

Calls for exchange rules upgrade

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

The Bangladesh Bank should rationalise the age-old foreign exchange rules and regulations to make the regime updated and cohesive, said former governor of Bangladesh Bank (BB) Dr Salehuddin Ahmed yesterday.

Ahmed said this while speaking at a seminar on foreign exchange and rates risk management organised by Citi Bangladesh at Spectra Convention Centre in Gulshan.

"I forwarded a draft to this effect to the government to rationalise the Act during my tenure, but nothing has happened yet," he said.

The Foreign Exchange Regulation Act, 1947 currently regulates payments and dealings in foreign exchanges and securities and the import and export of

currency and bullion in Bangladesh.

The former governor said the Act should be modified immediately to make it more supportive in line with the global norms and regulations. Otherwise, it would be difficult for the banks to manage their foreign exchange risks appropriately, he added.

"Rationalising foreign exchange laws is a fundamental work and the BB should concentrate more in this area than attending seminars," Ahmed remarked.

Dr Salehuddin Ahmed served Bangladesh's central bank as governor on a four-year stint till May 2009.

The former governor also advocated for an increase in the foreign exchange net open position (NOP) by the commercial banks. The present NOP limit is 12.5 percent of a bank's total capital.

"An increase in the NOP limit will help the commercial banks to be empowered with more foreign currency," said Ahmed. "Such a move will help keep the market stable too."

He said the central bank intervenes in the foreign exchange market only in the afternoon, whereas it should be done whenever required.

Ahmed also stressed the need for securitisation of large infrastructure projects, such as Bangabandhu Multipurpose Bridge (Jamuna Bridge) and the proposed Padma Bridge.

He said the government could raise huge amounts of money by securitisation of these bridges and invest them according to its priorities.

Citi Country Officer Mamun Rashid and acting head of global markets Shams Zaman also spoke.



RAHIMAFROOZ

Rahimafrooz Renewable Energy (RRE) has reached a memorandum of understanding with TATA BP Solar to execute a five-megawatt solar power plant. RRE Managing Director Munawar Misbah Moin and TATA BP Solar Managing Director K Subramania signed the deal on the sidelines of the DIREC 2010 renewable energy exhibition in New Delhi recently.

Rahimafrooz plans 5MW solar power plant

STAR BUSINESS DESK

Rahimafrooz Renewable Energy (RRE) has signed a memorandum of understanding with TATA BP Solar to set up a solar power plant in Bangladesh.

Rahimafrooz will install the five-megawatt plant on 20 acres at a cost of \$25 million.

RRE Managing Director Munawar Misbah Moin and TATA BP Solar Managing Director K Subramania signed the deal on the sidelines of the Delhi International Renewable Energy Conference (DIREC) that continued from Wednesday to Friday in New Delhi.

TATA BP Solar, established in 1989, is a joint venture between Tata Power Company of India and BP Solar.

DIREC 2010 is the fourth in the series of the international renewable energy conferences, which was followed from the initiative taken at the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg.

Previous three events were held in Washington in 2008, Beijing in 2005 and Bonn in 2004.



PREMIER LEASING

Uttara Bank has entered into a Tk 20 crore loan agreement with Premier Leasing and Finance on Tuesday. The bank's General Manager MA Matin and the leasing firm's Managing Director SM Shamsul Alam signed the deal.

KL keen on more imports, investment in shipbuilding

UNB, Dhaka

Malaysia, one of the most dynamic economies of Southeast Asia, is keen to import halal meat, fruits and agricultural produce from Bangladesh, and to invest in the country's prospective shipbuilding sector.

Visiting Chief Minister of Malaysian state Perlis Dr M Isa Bin Sabu expressed this at a meeting with Industries Minister Dilip Barua at his office yesterday.

Sabu, who is leading a business delegation here, told the minister that the Malaysian entrepreneurs had already started their groundwork as they are very interested in investing in the shipbuilding sector.

Industries Secretary KH Masud Siddiqui, Malaysian High Commissioner in Dhaka Jamaluddin Sabeh, General Manager of Perlis Marine Engineering Company Ltd Norsiake Bin Kassim and delegation members were present during the meeting.

The import of halal meat from Bangladesh and Malaysian investments in ICT, light engineering, pharmaceutical and shipbuilding sectors came up for discussion.

"Bangladesh is our friend... vast scope is there to boost bilateral trade between the two countries and both countries can be equally benefited through joint initiatives," Sabu said.

He said Bangladesh can build modern shipbuilding industry by

utilising the experiences of Malaysian Perlis state.

The Malaysian chief minister expressed his country's interest to import potato, tomato, carrot, pineapple, banana, mangoes and other agro products from Bangladesh.

Barua welcomed Malaysia's keenness to invest here and suggested Malaysian entrepreneurs invest in Bangladesh's shipbuilding industry either through joint ventures or individually.

"Bangladesh government will provide all-out support," Barua assured the visiting team.

The industries minister said Malaysia can import more Bangladeshi manpower and sought active role from Sabu in this regard.

Body to maintain RMG peace before Eid

BSS, Dhaka

Leaders of labour organisations and Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA) yesterday decided to form a tripartite committee to maintain peace in the garment industry ahead of Eid.

At a meeting held at the BGMEA office in Dhaka, they decided that representatives from owners, labourers and government would be in the body.

The meeting was chaired by BGMEA President Abdus Salam Murshedy.

Topics related to payment of salaries and allowances for workers in the sector ahead of the upcoming Eid-ul-Azha were discussed at the meeting.

The meeting mentioned the newly formed wage structure for the workers will come into effect on November 1 and the benefits will be available from December.

The garments owners and labour leaders vowed to work in a coordinated manner to face any unrest in the industry before the Eid.

Bumper aromatic rice harvest in Rangpur expected

BSS, Rangpur

Farmers are expecting a bumper harvest of aromatic rice as the crop is now growing excellent at its flowering stages everywhere in all eight districts under Rangpur Agriculture Zone (RAZ) this season.

Harvests of the aromatic paddy will begin next month and complete in mid-December during the current T-Aman season, farmers, officials, experts and rice scientists said yesterday.

Cultivation of such rice is becoming popular due to special steps taken by the Department of Agricultural Extension, Bangladesh Rice Research Institute, Bangladesh Institute of Nuclear Agriculture and several nongovernmental organisations.

DAE's Additional Director Mohsin Ali told the news agency that over 22 varieties of aromatic rice have been cultivated on 20,196 hectares of land in eight districts of the RAZ and the yield rates might be 1.7 to 2 tonnes per hectare in terms of clean aromatic rice.

The farmers have cultivated aromatic rice on 511 hectares of land in Rangpur, 247 in Gaibandha, 275 in Kurigram, 31 in Lalmonirhat, 795 in Nilphamari, 14,926 in Dinajpur, 2,006 in Thakurgaon and 1,405 in

Panchagarh districts this season.

They have cultivated kalijira variety aromatic rice on 2,212 hectares, Kataribhog on 5,287 hectares, Jira katari on 2,289 hectares, Jota katari on 2,565, Philippines katari on 3,816, Badshahbogh on 1,217, Nonia on 1,072, Jira 40 katari on 160 hectares and Zirashail on 215 hectares of land.

Besides, they have cultivated other aromatic variety rice like Dulabhogh, Basmati, Madhuvas, Begunbichi, Dheki bhog, Khirshabhogh, Uknimadhu, Rasulbhogh, Tilkapur, Chinigura, Bhogzira, Bawaibhog and BR 34, DAE officials said.

Renowned rice scientist and Dinajpur Hub Manager of Cereals System Initiatives for South Asia and former head of Agronomy of BRRI Dr MA Mazid said there are huge prospects of expanded aromatic rice farming in the region.

The rice scientists suggested adopting the latest agri-technologies, using existing natural resources and creating more facilities for exports of aromatic rice.

They laid importance on improving the crushing and processing systems for aromatic rice for boosting exports and said basmati, chinigura, kalijira and BR 34 varieties that are being produced in the region are already attracting buyers in the global market.

Samsung to sell tablet PC in India

REUTERS, New Delhi

Samsung Electronics will start selling its Galaxy Tab tablet computer in India from Nov. 10 and expects to capture about half of the market which it sees at up to 1 million units in the next 12 months, a company official said on Friday.

Samsung said this month it planned to sell Galaxy Tab in the United States, Japan, South Korea and Italy this year, taking aim at frontrunner Apple in the new but already congested segment.

Ranjit Yadav, director of mobile and IT businesses at Samsung's Indian unit, said he expected the industry to sell 750,000 to 1 million tablet computers in India in the next 12 months.

Galaxy Tab is based on Google's Android platform, has a 7-inch screen, smaller than iPad's 9.7-inch screen. Samsung has said it aims global sales of 1 million tablets this year.

Samsung has priced the product at 38,000 rupees (\$854) for the Indian market. Apple's iPad is yet to be officially launched in India.



PREMIER BANK

Premier Bank Director Kazi Abdul Mazid attends a workshop on Basel II for senior officers at the bank's training institute in Dhaka yesterday. Managing Director Niaz Habib was also present.

First Baghdad flight for European airline

AFP, Paris

An Airbus operated by France's Aigle Azur is on Saturday to make the first scheduled flight by a European airline to Baghdad in 20 years amid hopes of boosting historically close Franco-Iraqi business links.

The Airbus A319 is to take off from Paris-Charles de Gaulle at 11:30 pm (2130 GMT) with foreign trade minister Anne-Marie Idrac and 40 French businessmen aboard, landing at Baghdad International five hours later.

Commercial flights between the two

capitals, previously operated by national carrier Air France, were suspended after the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in August 1990.

"This is an historic event because this is the first scheduled direct service by a European airline between a Western capital and Baghdad for 20 years," said France's ambassador to Iraq, Boris Boillon.

Aigle Azur, owned by the Franco-Algerian Idjerouidene family, will from early 2011 offer two flights a week from Charles de Gaulle, Europe's second busiest air hub after London Heathrow.

Reliance profit tops forecast

REUTERS, Mumbai

Indian conglomerate Reliance Industries Ltd posted its highest quarterly profit in nearly three years, and increasing output at its main gas field is seen as key to earnings growth for India's most valuable company even as it diversifies into other sectors.

Reliance, controlled by billionaire Mukesh Ambani, has been investing overseas in shale gas assets and has also been looking to widen its businesses beyond petrochemicals, refining, oil and gas exploration, and retail.

The company, whose earnings were powered by improved refining margins, started pumping gas from its key KG D6 block off India's east coast in April last year, and the company has said it would not increase output until a full review of the reservoir was completed.

"The biggest earnings driver for the company is going to be the ramp up of production at the KG D6 block. That's the trump card," said Jagannadham Thunuguntla, equity head at SMC Capital in New Delhi.

Reliance is pumping about 55-60 million cubic metres of gas a day from KG D6, and the country's oil secretary said in July that Reliance would be able to pump gas at full capacity of 80 mmscmd during the year to March 2013.



HUAWEI

Zhao Ming, president of global network solution (sales) of Huawei Technologies, receives the 2010 3G CDMA Industry Achievement award for network technology innovation from Perry LaForge, executive director of CDMA Development Group, at the second annual CDMA World Forum in Shanghai recently.

Toyota secretly bought back faulty vehicles

AFP, Los Angeles

Japan's top world automaker Toyota secretly bought back some of the faulty vehicles it sold on the market in a bid to hide their defects from the public, the lawyers of clients suing the automaker said Friday.

One complaint filed in California and obtained by AFP said that, contrary to the company's statements, Toyota technicians have replicated the sudden unintended acceleration (SUA) problem that led to the recall of millions of its vehicles months ago.

"Upon the technicians replicating a SUA event, Toyota decided it was in the customer's interest for Toyota to buy back the vehicle, meaning in reality that Toyota decided to remove this vehicle from the market since it was experiencing SUA incidents that could not be blamed on the driver," said the complaint.

"And, to further conceal the defect, Toyota required as a condition of the vehicle repurchase that the owner sign a confidentiality agreement and agree not to sue," it added.

The complaint said Toyota deliberately withheld the information from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) and from its testimony at congressional hearings.



DBBL

K Shamshi Tabrez, deputy managing director of Dutch-Bangla Bank, attends the certificate awarding ceremony of a foundation training course for its officers at the bank's training centre in Dhaka on Wednesday.