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UMBRELLA.**

## Pak trade accord with Spain likely

MADRID, Sept 14: Pakistan Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto arrived Tuesday in Madrid for an official three-day visit to Spain, the first by a Pakistani head of government since 1956, reports AFP.

Spanish diplomats said Bhutto's visit reflected Madrid's growing interest in Asia.

Pakistan is to sign an agreement with Spain on promoting and protecting investments. Spain is negotiating a loan of between 50 and 100 million dollars to Islamabad, mainly to finance Spanish exports.

During her stay, Bhutto will hold talks on bilateral relations with Spanish Premier Felipe Gonzalez. The two leaders will also discuss the situation in China, India and the republics of the former Soviet Union, diplomatic sources said.

Bhutto also plans to discuss the conference on population in Cairo, which she attended, with Gonzalez.

The Pakistani premier will have a private dinner with King Juan Carlos and will meet Jose Maria Aznar, Spain's main opposition leader.

Trade between Spain and Pakistan favours Islamabad. In 1993, Spanish exports reached 6.4 billion pesetas (49 million dollars) while imports from Pakistan came to 13.6 billion pesetas.

## China facing its worst cotton crisis in years

BEIJING, Sept 14: Defying strict Beijing orders, a local Communist Party committee in central China stopped farmers from selling cotton to the state, diverting it instead onto the black market, the Economic Daily said on Tuesday, reports Reuters.

China is facing its worst cotton crisis in years, with output last year just 3.76 million tonnes, down 16.6 per cent from 1992, creating a shortage that has closed hundreds of mills, pushed up prices and created a booming black market.

The central government has repeatedly ordered farmers to sell cotton only to state outlets and said any other trade is strictly illegal.

But from August 26, the party committee of the Wuxu farm market in Hubei province set up roadblocks to stop farmers selling their new crop to state outlets and threatened fines of up to 500 yuan (58 dollars) per 50 kg (100 lbs) if they did so, the daily said.

## Israel's foreign debt rises

JERUSALEM, Sept 14: Israel's net foreign debt rose 8.9 per cent during the first six months of the year to 17.96 billion dollars, the Bank of Israel announced yesterday, reports AFP.

The government borrowed one billion dollars in US-guaranteed funds in March and foreigners increased deposits in local banks.

The state's share of the debt increased to 78.9 per cent at the end of June against 65 per cent in 1987.

The private sector's foreign debt went up 453 million dollars to 4.16 billion dollars after a 153 million dollar fall last year.

The net foreign debt represented 27 per cent of gross national product after the first six months of 1994 compared with 24 per cent at the start of 1993.

## Asian stock markets close mixed

HONG KONG, Sept 14: Asian stock markets closed mixed Wednesday, with share prices falling back through the 20,000-point barrier in Tokyo amid worries about too many stocks on the market, reports AP.

Tokyo's 225-issue Nikkei Stock Average dropped 126.73 points, or 0.63 per cent, closing at 19,919.38. The Nikkei fell below 20,000 last week for the first time since May but had recovered 128.63 points, or 0.65 per cent, on Tuesday to 20,046.11.

Brokers also said profit-taking on short-term investment funds as companies approached the end of the first half of fiscal 1994 weighed down the market.

The Tokyo Stock Price Index of all issues listed on the first section was down 8.55 points, or 0.54 per cent, to 1,585.96. It had gained 6.34 points, or 0.40 per cent, to 1,592.51 the previous day.

## Marine officers contribute Tk 150 cr in foreign currency a year

# Prospect of revenue earning thru' trained personnel abroad bright

CHITTAGONG, Sept 14: Bangladesh, a traditional source of skilled sailors, can earn a substantial amount of foreign exchange by supplying more trained officers, engineers and crew for foreign merchant ships, reports UNB.

Official sources said more than 900 Bangladeshi marine officers are now working in foreign ships, contributing about Tk 150 crore to the national exchequer in foreign exchange a year.

Marine officers and sailors trained by the country's two marine institutions — the Marine Academy and the Seamen's Training School in the port city — are also employed in local ships, both state owned and private.

Captain M Azizul Haque, commandant of the Marine Academy, told a group of visiting journalists at his office that the academy had trained 8,036 cadets and officials since its inception in 1962.

Of them, 1,224 Bangladeshi sailors have received pre-sea training from the academy. About 300 of them are employed in the ships owned by Bangladesh Shipping Corporation (BSC) and private vessels. The rest are employed in foreign ships, mostly registered in Hong Kong.

The academy, a branch of the World Maritime University at Malmo in Sweden since 1989, is now producing some 100 cadets every year providing them with two-years pre-sea training.

After the training, a cadet is to complete a 27-month sea-service course and a six-month preparatory course for a Class 3/4 certificate, required for a job in the ship.

The academy helps the cadets in finding jobs for sea-

service training in different shipping lines, mainly in the BSC ships and other local private shipping lines.

"But due to the shrinkage of BSC, junior cadets find it difficult to get jobs," said Captain Hoque. Moreover, some private lines are also recruiting direct cadets having no academic trainings.

According to official rule, a shipping line can employ one direct cadet against two academy cadets in a ship.

This provision was introduced in the absence of adequate number of academy cadets, Captain Hoque said.

"Anybody interested in entering this profession should have academic training in the interest of the ship and him-

self," said the commandant, the country's only Extra Master degree holder.

The academy, initially established to impart pre-sea training to the cadets for both nautical and engineering branches, introduced post-sea courses from 1980. It was mainly run by foreign marine officials before 1986.

It is now managed by the country's senior marine officials keeping a high standard comparable to British standard and ranks. The academy is rated as one of the world's foremost institutions in the field of maritime training and education.

The Marine Department of Hong Kong, the main employer of Bangladeshi cadets, has

recognised the academy in June this year. "Now Bangladeshi cadets do not face any problem while working in Hong Kong ships," Captain Hoque said.

The academy also conforms the standard of training, certification and watchkeeping for seafarers (STCW), an international convention adopted by International Maritime Organisation (IMO) in 1978 to promote safety of life and property at sea and the protection of marine environment.

Despite its major role in supplying marine officers, lack of instructors and other professional personnel impedes its further expansion.



The Malaysian High Commissioner in Bangladesh Ahmad Fuzi Bin Haji Abdul Razak made a farewell call on Latifur Rahman (C), President, Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Dhaka and CK Hyder, Secretary General, MCCL.

## Tokyo has the world's most expensive office space

SINGAPORE, Sept 14: Tokyo has the world's most expensive office space, but Hong Kong is not far behind, a ranking of 42 cities by international property consultants Richard Ellis showed Tuesday, reports AFP.

Tenants in central Tokyo pay an average of 1,827 US dollars for every square metre of office space, 23 dollars more than those in Hong Kong where rents have soared in recent months.

London's west end is a distant third. A square metre of space there fetches 1,124 dollars, a small premium over the city as London's financial district is known.

Richard Ellis' world rental levels July report ranks Bangkok as the cheapest among Asian capitals and major cities. A square metre of office space in the Thai capital goes for 251 dollars per square metre.

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He also reassured that all bilateral investment protection agreements and relevant international conventions would be honoured and that no restrictions would be placed on the repatriation of dividends and capital.

The foreign exchange lib-

## Chandrika vows to pursue free-market policies

COLOMBO, Sept 14: Prime Minister Chandrika Kumaratunga yesterday said that her new government had no plans for nationalisation and vowed to pursue Sri Lanka's free-market policies to build a strong economy, reports AFP.

Unveiling the economic policy of her leftist People's Alliance (PA) government at a meeting of industrialists and foreign investors, Kumaratunga emphasised that the private sector would remain the principal engine of growth.

The government stands committed to building a strong national economy with a market framework. The principal engine of growth is 16 expected to be the private sector, both domestic and foreign, Kumaratunga said.

She also reassured that all bilateral investment protection agreements and relevant international conventions would be honoured and that no restrictions would be placed on the repatriation of dividends and capital.

That is our understanding, he said, speaking after the latest round of talks between Kantor and Japanese International Trade and Industry Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto in Los Angeles.

both direct and portfolio, will be strongly encouraged," she said.

Kumaratunga and senior ministers have been holding a series of meetings with diplomats, leading businessmen and foreign investors to reiterate the government's commitment to continue liberalising the economy.

Kumaratunga is a member of the Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP) which was instrumental in nationalising dozens of business ventures when it was previously in power.

The SLFP is the dominant partner of the PA which ended the 17-year reign of the United National Party (UNP) at the August 16 parliamentary elections.

The UNP is credited with dismantling state control of the economy and introducing sweeping free-market reforms.

She said that the eventual goal of policy would be to continue to reduce the overall fiscal deficit from a level of eight per cent of GDP in 1993 to three to four per cent GDP before the year 2000.

## Democracy, economics intimately related, expert says

WASHINGTON, Sept 14: There is an undeniably close relationship between democracy and economic prosperity — a fact which dictators have an interest in denying — say two experts on human rights, says a USIS press release.

"Violations of political and civil rights" of citizens by their governments are very "bad for providing economic rights to citizens" — something that repressive regimes in Africa are fully aware of, says Holly Berkhalter of Human Rights Watch, an international human rights monitoring organization.

Berkhalter made her remarks September 13 during a discussion of democracy and ethnic conflicts with television audiences in Ouagadougou, Lome, and Libreville. She was joined by Adotei Akwei of Amnesty International, the dialogue, broadcast by the US Information Agency's WorldNet satellite television service.

Berkhalter said, "It doesn't help a community achieve economic progress by suppressing labor unions and it doesn't help fight a famine by cutting off free speech so that information cannot be shared."

These rights, she said, "are not luxuries, they are vital necessities and they go together at all times."

at both the central and grassroots levels of society. The result, such as with the most recent Angolan elections, has been a speedy return to armed conflict.

Ethnicity in politics, both Berkhalter and Akwei pointed out, has been portrayed by some as peculiarly African tradition. This is wrong, Berkhalter said. Citizens, such as those in Somalia, fall back on their clan or tribal affiliations only when the state no longer operates. The state has to be genuinely representative and it has to be seen as a benign and helpful force," she explained that citizens can turn to for protection and safeguard democratic gains.

"You don't eliminate ethnic identification," she added, but communities can channel their political energies in a more productive way if they don't have to defend themselves against other people whom the state whips up into a frenzy of bloodshed.

What went wrong in Rwanda, where the majority was goaded to attack the minority, Berkhalter said, is that "once the international community put in place and helped midwife a process of transition to democracy like inclusion of minorities into the govern-

ment they washed their hands and walked away."

This reaction made the Rwandan government think it could "get away with the genocide," and "I think this is why the concept of a tribunal and accountability is so vital," she added.

Berkhalter explained that in the Rwandan conflict, "where you had human rights groups, they were slaughtered. Where you had courts, they have been destroyed — the judges dead or fled the country."

"Then you have the destruction of the little seedlings of democracy that are so necessary to the protection of rights, then it is absolutely vital that there be a very visible process whereby those responsible will be prosecuted and brought to justice. That is the most important lesson to emerge from Rwanda."

"Asked if genocide in Rwanda was caused by the democratic process, Akwei said, "No, it was not. Rather it was caused by an extremist minority that wanted to retain hold on power by any means necessary."

The human rights activist said, "The rule of law and the administration of justice are our concern." Democracy means not only greater deci-

## World Bank team due month end

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Sept 14: A World Bank team is expected to arrive here at Chittagong Port by the end of this month to discuss the launching of a study to prepare an integrated 'Master Plan' for upgrading the services and facilities of the country's ports.

Highly placed official sources said after the discussion with World Bank team consultants for the study would be appointed by initiating the due process.

The study project will be financed by the World Bank and it will cost Taka 4 crore 45 lakh, sources added.

The study has been planned to be completed in ten months time. The study project was approved by the concerned bodies of the government recently. It is learnt.

The integrated master plan is aimed at providing advanced technology in cargo handling, extra facilities and a uniform tariff system at Chittagong Mongla and Narayanganj ports, official sources said.

The master plan formulated for Chittagong port only in 1965, has not been updated over the past 30 years to cope with the latest cargo handling demands.

Meanwhile, rapid growth of containers cargo forced Chittagong Port authority to go for procurement of modern equipment with the raising of additional facilities by constructing two multipurpose berths to tackle the new challenge, port sources said.

**India needs further import liberalisation, says Manmohan**

NEW DELHI, Sept 14: Indian Finance Minister Manmohan Singh put industry on notice today to gear for competition from a wide range of imported consumer goods in a trade regime he wants to open up further, reports AFP.

The time has now come to tell industry that the government cannot afford to provide a high level of protection... in the consumer goods sector for an indefinite period," Singh said, also hinting at further tariff cuts.

He said further import liberalisation was necessary to integrate India with the global economy and that curbs on foreign consumer goods were illogical in the reform process.

Singh, who was speaking to a ministry council comprising industry representatives, is architect of economic reforms begun three years ago opening up India's hitherto protected market to foreign investors.

An array of trade controls were thrown out, but curbs have remained in place on the import of consumer goods.

The minister's remarks came a day after D R Mehta, Deputy Governor of the central Reserve Bank of India, said the free import to consumer goods was an option India was considering to reduce foreign exchange reserves.

The reserves have grown to a record 17.8 billion dollars on the back of rapid capital inflows, and are set to hit 24 billion dollars by March, fuelling inflation by injecting excessive liquidity into the economy.

# Tk 865cr BKB loan for 94-95 fiscal

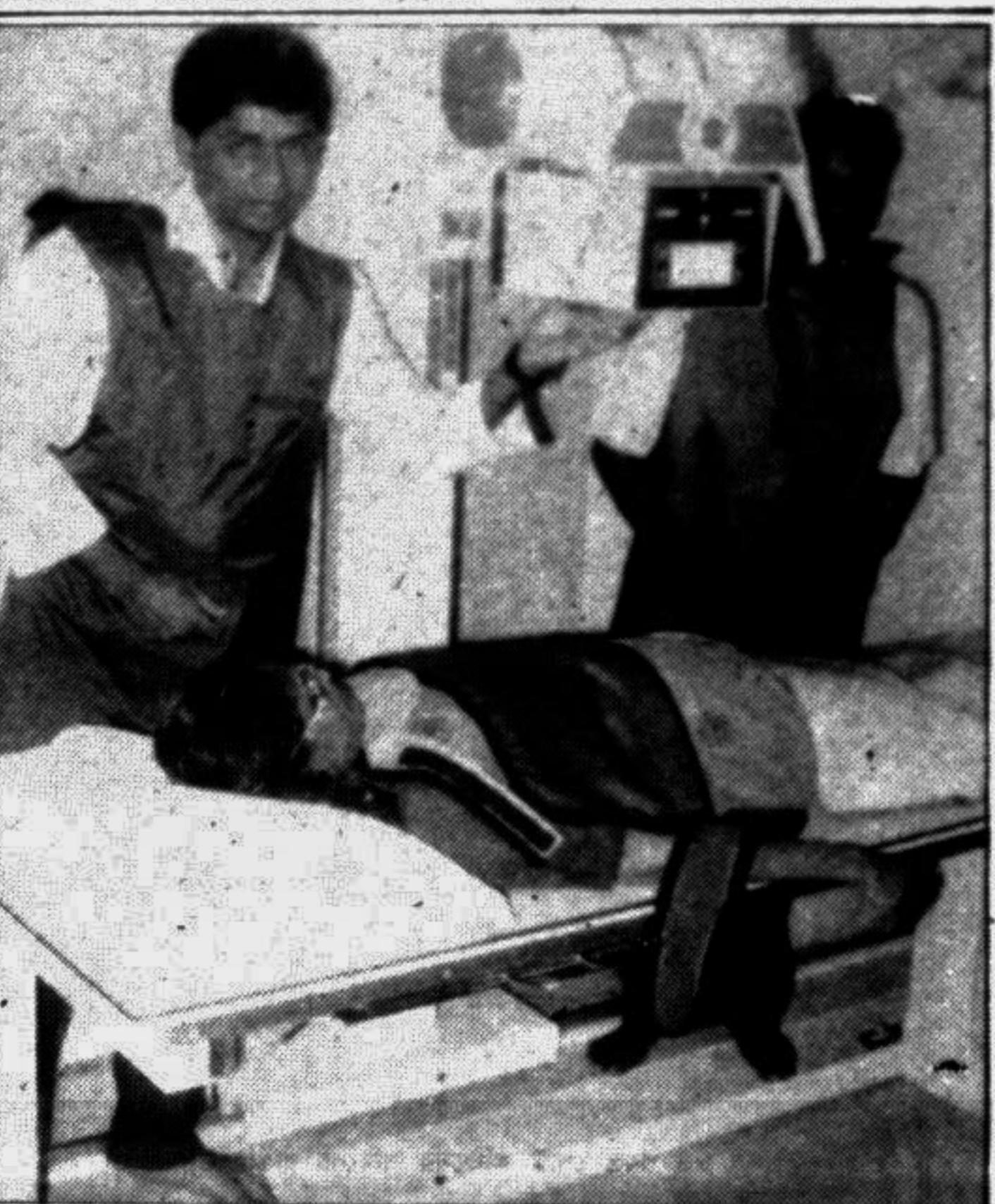
By Staff Correspondent

Bangladesh Krishibank (BKB) has set a target of disbursing a total of Taka 865 crore as loan during the 1994-95 fiscal year.

According to official records, the bank disbursed a total of Tk 860.38 crore worth of agri-loans up to Tk 5,000 taken by 11,894,425 farmers before March 1, 1991 while it waived Tk 30.19 crore of industrial loans under a special waiver, provided a simple interest waiver of Tk 138.35 crore, waived Tk 55.94 crore of loans on account of sick industries and wrote off Tk 74 lakh worth of loans between 1991 and June 1994.

The bank garnered a total of Tk 196.36 crore in deposits during the last fiscal year while the target for the current fiscal has been set at Tk 330 crore.

The total deposits held by the bank stand at Tk 1,480.33 crore as of June 1994.



Plasma Plus diagnostic and analytical services arranged a press briefing and quality assurance demonstration on X-ray radiation control and protective measures at its premises in the city yesterday. The programme highlighted the guidelines of the American College of Radiology for ensuring safer, more reliable X-rays.

— Star photo