

# E-money order service thru' post offices by Dec

BSS, Dhaka

The 'e-money order' service of the postal department will be extended to 1,600 post offices across the country by December this year, said Director General of Postal Department Mobasser Ur Rahman.

"At present, our 806 growth centres at district and upazila level offer the service," Rahman told the news agency.

"After December, even marginal people can transfer their money through the service in a super fast and safe way."

The DG mentioned that their IT experts have already developed software for operating the electronic money transfer.

"The software will be able to operate 23,000 to 24,000 transactions in a day," he said, adding that the UK Department for International Development will provide 100 laptops to help the department implement the project.

The director general said this initiative of familiarising 'e-money order' service at grassroots level will be marked as a major step towards the present government's vow to build a prosperous IT-based Digital Bangladesh.

He said the postal department would also sign agreements with foreign money transfer companies for ensuring a safer way for the rural people of receiving remittance using the e-money order service.

Presently, the postal department provides the service of electronic remittance transfer from its 450 post offices.

Mobasser Ur Rahman said they are now contacting with universities so that students can also pay their fees for admission test through the e-service.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina formally inaugurated the 'e-money order' service by sending money from her office in Dhaka to Tungipara in Gopalganj on the Independence Day this year.

## Fair price rice sale begins in Rangpur

BSS, Rangpur

The month-long programme of selling rice by the Directorate General of Food under the ongoing fair price card programme began in Rangpur yesterday.

Sadar Upazila Food Officer ATM Sajjadur Rahman Chowdhury and Awami League leader Shameem Talukder launched the programme.

Forty-one dealers have been engaged for selling rice among 43,000 fair price cardholders in the city during for the one-month period, a Sadar upazila food official told the news agency.

Each of the cardholders can purchase maximum 20 kg rice at Tk 24 a kg at a time or in two phases. Each dealer will serve at least 1,000 cardholders, the official added.



CITY BANK City Bank Vice Chairman Hossain Mehmood hands over a cheque for Tk 50 lakh to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at her office in Dhaka recently for the construction of Liberation War Museum. Finance Minister AMA Muhith and Bangladesh Bank Governor Atiur Rahman are also seen.

## DSE halts two more companies

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Dhaka Stock Exchange yesterday suspended trading of two listed companies for abnormal price hike in their share prices.

The suspension will continue until the completion of investigations into the unusual price hike of the two -- Fine Foods and Eastern Housing.

"Trading Fine Foods and Eastern Housing will remain suspended for unusual price hike of shares pending inquiry by the DSE management," according to a posting on the premier bourse's website.

Eastern Housing went up by 9.21 percent yesterday, while Fine Foods by 7.27 percent.

The prime bourse also suspended the trading of Samata Leather and sent a letter to the company asking whether there is any undisclosed price sensitive information.

The DSE said it will resume the trading of Samata Leather after receiving its reply.

## Rakub stresses SME search

BSS, Rajshahi

Rajshahi Krishi Unnayan Bank (Rakub) has asked its branch officials to find potential small and medium enterprises (SMEs) and provide those with loans.

Rakub Chairman Shah Nawaz Ali and Director Rustom Ali Ahmed made the call during a surprise visit to the bank's Mohonpur branch in Rajshahi yesterday.

The Rakub officials inquired about the branch's deposit mobilisation, loan disbursement, classified loan recovery, actions taken against default borrowers and liquidity management.

# Dhaka show highlights items made by women entrepreneurs

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

A six-day expo to display products made by Bangladeshi and Pakistani women entrepreneurs began in Dhaka yesterday.

The expo, DOSTI-WETEX 2010, is taking place at Bangabandhu International Conference Centre.

Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury, state minister of the women and children affairs ministry, inaugurated the fair as the chief guest. Pakistan High Commissioner Ashraf Qureshi was also present.

This is the seventh time this fair is being organised. It creates a platform

for the women entrepreneurs of Bangladesh to show their production capabilities and a chance to mingle with other women entrepreneurs of the region.

The state minister said the fair would ease interaction between the women entrepreneurs of the two countries.

She also depicted various programmes undertaken by the government to develop women entrepreneurship in the country. She said the problem was that women entrepreneurs are not aware of the facilities available for them.

Qureshi said the fair was mainly

organised to develop relationships and promote women entrepreneurship.

"There were only 14 participants in the first fair, whereas there are 88 participants this time -- this is our success," he added.

The high commissioner also told The Daily Star that they accommodated 11 women entrepreneurs from Bangladesh to participate in an international fair in Karachi last year. This year, they will accommodate eight participants from Bangladesh to participate in the same fair.

Qureshi also said it was a good time for the consumers of Bangladesh to taste the products of Paki-

stan, especially just before the upcoming festival of Eid.

Two Pakistani participants at the fair, Nuzhat Rizvi and Nabila Intisar, who exhibited apparels for women, said the clothing styles of the two countries were more or less the same. So, they said, they had a good opportunity to market their products in Bangladesh through local trading partners.

Yesmin Beg, a local visitor at the fair, said the designs displayed were fantastic and prices were also reasonable.

Bank Alfalah Ltd and Banglalion sponsored the fair. The fair's entry fee has been fixed at Tk 20.



Designer Maheen Khan browses through dresses after inaugurating an Eid fashion exhibition, organised by the International Institute of Fashion Design (INIFD), at Drik Gallery in Dhaka yesterday. Dresses designed by 30 students of INIFD will be showcased at the event that will remain open from 12pm to 9pm everyday until Saturday.

## Taiwanese LCD maker files second suit against Sony

REUTERS, New York

Taiwan's Chimei Innolux Corp sued Japan's Sony Corp for infringing on patents used in PlayStation 3 video game consoles, televisions, computer notebooks and cameras.

Sony engaged in "wide-spread infringement" of three patents dating back to 1998 Chimei said in its lawsuit filed in the U.S. District Court in Delaware on Monday.

Chimei said the infringement came after it had invested tens of millions of dollars in developing liquid crystal display (LCD) panels and related products.

The complaint was filed a month after Chimei filed a similar lawsuit against Sony in the U.S. District Court for the Western District of Arkansas.

Chimei is seeking unspecified compensatory damages, which it wants tripled because of what it considers Sony's "willful" misconduct, and other remedies.

## Bharti Airtel eyes mobile market leadership in Kenya

REUTERS, Nairobi

Zain Kenya plans to invest more than 25 billion shillings (\$308.1 million) in the next 18 months in a bid to gain market leadership in the nation of 20 million mobile phone users, its country managing director said.

Ranked the second largest operator by users in the country, Zain was acquired by Bharti Airtel as part of an Africa-wide deal. The new planned investment is double what Bharti had initially said it will put in.

Last week, Zain halved its calling and text messaging charges, sending shares of rival Safaricom skidding.

"We have started a new journey in the market and the journey is called market leadership," Rene Meza told Reuters late on Tuesday.

"It is going to be a long journey, a very tough one. But for the first time in eight years, we have the right majority shareholders with the understanding and the mindset of what it takes for us to do in Kenya, to become market leaders."

Although the firm that began as Kencell was one of the first players in the industry, it was hobbled by a focus on the top end of the market, locking out the majority of Kenyans who are on low incomes.

Safaricom, which typically accounts for more than half the shares traded each day on the Nairobi Stock Exchange, conquered 80 percent of the market by focusing on all segments, with post-paid services for the

rich and prepaid scratch cards for as little as 20 shillings for lower-paid users.

"We are planning to invest over 25 billion shillings over the next 18 months. It is an investment plan we had to revise upwards," Meza said.

He added Zain would increase its distributors to 200 from 80 and launch third generation (3G) internet access by year-end.

Under the first phase, the firm will focus on revenue growth, subscriber growth and revenue growth, before turning attention to margins.

"Profits and so on will come as we continue increasing our revenues, we continue increasing our customer base, we continue increasing our market share, we continue generating volume."

Bharti, which says it is the world's fifth largest mobile operator, aims to inject massive economies of scale, acquired through its position in India, into the Kenyan operation.

"We are going to get a spillover effect of Bharti Airtel India in terms of getting the prices and the right cost structure to sustain the model," he said.

"Those level of volumes, once they are cascaded to suppliers and to different partners, in Kenya or across Africa, will bring our costs structures dramatically down."

Zain will extend its second generation (2G) network to cover the country and relaunch its mobile commerce service, Zap, which trails Safaricom's M-Pesa by a very wide margin, he said.

# France's Carrefour getting out of Malaysia

AFP, Kuala Lumpur

French retail giant Carrefour plans to sell its business in Malaysia, a minister said, amid speculation the firm will also offload its Singapore and Thai stores and exit Southeast Asia altogether.

"We heard that Carrefour is considering divesting. It is for the purpose of rationalisation of their overseas business," deputy trade minister Mukhriz Mahathir told AFP late Monday.

"They want to sell their business (in Malaysia)," he said, adding that "other

hypermarkets are keen to take over" Carrefour's 23 stores in the country.

"There are many suitors," he said. Low Ngai Yuen, Carrefour's marketing and communications director, declined to respond to the comments.

Yeah Kim Leng, group chief economist with financial research firm RAM Holdings, said Carrefour's impending departure from Southeast Asia had been well flagged.

"The news has been around for some time. It is an open secret that Carrefour wants to pull out from Malaysia, Thailand and Singapore. They have put feelers out to the

industry on their plan," he said.

Yeah said Carrefour wanted to consolidate its business and move its resources to the booming Indian market.

"It is not surprising for them to move to India. The middle class segment is a large expanding group," he said.

The New Straits Times newspaper last month reported that Carrefour had put a tag of 1.0 billion dollars collectively on its business in Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand.

Yeah said the growth of the hypermarket industry in Malaysia was not

spectacular compared to the opportunities presented by the fast-growing Indian market but that it remained profitable.

"The hypermarket industry in Malaysia is dynamic and very competitive," he said.

"Given the growth potential in the region, we will likely see other players buying Carrefour. Players that exit will be able to find suitors."

Other players in the Malaysian market who are possible buyers of the Carrefour outlets include Britain's Tesco, Japan's Jusco, and Giant, which is owned by the Dairy Farm group.



AGORA Employees of Rahimafroz Superstores Ltd pose for photographs at the 10th anniversary celebration of Agora in Dhaka yesterday. To mark its anniversary, the retail chain will offer discounts and other special benefits for customers during Ramadan.