

Lawai tells The Daily Star

MCB to help boost trade link with Pakistan

By Sharier Khan

President of the Muslim Commercial Bank (MCB) of Pakistan Husain Lawai feels that his bank will create a wider scope for massive cotton and jute trade between Pakistan and Bangladesh.

"Our main focus in Bangladesh will be financing trade and viable industries including the health and education sector," Lawai said in an exclusive interview with The Daily Star during the inauguration of an MCB branch in the capital yesterday.

"This branch will play the role of a catalyst in gearing up trade exchange between the two countries," Lawai, who is also the chief executive of the bank said. "Pakistani businessmen are keen to invest in different fields in Bangladesh, he maintained.

The Muslim Commercial Bank, having an authorised capital of Pakistani rupees 2,000 crores in 1993, started to extend its branches internationally from May last.

It is the second oldest Pakistani bank which started commercial operation in Dhaka since 1948. After the independence of Bangladesh,

the MCB made its comeback under a new and dynamic private management. "We took a regional approach in expanding our network globally. We made first experiment with Colombo in May. Dhaka is our second venture. Our next mis-



Husain Lawai

sion will be Almaty in Kazakhstan from November. Gujarat born Lawai said.

"Pakistan's business interest here is mainly concentrated on items like jute and tea. Bangladesh can focus on

cotton and textiles from Pakistan. Our bank would transmit trade information between the two countries."

There is already a number of joint ventures in garments sector between Bangladeshi and Pakistani investors. The MCB branch in the capital would attract more such investors from Pakistan, he added.

With the assurance of better customer service, the MCB President said there are branches of two state-owned Pakistani banks in Dhaka named Habib Bank and National Bank of Pakistan. "The MCB is a progressive private bank with dynamic outlook than any other Pakistani banks," Lawai pointed out.

The MCB also has a number of attractive loan schemes.

"Our big investment went in to the power sector and the textiles sector in Pakistan. We are ready for such investment in Bangladesh if financially viable," Lawai said.

The MCB also provides loans to small traders. It has two schemes with Swiss assistance. One such scheme pro-

vides for housing and housing improvement loans up to rupees 50,000. Another scheme provides loans to lower income group for improvement of their carrier or income.

"We will introduce such schemes here," he said adding these schemes, have already been proved to be successful having 95 per cent recovery of loans.

MCB has a long-term plan in Bangladesh. For the first year, it will operate in Dhaka on the basis of its business response will go for opening more branches in Chittagong, he said.

Born in Bantva of Gujarat in India on February 21, 1946, Lawai got his MBA degree from the Institute of Business Administration in Karachi and earned reputation as a top banker in Pakistan having distinction in establishing operations of two foreign banks there.

"We can provide big industrial loans, if necessary we will raise funds from the international financial institutions," the banker said with great confidence.

Jute growers in Savar facing hardships

Jute growers have been facing hardships because of fall in jute prices in different markets of the Savar thana, reports UNB.

Jute is being sold between Tk 120 and 150 per maund which is below the production cost. The price has come down abnormally in the absence of government purchasing centre and shortage of buyers.

The farmers said they are sustaining huge financial losses as their cost of production was about Tk 300 per maund.

They said due to lack of marketing facilities jute cultivation has come down to one third in Dhaka district in comparison with the previous year.

Japan-ASEAN meet Hashimoto leaves for Thailand

TOKYO, Sept 21: Japanese International Trade and Industry Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto left here today for Thailand to attend a Japan-ASEAN meeting of economic and trade ministers, reports APP.

The annual meeting, to be held Saturday, will deal with global and regional economic issues, including Japan's economic cooperation with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, ministry officials said.

Explore potentials of sericulture sector development: Saifur

Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman yesterday called for exploring the inherent potentials of the development of labour intensive sericulture sector towards economic emancipation and poverty alleviation, reports BSS.

There is a tremendous scope for the development of sericulture in Bangladesh with suitable climate and skilled craftsmanship of the local people, the Finance Minister said at a two-day workshop on sericulture sub-sector, review and project identification.

The workshop, organised by the Ministry of Textiles in co-operation with the World Bank, Ford Foundation and Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), is being participated by the delegates from the concerned ministries, divisions, and representatives of the sericulture growers.

Presided over by the Secretary, Ministry of Textiles, Mohammad Abdur Rashid, the inaugural session was also addressed by the Minister of State for Textiles, Major (ret'd) Abdul Mannan.

The team leader of the FAO-World Bank study on sericulture in Bangladesh, Charles Bevans read out a keynote paper on the occasion.

The Finance Minister said

that the rural economy in Bangladesh was growing fast due to the pragmatic policies being pursued by the present government.

He hoped that the sericulture sector could also be given due and practical emphasis for rapid development through harnessing the benefits of the fertility of soil, and the suitable climate and the cheap and hard working labour force.

The Finance Minister said side by side incentives to the farmers efforts must be given for evolving a regular and dependable system of collecting cocoons with processing centres and extension services for the overall development of sericulture sector.

Rahman described the need for providing credit to the sericulturists as "most important" and suggested that the non-government organisations could play a great role in this connection.

He pointed out that the government was channelising over Tk 100 crore as small credit to the entrepreneurs and farmers in the current financial year.

He emphasised on the need for quantity and quality of silk fabrics in the country to compete in the international market.

Bangladesh Handicrafts Fair in NY from Oct 1

A three-day Bangladesh Handicrafts Fair will be held at Queens and Brooklyn in New York from October 1 to 3 next, an official source said in the city yesterday.

The Bangladesh Federation of Non-Government Organisations is arranging the fair in collaboration with Sangbad Publication INC of New York.

The local Congressman of Queens, New York will open the fair. Foreign Minister of Bangladesh A S M Mostafizur Rahman will be present at the concluding day function as chief guest.

About 140 non-government organisations will participate in the fair. Various traditional handicrafts of Bangladesh will be on display in the fair.

Tk 26 cr imported diesel fails quality test

CHITTAGONG, Sept 21: More than 20,000 metric tons of diesel worth about Tk 26 crore, imported by Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation (BPC), failed quality test before unloading, reports UNB.

Sources at Chittagong port said the ship that had arrived here with the diesel on September 12 was reportedly asked to leave the port fearing possible fire incident due to the presence of highly inflammable substance in the oil imported from Singapore.

Tests revealed that the low-grade diesel, deep brown in colour instead of light brown, had inflammable substance beyond permissible limits. The tests were carried out at the Meghna and Padma Oil companies immediately after the arrival of the vessel, MT Osan Traders, at Chittagong Jetty-5.

BPC Chairman Fazul Haque, however, told UNB that the unloading began Monday night after an independent test at a laboratory of the Eastern Refinery as decided by BPC and local agent of Singapore-based BB Naft Asia Limited. The test found the inflammable substance within limits, he said.

He also discarded the allegation that the local representative of the supplier might have influenced the test at the Eastern Refinery.

But the sources alleged an expert of BB Naft Limited was present during the test at the Refinery laboratory violating the law and its local agent, East Cost Trading Company, was engaged in hectic lobbying to make the low grade diesel acceptable to BPC.

They also blamed the supplier for violating one of the conditions - shore to shore delivery of the oil. The unloading from a floating tanker might have caused reduction in the volume of the imported oil, experts said.

Following such allegations, the BPC chairman said, the local agent of the supplier agreed to claim payment according to the volume of the oil received by BPC after unloading.

The diesel was part of the 40,000 metric tons of oil BPC was to import through BB Naft.

One person was killed and some others were wounded while using substandard kerosene oil in lamp in Khulna and elsewhere in the country early this year.

Tea prices move down further

By Staff Correspondent

Tea prices continued to slide downward at this week's auction sale held in Chittagong on Tuesday.

According to a Unity Brokers market report, tea prices moved down further this week and were easier by

Taka one to two per kilogram. Larger brokens sold at between Tk 38.50 and Tk 39.50 per kilogram while prices for most other types were below last week's levels.

The major buyers at the sale were Russia, Poland, Sudan

and Pakistan. Local traders operated strongly for the cleaner, good liquoring smaller brokens and fannings. There were also some export interest for dust grades at the auction. Total withdrawals at the sale stood at 37 per cent of the total offerings as against last week's 38 per cent.

A total of 24,491 packages of leaf were offered at the sale. Of which, the export buyers accounted for 42 per cent of the sale while the local traders brought 18 per cent and the remaining 40 per cent was withdrawn.

In the dust category 4,707 packages were offered at the auction. Of which, the internal traders purchased 54 per cent while the export buyers brought 21 per cent and the remaining 26 per cent was unsold.

Following is the category-wise market performance report as prepared by Unity Brokers:

CTC: Larger brokens opened at about one Tk lower but by close eased by up to Tk two. Most others declined by Tk 1/2 except for selective marks which were about steady and sold between Tk 42.00-Tk 46.80.

Fannings depreciated by Tk 1/2 with the fibrous sorts losing more. Few best lines were firm and sold between Tk 44.50-Tk 48.20.

GREEN TEA: 370 packages were on offer. FYH's and Hysons were dearer and sold at Tk 72.50 whilst the YH's eased and realised between Tk 87.00-Tk 87.50.

DUST: 4,707 packages were on offer. Cleaner and good liquoring lines sold at around last levels. Plainer types eased by Tk 1/3.

The next tea auction would be held in Chittagong on September 27 and offerings would consist of about 27,000 packages of leaf and another 5,000 packages of dust.

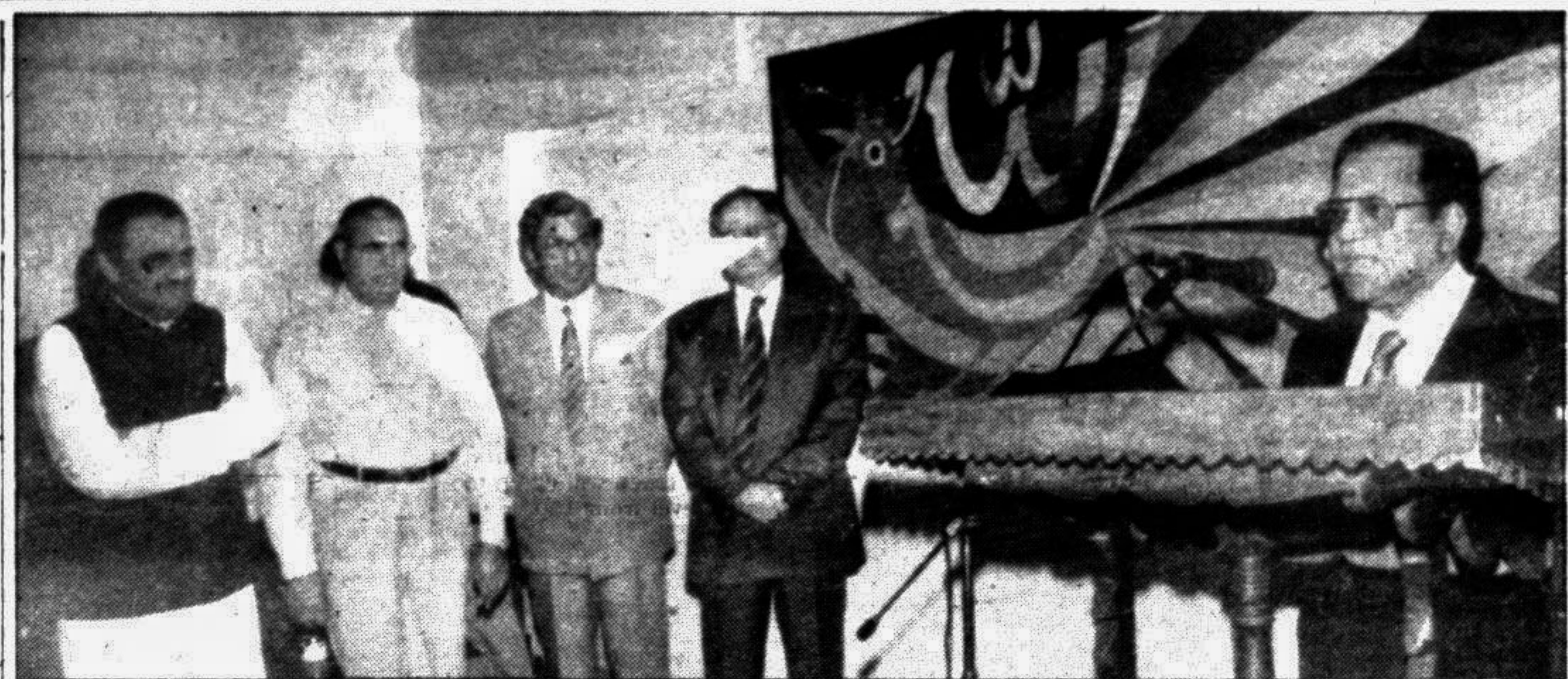
Bangladesh trade fair in Thimpu concludes

THIMPU, Sept 21: The first ever week-long Bangladesh trade fair concluded in the Bhutanese capital Thimpu on Sunday last, reports BSS.

The fair was opened by Bhutanese Trade and Industries Minister Lyonpo Om Pradhan on September 10 last. Jute carpet, readymade garments, dairy product, cosmetics, ceramics and melamine products, crockeries, cables and wires, and pharmaceutical products were put on display at the fair.

Goods worth about 60 thousands US dollars were sold in the fair.

Bangladesh Ambassador to Bhutan Julmat Ali Khan said that Bangladesh trade organisations who took part in the fair received spot orders for products worth one lakh thirty five thousands US dollars, potential orders of goods worth 88 thousand US dollars was also received.



Khurshid Alam, Governor of Bangladesh Bank, addressing the branch opening ceremony of Muslim Commercial Bank in the city yesterday. Also seen in the picture are: Pakistan High Commissioner Anwar Kemal (extreme left), President and Chief Executive of MCB Husain Lawai (extreme right) and Azizuddin Khan, Senior Executive Vice President (2nd from right).

China to give Tibet \$1.17b aid

BEIJING, Sept 21: China plans to funnel more than 10 billion yuan (1.17 billion dollars) in financial aid to Tibet before the end of the century to help the impoverished Himalayan region catch up with the rest of the country, reports AP.

The aid plan is part of Beijing's effort to counter separatist sentiment among Tibetans by reducing the isolation and backwardness of the mountainous region.

The funds would include both subsidies from the central government and investment from Beijing and other regions, the official newspaper China Daily reported Wednesday.

The report said the aid plan was decided at a conference in Beijing in July.

Beijing hopes to give Tibet a "facilit" by investing heavily in the region's energy, transportation, health and education. The central authorities have ordered other provinces to contribute financing and planning for at least one project each, it said.

The report acknowledged that despite some 14 billion yuan (1.65 billion dollars) in national subsidies and 4.76 yuan (560 million dollars) more in investment over the past 40 years, Tibet's economic and social development had failed to keep up with the rest of China.

It blamed the region's

poverty on the area's isolation and the activities of exiled Tibetans seeking independence.

The central government has not sat idly and neglected Tibet," the report said.

The government has launched major development programme in several of China's minority regions this year in an effort to help bridge the yawning gap in living standards between its vast north-west and the booming coastal regions.

In Tibet which has been racked by pro-independence demonstrations since 1987, the government also recently trumpeted the renovation of a 1,300-year-old palace as a symbol of Beijing's concern for Tibetan culture.

The massive white and maroon palace, which covers above Tibet's capital of Lhasa, was home to the region's leader, the Dalai Lama, until he fled into exile following a failed anti-Chinese uprising in 1959.

Critics accuse the Chinese Han majority of seeking to eradicate the Tibetan's pastoral Buddhist culture. And they protest Beijing's contention that Tibet has been part of China for the last 700 years, arguing that the region has always enjoyed de facto independence.

Recent reports from Tibet suggest that anti-Chinese sentiment remains strong, although overt protests have been squelched by tight secu-

urity.

Given the strategic importance of the region and its wealth of natural resources, Beijing apparently has decided to invest more in its development and to continue preferential policies that have made Tibetans largely exempt from paying taxes.

"The party and the central government constantly have the interest of Tibetans in their minds," Radi, chairman of Tibet's regional legislature, was quoted as saying.

The China Daily report said some 2.38 billion yuan (300 million dollars) had been allocated for 62 construction projects in the region over the next seven years.

Including both subsidies and investment, the amount to be spent by the year 2000 was likely to total some 5,000 yuan (588 million dollars) for each of the 2.3 million people living in Tibet, it said.

Dainzin, deputy secretary of the Communist Party in Tibet, told the newspaper that delegations from 24 provinces and cities had visited the region to conduct feasibility studies for their projects and that investment was likely to far exceed that amount.

In 1992, the latest year for which figures were available the central government provided 577 million yuan (67.9 million dollars) investment and 1.45 billion yuan (200 million dollars) in subsidies to Tibet.

Third World should continue bid to attract foreign portfolio flows: IFC

NEW DELHI, Sept 21: The International Finance Corporation (IFC) has said developing countries including India should continue their efforts to attract foreign portfolio flows not only because they supplement domestic savings but also because they help develop the domestic capital markets, reports PTI.

In its just released 1994 annual report, the private sector lending window of the World Bank said foreign portfolio investment and global security issues closely link emerging markets with international markets, primarily because sophisticated institutional investors seek international standards in local markets.

Bangladesh Petroleum Exploration Company Ltd (BAPEX)
(A Subsidiary Company of Petrobrangla)
Material Control Division
HBFC Building (9th Floor), 22, Purana Paltan, Dhaka.
Tender No. 123.53.71 Dated: 14-9-1994

Re-Tender Notice

Sealed Quotations are hereby invited from the bonafide Suppliers /Manufacturers/ Distributors on prescribed schedule for supply of COMPUTER.

Tender schedule containing terms and conditions will be available at our Accounts & Finance Division, Ibrahim Mansion (3rd floor), 11, Purana Paltan, Dhaka during office hours from 4-10-94 at a cost of Tk 500/- per schedule (Non refundable). No tender schedule will be sold on the opening date of the tender. Tender in separate sealed covered superscribing the case number and description of goods may be dropped in the tender box kept at Material Control Division, HBFC Building (9th floor), 22, Purana Paltan, Dhaka at 12.00 Noon on 11-10-94 which will be opened on the same day at 12.10 PM in presence of tenderers (if any).

Management reserves the right to accept/reject any or all the tenders and increase/decrease the quantity of the item without assigning any reasons whatsoever.



The fifteenth annual central meeting of Bangladesh Thai Aluminium Limited plc was held at BCIC auditorium in the city yesterday. The company declared a dividend of 13.5 per cent for 1993.

Directorate General Defence Purchase Ministry of Defence
New Airport Road Tejaon, Dhaka-1215

Tender Notice

1. Sealed tenders for items listed below in local currency are invited from bonafide Manufacturer/Suppliers (Not necessarily enlisted with this Directorate General) for supply of:

a. Backing title shoulder engineer	Quantity	4,500 Nos
b. Backing title shoulder maroon	"	28,000 "
c. Backing title shoulder BMA	"	4,300 "
d. Backing cap badges scarlet	"	10,000 "
e. Ribon for JCO/braid shoulder for Army.	"	3,500 "

2. Tender schedule for item with detail specification will be available on payment (Non-refundable) from 28 September '94 to 24 October '94 on any working day between 0800 hours to 1200 hours. The tender will be opened on 26 October '94 at 1000 hours in presence of all tenderers present, if any.

ISPR/Misc/94/1727
DFP-4700-17/9
G-1447

Major
For Director General