



Atiur Rahman, governor of Bangladesh Bank, receives the Nawab Bahadur Syed Nawab Ali Chowdhury National Award 2012, from AAMS Arefin Siddique, vice chancellor of Dhaka University, in the capital on Saturday. Nawab Ali Hasan Smriti Samity conferred the award in recognition of Rahman's contribution to the banking and finance industry.

Hasina asks expats in Qatar to invest in Bangladesh

UNB, Qatar
Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday urged Bangladeshis in Qatar to invest in different sectors, particularly in the five newly designed economic zones in the country.

Hasina made the call while addressing a luncheon meeting, organised by Business Association of Bangladesh (BAB) in Doha in her honour at the hotel Four Seasons.

The premier talked about the contribution of expatriates to the economy of Bangladesh. Listing various steps taken by her government, Hasina mentioned that investment rules have been made more liberal while approval was given to establish three NRB banks to look after

the interests of the expatriate Bangladeshis.

The BAB leaders requested the premier to make their organisation a member of the country's apex trade body, the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry.

They were also keenly interested to set up factories for manufacturing fire-fighting and electric-safety appliances in Bangladesh as well as sought opportunities for investment in the power sector.

On their request to open a bank account of the disaster management ministry to facilitate them to donate directly during any crisis, Hasina advised them to send any such donation to the PM's Relief Fund, which will be eventually diverted for the cause of disaster management and relief operations.

Beximco wraps up acquisition of four subsidiaries

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Bangladesh Export Import Company, popularly known as Beximco, has completed acquiring four non-listed sister concerns.

The company has issued 80.62 lakh ordinary shares of Tk 10 each to the existing shareholders of the four non-listed firms to acquire the entities, according to a posting on the website of Dhaka Stock Exchange yesterday.

The four companies are: International Knitwear and Apparels, Beximco Fashions, Crescent Fashion and Design, and FreshTex Bangladesh.

With the issuance of the new shares, paid-up capital of Beximco has increased by Tk 8.06 crore to Tk 363.56 crore.

The newly issued shares will, however, be locked-in for three years as per regulatory requirement.

On March 28, Beximco received regulatory approval from the Securities and Exchange Commission to acquire the four firms.

Last year Beximco Textiles -- known as Bextex -- merged with Beximco at an exchange ratio of one Beximco share for five Bextex shares. In August 2006, Beximco Group merged its four textile units into one.

Listed on the stockmarket in 1989, Beximco with miscellaneous business segments made a net profit of Tk 685 crore in 2010, according to the DSE website.

On the premier bourse yesterday, each Beximco share traded between Tk 126.60 and Tk 122.80 before closing at Tk 126.10, registering a 4.98 percent rise.

Italy launches Europe's first private high-speed train

AFP, Naples, Italy

Italy launched Europe's first private high-speed train service last week, as the country looks towards the more liberal economy that Prime Minister Mario Monti wants to put on the rails.

The dark-red bullet-shaped "Italo" trains are run by NTV, a company headed by Ferrari boss Luca di Montezemolo who wants to take a quarter of the market from state rail network Trenitalia, the biggest employer in the country.

"Italo has arrived, the competition has kicked off," NTV told its first passengers on an inaugural trip from Rome to Naples as they admired interiors that included a cinema carriage, leather seats and

ADB top officials in town



Xiaoyu Zhao

Juan Miranda

STAR BUSINESS DESK

Xiaoyu Zhao, vice president (operations 1) of the Asian Development Bank, and Juan Miranda, director general for the South Asia Department, arrived in Dhaka yesterday for a two-day official visit, according to a statement of the bank.

During the visit, Zhao and Miranda will hold discussions with senior government officials, including ministers for finance, communications and railways; and advisers for economic affairs, and power and energy.

Discussions will focus on ADB operations and trusts, as well as reform priorities, and implementation issues in key areas, including infrastructure development.

ADB, based in Manila, is dedicated to reducing poverty in Asia and the Pacific through inclusive economic growth, environmentally sustainable growth, and regional integration.



Ferdous Amin, chairman of Prime Insurance Co Ltd, presides over the company's 16th annual general meeting in Dhaka recently. The company approved 10 percent stock dividends. Md Ezhar Hossain, managing director, was also present.



Md Mehmood Husain, managing director of Bank Asia, poses with the participants of a workshop on "Anti-money laundering and combating finance on terrorism" organised by the bank at its training institute in Dhaka yesterday. M Mahfuzur Rahman, executive director of Bangladesh Bank, was also present.

Stocks finish flat in thin trade

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Stocks ended flat yesterday with low turnover following thin participation in trading due to dawn-to-dusk hartal called by BNP.

Turnover on the DSE declined 16.2 percent to Tk 653 crore, compared to the previous day.

The DGEN, the gauge of Dhaka Stock Exchange, finished the day at 5,367.19 points, after falling 0.33 points or 0.006 percent.

"As investment outlook gets cloudy with uncertain political scenario, investors reacted cautiously, leading to a flat session," IDLC Investments said in its market analysis.

Shaken-up confidence rippled across the market and erratic movement was observed throughout the session, IDLC said.

Under the circumstances, investors shied away from new investments and took a neutral stance, it said.

"The market oscillated between gain and loss as the opposition party tried to enforce daylong shut-down," LankaBangla Securities said.

Overall turnover also declined as most investors restrained from participating in trading, it said.

A total of 1.37 lakh trades were executed with 9.75 crore shares and mutual fund units changing hands on the Dhaka bourse.

Of the total 262 issues that traded on the DSE, 124 advanced, 120 declined and eight remained unchanged.

Among the major sectors, pharmaceuticals rose 1.09 percent, followed by telecom 0.42 percent and non-bank financial institutions 0.22 percent. Banks lost 0.90 percent and power 0.21 percent.

Islamic Finance and Investment Ltd topped the gainers' list, rising 9.97 percent, following the first quar-

Indian eggs threaten Bangladesh poultry

FROM PAGE B1

He alleged that apart from the official channel, hundreds of thousands of eggs are smuggled into Bangladesh.

Industry people said there is no way to know whether the eggs would be used for sale or hatching.

India is now frantically looking for markets for its eggs and other poultry products, after the Middle Eastern countries shut their door for the Indian eggs due to the outbreak of bird flu in the country, with the latest ban coming from Oman.

The oil-rich country, which accounts for one-third of Indian poultry products, banned the import of eggs from India on March 27.

Indian exporters have now turned their focus towards markets such as Bangladesh, Afghanistan, Sri Lanka, and West African countries.

The industry people said the poultry products entering Bangladesh from India both legally and illegally would come from India's border areas connected with Bangladesh. These areas are highly at risk of bird flu.

Reports of repeated resurgence of pathogenic H5N1 avian influenza in Tripura have already prompted the Food and Agriculture Organisation to send a five-member specialist team to the state on April 18 to investigate the matter, according to the Times of India. India notified the World Organiza-

sation for Animal Health (OIE) of a bird flu outbreak on February 6, according to the OIE website.

The commerce ministry has said, it has to be certified that the imported grand parent stock or parent stock has not been given influenza vaccine, according to the industry people.

But Indian farmers are giving vaccines to the chicks officially and unofficially. Ihtesham Shahjahan, general secretary of Feed Mill Association of Bangladesh, said Indian farms also use harmful antibiotic in the chicks.

He said the government allowed Faria Enterprise to import eggs last year, but the eggs were not imported because there was over-production in the country.

Rahman said they are not against egg import, but the poultry products should come from countries free from avian influenza for the sake of human health.

Bangladesh, which was self sufficient in poultry products even in 2011, needs to import eggs as the local supply is half of the daily demand for 3.5 crore eggs, due to a drastic fall in production amid the outbreak of avian influenza.

MM Khan, secretary general of Bangladesh Poultry Industries Association, said there are laws to stop imports of eggs from an avian influenza affected country, but the rules are not being followed.

The industry people also expressed concern about the foreign companies' foray into the country's poultry industry. No official of Faria Enterprise was immediately available for comments.

Faria Enterprise is not the only company that has been given permission to import eggs.

Rajdhani International, a trader, imported some 77 lakh pieces of Indian eggs through Benapole land port in the last one month, a customs official said earlier.

The company received the green light from the commerce ministry in August 2009 to import 10 crore pieces of eggs. It has so far imported more than two crore pieces.

According to Import Policy Order 2009-12, an importer requires permission from the commerce ministry. And "eggs are importable in limited quantity from a country free from avian influenza or bird flu," says the order.

It also says, for every consignment of imported eggs, there must be a certificate mentioning the goods are free from avian influenza or bird flu virus and harmful bacteria, issued from the livestock department or any competent authority of the exporting country.

Commerce Secretary Ghulam Hussain recently said the government would not allow egg import from a bird flu or avian influenza prone country.

Container seized by Ctg customs

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Customs officials at Chittagong Port yesterday seized an import container full of electronic goods as they were not correctly declared.

Omar Faruk, superintendent of audit investigation and revenue branch of Chittagong Customs House, said they opened the 40-foot equivalent unit container and found several LCD and LED televisions of different brands, digital cameras, DVD players and shampoos.

The actual quantity of the seized items was immediately unavailable as the count was not complete.

An importer, named Consortium Link with an address as Bahadurpur in Mirzapur, Gazipur, imported the shipment around one month ago under declaration of importing four sets of capital machinery," Faruk said.

He said no clearing and forwarding agent had so far submitted any bill of entry against the container to the customs house.

Default loans at state banks still high: BB

FROM PAGE B1

His comments came at a meeting with the chief executives of Sonali, Janata, Agrani and Rupali banks at the BB headquarters in Dhaka.

The four banks sign memorandum of understanding (MoU) every year with the central bank for developing banking operations including operation costs, availability of capital, realisation of default loans, reduction of loss incurring branches and risk management.

The BB also sets some targets for the banks through the agreement and reviews their achievements in every three months.

Rahman said both the amount and the rate of non-performing loans of all the state banks went down in the last

quarter of 2011 compared to the previous quarter.

The bad loan recovery rate is also not satisfactory with the three banks apart from Janata.

Last year, Sonali Bank could recover only 14.82 percent of the target from its top 20 loan-defaulter. Agrani Bank could retrieve 57.03 percent and Rupali Bank only 0.04 percent of the targeted bad loans.

Janata Bank fared well, recovering 91.99 percent of the target.

"The banks have to play more effective roles in recovering the default loans," said Rahman. "The recovery cell of the banks has to be made more effective in realising the bad loans."

He said the state banks, however, have been able to maintain 11.68 percent capital adequacy

in compliance with Basel-II regulations.

The banks need to hold at least 10 percent capital adequacy.

The governor asked the banks to prepare and submit a comprehensive capital plan in the next two months, as the central bank is going ahead with implementing Basel-III.

Rahman said the banks' implementation of the core risk management guideline has been at a marginal or fair level in most cases, which has to be improved to a satisfactory level.

He categorically said the central bank would not tolerate any breach of the regulator's prudential regulations.

He also asked the banks to be more cautious about their asset liability management.

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