

ADB to okay new aid strategy in Sept

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Asian Development Bank (ADB) will endorse a new assistance strategy for Bangladesh for 2011-2015 in September, the Manila based lender said in a statement on Friday.

The strategy is being finalised through a broad consultative and participatory process. The new strategy will follow a previous one, which lapsed in 2010.

The first phase of consultations for the new Country Partnership Strategy (CPS) has concluded recently with 12 dialogues involving development partners, civil society, women's groups, academia, and minority groups. The second phase consultations will focus on dialogues with senior government officials and project executing agencies.

The new CPS is scheduled to be

submitted to the ADB Board of Directors for endorsement in September 2011," said the bank.

Feedback received from phase I consultations has been incorporated in the draft CPS while identifying priorities and developing assistance pipeline. It included the needs of greater focus on infrastructure, skills development and urban services, and will address the effects of climate change.

"The new CPS aligns itself with the vision and priorities of Bangladesh's draft sixth five-year plan, which emphasises boosting growth by creating and enabling environment for private sector development, and promoting investment in power, transport, urban services, and marketable skills," said Thevakumar Kandiah, country director of ADB, Bangladesh.

"Through the CPS period, ADB assistance will seek to foster green growth by integrating climate change mitigation and adaptation measures in all ADB operations. The ADB will also support public private partnership initiatives to help meet the country's huge infrastructure needs," said Kandiah.

He said the new CPS aims to be more selective and focused, building on ADB's experience and sector strength while engaging in sectors where reforms are difficult but are of fundamental importance to the growth of the national economy.

Despite steady growth since 1990s and significant economic and social development gains, around 32 percent of Bangladesh's over 150 million population remain poor, while per capita gross domestic product was \$685 in fiscal 2009-10.

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Commerce Minister Faruk Khan speaks at the launch of Foundations in Accountancy (FIA) at Ruposhi Bangla Hotel in Dhaka on Friday. The Association of Chartered Certified Accountants, Bangladesh launched FIA.

Stocks keep losing for fourth week

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Stocks continued its bearish trend for the fourth straight week as institutional investors remained inactive in the market despite cash-pumps by the Bangladesh Fund into the market.

The benchmark general index of Dhaka Stock Exchange (DGEN) lost 151 points, or 2.50 percent, to close at 5,899 points last week. DGEN had lost more than 500 points within four weeks.

Saiful Islam, vice-chairman of BRAC EPL Investment and managing director of BRAC EPL Stock Brokerage, said, "The market could not get strong as most of the big institutional investors kept aloof from the market as government announced re-investigation of big-volume trading."

"The Bangladesh Fund could not make any positive impact in the market as big institutional investors stayed away from the market," said Islam.

"The Bangladesh Fund started investing in the capital market on Thursday, which may have resulted in early gains in the indices. This peak however could not

be sustained for the rest of the session," said Lankabangla Securities in its weekly market analysis.

Turnover on the DSE hit its lowest in 2011 and stood at Tk 1,875 crore, down by 34.52 percent from the previous week.

All the sectors lost in the week except banks, which gained marginally by 0.13 percent.

Ceramics and jute sector were the biggest losers, slumping 7.80 percent and 7.70 percent in the week.

Among other sectors, non-bank financial institutions, telecommunication, and fuel and power lost 4.46 percent, 1.91 percent, and 3.02 percent respectively.

Out of 258 issues traded, 39 advanced and 211 declined while eight remained unchanged.

Bextex Limited emerged as the turnover leader with shares worth Tk 104.01 crore changing hands.

Shahjalal Islami Bank was the biggest gainer of the week, posting a 12.54 percent rise in its share prices, while United Leasing was the worst loser, slumping by 44.98 percent.

ACCA launches Foundations in Accountancy

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Global accountancy body ACCA (the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants) launched a new suite of qualification 'Foundations in Accountancy' worldwide, said a statement yesterday.

ACCA Bangladesh organised a launch ceremony at Ruposhi Bangla Hotel in Dhaka on Friday.

Foundations in Accountancy consists of a suite of awards, including certificates, diplomas and a revised CAT qualification. These flexible awards focus on the core skills of financial accounting and management accounting and the wider role of the accountant in business at higher levels.

The range of awards will allow Bangladeshi employers to pick the level of qualification which most appropriately meets their business needs best. For students, it provides flexible entry points with certification awarded at each level, allowing students to develop their education and skills.

Faruk Khan, commerce minister, attended the programme as the chief guest where Nick Low, acting British high commissioner; Jon Gore, acting director of British Council, and Mohua Rashid, country manager of ACCA Bangladesh,



Didar Islam, second from left, chairman and managing director of Solar Intercontinental (Solaric) Ltd, signs a deal with Fahim Ahmed, second from right, managing partner of SEAF Bangladesh Ventures (SEAF BV), at a programme in Dhaka yesterday under which the US-based investment company SEAF BV will invest around \$0.5 million in Solaric, a developer of renewable energy technology and products. Fahmida Sultana, extreme left, director of Solaric, and Zia Ahmed, extreme right, managing partner of SEAF BV, are also seen.

ICT needs tax holiday till 2018: experts

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The ICT sector should be kept out of the tax net up to 2018 to encourage foreign and domestic investment in software and information enabled services, said stakeholders yesterday.

Industry people placed a number of pre-budget proposals at a seminar styled 'National ICT policy and its implementation: national budget perspective' in Dhaka.

The tax holiday for the sector will end on June 30, they said.

The definition of IT-enabled services should be changed, they said, adding that imports of some computers and related products currently require a deposit of 3 percent advanced income tax (AIT). The speakers proposed the AIT be slapped on imports of all types of computers, acces-

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Rajeev Ahmed, head of marketing of Mermaid Ecotourism Ltd, and Asif Ahmed, head of marketing and communications of GMG Airlines, signed a deal at Mermaid Gallery Café in Baridhara. Mermaid's customers will enjoy a direct link of online booking system to know flight schedules, availability of seats and make reservations. Flyers of GMG will receive discounted prices during peak and off-peak seasons in Mermaid resorts and café.

Aftab seeks single digit rate for SME loans

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