

BRIEFS

Zaire merchants accept new notes

KINSHASA (Zaire), Feb 8: President Mobutu Sese Seko has won a temporary reprieve in the pressure for him to step down, as merchants began accepting disputed new bank notes that provoked military riots last week...

Cuba studying free trade zone's idea

HAVANA, Feb 8: Cuba, which is seeking to open its economy to international trade and investment, is studying the possibility of setting up a free trade and transit zone, the communist-ruled island's Customs chief said...

Canadian PM in US

WASHINGTON, Feb 8: President Bill Clinton stuck to tradition on Friday as Canadian Prime Minister Brian Mulroney became the first foreign leader to visit the White House since the November 3 election...

GM men moving to counter publicity

CHICAGO, Feb 8: Top General Motors Corp officials are moving aggressively to counter the publicity from an enormous negligence verdict on GM's pre-1988 pickups, asserting it would have no impact on sales or customer loyalty...

FTC defers action on Microsoft probe

WASHINGTON, Feb 8: The Federal Trade Commission deferred action Friday on its closely watched antitrust investigation of Microsoft Corp, the world's largest computer software company...

US budget cuts to be announced soon

WASHINGTON, Feb 8: The US administration will announce spending cuts in the coming week demonstrating President Bill Clinton's commitment to curbing waste, Vice President Al Gore said Sunday...

ECO to set up bank, link member states

QUETTA, (Pakistan), Feb 8: Members of the 10-nation Economic Cooperation Organisation (ECO) Sunday agreed to establish a regional bank to boost and finance their trade and called for a rail and road network to improve inter-Asia transport and communications, reports AFP.

groupings and organisations and the foreign ministers also decided to seek help from the United Nations agencies, World Bank and Islamic Bank in realising objectives states in the plan.

national financing and expressed "satisfaction" at the "positive results" of various expert groups on developing regional cooperation and initiation of significant projects among the member states, it said.

communications as a pre-requisite for achieving the goals of ECO. The plan calls for improving the transport system among the member countries to enable trucks to travel from one end of the ECO to the other as well as the expansion and integration of national railway networks.

The conference also decided to establish a direct air link between the capitals of each of the ECO countries and discussed the possibility of starting an ECO airline.



SIBI (Pakistan): Iranian Foreign Minister, Ali Akbar Velayati tries on a traditional Balouchi cap and an ajrak (scarf) presented by Quetta Senator Fasih Iqbal February 7. On the second day of Economic Cooperation Organisation (ECO) ministerial session being held in Quetta. Delegates visited Sibi 165 km east of Quetta for the Sibi festival of horse and cattle. —photo AFP/UNB.

The ECO foreign minister at the end of their two-day meeting here adopted a Quetta Plan of action aimed at achieving an integrated economy by the end of the century.

Pakistani Foreign Secretary Shahayyar Mohammad Khan described the outcome of the first substantive meeting of ECO since its expansion, as "very successful."

Formed by Iran, Turkey and Pakistan in 1985, ECO was joined the six central Asian republics Azerbaijan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Kazak-hatan, Turkmenistan and Kirghistan and Afghanistan last year.

The plan of action is very significant, as it charts the whole range of areas of cooperation and a time-frame to achieve the targets, Khan said.

He said the ECO bank will be established before the summit of the member states in Istanbul, Turkey in June this year.

The member states emphasised the "vital importance" of mobilising a market oriented economy and stressed the need to encourage private sector, a statement said.

They also called for interaction with other economic

Clinton admn believes in free, fair trade, say trade officials

WASHINGTON, Feb 8: The new US administration is not protectionist, President Bill Clinton's top trade officials said Sunday, reports AFP.

This is not a protectionist administration. This is an administration that believes in opening markets, Commerce Secretary Ron Brown said in a television interview Sunday.

We believe in free trade. We also believe in fair trade. We want to have a level playing field, Brown added.

Trade representative Micky Kantor echoed these sentiments, saying in another television interview that trade is a

fact of life.

"We are looking to expand trade, open up markets, Kantor told Cable news network.

The first two weeks of the Clinton administration have seen Washington impose anti-dumping measures on imported steel, and threaten the European Community with retaliatory action on government contracts, particularly communications, if the EC does not lift new restrictions on its market.

Brown and Kantor sought Sunday to play down fears of Clinton protectionism, with

the United States was not the world's only economic superpower, and noted that the government contracts more followed an EC ruling on this sector that effectively closed a potential 15 billion dollar market to US companies.

Asked about calls from the US auto industry for higher tariffs on imported Japanese minivans, Kantor said the treasury was looking into the question, but no final decisions have been made.

Brown also said a modest economic stimulus package was still needed despite recent good economic figures.

He said several times that

Japan plans to set up council to avoid tanker accidents

TOKYO, Feb 8: Japan plans to set up a council this month to develop ways to prevent oil tanker accidents, the Ministry of International Trade and Industry (MITI) said on Monday following a spate of accidents in the congested Malacca Strait, reports Reuters.

The council-likely to comprise officials from MITI, the Petroleum Association of Japan and the shipping industry — will focus on technical measures, such as an electronic system to warn one tanker when it gets too close to another.

The move is aimed at ensuring safety in the Malacca Strait. The route for nearly two thirds of Japan's imported oil and the scene of tanker collisions caused largely by busy traffic, a MITI official said.

The most recent mishap occurred in late January, when the Singapore-registered Maersk navigator, bound for Japan with oil, collided with another tanker near the strait's entrance.

The accident set off a pollution alert, as the Maersk navigator spilled a large amount of crude oil in the area, home to endangered species such as turtles.

Keating said APEC countries ought to be able to discuss between themselves impediments to trade and investment which Washington now discusses bilaterally with its East Asian partners.

He proposed talks about a framework agreement "which would set our goal of establishing an open economic association in the Asia Pacific region, in which economies were by degrees integrated to create the world's most dynamic zone of production."

Keating for 15-nation common market

SYDNEY, Feb 8: Australian Prime Minister Paul Keating proposed Monday turning 15 major economies of the Asia-Pacific region into a common market which he predicted would become the "world's most dynamic zone of production," says an AFP reporter.

In the first speech of his campaign to win the March 13 election, Keating acknowledged unemployment as Australia's major problem and proposed strengthening trading links with Asia and the Pacific rim as the best long-term solution.

In a speech which highlighted Australia's achievements as an exporter, he also made clear its concern that Washington's new administration could be about to take the wrong route on trade and warned of the resentment it would cause if it did.

"There is no doubt in my mind that the Clinton administration intends to pursue a very robust market-opening strategy with Asian trading partners," Keating said.

"And equally there is no doubt in my mind that unless the United States goes about it

the right way, it risks causing resentment and resistance."

His remarks reflect increasing concern among officials here that the new United States administration is showing less interest than the previous one in finding a solution to the Uruguay round of GATT trade talks.

These are Japan, China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, South Korea, the United States, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and the six Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) nations member: Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia,

the Philippines, Singapore and Thailand.

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AIDS gives boost to Malaysian rubber industry

The rapid spread of AIDS holds little good news for most countries today. But for Malaysia, the surge in demand for condoms and surgical gloves came at a time when the rubber industry was at a crossroads. After a decline in rubber output, the shift to the manufacture of latex products gave the industry a much needed boost.

Such was the success of the industry that by the mid 1980s the country was the world leader and employed a quarter of its working population.

Prime Minister Mahatir Mohamad aims for an ambitious annual growth rate of over seven per cent through to the year 2020.

Kuala Lumpur, the manufacture of rubber products has huge potential for Malaysia. But to date production has been slow to pick up.

works in an air-conditioned factory near Kuala Lumpur. "I didn't want to get up early every morning to do that sort of work for those wages," he said. The best time to tap rubber trees is at dawn.

Largely due to the AIDS scare, products made from a concentrated form of latex — sap extracted from rubber trees — are now in high demand. The use of condoms has been promoted in "safe sex" campaigns around the world and sales have rocketed. In addition, use of surgical and examination gloves amongst nurses, doctors and other medical practitioners has increased.

Total rubber production fell

The most remarkable gains

The transition of Malaysia's rubber industry is marked by a labour shortage and moves by some plantation owners to palm oil production.

As Malaysia continues its push for high growth, rubber production will assume a less important economic role than in the past. But as the number of HIV and AIDS cases continue to rise, the export of rubber latex and goods looks set for further growth. — GEMINI NEWS

The spread of AIDS in South East Asia has boosted the rubber industry in Malaysia. The use of condoms has been promoted in "safe sex" campaigns and use of surgical and examination gloves amongst medical practitioners has increased. Growing demand for latex products, reports Gemini News Service, has kept Malaysia amongst the world leaders in the rubber industry.

Dr Habibah Suleiman of the Malaysian Rubber Research and Development Board (MRRDB) says rubber latex forms the expanding sector of the rubber industry. Other products like rubber tyres, which are made from an alternative form of rubber — dry rubber — have been affected by the worldwide recession.

in the rubber industry have been in rubber latex. Michael Morris, latex technologist at the Malaysian Rubber Producers Research Association in Hertford, England, says Malaysia is the biggest producer of rubber latex in the world.

As more Malaysians move to the city looking for the good life, the monotonous drudgery of plantation work holds little attraction.

An increased standard of living has also made work on rubber plantations less appealing. Abdul Rahman used to tap rubber on a plantation but now

But rubber remains an important product in Malaysia's programme to industrialise, as

According to Lim Pin Yui, a Malaysian businessman in

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France will take legal action against US co for violating law

PARIS, Feb 8: Labour Minister Martine Aubry said legal action will be taken starting Monday against the American vacuum cleaner company Hoover for its alleged failure to respect French law in its planned move from the Dijon region to Scotland, reports AP.

The Hoover relocation from Longvic, in the Cote d'Or region near Dijon, to Scotland will eliminate 600 to 700 jobs in Dijon, French regional authorities have hired a US law firm to investigate the situation.

Aubry, speaking on French radio, claimed that Hoover, a unit of Maytag Corp, failed to notify its French worker-management committee about the move prior to announcing it.

The Hoover move has become a headline issue in France, as March legislative elections approach, and the ruling Socialists take heat for failing to cut the unemployment rate of 10.5 per cent.

She added that the government will investigate whether Hoover has violated any European Community regulations.

Addressing the issue of unemployment, Aubry was pessimistic, saying France is not likely to see a decline in the figures before March.

"At the least one must respect the laws of a country where one is exercising an activity," the minister said, adding that Hoover would be cited later Monday by the work inspector who guarantees that companies operating in France conform to all aspects of the law.

The Hoover move is money-saving device for the company, which will benefit from concessions on wages and benefits for Scottish unions that cut labour costs. Some 400 jobs will be created in Scotland by the move.

Economic prospects of India, Spain excellent

NEW DELHI, Feb 8: Prime Minister Felipe Gonzalez of Spain, visiting India with top Spanish business leaders, said Monday the two nations have "excellent economic prospects," reports AP.

India exported 162 million dollar worth of garments, scaffolding and engineering goods to Spain in 1992 and imported 59 million dollar worth of oil, chemicals and drugs, according to Indian officials.

Spain has gone through a process of economic liberalisation... and I think it could be useful to strengthen our relation, Gonzalez told journalists after a ceremonial welcome at the president's palace.

Both countries will sign an agreement to avoid taxing businesses doing trade in both countries. Indian officials say that would boost investments in their nation.

Gonzalez is trying to assess the changes Prime Minister PV Narasimha Rao introduced 18 months ago to begin opening India's closed-door economy and to attract more foreign investment.

Gonzalez will hold talks with Rao and senior ministers before heading to Beijing on Wednesday.

Rao was upbeat about the Gonzalez's four-day visit, the third by a European head of government in as many weeks.

The visit comes at a time when Rao is trying to reduce Hindu-Muslim animosity, which caused nationwide riots in the past two months that claimed more than 1,800 lives.

"Our economic liberalization will have beneficial results on both countries," Rao said after welcoming Gonzalez at the red sandstone building.

Rao also is trying to fend off attacks by dissidents in his governing Congress Party who believe the prime minister has done too little to curb the nationwide communal riots.

Black farmers in US get smaller loan

WASHINGTON, Feb 8: Black farmers receive an average of 51 cents for every dollar lent to white farmers under an Agriculture Department programme intended to rescue America's struggling small farms, reports AP.

80 head of cattle and 3,000 hogs starved to death. "It's the worst thing I ever got into," Marable said. He is convinced that the roadblocks he ran into were "just racially motivated."

An Associated Press review of the Farmers Home Administration lending records from 1980 to 1992 also found that overall, a black farmer's loan was 21,000 dollar smaller than the average loan to a white family farmer.

From 1980 through 1992, Farmers Home made or guaranteed 20.5 billion dollar in loans to buy farmland, tractors, livestock, seeds or chemicals. About two per cent of the money went to blacks, who own one per cent of the nation's farms.

The FmHA loan programme was set up for farmers who cannot get loans elsewhere to buy the seed, land, livestock and equipment they need to expand or survive.

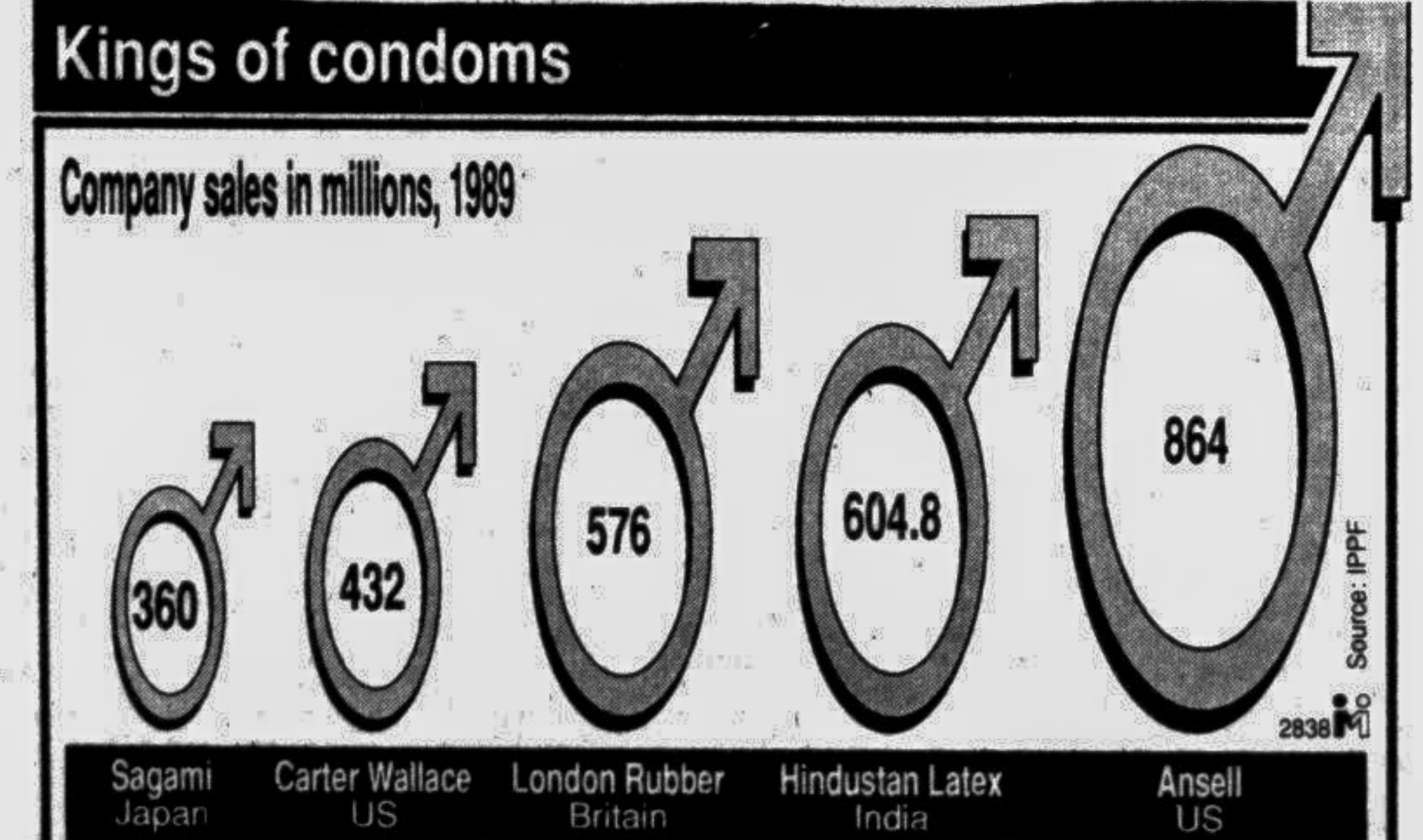
The AP's analysis of lending records from 1980 to 1992 also found that while the number of loans to white farmers dropped by 66 per cent over that period, the number of loans to black farm borrowers tumbled by 82 per cent.

The agency denies that it discriminates and argues that loans to black farmers are smaller because their operations are smaller. It does not keep records on farm-loan applications and rejections by race, but information about the race of those who do receive loans is available in agency files.

FmHA spokesman Marlyn Aycock said discrimination is "not policy," adding, "The administrator is firmly against it. He won't tolerate it."

As Malaysia continues its push for high growth, rubber production will assume a less important economic role than in the past. But as the number of HIV and AIDS cases continue to rise, the export of rubber latex and goods looks set for further growth. — GEMINI NEWS

Luther Marable Jr, a black farmer near the southwest Georgia town of Boston, said the agency's refusal to lend him money left him unable to feed his livestock. More than



সওজ দপ্তরের দরপত্র আহ্বানের বিজ্ঞপ্তি
নং-৩৬/সু স বি/১৯৯২-৯৩ইং
১। দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি নং : ৩৬/সু স বি/১৯৯২-৯৩ইং।
২। কাজের নাম : ১৯৯২-৯৩ ইং অর্থ কমসর সুনামগঞ্জ সদরক বিভাগীয় সিঙ্গেট-সুনামগঞ্জ সদরক ০৮তম (অ) কিমি এক ৬০ তম কিমি-এ প্রিমিকট বিটুনিয়াস সীলকোট কাজ।
৩। দরপত্র প্রার্থীর কার্যালয়সমূহের নাম : নিম্নাঙ্ককরাণী/নির্বাহী প্রকৌশলী (সওজ) সদরক বিভাগ, সিঙ্গেট/মৌঃ বাজার/কুমিল্লা।
৪। বায়নার টাকা : প্রশ্ন তালিকা মোতাবেক যে কোন তফসিলী ব্যাংক হইতে নিম্নাঙ্ককরাণীর অনুকূলে বি/ডি/টি সি/প্রতিরক্ষা সঙ্কল্প/৫ বছর মেয়াদী সঙ্কল্প/বোনাস সঙ্কল্পের আকারে জমা দিতে হইবে।
৫। দরপত্র গ্রহণকারী অফিসের নাম : নিম্নাঙ্ককরাণী/তত্ত্বাবধায়ক প্রকৌশলী (সওজ) সিঙ্গেট সদরক সার্কেল, সিঙ্গেট।
৬। দরপত্র বিক্রয়ের শেষ তারিখ : ০২-০২-৯৩ইং তারিখের বেলা ০০০ টা পর্যন্ত।
৭। দরপত্র গ্রহণের শেষ তারিখ : ১০-০২-৯৩ইং তারিখের বেলা ১২-০০টা পর্যন্ত।
৮। দরপত্র খোলার সময় ও তারিখ : ১০-০২-৯৩ইং তারিখের বেলা ১২-০৫ টা সময়।
৯। প্রশ্ন তালিকা
ক্রম নং : কাজের নাম ও অবস্থান : প্রাকল্পিত মূল্য : আর্নেস্টমনি : অনুমোদিত সময় : টিকাদানের প্রয়োজনীয় যোগ্যতা
১(এক) সিঙ্গেট-সুনামগঞ্জ সদরক ০৮ তম (অ) কিমি-এ প্রিমিকট বিটুনিয়াস সীলকোট-এর কাজ : টাঃ ১,৯৩,০০০/- : টাঃ ৩,৯০/- : ২০(বিশ) দিন : (সওজ) দপ্তরের 'এ' হইতে 'ই' সাধারণ বোণীর টিকাদান
২(দুই) সিঙ্গেট-সুনামগঞ্জ সদরক ৬০তম কিমি-এ প্রিমিকট বিটুনিয়াস সীলকোট-এর কাজ : টাঃ ২,৭৬,৯৪/- : টাঃ ০,২২/- : ২৫ (পঁচিশ) দিন : -
ডিক্রেশন নং) ১৭৭১-২/২ ডি-১৮৮
প্রকৌঃ মৌঃ আঃ মতিন মোল্লা নির্বাহী প্রকৌশলী (সওজ) সুনামগঞ্জ সদরক বিভাগ।