

Humanitarian mission of EC due soon

APELDOORN (The Netherlands), July 8: European Community (EC) cooperation and development ministers...

The ministers reviewed a proposal by community foreign ministers to have an EC Troika carry out urgent missions to developing countries in need of humanitarian aid.

The current EC Troika consists of the Netherlands, Luxembourg and Portugal.

The EC ministers discussed setting up a humanitarian aid agency that would streamline relief procedures.

Informal talks centered on a proposal by EC Cooperation and Development Commissioner Manuel Marin of Spain that community members better coordinate their aid efforts...

Bangladesh Bank opens 2 VAT accounts

Bangladesh Bank said on Sunday that two more new accounts have been opened from July 2, 1991 under the No-10 (Internal Resource Division) account of the Government with Bangladesh Bank...

The new accounts are 14-Ka value added tax (VAT) and 14-Kha-supplementary duty. Under these two major heads, the names of the new minor heads are imported goods and indigenous goods and services.

All branches of Bangladesh Bank have been directed through circulars from the Head Office on July 2 to accept money from the tax payers under these new Government heads.

Small Bank was also asked to give similar directives to its branches which operate as treasury.

Sharp fall in share trading

Star Economic Report

Dhaka Stock Exchange (DSE) witnessed a sharp decline in trading on Monday.

In all 2,376 shares changed hands compared with Sunday's 5,103. Traded issues valued Taka 2,41,735.25 against Sunday's Taka 3,54,533.00.

Advancers were less in number. But they involved more transactions in value terms. As a result the All Share Price Index of DSE, which is the broad indicator of price movements of all the listed stocks, moved up slightly to 307.0109 points from Sunday's 306.7505.

Transactions involved ten stocks. Of them two gained five and three remained unchanged at their previous quoted prices.

Bangladesh Thai Aluminium and IF/C Bank moved up Taka 8.86 and Taka 6.43 to Taka 99.19 and Taka 186.43 respectively.

Talks Spinning declined Taka 1.67 to Taka 114.45. Green Delta Insurance, 6th ICB Mutual Fund, Ambee Pharma and Savar Refractories lost with in the range between Taka 0.25 and Taka 1.00.

Quoted Prices of Traded Stocks July - 8

Table with columns: Stock Name, Price, Change. Includes items like Delta Insurance, ICB Mutual Fund, Ambee Pharma, Savar Refractories, etc.

\*FV=Face Value, ML=Market Lot \*\* Changes: Plus signs mean gain and (-) signs losses.

Dhaka Stock Exchange Market Profile July - 8

Summary table showing 134 Listed Stocks, 2 Gainers, 5 losers, 127 Unchanged. Includes DSE All Share Price Index = 307.0109, Issued Capital=Taka 5,439,680,590, Market Capitalisation = 8,772,915,175, Turnover = Taka 32,41,735.25 (Value) 2,376(Volume).

Rapid, effective trade reforms needed

Star Economic Report

Chief of the World Bank (WB) Resident Mission in Dhaka Christopher R Willoughby said on Monday that sufficiently rapid and effective trade reforms were needed in Bangladesh to strengthen the functioning of markets.

He stated this on Monday at the mission office at a press briefing on the occasion of the release of the annual report 1991 of the WB with its theme, 'the challenge of development'.

Dilating on the conclusions of the report in the particular context of Bangladesh's experience, Willoughby observed that reforms should cover both domestic and international trade because 'their effectiveness depends on one another.' 'If the reforms are sufficiently rapid and effective, many firms

in both public and private sectors will initially suffer. This is the inevitable consequence of the policies previously followed and, in other parts of the world, now being almost universally rejected,' he felt.

While stating that some firms should fold because of the reforms, he expressed the view that Bangladesh 'is in a comparatively good position to absorb these shocks because its garments industry has already demonstrated that its entrepreneurs and workers can be internationally competitive on a large scale, and there are undoubtedly substantial further opportunities awaiting Bangladesh in international markets.'

He did not, however, elaborate on what were such opportunities. The Bank Resident Mission

Chief noted that the alternative to rapid and effective trade reforms would be to continue the almost total stagnation of the last decade in the sectors that should be providing Bangladesh's main new sources of employment.

About the domestic trade reforms, he suggested that the main measures might include progress in the collection of bank debts and creation of a sound credit system, rationalization of the public sector bodies and enterprises, elimination of investment controls, facilitation of the closure of loss-making enterprises and other bankruptcy arrangements, and renewed policies for privatization of public sector manufacturing enterprises.

On the international trade front, he stated, the key steps

could include rapid phase-out of import bans and restrictions, sharp reduction in the protection of manufacturing industry, and aggressive facilitation of foreign investment, especially in export industry. The WB annual report this year shows that average tariff levels in Bangladesh are well over double those in other developing regions and about four times those applied by Japan and most other rich countries during their early stage of development, he noted. He maintained that key reforms in international trade would have a 'crucial impact on the domestic economy' of Bangladesh.

Willoughby mentioned about the conclusions drawn in the world development report 1991. He said, world development experience strongly

urges a dynamic programme of reforms 'at this time in Bangladesh.' 'The report's analysis of the difference between success and failure in development make it clear that the crucial factor has been countries' own policies. The projections into the future suggest again that countries' own policies will have much greater impact on their development than policies of the industrialised countries, wealthy they may be in world trade,' he added.

He noted that the report concluded that the right strategy for the developing countries whether external conditions are supportive or not, should be to invest in people including education, health and population control and to help domestic markets to

work well by fostering competition and investing in infrastructure. Besides, the strategy should cover effective moves to liberalise trade and foreign investment and to avoid excessive fiscal deficits and high inflation, he said.

About the situation in Bangladesh in the context of such a strategy, he observed that the country generally followed cautious macroeconomic policies and avoided high inflation. 'The nation is also on the way to gradually catching up the huge backlog in investment in primary education and health,' he pointed out while adding Bangladesh 'still has a very long way to go' on development of a more competitive domestic economy and opening up to international trade and investment.

Snippets

German trade hits 26-year low

WIESBADEN (Germany), July 8: Germany's trade balance was in deficit in May for the second month running, marking the worst German trade performance in almost 26 years, the Federal Statistics Office reported Friday, says AFP.

The deficit was 0.8 billion Marks (437 million Dollars) in May, after a deficit of 1.4 billion Marks (765 million Dollars) in April, it said.

In May 1990 - the month before German Economic and Monetary Union on July 1 - West Germany had a surplus of 12.3 billion Marks (6.50 billion Dollars).

The last time that West Germany recorded a consecutive two-month deficit in trade was in August and September, 1985. The last annual deficit was in 1951.

Foreign investors get same rights in USSR

MOSCOW, July 8: The Supreme Soviet of USSR Friday approved the legislative principles for foreign investment law granting foreign investors the same rights as Soviet enterprises enjoy, reports Xinhua.

The legislative document allows establishment of solely-owned foreign enterprises in the Soviet Union and grant of royalty over natural resources to foreign investors.

Under the document Soviet foreign joint ventures or foreign enterprises are exempted from import duties and joint ventures with no less than 15 per cent of foreign investment have the right to import and export.

Dollar down, Sterling gains

LONDON, July 8: The Dollar was well down on the day Friday, losing a full penny following the announcement of disappointing unemployment figures in the United States, reports AFP.

News of a seven per cent jobless rate in June - the highest since October 1986 - saw traders ease off the Dollar which finished at 1,842.5 German Marks compared with 1,833.0 at Thursday's close.

The German Mark was also on a downward trend due to the situation in Yugoslavia and a further deterioration in the German balance of trade announced during the day.

\$9.3m Pak-Japan agri project

ISLAMABAD, July 8: Japanese and Pakistani officials here Sunday finalised plans for a 293 million Rupee (\$9.3 million Dollar) agricultural research project, the state-run Associated Press of Pakistan (APP) said.

Work on the project called genetic resources laboratory is to start after the two governments give their formal approval, the agency said.

A five-member Japanese team led by an Agriculture Ministry official and the head of Pakistan agricultural research council settled the details in talks during the past two weeks, the APP said.

Pakistan Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif abruptly postponed a scheduled official visit to Japan at the start of the month because of law and order problems in the country.

Britain win 61 Kuwaiti contracts

LONDON, July 8: British companies have won at least 61 contracts worth 200 million Pounds (\$380 million US Dollars) for the rebuilding of Kuwait following the Gulf war, says the department of trade and industry, reports Xinhua.

They have also clinched a 300 million Dollars share of a deal to supply the country's airline with new airbus airliners.

The department said the contract were being won in direct dealings with Kuwaiti ministries, as well as through the private sector and project managers.

About 200 British companies and individuals had suggested innovative ways of extinguishing Kuwaiti oil-well fires.

New revenue measures likely in Philippines

MANILA, July 8: President Corason Aquino said Sunday she would ask the Philippine Congress to pass new revenue measures to help finance the cost of reconstruction from the eruption of Mount Pinatubo, reports AFP.

Finance Secretary Jesus Estaralao said in Mrs Aquino's regular talk show on government radio that Manila needed 15 billion Pesos (540 million Dollars) just to feed the tens of thousands of displaced people and rebuild damaged infrastructure over the next six months.

Negative effects of palm oil refuted

\$30m can be saved

Star Economic Report

Bangladesh could have saved 30 million Dollar a year if palm oil was used in the country with greater intensity than that of the soyabean.

This was stated by Dato Murad Hashim, Chief Executive, Malaysian Palm Oil Promotion Council at a luncheon discussion at a local hotel in Dhaka on Monday. The discussion was arranged in order to explain aspects arising out of unfair and erroneous allegations in the local press regarding palm oil.

Ms Tunku Nazriah Mohammad Ros, High Commissioner of Malaysia in Bangladesh made introductory remarks in the meeting.

Refuting the negative ef-

fects of palm oil use, Dato said palm oil is now one of the world's most widely consumed edible oil. Historical records show that it was traded as a food commodity over 5000 years ago. In human feeding experiments, it was found that diets containing palm oil caused a reduction in blood cholesterol to a certain level, he added.

Dato said recent animal experiments indicate that palm oil inhibits arterial thrombosis, does not promote atherosclerosis, increases coronary blood flow and has no effect on blood pressure.

He said charges brought against palm oil was on ac-

count of business rivalry by a vested quarter lobbying for the promotion of soyabean oil.

Claiming palm oil as better than soyabean in most cases, Dato said consequences of attack is far-reaching without any scientific basis.

Palm oil is widely marketed in China, India, Pakistan, EEC and even in USA. But in Bangladesh, the import of palm oil had slowed down during the last few years.

Bangladesh had imported two lakh tons of palm oil in 1986 but the imports came down to 80,000 tons in 1990. The duty on palm oil has been increased manifold as compared to soyabean. The present duty on soyabean import is 30 per cent while 70 per cent duty has been imposed on palm oil.

Presenting slide show of scientific uses of palm oil, Dr Augustin S H Ong, Director, Scientific & Technical Services of the Council demonstrated healthy uses of palm oil.

Dato led the three-member delegation from the Malaysian Palm Oil Promotion Council. Other members are Dr Augustin S H Ong and T Thilagaranjan, Head of Technical Advisory Unit, Palm Oil Research Institute of Malaysia.

Replying to a question, Dato said some particular varieties of palm oil could be processed through the soyabean refinery units and the conversion cost will be minimum in Bangladesh.

In reply to another question, Dato said there was little price-gap between the crude palm and refined palm oil.

He hinted that misconception about palm might have been created by propaganda of a certain quarter.

'We are confident that the future of Malaysian palm oil, its production and marketing potentials are also increasing,' he said.

'We consider Bangladesh as an important country which has great potentials for palm oil,' he added.



JOHANNESBURG: Several thousand supporters of the African National Congress (ANC) held a protest march recently through downtown Johannesburg where the ANC is calling for jobs, peace and freedom. -AFP photo

'Public, private sectors' roles determine 3rd world uplift

WASHINGTON, July 8: Relations between the government and the private sector in developing countries are the determining factor in those nations' economic development, the World Bank said Sunday, reports AFP.

'The tremendous divergence of country experiences over the last 40 years provides the basis for convergence in views about the way forward,' World Bank chief economist Lawrence Summers said in the

bank's annual report on world economic development.

For the 1990s, the World Bank predicted that per capita incomes in developed countries might grow, on average, about 2.5 per cent annually, barring any adverse economic shocks. In developing countries, it said per capita income might grow by about three per cent per year if those countries continue economic reform programs.

The report also said that 95

per cent of growth in the world's labour force over the next 25 years would be in developing countries, with interaction between government and markets as the centerpiece.

'Competitive markets are the best way yet found for efficiently organizing the production and distribution of goods and services,' the lending giant said.

New IAIB Secy-Gen

Sheikh Fouad Abdul Hameed Al-Khateeb of Saudi Arabia one of the Sponsors-Directors of Islamic Bank Bangladesh Limited was elected Secretary General of International Association of Islamic Banks (IAIB) recently.

He took over the charge from the outgoing Secretary General Dr Ahmad Al-Naggar.

Saudi Citizen Sheikh Fouad Abdul Hameed Al-Khateeb is a career diplomat. He was the Ambassador of Saudi Arabia to Bangladesh. Later, he was appointed the Assistant Secretary General of the OIC.

He is a prominent Islamic Scholar who authored a number of books on various aspects of Islamic ideology an Islamic Bank press release said Monday.



Most Asian currencies fall

HONG KONG, July 8: Most Asian currencies fell during the week on signs of improvement in the US economy and amid share scandals buffeting Tokyo's financial markets, reports AFP.

The Japanese Yen, the Indonesian Rupiah, the Malaysian Ringgit, the Thai Baht, the Korean Won and the Hong Kong, Australian and New Zealand Dollars all fell while the Singapore Dollar remained the same.

Only the Philippine Peso and the Taiwan Dollar strengthened during the week.

Japanese Yen: The Yen last ground in Tokyo after a brief

rally on a cut in Japan's discount rate at the outset of the week. It closed at 136.23 Yen to the Dollar slightly off from 138.15 Yen a week earlier.

It opened the week off at 136.37 Yen but rallied to 137.65 Yen Monday when the Bank of Japan cut its key lending rate by 0.5 per cent to 5.5 per cent.

Australian Dollar: The Australian Dollar slid against the US Dollar during the week as the Greenback gained against most major currencies.

Hong Kong Dollar: The Hong Kong Dollar closed the week at 7.7655-7.7675 to the US Dollars down from last

week's position of 7.7275-7.7285.

The Hong Kong unit has been pegged at about 7.80 to the US Dollar since 1983.

Indonesian Rupiah: The Indonesian currency fell this week to close at 1,956 Rupiah to the Dollar, a record low, against 1,953 Rupiah a week earlier.

Malaysian Ringgit: The Malaysian Ringgit weakened to 2.7935 Friday against the US Dollar compared with 2.7892 the previous week.

New Zealand Dollar: The New Zealand Dollar closed the week worth 56.64 US cents, down on last week's 57.00

cents.

With the government due to bring in its budget at the end of the week, trading next week is expected to remain slow.

Philippine Peso: The Philippine Peso closed the week at 27.656 Peso to the Greenback, up on the previous week's 27.75 Peso level.

Singapore Dollar: The Singapore Dollar held steady against the US Dollar closing at 1.7685 Friday, the same level as the previous week.

Taiwan Dollar: The Taiwan currency picked up steam to close at 27.025 to the US Dollar, up 8.45 Taiwan cents from the previous week's finish of 27.1095.

Thai Baht: The Thai currency fluctuated slightly against the Greenback during the week to close at a mid-rate of 25.79 Baht to the Dollar, down against 25.71 Baht the previous week.

The decline was a result of increased confidence in the US economy, the a Bangkok Bank official said.

South Korean Won: The Won closed the week at 729.41 Won, off against the previous Friday's 725.20 Won level, against a backdrop of a current account deficit South Korea has accumulated this year.

A senior dealer at Barclays Bank Plc said the exchange rate fluctuated throughout the week as banks and businesses speculated.



The Fifth Annual General Meeting of the Phoenix Insurance Company Ltd was held recently at the Company's Head Office. The meeting was presided over by the Chairman of the Company Major General Abdul Mannan Siddiqui (Retd.).