

# \$25m ADB support for online tax return

**BSS, Dhaka**  
Asian Development Bank will give \$25 million to Bangladesh to help deliver public services in a more efficient and transparent way. The project will use the state-of-the-art information and communications technology to introduce online filing of tax returns, digitise land records management in selected districts, and establish 40 specialised tax and land information and service centres for easy

access to information. The National Board of Revenue will be the executing agency for the tax elements of the project, while the Department of Land Records and Survey will handle the land records management components, the news agency quoted ADB saying in a statement. Bangladesh currently struggles to fund its development needs, with a limited resource base, compounded by low levels of direct taxes, the statement added.

Weak governance hampers the delivery of public services, and poor land records management often causes lengthy court battles, which are major burdens for the poor. "Enabling online tax filing and easy and accurate access to land records will reduce the scope for human interaction, and help reduce demands for illicit extra payments for services," said Hiranya Mukhopadhyay, an economist for fiscal management in ADB's South Asia department.

Electronic tax filing has been shown to increase compliance and to boost government revenues, while digitising land documents will help reduce inaccurate records, which are key sources to land disputes. By establishing the service centres for tax and land information, he said, the project will improve access to information, particularly in remote areas, resulting in reduced costs of compliance with government rules and less harassment by

'middlemen'. "The project will improve transparency and accountability in tax and land record administration, resulting in enhanced public trust in government for service delivery," Mukhopadhyay said. In addition to \$25 million assistance, the ADB will provide \$0.8 million in technical assistance for training and other capacity building support for the government officials involved in the project.



IBBL  
Islami Bank Bangladesh organised a reception programme for Mohammad Abbas Al Nomas, minister of Awqaf and Islamic affairs of Kuwait, on the occasion of his visit to Bangladesh yesterday. Abu Nasser Muhammad Abdus Zaher, chairman of Islami Bank Bangladesh Ltd, attended the programme.

**Pubali Bank gets new additional MD**  
STAR BUSINESS DESK  
MA Halim Chowdhury has recently been appointed additional managing director of Pubali Bank on contract basis, the bank said in a statement yesterday. Prior to this appointment, Chowdhury was the deputy managing director of the bank. He joined the bank in 1988 as principal officer. A science postgraduate from Chittagong University.



**AGM of Shipping Agents' Assoc held in Ctg**  
STAR BUSINESS REPORT  
The 34th annual general meeting of Bangladesh Shipping Agents' Association took place in Chittagong on Wednesday. Sixty-five representatives from different firms under the association attended the meeting at the conference room of Chittagong Stock Exchange. The association's Senior Vice Chairman M Kamal Hayat was in the chair. The minutes of the meeting and the annual report of 2010 were approved on the occasion. The meeting also took decisions on appointing an audit



Latifur Rahman, fourth from right, chairman of National Housing Finance and Investment Ltd, speaks at the company's 12th annual general meeting at Samarai Convention Centre in Dhaka on Wednesday. The company approved 10 percent cash and 10 stock dividends for 2010. Md Abdur Rob, managing director, was also present.

## Khulna Newsprint Mills workers left in distress

**QUAZI AMANULLAH, Khulna**  
Unemployment has added to untold sufferings of a large number of workers and employees of the closed Khulna Newsprint Mills in Khalishpur industrial belt. Members of families of more than 90 percent workers and employees have been living in subhuman condition, reeling under extreme poverty, said former president of KNM Workers' Union Md Rafiqul Islam. About 6,000 workers and employees have been jobless since Khulna Newsprint Mills (KNM) was shut down in 2002 on account of being a losing concern. KNM which went into commercial production in 1957 was closed on November 30, 2002, leaving 3,000 permanent and 3,000 casual workers and employees unemployed. The managing director of the mill, Kazi Ruhul Amin, said the demand for KNM newsprint had fallen sharply since fiscal 1995-96 due to withdrawal of duty for importing newsprint. Besides, the mill started incurring heavy losses as the government did not want to raise the prices of its newsprint to help it cope with higher production costs, he added. A feasibility study committee formed by the government submitted its report in February last year, proposing an allocation of Tk 5,000 crore for the modernisation of the mill to help it produce quality products to compete with imports. Imroze Jahan, former office assistant of the sales department of the mill, said many buyers used to sell KNM newsprint in the black market at Tk 50,000 per tonne after buying it at the mill rate of Tk 19,880 per tonne. "The government did not respond to the repeated demand of the KNM authorities to raise the prices of the products," he said. President of Khulna Citizens' Committee Feroze Ahmed said a large number of workers have shifted to other professions. Even many have been involved in criminal activities, rickshaw pulling and begging, for a livelihood. When asked, State Minister for Labour Begum Monnujan Sufian said the government is determined to reopen the mill as soon as possible. A high-level team is working on the matter, she said.

## Greek lawmakers back reforms, clear way for more aid

**REUTERS, Athens/Berlin**  
The Greek parliament approved detailed austerity and privatisation bills on Thursday in a crucial vote to secure emergency funds and avert imminent bankruptcy, but longer-term dangers still lurk. Prime Minister George Papandreou secured a majority for the legislation after lawmakers backed a 28 billion five-year euro austerity plan on Wednesday, clearing the last obstacle to the next slice of aid from the European Union and the International Monetary Fund. The euro and global stocks rose to three-week highs in anticipation of the vote as investors expressed relief that the spectre of a sudden summer default had been avoided, despite fierce public opposition to more pay and spending cuts. Belgian Finance Minister Didier Reynders said euro zone finance ministers were likely to agree as a result to release a next tranche of loans to Greece at a meeting on Sunday. The IMF is set to follow suit on July 5. That 12 billion euro loan will prevent Greece defaulting in mid-July or at the latest on Aug. 20, when it must honour a big bond redemption, and shift the focus to a second assistance package likely to be about the same size as last year's 110 billion euro bailout. But credit insurance markets are still pricing in an 80 percent chance of Greece defaulting on its 340 billion euro debt mountain -- 150 percent of annual economic output -- within five years, and a likely 40 percent write-down for bondholders on three-year debt. In Berlin, Finance Minister Wolfgang Schauble said he had reached agreement with German banks and he expected a euro zone deal on Sunday on private sector participation in a new assistance programme, based on a French plan for a voluntary debt rollover. German institutes were likely to contribute 3.2 billion euros through this scheme -- barely one-tenth of the sum sought from private bondholders. French banks and insurers have the biggest exposure among foreign holders of Greek debt. Greek banks have little choice but to roll over their holdings. Prime Minister George Papandreou's socialist government may find it hard to enforce tax increases and state asset sales against massive public resistance, while a violent fringe always present in Greek politics has burst to the fore. Vasso Papandreou, a former European Commissioner and rebel member of the prime minister's PASOK party who is not related to him, told parliament she would vote for the laws as a patriotic duty even though she believed the economy would deteriorate as a result. "Germany is preparing the ground for our official bankruptcy as soon as this can happen without cost to the German banks," she said, venting a feeling widely shared among Greeks, who say they are suffering to save European bankers. Rioters armed with stones and clubs fought several hours of running battles with police firing huge clouds of teargas in central Athens until the early hours of the morning, leaving gutted shop-fronts, shattered windows and a field of debris. "The problem for Papandreou is not in parliament," said Costas Panagopoulos, head of ALCO pollsters. "It is what is happening outside parliament: not in Syntagma Square, which is just a few hundred protesters, but with the whole of Greece's 11 million people."

## Japan government agrees plan to double sales tax

**AFP, Tokyo**  
Japan's government and the ruling party on Thursday agreed a plan to double sales tax by the middle of the decade, as the nation looks to tackle rising social welfare costs and ballooning debt. However, the timing of the plan was watered down from an earlier proposal to double the tax -- currently 5 percent -- by March 2016, with no fixed date set. Some lawmakers fear that the economy is too fragile to cope with a tax hike, despite the threat from ratings agencies of a sovereign debt downgrade. Final approval of the plan is expected to be complicated by the fact that Prime Minister Naoto Kan is expected to resign in coming months amid opposition pressure. Kan has faced mounting criticism for his response to the country's March 11 earthquake and tsunami disaster amid anger at his handling of the ensuing nuclear crisis and slow progress in helping

## ECB head says austerity is a 'correction,' points to Berlin

**AFP, Brussels**  
European Central Bank president Jean-Claude Trichet stressed on Thursday that heavily indebted eurozone countries facing tough austerity measures were responsible for their crises and urged them to follow Germany's example. "What we call austerity today is correction of, in many cases I have to say, evolution in the past that were not reasonable, and should have been prevented," Trichet told European Parliament deputies. Responding to questions from the body's economic and monetary affairs committee, Trichet pointed out that public sector wages and salaries in three countries he did not name were "very significantly higher than the average augmentation of unit labour costs in the euro area as a whole."



Md Fayezuzzaman, managing director of Investment Corporation of Bangladesh (ICB) and chairman of ICB Capital Management Ltd (ICML), a subsidiary of ICB, and Nasir Uddin Ahmed, chief executive officer of ICML, attend the opening of the Gazipur branch of ICML on Tuesday.



Firoz Ahmed Khan, head of retail banking of BRAC Bank, and Saleem Bin Saleh, general manager for business development and corporate affairs of Sanmar Properties, sign a deal at a programme in Chittagong recently under which the customers of Apon Ghar, a home loan product of the bank, will enjoy special discounts from Sanmar.

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**FIO:** শিক্ষাগত যোগ্যতা ন্যূনতম স্নাতক। সর্বোচ্চ বয়স সীমা ২৮ বছর। বাছাই প্রক্রিয়ায় বিভিন্ন জায়গায় প্রতি সপ্তাহে ভ্রমণ করতে হবে।  
**বেতন:** ১০,০০০/- (দশ হাজার) টাকা ও অন্যান্য সুবিধা সমূহ।  
**CO:** শিক্ষাগত যোগ্যতা ন্যূনতম এইচ.এস.সি।  
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