

Sheltech honours Jamilur Reza, Atiur

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Sheltech (Pvt) Ltd, a leading real estate company, yesterday handed over the Sheltech Award-2010 to Prof Jamilur Reza Choudhury and Dr Atiur Rahman.

"We have been trying for the last 14 years to honour the most recognisable persons of the society, who have constantly been contributing to the country," said Toufiq M Seraj, managing director of Sheltech.

"And through this initiative, we think we are playing a role for the betterment of the society," he said at the award giving ceremony at Ruposhi Bangla Hotel in Dhaka.

Sheltech has been awarding the country's eminent personalities since 1998 for their outstanding contributions to different sectors. The value of each award is Tk 2 lakh, along with a crest.

At the function, Jamilur Reza Chowdhury, former adviser to a caretaker government, urged the government to create better opportunities for the students of architecture to stop brain drain.



Prof Jamilur Reza Choudhury, second from left, and Dr Atiur Rahman, second from right, pose with trophies for a photo with Kutubuddin Ahmed, extreme right, chairman of Sheltech and Toufiq M Seraj, extreme left, managing director of the real estate company, at an awards ceremony in Dhaka yesterday.

"Most of the time our policymakers hire foreign architects whenever the government goes for big projects, which creates frustration, and is a major reason behind brain drain," he said.

"But, if the government can offer better opportunities here, these students will not leave the country," he added.

Atiur Rahman, governor of the Bangladesh Bank, dedicated his

award money equally between an animal conservator in Sylhet and the Nursing Faculty of the Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University, which is under construction.

"As a governor of the central bank, I have been trying to initiate some policy measures that would help accommodate the 'missing middle class', which was never included in the development process, and thus could not play a role in changing the status of the country," he said.

"Also, we are trying to prioritise the farm sector, small and medium enterprises and green banking approach while formulating monetary policy," he added.

Along with accommodating farmers, landless farmers and small entrepreneurs in the formal banking channel, the central bank has been trying to enhance corporate social responsibility (CSR) of the banking sector, said Rahman.

This year, local banks will spend Tk 400 crore on CSR, which grew from Tk 60 crore in fiscal 2010-11, he said. "And our banks will play a significant role in revitalising the economy."

Kutubuddin Ahmed, chairman of Sheltech, also spoke at the programme.



Amjad Khan Chowdhury, chief executive officer of PRAN RFL, inaugurates the company's new corporate headquarters at 105 Progoti Sarani in Dhaka yesterday. The agro-processed foods maker also celebrated 30 years of its existence.

Renata plans second plant in Rajendrapur

STAR BUSINESS DESK

Renata Ltd plans to set up a second potent product facility in Rajendrapur to increase its capacity, said SH Kabir, chairman of the pharmaceuticals company.

With a planned single-shift capacity of 1.4 billion tablets a year, the new factory will allow Renata to participate in a large bidding for oral contraceptives at home and abroad, Kabir said in a statement after the company's 38th annual general meeting.

The company declared 60 percent cash dividends and 25 percent stock dividends for its shareholders for 2010.

In 2010, Renata's combined turnover and net profit grew by 30.5 percent and 41.0 percent respectively. Earnings per share rose to Tk 471.06 in 2010 from Tk 333.90 a year earlier.

The company's retained earnings as of Decem-

BP chairman eyes new drilling in Mexico Gulf soon: media

AFP, Stockholm

British oil giant BP hopes to soon be able to operate again in the Gulf of Mexico, its chairman was quoted as saying Tuesday.

"It's difficult to speculate on but I think it isn't far away," Carl-Henric Svanberg told reporters on the sideline of an International Association for Energy Economics in Stockholm, according to Dow Jones Newswires.

The BP-leased Deepwater Horizon oil rig exploded in the Gulf of Mexico on April 20, 2010, killing 11 workers and sending some 4.9 million barrels of oil gushing into the Gulf over a three-month period, wreaking havoc on the region's environment and economy.

Following the spill, the largest ever manmade environmental disaster in the United States, Washington imposed a moratorium on deepwater drilling in the Gulf of Mexico, which it lifted in October.

"We are confident that we aren't treated differently there," Svanberg said Tuesday.

The chairman's comments came a day after BP announced it had struck a deal with oil services company Weatherford International, to settle potential claims between them linked to the Deep-

Russia cuts off Belarus electricity

AFP, Moscow

Russia's power utility announced imminent plans Tuesday to cut off electricity to cash-strapped Belarus after Moscow released the first tranche of a \$3 billion bailout loan to its neighbour.

The decision by Inter RAO UES should not hit resource-starved Belarus too severely because it only receives a 10th of its electricity from its energy-rich neighbour.

But it adds another psychological blow to a nation of 10 million that this year has already seen its currency devalued by more than a third and inflation reach a staggering 32.6 percent amid its worst crisis since the Soviet era.

The cutoff stems from a \$54 electricity payments debt that resulted in a partial disruption in supplies earlier this month.

"It will go into effect at midnight (Tuesday 2000 GMT)," company spokeswoman Nikolai Garelov told AFP.

The announcement was made as \$800 million dollars of Russian-orchestrated assistance reached Minsk -- the first line of support to reach depleted state coffers since the crisis began in the winter.

The three-year package was agreed under strict conditions that include the government's adoption

Japan pledges to support eurozone

AFP, Tokyo

Japan on Tuesday pledged to continue to help support Europe as it struggles to contain its debt crisis, such as by buying bonds from a eurozone rescue fund, finance minister Yoshihiko Noda said.

"Japan has been making its own contributions to bring stability to European financial conditions, such as by buying debt (issued by the rescue fund) during efforts to support Portugal," Noda said at a press conference following a cabinet meeting.

"We'd like to continue those efforts," he said.

Japan has previously pledged to help boost confidence in the bonds issued by the European Financial Stability Facility (EFSF), amid concerns earlier this year for eurozone nations such as

Meet the Press

Tuesday, June 21, 2011



Kamran Sunjoy Rahman, general manager of Islamic banking at Standard Chartered Bank, speaks at the launch of two shariah compliant products for business customers in Bangladesh. Wasim Akhtar Saifi, second from left, global head of Islamic banking, and Sandeep Bose, extreme left, regional head of consumer banking for Bangladesh, Nepal and Sri Lanka, are also seen at the programme in Gulshan.

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StanChart offers Islamic products for SMEs

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Standard Chartered Saadiq, the bank's brand name for Islamic banking, yesterday unveiled two shariah compliant products for business customers in Bangladesh.

The products -- Islamic business installment finance, and Islamic finance against property -- are designed for small and medium enterprises (SMEs).

Islamic business installment finance operates under the concept of goods murabaha and Islamic finance against property works under hire purchase Shirkat-ul-Melk (diminishing musharaka) concept.

"A growing number of customers are now conscious about shariah. They want shariah compliant products to satisfy their financial needs," said Wasim Akhtar Saifi, global head of Islamic banking for consumer banking at Standard Chartered Bank, at a press conference in Dhaka.

"So we have launched the products in Bangladesh to provide the same quality of products available in other six countries," he added.

Sandeep Bose, regional head of consumer banking for Bangladesh, Nepal and Sri Lanka, said: "We are committed to bringing world-class shariah compliant products for the customers."

In Islamic business instalment finance, any business enterprise with at least three years of experience can get a maximum of Tk 70 lakh if the organisation has at least Tk 1.20 crore in annual sales turnover.

Saadiq finance against property is instalment-based term finance. Any business enterprise with at least three years of experience can take a maximum of Tk 2.8 crore. But the finance does not exceed 70 percent of the property's current market value in this scheme.

The bank started its Islamic banking operation in Bangladesh in 2004 and launched its Saadiq brand in 2007. Under the umbrella of Saadiq, the bank will now offer a full range of products comprising both deposit accounts and financing products.

Hassan O Rashid, general manager of SME banking, and Kamran Sunjoy Rahman, general manager of Islamic banking, also spoke at the press conference.

BB, parliamentary watchdog moves push stocks up

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Both Dhaka and Chittagong bourses ended higher yesterday after a decision to relax credit deposit ratio rules and a parliamentary watchdog's plea to allow black money in the market shored up investors confidence.

The benchmark General Index of Dhaka Stock Exchange (DGEN) gained 49 points, or 0.87 percent, to close at 5,745.

The Selective Categories Index of Chittagong Stock Exchange (CSCX) added 106 points, or 1.5 percent, to end the day at 10,278.

The rise came a day after the central bank decided to allow commercial banks to calculate their CDR including their deposits in other banks as a source of fund. Earlier Bangladesh Bank excluded those deposits from the denominator.

On February 20 this year, the BB set June 30 as deadline for bringing down the CDR of commercial banks to 85 percent. Banks, which had invested beyond the ceiling, were in trouble to bring down the ratio.

Bankers now believe with the latest decision the ongoing credit crunch would cool down and they would be able to lend more funds.

A stockbroker said the market would also get much-needed liquidity.

Trading started on an upbeat note, gaining 121 points in the first five minutes of trading in DSE.

Saiful Islam, vice-chairman of BRAC EPL Investment, said the central bank directive pulled up the market as investors anticipated that the market would get some liquidity. Institutional investors also participated in the market.

Islam said a meeting between DSE and the parliamentary standing committee on the finance ministry also inspired the

investors as it recommended to allow untaxed money into the capital market.

Of the total 254 issues traded on the bourse, 203 advanced, 43 declined and eight remained unchanged. Turnover on the DSE stood at Tk 546 crore, while 5.2 crore shares and mutual fund units changing hands.

Meanwhile, AHM Mustafa Kamal, chairman of the parliamentary standing committee on the finance ministry, after a meeting with the leaders of DSE recommended the government allow untaxed money into the market in a bid to prop up confidence of the investors and restore stability.

He made the suggestion after the DSE top brass requested the committee to ask the finance minister for giving a chance to invest untaxed money.

Shakil Rizvi, president of DSE, Ahasanul Islam, senior vice president, and Mohiuddin Khan Alamgir, chairman of the parliamentary standing committee on public accounts, and lawmakers Ali Ashraf, Farida Rahman and Abdur Rahman were present at the meeting.

Kamal said, "We will try to convince the finance minister to give scope to invest untaxed money into the market in addition to bonds."

He said the DSE has proposed some initiatives and sought some incentives for the capital market. "We will discuss those issues with the finance minister on June 23."

The ruling party lawmaker said it is high time to invest in the market as the price earning ratio is good for investment.

He also said the government should take actions against manipulators responsible for share market debacle.

Islam said they also demanded the government reduce tax on share transactions.



Syed Mahbubur Rahman, managing director and chief executive officer of BRAC Bank, opens a new branch in Manikganj yesterday. The branch will have a solar power system as an alternative support.