

STOCKS		COMMODITIES		ASIAN MARKETS				CURRENCIES				
DGEN	CSCX	Gold	Oil	MUMBAI	TOKYO	SINGAPORE	SHANGHAI	USD	EUR	GBP	JPY	
4.50%	4.60%	\$1,428.00 (per ounce)	\$99.83 (per barrel)	1.46%	6.18%	0.41%	0.13%	72.20	98.55	113.90	0.87	
6,457.98	11,764.15			18,439.48	9,620.49	3,030.86	2,937.63	BUY TK	73.20	103.96	119.54	0.95
								SELL TK				

# star BUSINESS

DHAKA TUESDAY MARCH 15, 2011, e-mail: business@thedailystar.net

## Trade deal with Canada

### Another four signed in education, agriculture and research

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Bangladesh yesterday went into an agreement with Canada to boost cooperation in trade and services between the two countries.

Trading Corporation of Bangladesh (TCB) and Saskatchewan Trade and Export Partnership (STEP) inked the deal in favour of the respective countries at a programme at the commerce ministry in Dhaka.

Commerce Minister Faruk Khan and Premier of Saskatchewan province of Canada Brad Wall were present during the signing of the agreement, which will facilitate exchange of ideas, and trade and market related information to scale up bilateral trade.

That was one of the six deals signed during a three-day visit of Brad Wall to explore cooperation in trade and investment, agriculture, education and human resources.

"Bangladesh buys a lot of agricultural products from our province. It benefits 18,000 farmers of our province directly and indirectly," said Brad Wall at a press conference at Sonargaon Hotel, explaining the reasons of signing the



**Brad Wall, premier of Saskatchewan Province of Canada, briefs reporters on his visit to Bangladesh at a press meet at Sonargaon Hotel in Dhaka yesterday. Robert McDougall, Canadian high commissioner, is also seen.**

deals with Bangladesh.

"It is a relationship we value very much. We are very much looking forward to building this relationship," said the Saskatchewan premier who led a 41-member business delegation along with university academics.

During the visit, he met a number of ministers including Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and signed several understanding agreements.

Of the accords, four memoranda of understanding (MoUs) were signed on the education sector.

Public universities of Saskatchewan and Bangladesh inked the deals to conduct joint research on agriculture and agriculture engineering, for academic cooperation in science and engineering, and to exchange faculty and students.

Representatives of Univer-

sity of Saskatchewan and Dhaka University, Bangladesh Agricultural University, Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (Buet) and Khulna University signed these agreements.

Under the MoU with Dhaka University, a joint funding of up to 800,000 Canadian dollars will be provided by the Saskatchewan Ministry of Agriculture and Saskatchewan Pulse Growers.

The premier of the province, which is the world's biggest exporter of peas and lentils, said a joint research would be conducted to improve nutritional quality of lentils.

He said the joint research would benefit the farmers of both the countries.

Bangladesh is the second largest buyer of lentils from Saskatchewan and the exports of pulses to Bangladesh grew by 90 percent annually over the past five years.

Brad Wall said Bangladesh has a trade surplus with Canada and there is an interest among businesses of the province to invest in Bangladesh.

On hiring farm workers from Bangladesh, he said: "We would be very open to see agricultural workers coming from Bangladesh."

## Hasina urges Canada to recruit more from Bangladesh

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday urged Canada to recruit more human resources from Bangladesh.

Hasina made the call when the visiting premier of Saskatchewan Province of Canada, Brad Wall, paid a courtesy call on her at Ganobhaban in Dhaka.

They discussed the issues of national and international importance, said Prime Minister's Press Secretary Abul Kalam Azad after the meeting. They also underscored the need for increasing bilateral trade and commerce for mutual benefits.

She also called upon the Canadian government and entrepreneurs to invest in power, energy, textile, garments, food processing and packaging, information technology and public service sectors in Bangladesh. Wall assured the Bangladesh government of continuing Canadian support in different economic areas.

## SEC suggests changes in book building method

SARWAR A CHOWDHURY

The stockmarket regulator has recommended some changes in the book building method, which was suspended by the government in January in the wake of huge criticism of the system.

In line with the recommendation, the offer price of a company's share will be no more than 15 PE (price-earnings), or must not exceed five times its net asset value per share, or whichever is lowest, under the book building system.

The PE should be calculated based on the company's previous three years' average earnings per share (EPS) mentioned in the audited accounts.

For example, if a company's face value is Tk 10 and EPS is Tk 5, under the proposed method, its highest offer price would be Tk 75. If the net asset value (NAV) per share is Tk 20, the highest offer price would not cross Tk 100. But, the final offer price should be within Tk 75, as it is the lowest.

The Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) has sent the draft recommendations to Finance Minister AMA Muhith for consideration.

The SEC also suggested the formation of a committee comprising the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Bangla-

desh, the Institute of Cost and Management Accountants of Bangladesh, Dhaka Stock Exchange and Chittagong Stock Exchange to scrutinise the audited accounts submitted by the companies before IPO.

The officials of other departments concerned will also represent in the committee. If the committee has any comments or opinions after the scrutiny, those will have to be sent to the commission in seven working days.

The lock-in period for institutional investors has been proposed at 60 days instead of 15 days, while the subscription period at 15 days, down from 25 days.

The SEC also recommended a cut in the institutional bidding period from 72 hours to 48 hours.

After the bidding, the issuer company and the issue manager will have to submit the final IPO prospectus to the SEC within 48 hours.

The printed draft IPO prospectus will have to be sent to related institutions and organisations at least five days before the roadshow.

DSE and CSE officials will be present at the roadshow, and indicative price would be mentioned in the draft prospectus, according to the draft recommendation.

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## ME crisis, oil price worry Muhith

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Finance Minister AMA Muhith yesterday expressed his worries about the Middle East (ME) crisis and oil price hike, saying the untoward events and trends may impact the country's remittance inflow and foreign currency reserve negatively.

Muhith said this while presenting a report in parliament on budget expenditure and economic situation of the country in the first six months of the current fiscal year.

The finance minister said, while it is imperative to increase the public and private sector investments, a rise in fuel and food prices on the world market may fuel expenditure on imports. As a result, the foreign exchange reserve may fall significantly in future, he added.

According to the report, by the end of December 2010 the foreign exchange reserve was \$11.2 billion, while Bangladesh Bank data show the reserve is already on a downward curve. On March 8, it stood at \$10.36 billion.

On the remittance situation, the

finance minister said, under the prolonged impact of the global recession the export of manpower to the Middle East labour markets decreased in the first quarter of the current fiscal year causing a downside in remittances.

But in the second quarter, the remittance inflow improved slightly owing to some measures taken by the government, he added.

The minister said the remittance inflow will return to normalcy in future but, at the same time, he expressed apprehension that the recent upheavals in North Africa and the Middle East may delay the maturation of the government initiatives.

In the report, the finance minister dwelt on the inflation situation and said the whole world has been experiencing a rise in inflation due to a hike in food prices.

The minister said, due to the rise in the fuel prices on the international market, and as the food production did not evenly meet expectations throughout the world because of adverse weather, the

prices of food commodities will continue to shoot up globally.

As Bangladesh is an import dependent country, its economy experienced an adverse impact. Besides, the pressure of high inflation in India had weighed on inflation in Bangladesh.

However, the finance minister said, since the economic trend was satisfactory in the first six months of the current fiscal year, the GDP target of 6.7 percent may be achieved after all.

On the progress of Public Private Partnership (PPP) initiative, Muhith said the PPP policy has already been gazetted. He said the PPP offices have been set up and manpower has been appointed to some offices. The process of appointing the chief executive of PPP initiative and some other officials is underway.

The registration of Bangladesh Infrastructure Finance Fund as a company will soon be completed, the finance minister said. Once these activities are complete, various projects will be financed through the PPP initiative, he said.

## Ex-GP boss takes up new role at Telenor

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Oddvar Hesjedal, the former chief executive officer of Grameenphone, has been appointed as executive vice-president and head of people development at Telenor Group.

The 60-year-old was due to start his new assignment yesterday after serving nearly two years and a half at Grameenphone.

His responsibilities include Telenor Group's human resource operations and development, corporate responsibility, event and corporate staff management, the telecom giant said in a statement.

Hesjedal had served GP as CEO since November 2008. He also served GP as its chief technology officer since June the same year.

Prior to joining Grameenphone, he held various top management



**Oddvar Hesjedal**

capacities within the Telenor Group.

"Gaining experience from different markets and cultures is essential in Telenor's leadership philosophy and to the Telenor way of doing business. I am certain that this appointment will benefit Telenor Group as

an international company," said Jon Fredrik Baksaas, president and CEO of Telenor.

Hesjedal said: "I am excited to get the opportunity to work together with a team of skilled professionals to continue developing Telenor as an attractive workplace and promote mobility and collaboration across the group."

Under the leadership of Hesjedal, Grameenphone grew tremendously, adding over one crore new clients as of January. With 3.04 crore customers at present, the mobile operator controls over 43 percent of Bangladesh's seven-crore mobile subscribers' market.

GP also went public during his time, the first by any telecom operator in the history of stock markets in Bangladesh. Its shares traded at Tk 184.80, up 7.38 percent from the previous day.

Thank you Tigers!  
for putting your third mark.

Congratulations to  
**Bangladesh Cricket Team**  
for their win against Netherlands.

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