and PT Berlian Laju Tanker, and Varun Shipping Company of India.

"The oversupply of shipping capacity will continue to exert pressure on shipping rates and utilisation levels in 2010," Fitch said.

Due to the long time needed to build new ships, the shipping industry is inflexible in terms of its ability to respond to the changing global supply and demand picture, analysts say.

"The weak fundamentals in the global shipping markets have even affected domestic revenues of Indonesian and Indian shipping companies that benefit from cabotage laws", Fitch added.

Cabotage restricts a nation's coastal trade only to ships belonging to that country.

# Bangladesh Bank prioritises branchless banking

BSS, Dhaka

Aiming at the speedy financial inclusion of rural people, Bangladesh Bank (BB) will give banks and other related organisations more support to expand branchless banking.

With technological advancements, including expansion of mobile phone coverage, Bangladesh Bank Governor Atiur Rahman said effective partnerships among banks and technology service providers would make branchless banking a great success.

The central bank is supporting banks and some other financial institutions to operate branchless services to cater to the major banking need of rural and urban people.

BB will be more active in future with the target of full financial inclusion of the people who are yet to get the institutional banking ser-

vices.

The branchless banking, where some major banking services including disbursing loan and getting repayment, sending and receiving money and remittance, will be the BB's priority to expand rural banking services, Rahman told a programme yesterday.

The Department for International Development and Consultative Group to Assist the Poor co-organised the programme to launch a publication on branchless banking at Sonargaon Hotel in Dhaka.

"Bangladesh Bank is on the lookout for such creative partnerships in regulated IT based remote delivery of financial services," he said.

A number of services are already in operation, facilitating utility bill payments and delivery of remittances from Bangladeshi workers abroad to their families at home.

Other branchless banking services like smartcards and point of sale (POS) terminals are at various stages of implementation.

He said banks could usefully go for technology-based branchless banking to disburse and recover loan instalments to and from small landholder farmers and rural non-farm enterprises cost effectively, with only occasional field visits to appraise borrowers and to complete documentations.

Also, he said the expansion of branchless banking would at least to some extent ease the pressure of demand for cash currency notes, which are expensive to print, circulate and to dispose when they become unusable.

The governor, however, said that technology-based branchless banking would have its own set of technical and operational risks, which need to be mitigated and appropriately managed.

**Govt of the People's Republic of Bangladesh**  
 Bangladesh Betar  
 Maintenance Section  
 Administrative Building  
 Agargaon, Dhaka-1207

### Invitation for Tender

Sealed tenders in triplicate are hereby invited from the bonafide distributor/supplier/genuine bidder for the undermentioned goods with the following conditions.

|   |  |  |   |                                 |
|---|--|--|---|---------------------------------|
| 1. Ministry/Division  | Ministry of Information.   |  |   |                                 |
| 2. Agency   | Bangladesh Betar.  |  |   |                                 |
| 3. Procuring entity name  | Director General, Bangladesh Betar.  |  |   |                                 |
| 4. Procuring entity district  | Dhaka.   |  |   |                                 |
| 5. Invitation for   | Tender for following items as mentioned below.   |  |   |                                 |
| 6. Invitation Ref No. & date  | MES/3/2505/2009-715; dated: 25-01-2010   |  |   |                                 |
| 7. Procuring method   | Open tendering method (national competitive tendering).  |  |   |                                 |
| 8. Budget & source of funds   | GOB  |  |   |                                 |
| 9. Tender package No.   | G13  |  |   |                                 |
| 10. Tender publication date   | 31-01-2010   |  |   |                                 |
| 11. Tender last selling date  | At 4.00pm (BST) on 22-02-2010  |  |   |                                 |
| 12. Tender closing date & time  | At 11.30am (BST) on 24-02-2010   |  |   |                                 |
| 13. Tender opening date & time  | At 12.00 noon (BST) on 24-02-2010  |  |   |                                 |
| 14. Name and address of the office(s)   | Address  |  |   |                                 |
| Selling tender document   | Station Engineer, Maintenance Section, Bangladesh Betar, Administrative Building, Agargaon, Dhaka-1207.  |  |   |                                 |
| Receiving tender document   | Senior Engineer, Maintenance Section, Bangladesh Betar, Administrative Building, Agargaon, Dhaka-1207.   |  |   |                                 |
| Opening tender document   | Senior Engineer, Maintenance Section, Bangladesh Betar, Administrative Building, Agargaon, Dhaka-1207.   |  |   |                                 |
| 15. Place/date/time of pre-tender meeting   | N/A  |  |   |                                 |
| 16. Eligibility of tenderer   | All eligible tenderers except of Israel.   |  |   |                                 |
| 17. Brief description of goods and services   | As mentioned below.  |  |   |                                 |
| 18. Price of tender document (Tk)   | Tk 300/- for each lot to be deposited in the form of Treasury Challan to the code 1/3351/0001/2366 on the account of Director General, Bangladesh Betar. |  |   |                                 |
| 19. Lot No.   | Identification of lot  | Location                               | Tender security in the form of Pay Order/Bank Draft from any scheduled bank in favour of the Director General, Bangladesh Betar | Completion time in weeks/months |
| 01.   | Supply, installation, testing and commissioning of 2 Nos, 5 Ton Capacity (each) Split Type Air-cooler (floor mounted).                                   | HPT-5, Bangladesh Betar, Kahalu, Bogra | Tk 10,600/- only  | 04 (four) weeks                 |
| 20. Name of official inviting tender  | Md. Taimur Rahman.   |  |   |                                 |
| 21. Designation of official inviting tender   | Station Engineer on behalf of Director General.  |  |   |                                 |
| 22. Address of official inviting tender   | Maintenance Section, Bangladesh Betar, Administrative Building, Agargaon, Dhaka-1207, Bangladesh.  |  |   |                                 |
| 23. Contact details of official inviting tender                                     | Tel: +880-2-9112778, 9123057, Fax: +880-2-9118784.   |  |   |                                 |
| 24. The procuring entity reserves the right to accept or reject any or all tenders. |  |  |   |                                 |

MD-425

Md. Taimur Rahman  
 Station Engineer  
 for Director General