

Asian mobile telecom satellite system soon

JAKARTA, Aug 5: Four firms from Indonesia, Singapore and the United States agreed today to launch an Asian mobile telephone communication satellite system worth up to 900 million dollars, an executive said here, reports AFP.

The geostationary satellite system will allow one million hand-held mobile telephone users to communicate directly with one another in the satellite coverage area, also using special ground stations and public telephone networks.

Indonesia's Pt Pasifik Satelit Nusantara (PSN) signed a memorandum of understanding with Singapore Telecom, Singapore Technology ventures and US Firm Hughes Communication Inc to take part in the joint venture estimated to be worth 800-900

million dollars, with the procurement of two satellites.

"The satellite (system) will have a capacity of handling one million subscribers," Adi Rahmanto, PSN Director, said.

A finance agreement for project has yet to be decided as the venture still expected other firms, including the Philippine Long Distance Telephone company, to join the venture soon, he said.

But, if no other firms showed interest, he said there was a possibility that the PSN, two Singaporean firms and the Hughes Communication would provide one third of the total investment each.

Adiwo said today's signing was the first step to realizing the Asian mobile satellite system, which will cover an area

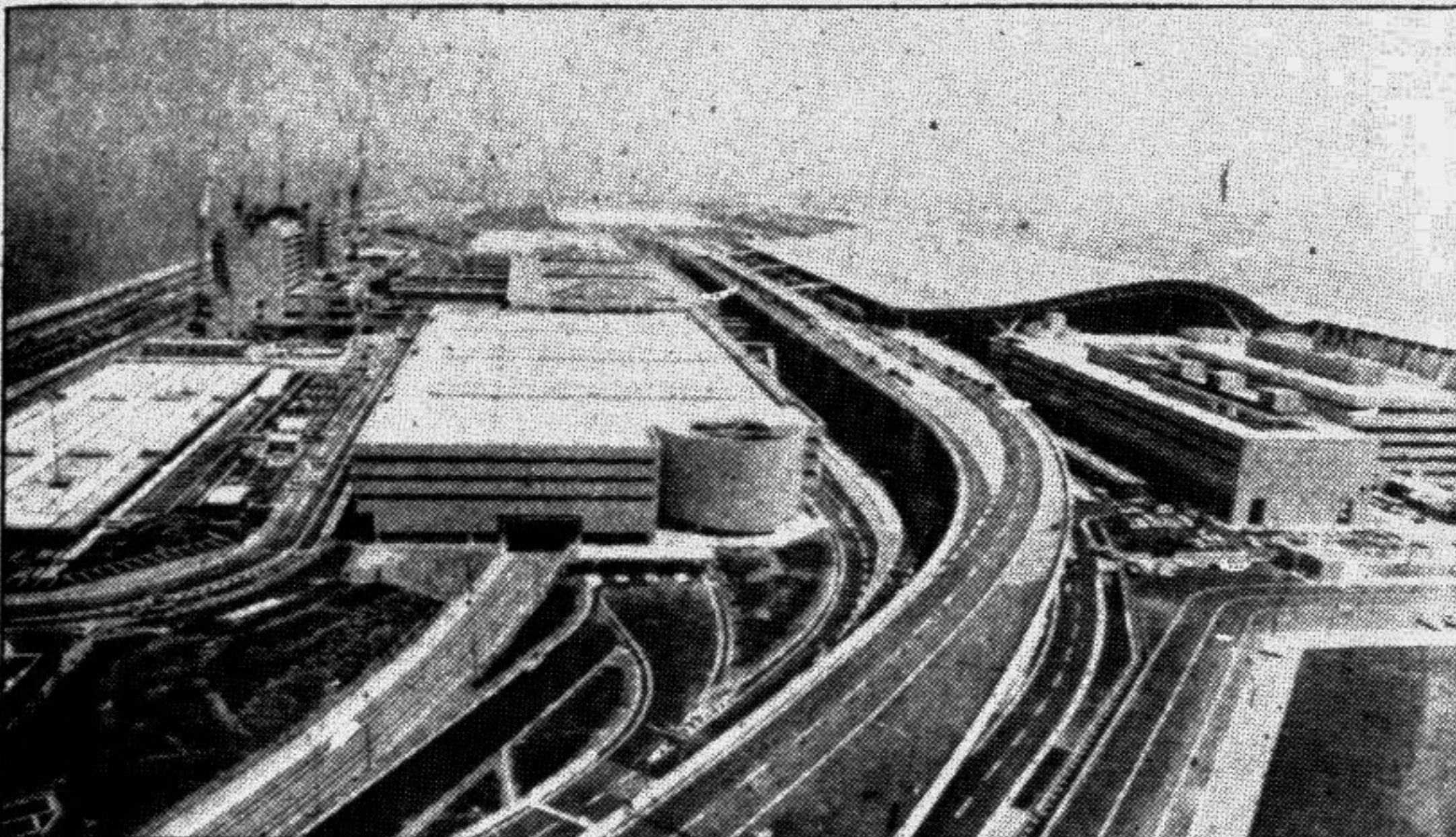
from India in the west, to China in the north, as well as the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) countries and Indo-China.

ASEAN groups Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore and Thailand.

The feasibility study for the project will be completed in September and the satellite was expected to be operational by early 1998, he said.

Setanto Sentosa, President of the state-owned Indonesian telecommunications firm PT Telkom — which owns 30 per cent of PSN shares — said the project would also provide 220,000 lines for digital mobile phone services in Indonesia by the year 2003.

Indonesia's demand for cellular services is expected to reach 350,000 lines by 1998.



Overview showing Japan's Kansai International Airport scheduled to open on September 4, as the country's first 24-hour airport on a man-made island in Osaka Bay. Construction for the airport, and its 3,500-meter runway which will allow some 160,000 take offs and landings a year, started in 1987. The terminal will be able to accommodate a yearly flow of 30.7 million passengers. — AFP photo

Gold slips, price of coffee leap anew in London

LONDON, Aug 5: Gold fell to a three month low of \$375.50 an ounce on Thursday as investors tired of its dull performance in recent weeks, bullion dealers said, reports Reuters.

A few weeks ago it was nudging 390 dollars and dealers said it was set for an assault on 400 dollars and last year's high of 409 dollars. It closed trading in London at 378.65 dollars on Wednesday. But now market sentiment has changed.

Wednesday was the first time in months dealers did not buy on the dips. Said one bullion analyst, "That suggest to me it's heading south."

Last year gold rallied from 326 to 409 dollars in one of its

biggest rises in a decade on buying by financiers George Soros and Sir James Goldsmith. But it has lost its sparkle while other commodities such as copper and aluminium have gained ground.

Meanwhile, coffee prices, close to eight and a half year highs after two severe frosts in Brazil, leapt anew on Thursday following a light frost in a key Brazilian growing area.

On the London futures market, coffee for November delivery had gained 44 to 3,600 dollars a tonne by midday.

"People are scratching their heads and wondering if the (frost news) is true," an analyst said.

Light frost covered the region of Pocos de Caldas in Minas Gerais state, though

most other growing areas reported no frost, growers and officials said.

London traders said the market was nervously trying to assess whether the latest frost presaged more colder weather. Normally the threat of frost in Brazil's growing areas recedes in August.

"If it (the Brazil crop) hadn't already been damaged this light frost might be taken more seriously," one trader said.

London's second month futures contract recently peaked at 4,085 dollars a tonne on expectations that Brazil, the world's biggest producer, may have lost up to 50 per cent of its 1995/96 crop in two heavy frosts in late June and early July.

FAO warns of massive famine in Africa

ROME, Aug 5: The UN Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) warned Thursday that there would be another massive famine in the horn of Africa, unless the international community mobilised aid and logistical support, reports AFP.

The FAO's Senegalese Director General, Jacques Diouf said in a communique issued from the organisation's Rome headquarters that "a generalised famine is to be feared in the horn of Africa if the international community does not offer extra contributions and does not rapidly deliver previously pledged aid and logistical support to distribute the aid."

The countries likely to be affected were Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Sudan and Somalia, the FAO said.

A special FAO report forecasting harvests in Sub-Saharan Africa warns that harvests will be poor because of a combination of adverse weather conditions and internal strife.

The 1994 cereal import needs for the horn of African countries are estimated at 4.7 million tonnes — almost double that of last year — almost all of which will have to be met through food aid, the statement said.

The report added that there was less food aid available this year than last so that the food gap would not be filled in these countries.

The FAO noted that apart from the catastrophe in Rwanda, where crops will not be harvested because the farmers have all left, there were several other serious problems in Africa.

These included the critical situation of food supplies in Burundi.

\$72m Malaysian loan scam 10 bank officials held

KUALA LUMPUR, Aug 5: Ten senior executives of a troubled Malaysian merchant bank, Rayat Merchant Bankers Bhd, have been arrested in connection with a 180 million ringgit (72 million dollars) loan scandal, police officials said yesterday, reports AFP.

Nine were arrested at their homes in an eight-hour operation Wednesday, while another surrendered to police, Malaysian commercial crime police said.

"We have no comments, we are still investigating," a spokesman of the commercial crime section at police headquarters said.

The Star English-language daily reported Thursday the nine, aged between 30 and 48, were arrested following

several months of investigations into alleged lending irregularities since November 1993.

The Star said several important documents relating to the approval of the loans were also seized.

Bank Negara, Malaysia's central bank, on March 3 announced it had taken control of the merchant bank which had allegedly violated the capital adequacy ratio by breaching lending limits.

The bank was said to have avoided the single customer lending limit of three million ringgit (1.2 million dollars) by creating 50 individual loan applicants, whose names were either obtained from the telephone directory, calling cards or other sources.

Japan's current account surplus increases

TOKYO, Aug 5: Japan's current account surplus rose 2.2 per cent from a year ago to a record 68.78 billion dollars in the first six months this year, the Finance Ministry said Friday, reports AP.

Japan's huge current account and trade surpluses have been a major source of tension for more than a decade with its trading partners, including the United States, some Asian nations and the European Union.

The surplus in the current account, a broad measure of a nation's international economic flows, was the biggest ever for any six-month period in part because of the high value of the yen against the US dollar, officials said.

In yen terms the current account surplus for the

January-June period actually fell 6.7 per cent, but due to the yen's 9.7 per cent for against the dollar over the same period, the surplus went up in dollar terms.

The higher yen is believed to have a long term effect of reducing Japan's surplus by forcing exporters to raise their overseas prices, making their products less attractive. At the same time, a stronger yen would theoretically encourage imports by making them cheaper in Japan.

The trade surplus, which makes up the bulk of the current account, was up 5.0 per cent for the January-June period to 71.79 billion dollars, the report said.

Stock prices plunge in NY

NEW YORK, Aug 5: Wall Street stocks ended lower Thursday as investors were waiting for Friday's government employment report for July, reports Xinhua.

The Dow Jones Industrial Average lost 26.87 points to 3,765.79. Most of other major market indicators also fell.

On the New York Stock Exchange, declining issues outnumbered advances by about 4 to 3, with some 289 million shares traded.

Analysts said investors were waiting for the July employment data to see whether the Federal Reserve would raise short-term interest rates or not.

Bond prices fell Friday amid renewed fears of rising interest rates.

Also contributing to Friday's market decline were heavy selling of the big three auto stocks, affected by a downgrading investment rating from investment firm Merrill Lynch Co.

Cuba's sugarcane harvests fall

HAVANA, Aug 5: President Fidel Castro, announcing one of the poorest sugarcane harvests in decades, has urged Cubans to break out of the current economic crisis by "winning the battle" of sugar harvests and food production, reports Reuters.

Castro told parliament Wednesday evening that the country's sugar harvest for 1993-94 will be four million metric tons, down from a disastrously low 4.2 million metric tons last year.

If Cuba didn't start improving on its sugar and food production, he said, it risked destroying the revolution.

"We are going to create conditions that make it impossible to save it (the revolution)," Castro told the first day of an ordinary session of the national assembly.

Middy heist in Tokyo

TOKYO, Aug 5: In Japan's biggest robbery ever involving a bank, two men seized 541 million yen (5.4 million dollars) Friday from bank employees in a busy area of the western city of Kobe, reports AP.

The midday heist was top news in relatively crime-free Japan.

According to police, the men struck as three bank employees were transporting the cash in three metal cases from a Fukutoku Bank branch to a van for transport.

One of the robbers brandished a pistol at the employees and forced them into the van. The robbers then seized the cases and drove off in their own van.

The previous record for a robbery involving a bank was set on November 25, 1986, when three men attacked a cash delivery vehicle in Tokyo and stole 333 million yen (3.3 million dollars) worth of cash and checks, the National Police Agency said.

A police spokesman in Kobe, speaking on condition of anonymity, said both robbers wore identical gray work uniforms but one wore sunglasses and the other had a white bandage on his face.

The robbers' vehicle was later found on a road about two kilometers from the bank branch.

German jobless number up

BERLIN, Aug 5: The number of the unemployed rose in both western and eastern Germany in July for the first time in four months, reports AP.

The Federal Labour Office Director, Bernhard Jagoda, said Thursday the labour market was stabilizing while seasonal factors led to the increase nationwide of 112,000 jobless people to a total of 3.7 million. Seasonally adjusted, he said, the number of the jobless fell 18,000.

Western German unemployment rose from 8.0 per cent in June to 8.3 per cent in July, and in formerly Communist eastern Germany the rate rose from 14.8 per cent to 15.1 per cent.

Unemployment climbed steeply in Germany last year and early this year as recession and restructuring led to widespread layoffs. The western German economy, creeping out of recession, registered fewer jobless people in April through June but most analysts expect unemployment to remain high through early 1995.

Eastern Germany's economic output has been growing strongly for two years though unemployment has remained high. Jagoda said the number of jobless was 30,400 less than in July 1993, a positive sign, and the number of open jobs rose strongly in the east.

Asian stock markets close higher

HONG KONG, Aug 5: Asian stock markets closed generally higher Friday, but share prices fell in both Tokyo and Hong Kong, reports AP.

On the Tokyo Stock Exchange, the 225-issue Nikkei Stock Average fell 155.14 points, or 0.75 per cent, closing at 20,521.70. On Thursday, the average had gained 44.1 points to 20,676.84.

The Tokyo Stock Price Index of all issues listed on the first section was down 6.78 points, or 0.41 per cent, to 1,649.74. The TOPIX had gained 3.21 points to 1,656.52 the day before.

Following an overnight decline on Wall Street, investors turned cautious as they awaited

the US jobless data later Friday, dealers said.

Meanwhile, the US dollar closed at 100.45 yen, up 0.26 yen from Thursday's close and above its late overnight level of 100.38 yen in New York.

In Hong Kong, share prices closed lower on profit-taking. The Hang Seng Index, the Hong Kong market's key indicator of blue chips, fell 40.64 points, or 0.4 per cent, to 9,602.21. On Thursday, the index had gained 56 points.

Brokers attributed the slump to profit-taking following recent sharp gains in the market.

Wellington: New Zealand share prices closed higher despite some profit-taking early in the session. The NZSE 40

Capital Index rose 9.38 points to 2,111.26.

Taipei: Share prices closed sharply higher for the second straight day on continued bullish sentiment. The market's Weighted Index rose 129.64 points to 6,919.21, its highest close in four years.

Manila: Share prices closed mixed in active trading. The Philippines' unified composite index of 31 selected issues fell 14.23 points to 2,883.39.

Seoul: The market's key index closed higher because of gains in blue chips though most other share prices ended lower. The Korea Composite Stock Price Index fell 8.33 points to 935.82.

Sydney: Australian share

prices closed higher, boosted by strong institutional buying. The All Ordinaries Index rose 8.5 points to 2,091.9.

Singapore: Share prices closed slightly higher in moderate trading. The 30-share Straits Times Industrials (STI) Index rose 1.95 points to 2,273.12.

Kuala Lumpur: Malaysian share prices closed higher despite early profit-taking. The Kuala Lumpur Stock Exchange's Composite Index rose 2.35 points to 1,089.15.

Bangkok: Thai share prices closed slightly higher in moderate trading. The Stock Exchange of Thailand (SET) Index rose 1.89 points to 1,418.60.

Exchange Rates

Following are the Sonali Bank's dealing rates to public for some selected foreign currencies effective as on August 4 and 5.

Currency	(Figures in Taka)					
	Selling TT & OD	HC	TT Clean	OD Sight Ex. Bills	OD Transfer	
US Dollar	40.3850	40.4150	40.1000	40.0326	39.8750	
Pound Sterling	62.6337	62.6803	60.9343	60.8318	60.5924	
DM	25.9306	25.9499	25.2217	25.1793	25.0802	
F Franc	7.5858	7.5914	7.3804	7.3679	7.3390	
C Dollar	29.3656	29.3874	28.5707	28.5226	28.4104	
S Franc	30.6988	30.7211	29.8556	29.8053	29.6881	
Jap Yen	0.4101	0.4105	0.3948	0.3942	0.3926	
Indian Rupee (AMU)	1.2907	1.2971	1.2754	1.2595	—	
Pak Rupee (AMU)	1.3204	1.3270	1.3046	1.2883	—	
Iranian Rial (AMU)	0.0230	0.0231	0.0228	0.0225	—	

A) T. T. (D/C) US Dollar Spot Buying Tk 40.0662

B) Usance Rates:

30 Days DA	60 Days DA	90 Days DA	120 Days DA	180 Days DA
39.7497	39.4656	39.1816	38.8976	38.3295

C) US Dollar sight export bill 3 months forward purchase: Tk. 40.0325

D) US Dollar 3 months forward sale: Tk. 40.6150

Currency	Selling T.T. & O.D.		Buying O. D. Transfer	
S Riyal	10.7647		10.6310	
UAE Dirham	10.9919		10.8550	
Kuwaiti Dinar	135.5641		133.6658	
Singapore Dollar	26.7943		26.4459	
D Guilders	22.7135		22.4204	
S Kroner	5.2227		5.1555	
Malaysian Ringgit	15.6234		15.4246	

Note: AMU—Asian Monetary Unit

Shipping Intelligence

Chittagong port									
Berth position and performance of vessels as on 4.8.1994									
Berth No.	Name of vessels	Cargo	Port call	Local agent	Date of arrival	Leaving			
J/1	Arktis Sun	GI	Sing	BSC	31/7	8/8			
J/2	Kutuzov	GI	Kos	Seacom	31/7	8/8			
J/3	Young II	Repair	Sing	BML	28/7	8/8			
J/4	Dubai Glory	GI	Sing	Prog	1/8	10/8			
J/5	Khartoum	SSP(P)	SAFA	Cosmo	30/7	8/8			
J/6	Kransmo Yarski	GI	Sing	Seacom	26/7	10/8			
J/7	Komsomolets	GI	Pena	BSC	23/7	6/8			
J/8	Banglar Kallol	GI	Sing	Prog	22/7	5/8			
J/9	Mikhail Stenko	Cont	Col	BTSA	2/8	6/8			
J/10	Dolores	Idle	Seacom	R/A	10/8				
J/11	Alam Tenang	Sugar(P)	Bank	Seacom	17/7	10/8			
J/12	I Yamburenko	Cont	Sing	CT	31/7	5/8			
J/13	Petr Starostin	Cont	Sing	CT	30/7	5/8			
MPB/1	Fong Yun	Cont	Sing	BDShip	29/7	5/8			
MPB/2	Optima	Cont	Sing	RSL	30/7	5/8			
CCJ	Banglar Asha	Repair	Sing	BSC	R/A	10/8			
GSJ	Altodor	Cement	Sing	Aeka	21/7	8/8			
RM/4	ARJ Priti	Cement	Sing	USTC	31/7	7/8			
PM/6	Team Trinta	HSD/MS	Sing	MSPL	10/7	7/8			
DOJ	Global Trader	Cement	Sing	Aeka	14/7	6/8			
DDJ/1	Banglar Maya	Repair	CAL	BSC	1/8	10/8			
DDJ/1	Pearl One	Repair	Yang	ENCL	15/6	5/8			
RM/9	Banglar Jyoti	Repair	Sing	BSC	R/A	6/8			

Vessels due at outer anchorage					
Name of vessels	Date of arrival	Last port call	Local agent	Cargo	Loading port
Dona Ourania	4/8	Kapt	JF	Scrapping	
Blue North	5/8	Sing	PSAL	Cement	
Tirgu Secules	8/8	Braz	USTC	P Iron	
Iran Elham	5/8		BSC	Cement	
Andrian Goncharov	5/8	Sing	CT	Cont	Sing/Mong
Couper	6/8	Sing	Get		
Java Supply-1	6/8		Nova	P Equip	
Meng Kiat	7/8	Sing	AML	Cont	Sing
Lhotse	7/8	Sing	RSL	Cont	Sing
Esteburges	7/8	Sing	APL(B)	Cont	Sing
Ultima	7/8	Mong	Baridhi	Cont	Col
Samudra Raj	7/8	Kara	SSL	Rice/Gl	
Kota Binitan	9/8	Sing	CTS	Cont	Sing
Enliverer	9/8	Mong	BBA	GL	Japan
State of Nagaland	10/8	Mong	SSL	GL	UK Cont
Banglar Mont	10/8	Mong	BSC	Cont	Sing
Banglar Robi	10/8	Sing	BSC	Cont	Sing
Banglar Shobha	10/8	Mong	BSC	Cont	Sing
Pekopadi	12/8		Litmond	Wheat(P)	
Monkavsky	15/8	Okha	OWSL	SASH	
Kosmolets					
Sofar	4/8	Sing	ASL	Sugar	