

Kibria to visit Dhaka next week

Star Economic Report SAMS Kibria, Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations and Executive Secretary of ESCAP, will undertake an official visit to Bangladesh from 16 to 23 November. During the course of his stay in Bangladesh, Kibria will participate in a number of important events in addition to holding consultations with leaders and senior officials of the Government on matters of cooperation between Bangladesh and ESCAP.

Kibria has been invited by the Government to the Regional Workshop on Sectoral Development Issues and Environment being held in Dhaka from 16 to 21 November. This workshop is being organized by ESCAP in cooperation with UNDP. It is one of the five major regional meetings being organized by ESCAP aimed at implementation of the regional strategy on environmentally sound and sustainable development in Asia and the Pacific. The strategy was endorsed at ESCAP's 47th annual ministerial session in Seoul in April this year, following a decision on the subject by the Ministerial Meeting on Environment and Development also convened by ESCAP in October last year. The main focus of Regional Workshop in Dhaka will be to address the relationships between energy, transport and industrial sectors and the environment and to seek ways and means of integrating environment and economic considerations affecting activities at different levels.

During his stay, the Executive Secretary of ESCAP will also attend the Bangladesh National Seminar on Evaluation of ESCAP/IO Non-Farm Employment Promotion Project. The main focus of the seminar will be on evaluating the performance of direct beneficiaries of the pilot scheme to promote non-farm employment as an alternative to agricultural employment in rural Bangladesh. Since 1987, ESCAP has been implementing a project on the subject with financial support from Australia and the Netherlands in selected villages in Narsingdi Sadar and Shaktipur upazilas of Narsingdi and Tangail districts. Similar projects with highly significant results are also being implemented by ESCAP in Sri Lanka, the Philippines, Thailand and Nepal.

Kibria will be accompanied by several senior officials of ESCAP, including Sultan Zaman Khan, Chief, Agriculture and Rural Development and Kazi F. Jalal, Chief, Industry, Human Settlements and Environment Division. Kibria will also meet the Bangladesh Forum of Environment Journalists during his stay in Dhaka.



THE HAGUE US President George Bush gestures as he holds a joint press conference along with Dutch PM Ruud Lubbers (centre) and EEC Commissioner Jacques Delors.

Inter-ministerial body to privatise public sector industries

A thirteen member inter-ministerial privatisation committee has been formed with the principal Finance Secretary as its chief to work out the transfer of public sector industries and government shares of various commercial, financial and other institutions to the private sector, an official source said in Dhaka on Sunday, reports BSS.

The terms of reference of the committee is to review the present privatisation policy and formulate future policies in this regard, assessing the proposals of various ministries with regard to privatisation and adopting appropriate recommendations and place the final recommendations before the Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (ECNEC) and monitoring the implementation of the ECNEC approved policies regarding privatisation.

21 miners killed in S. African violence

JOHANNESBURG, Nov 9: Twenty-one black miners were killed overnight in fresh fighting at a violence-plagued South African gold mine, the mine owners said today, reports Reuter.

Orange Free State. Last Sunday 15 blacks were killed at the mine in fighting linked to a two-day general strike called by unions trying to force the government to give them a say in policy-making.

Japan may not join EAEC

TOKYO, Nov 10: New Japanese Foreign Minister Michio Watanabe says his government is unlikely to join the proposed East Asia Economic Caucus (EAEC) as long as it excludes the United States, reports Reuter.

Mahathir Mohamad. Details of Baker's memorandum were not disclosed but the United States has rejected the EAEC proposal excluding it from an organisation spanning one of the most dynamic economic regions in the world, the news agency said.

The Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum is a conference which includes even the United States, so it is worthwhile, but for my part, I can't go along with thinking which excludes a particular country, Watanabe was quoted by Kyodo news service as saying on Saturday.

Watanabe and Industry Minister Koze Watanabe are to represent Japan in a three-day APEC meeting in Seoul starting on Tuesday. Baker and US Trade Representative Carla Hills are to take part, along with Chinese Foreign Minister Qian Qichen.

India targets to save \$307m from defence

NEW DELHI, Nov 10: The Defence Ministry has taken a series of measures to prune expenditure in view of the marginal increase in budgetary allocation for the current year, with the target of saving 8 billion Rupees (307 million US Dollars), the Economic Times reported today, says Xinhua.

India's defense outlay in the current 1991-92 financial year is at 163.5 billion Rupees (6.3 billion US Dollars), about four per cent higher than 1990-91 in Rupee term.

Addressing the conference of economic editors here, last week the Minister of State for Defense, Krishna Kumar, said that the ministry planned to raise an additional 20 billion Rupees (769 million US Dollars) by disposing of stores and spares which the armed forces had accumulated over the years. The resources will be used to meet the modernisation requirements of the armed forces.

Kumar said the armed forces had been badly hit by the foreign exchange crisis. As a result, defense under takings had started exploring markets abroad to export surplus production for earning foreign exchanges.

Environmental spending good for Asian business

SINGAPORE, Nov 10: Environmental spending is good for Asian business and "green" measures will play an increasing role in the region's growth and policies, according to government officials and corporate leaders meeting here, reports Reuter.

He said the concept of "sustainable development" was taking root among leading multinationals operating in Asia, backing the idea that economic growth must go hand in hand with, protecting the environment.

They also told a four-day conference which concluded today that global cooperation on green issues was vital and technology transfers and training would expand. Some suggested enforcement would also have to be global. The pest hope for greater uniformity and less confusion may well be some kind of international charter that would enunciate guidelines and principles,

K Onogawa, senior adviser to Japan's environment agency, said Japan's multi-billion Dollar spending on environmental measures after disasters with mercury poisoning and air pollution in the 1950s and 1960s had not hurt the economy. The implementation of stringent control measures often results in the development of new technology or innovation of technology which

Seoul workers demand more labour rights

SEOUL, Nov 10: Some 40,000 workers and dissidents shouting anti-government slogans railed Sunday to demand expanded labour rights and the repeal of vicious labour laws, reports AP.

"Repel vicious labour laws!" shouted workers waving hundreds of red, green and yellow flags and jabbing their fists in the air. "Labour rights!" they shouted to the beat of drum.

About 8,000 riot police backed up by armored multiple tear-gas launchers were deployed around the rally site to prevent violence. They did not block workers and students from attending the rally.

A gigantic banner showing workers with their fists in the air hung behind a giant stage in an outdoor park beside the Han River in central Seoul, where the rally was held.

More Korean investment in Bangladesh sought

Mahbubur Rahman, President, DCCI and leader of the 8-member trade and investment delegation now on a visit to Seoul, Korea held a meeting with Dr Chulsu Kim, President of the Korea Trade Promotion Corporation (KOTRA) recently. He was accompanied, among others, by Dr. Shah M. Farid, Executive Chairman, Board of Investment (BOI) and Bangladesh Ambassador to Korea H. E. Kazi Anwarul Masud.

They apprised the KOTRA President about the new industrial policy and investment opportunities offered by Bangladesh and requested him to help increase investment in Bangladesh.

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Investment Promotion Seminar organised by Bangladesh Embassy in Seoul in collaboration with KOTRA. Mr. Mahbubur Rahman, DCCI President presented a paper on new industrial policy measures for foreign investment in Bangladesh. In this address, Rahman mentioned that the new Bangladesh government has given top priority to the growth of a strong private sector through local and foreign investment. In the industrial policy various encouraging measures have been undertaken for rapid industrial growth. He also mentioned that the opportunities for composite Textiles Mills, Leather, Electronics etc. and other items that has export potentials.

He also pointed out that the balance of trade between the two countries was very much unfavourable to Bangladesh for a very long time. Korean investment in export oriented industries can easily offset this imbalance and at the same time it will help Korean manufacturer in Bangladesh to become more competitive in the international market.

Mr. Rahman also mentioned that the central Bank of Korea has advised Small and Medium Industries to re-locate their enterprises abroad because of high salary and ever-increasing shortage of workers. In this case Bangladesh is the most suitable place compared to other countries at this time. After the seminar, members

India to ask for \$5b IMF loan

NEW DELHI, Nov 10: The International Monetary Fund has agreed in principle to convert a 2.3 billion Dollar standby loan to India approved last month into a five to seven billion Dollar loan next year, Finance Minister Manmohan Singh said here, reports Reuter.

IMF Managing Director Michael Camdessus on a visit to Delhi two weeks ago said there would be no problem in converting the loan but the fund would be looking for signals that sweeping economic reforms already in place were irreversible.

"It is our intention to ask for the EFF (Extended Fund Facility) and the fund has agreed in principle," Singh told a conference of economic editors.

The 2.3 billion Dollar standby loan—on top 2.6 billion Dollar borrowed earlier this year from the fund—has eased a severe foreign exchange crunch that brought India to the brink of default earlier this year on its 72 billion Dollar debt.

Delhi will formally ask the IMF to convert the 18-month stand-by credit to a three-year EFF loan after it presents its 1992/93 (April-March) budget in late February, he said. There will be no more conditionality (under the EFF) than what we have now," Singh said. The longer repayment period in another big reason to convert the stand-by credit, the added.

Singh said the IMF money would remain in the government's offers. India now has 2.1 billion Dollars in foreign exchange reserves and aims to keep them at around 2.5 billion, he said.

worst crisis since independence from Britain in 1947, said Singh, a former central bank Governor.

For the future, India wants as much as possible to replace foreign loans with direct foreign equity investment, he said.

"One objective is to switch from loans to direct investment," Singh said. "The world faces a capital shortage and it's not going to be easy to attract large-scale flows."

The government now gives automatic approval for most foreign investment projects and allows the foreign partner to take a majority stake in joint ventures.

A more open attitude toward foreign investment was also needed to restore the confidence of international leaders in India's economy, he said.

Chinese soaring industrial growth threatens economy

BEIJING, Nov 10: China's soaring output of often unmarketable goods poses a threat to an economy staggering under the weight of heavily indebted state enterprises and unwanted inventories, an official report warned Saturday, reports AP.

The China Daily also reported an estimate that China's budget deficit for 1991 was likely to reach 60 billion Yuan (11.1 billion Dollars), and that its trade deficit grew for the third straight month.

A States Statistics Bureau economist warned that uncontrolled industrial growth could overwhelm the central government if it rises above 15 per cent, The China Daily said. It said industrial output in the first 10 months of this year was 13.9 per cent higher than the same period last year. The government has spent heavily making up its enterprises debts. It ordered each

Bombs damaged 17 oil wells in Kuwait

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 10: At least 17 of the hundreds of damaged oil wells in Kuwait were destroyed by allied air bombardment during the Gulf War, a Kuwaiti official was quoted Sunday as saying, reports AP.

State-run enterprises continue churning out shoddy goods that are shunned by consumers, building up stockpiles of unsold goods and driving the businesses deep into debt.

"So far, we have been able to count 17 wells that have been hit by aerial bombardment," said Bouyabib. Some 732 wells were set ablaze or damaged by retreating Iraqi occupation forces last February.

The fact that industrial production has sustained high growth rates should merit highly serious attention," said a statement from the Statistics Bureau.

Previously, bureau spokesman Zhang Zhongji said he expected the annual rate of industrial growth to be around recent for this year, the newspaper said. It said the value of industrial production last month was 204.5 billion Yuan (38.2 billion Dollars), but gave no figure for October 1990.

Exchange Rates

November-10

Table showing Exchange Rates for various currencies including US Dollar, UK Pound Sterling, German Deutsche, etc. Includes columns for Selling and Buying rates.

of the delegation initiated individual business dialogue with the prospective Korean companies which was arranged by KOTRA. Both for trade and investment contacts.

On October 31, 1991 members of the DCCI delegation held two separate meetings with Korea Foreign Trade Association (KFTA) and Korea Federation of Small Business (KFSB). The Leader and the members of the delegation apprised them about the investment climate and incentives offered by Bangladesh for Foreign private investment. The DCCI President assured them that Dhaka Chamber as the largest representative body of the private sector shall extend all necessary support and co-operation to the Foreign investors, whenever asked for.

\$15.4 m IFAD assistance for cyclone victims

Bangladesh will receive 15.4 million US dollars from the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) as assistance for the cyclone affected people of the country, reports UNB.

A loan agreement to this effect was signed with the Fund by Bangladesh Ambassador to IFAD Walfur Rahman in Rome on Friday, according to a message received Saturday.

The agreement was signed during a meeting of Agriculture, Irrigation and Flood Control Minister Majidul Haq with IFAD President Idries Jazairy.

During his meeting with the IFAD President, the visiting Bangladesh Minister discussed bilateral matters, particularly the Fund's special assistance project for the cyclone affected rural households in the country.

The 20.7 million US dollars IFAD Special Assistance Project, with grants from the Danish International Development Agency and the European Community and funds from the Bangladesh Government, will focus on some 69,000 farming and fishing families living on islands and coastal regions in the Chittagong-Cox's Bazar area.

With this project, IFAD becomes one of the first international agencies operating in the country to emphasize on two essential dimensions of recovery: rehabilitation and prevention.

Fund officials said long term sustainable development for the rural poor, not emergency relief, is the goal of IFAD's eleven previous interventions in Bangladesh for a total cost of 348 million US dollars and of the 302 projects it has financed in 93 developing countries since 1978.

West agrees to give aid to Soviet Union

TOKYO, Nov 9: Western countries have agreed to give emergency aid to the Soviet Union to help avoid a default in payments of its foreign debt, a major Japanese newspaper said today, reports Reuter.

The mass-circulation Asahi Shimbun quoted unnamed international financial sources as saying the agreement came at recent meetings of Deputy Finance Ministers from the Group of Seven (G-7) in Moscow and Paris.

Asahi said the agreement called for deferment of debt repayments and short-term financing through the bank of international settlements. It did not give figures.

The sources were quoted as saying that such debt financing would continue in 1992 if the Soviet cash flow problem was not resolved the end of this year.

The paper said the agreement urged the Soviet Union to make payments through a single channel, the central foreign-trade bank, and not through banks in the republics.



Gulf Air recently distributed the 1990 Golden Falcon Agents Award for excellence in productivity and increased sale during 1990 to top ten travel and cargo agents. Said Al Rumhy, Area Manager and Kashem Chowdhury, District Sales Manager, Gulf Air are seen among the prize winners.

Hides & Skin

(Wet/Salted) November-10 (Taka per 100 pieces)

Table showing prices for various types of hides and skins such as Cow, Calf, Light, Medium, Heavy, etc.

Gold & Silver

Table showing prices for Gold and Silver (Taka for 11.66 grams).

Price Barometer Essentials

November-10

Large table listing various commodities and their prices, including Rice, Vegetables, Fish, Poultry, and Meat.

Source: Department of Agricultural Marketing