

Leekpai orders crackdown on Thai companies in Libya

BANGKOK, Oct 17: Prime Minister Chuan Leekpai ordered a crackdown on Thai companies doing construction work in Libya after receiving a secret US report linking Libyan projects to the production of chemical and nuclear weapons...

The newspaper said police were seeking to establish a connection between Viroj and an unnamed German-educated Thai expert in chemicals who it said was playing a significant role in the project.

The United States also has been demanding that Libya hand over two suspects in the 1988 bombing of a Pan Am passenger plane over Scotland or face unspecified consequences.

Construction on the bunker began two years ago and had another year to go, it quoted Viroj as saying. The report did not make clear the exact location of the project.

Pakistan okays plan to bring down population growth to 2.6 pc

ISLAMABAD, Oct 17: Pakistan's caretaker cabinet approved a five-year programme at its final meeting on Saturday to bring the galloping three per cent population growth rate down to 2.6 per cent, reports Reuter.

AKFED-IFC accord on tourism

In Washington, the Aga Khan and Sir William Ryrrie, Executive Vice President of the International Finance Corporation (IFC), have signed an agreement to establish the IFC's participation in a \$2.5 million US dollar tourism project in Tanzania, says a press release.

The co-investors in the projects include, in addition to the IFC, the Aga Khan Fund for Economic Development (AKFED) and the Commonwealth Development Corporation (CDC).

chain of four and five star Serena hotels in selected locations in East Africa and South Asia managed in collaboration with Serena Tourism Promotion Services SA of Switzerland.



Aga Khan and Sir William Ryrrie, Executive Vice President of the IFC in Washington after signing an agreement on a tourism project in Tanzania.

Kraft opens joint venture dairy products factory in China

BELJING, Oct 17: Kraft General Foods International Inc. opened a joint venture factory Saturday to produce milk powder, cheese, yogurt and other milk products for the domestic Chinese market, reports AP.

The 42 million dollar joint venture was formed with the Beijing Agriculture, Industry and Commerce General Corp. Kraft said it can produce more than 50,000 tons of dairy products per year and eventually will double that output.



Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia visiting different stalls of handicrafts exhibition of BSCIC held on the occasion of 'Tourism Month '93' at Osmani Memorial Hall in the city on Saturday. State Minister for Civil Aviation and Tourism Abdul Mannan seen in the picture. — PID photo

Kraft said sales of milk and milk products have been increasing more than 15 per cent annually.

World's largest dish of fried rice?

BANGKOK, Oct 17: About 40 Thai and foreign chefs cooked up what they said was the world's largest dish of fried rice Saturday to raise money for charity, reports AFP.

Ingredients in the gargantuan fried rice include 125 kilograms (274 pounds) of chicken, 50 kilograms (110 pounds) of spring onions and 25 kilograms (55 pounds) of garlic, organisers said.

The fried rice, enough to feed some 55,000 people, will be given to children in Bangkok slums.

Fried rice, made with pre-cooked rice and whatever ingredients happen to be on hand, is a cheap and popular dish throughout Asia.

South-east Asia: More triangles, fewer borders

Leah Makabenta writes from Kuala Lumpur

Borders between member countries of the Association of South-east Asian Nations (ASEAN) are falling fast as governments consider more economic growth triangles in the region.

building an industrial park in Batam island in the Riau, where more than 150 transnationals operate. Johor is currently experiencing a boom as Singaporean investors, attracted by its cheap labour, flood in.

The success of the southern triangle has inspired similar projects in the region. ASEAN leaders have visited each other's capitals in the past year to airily propose growth triangles to link one or another of their regions with that of their host's.

Philippine President Fidel Ramos, on a visit to Malaysia early this year, spoke of a growth area involving the southern Philippine island of Mindanao, the east Malaysian state of Sabah and Indonesia's Irian Jaya and Sulawesi regions.

Indonesia, Thai and Malaysian officials will meet in southern Thailand this month to identify projects for a 'northern growth triangle' involving five provinces in southern Thailand, four northern Malaysian states and two provinces of Sarawak in Indonesia.

Aussie economy making big leap into Asia-Pacific region

CANBERRA, Oct 17: Australia now a multicultural country in Asia, very different than it was 50 or 100 years ago. Australians are making the big leap into the Asia-Pacific region as never before. Indeed, we have opened the whole country up to the world, reports IPS.

productivity on the wharves, reduced crew levels in coastal shipping to international levels, deregulated aviation, and introduced tough competition into telecommunications.

ports going to East Asia, the fastest growing economies in the world, which allows US to grow faster than our OECD partners, without inflation or debt, and provides Australia with interesting high-productivity jobs.

economies of East Asia. In the mid 1980s, less than one-half of Australia's merchandise exports went to East Asian markets. Today the figure is more than one-half.

Unemployment rate falls in UK to 10.3pc last month

LONDON, Oct 17: The number of people unemployed in Britain fell by 13,600 in September to 2,908,300, the lowest level for a year, after slight rises in July and August, the Department of Employment said yesterday, reports AFP.

At the same time, British Aerospace (BAE) announced that it was to shed 1,000 jobs at Rocket Motor Plants in Prestwick, Scotland and at different locations around the country.

The unemployment rate fell in September to 10.3 per cent of the working population, down from 10.4 per cent in August. Unadjusted unemployment fell by 47,834 to 2,912,130, a rate of 10.4 per cent.

Japanese consumers concerned about imported rice

TOKYO, Oct 17: Japanese civic and consumer groups are voicing serious concerns about contaminated rice entering the country following the government decision to order emergency rice imports to counter the worst domestic harvest since World War II, reports AFP.

No one wants to eat such chemicals," Kowaka added. Japan announced last month plans to import 200,000 tonnes of rice this year to cover the shortfall from the woeful domestic harvest. It will be the first emergency rice import since 1964 when Japan secured 150,000 tonnes from South Korea.

Of that total, some 300,000 tonnes — mainly from the United States and Thailand — are likely to have been treated with harmful insecticides, the fund says.

Post-harvest agricultural chemicals are more dangerous than food additives," said Jun-ichi Kowaka, Secretary General of the fund which was established in 1987 as a watchdog.



Industries Minister AM Zahiruddin Khan addressing as chief guest a seminar on 'Scope and development of ceramic industries in Bangladesh in the context of free market economy' at the BANSDOC auditorium in the city yesterday. — Star photo

Soft goods rally again on the world commodity markets

LONDON, Oct 17: Soft goods, which have been hit in recent weeks by profit-taking after a rise earlier in the year, rallied again this week on the world commodity markets, reports AFP.

Copper: Slightly higher. Copper prices rose slightly on the London Metal Exchange (LME) this week, sustained by rumours that China might have bought up to 20,000 tonnes of the metal, some of its coming from LME warehouses.

Lead: Sharply higher. Lead prices jumped by more than six per cent over the week, boosted by Wednesday's announcement that Brunswick Mining and Smelting of Canada plans to suspend operations at its Bellefleur Smelter for six weeks from November 4 because of a lack of concentrates feed.

Tin: Higher after weak start. Tin prices followed nickel, falling at the start of the week on profit-taking but rising later ahead of talks at the Association of Tin Producing Countries in Kuala Lumpur next week.

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should help support the metal's prices through next year, analysts said. One of the LME, lead stocks rose by 2,975 tonnes to a record 290,225 tonnes.

Nickel: Higher after weak start. Nickel prices rose over the week despite a weak start when prices were affected by profit-taking on the previous week's rise.

Coffee: Slightly higher. After falling by 11 per cent over the previous four weeks, coffee prices rose slightly this week, despite scepticism over the producer countries' degree of determination to stick by their recently agreed stock-withholding scheme.

Rubber: Slightly higher. The price of natural rubber rose thanks to major Chinese buying and a rise in industrial demand in Europe and the United States.

Vegetable oils: Slightly higher. The price of soyabean, boosted by a reduction in US Department of Agriculture (USDA) estimates of the world soyabean harvest.

Crude oil: Lower. The price of crude oil slid toward 17 dollar a barrel, weakened by fears of a sharp increase in output from the North Sea in November and uncertainties over output from OPEC member countries.

Wool: Weak. The price of wool was unchanged from the previous week, close to its lowest level for two years, affected by weak textile demand and the high level of stocks.