

Country's 12 export houses to take part in KL fair

By Staff Correspondent

Twelve export houses of the country will participate in the four-day Malaysian international trade fair scheduled to be held from October 5 to 9.

Sources in the Export Promotion Bureau, under whose auspices the exporters are participating, said, there is much possibility of Bangladeshi products finding a market in this South Asian country. They said recently a 5-member business delegation from Malaysia visited our country to import various items like jute and jute goods, melamine, leather and leather goods.

They have also signed agreements with Bangladesh Jute Mills Corporation (BJMC) to import jute goods worth 16

thousand US dollars and with Bengal Fine Ceramics to import ceramic goods worth 25 thousand dollars, the exporters informed The Daily Star.

The delegation had a meeting with the Commerce Minister M Shamsul Islam during the visit.

Sources further said, Yohan groups, a Kuala Lumpur based company has agreed to market Bangladesh products in the Malaysian market.

Export of Bangladeshi products to Malaysia as well as in the South Asian region would be increased after this international trade fair, they hope.

The export houses that are

expected to participate in the fair include General Apparels Dhaka, Sharif Malamine, Ananaya Apparels, BRB Cables, Saleh Carpets, Bengal Fine Ceramics, Standard Ceramics, and Shah Jalal Leather Complex.

Samples of garment, fabrics, jute and jute goods, carpets, handicrafts, melamine products, leather, leather goods and some other products will be on display at the fair.

Bangladesh earned about Tk 20 and a half crore by exporting various items to Malaysia in 1992-93 fiscal year.

In 1991-92 fiscal, the amount of export earnings was 21 and a half crore.

Bangladesh to get \$ 80m US grant for agro industries

Bangladesh will receive a grant of 80 million US dollar from the United States for an Agro-based Industries and Technology Development Project (ATDP), reports UNB.

An agreement to this effect was signed here yesterday between the two countries. The five-year project, to be implemented by the Agriculture Ministry, aims at increasing productive employment in agriculture and related enterprises, and creating competitive markets for agricultural and agro-business inputs and technologies.

Additional Secretary of External Relations Division (ERD) Dr Saadat Hussain and US Ambassador David N Merrill signed the agreement on behalf of their respective governments.



Bangladesh will receive a grant of 80 million dollar from the United States of America. To this effect an agreement was signed in Dhaka yesterday. Additional Secretary of Economic Relations Division Dr Saadat Hussain and the Ambassador of the United States of America to Bangladesh David N Merrill signed the agreement on behalf of their respective governments. —PID photo

Agrani Bank lowers crop loan interest

Agrani Bank has lowered interest rate of crop loan to 11 per cent which will be effective from October 1, says a press release.

The timely loan payers will also be given 0.5 per cent rebate.

Besides this, Agrani Bank has kept all the agriculture loan open to the farmers.

Beximco Infusions declares dividend

The Beximco Infusions Ltd declared an interim dividend of 10 per cent for the year 1994, says a press release.

The declaration came at the annual general meeting of the company at Sonargaon Hotel in the city on Tuesday.

The meeting was presided over by A S F Rahman, Chairman of the Board of Directors, Salim F Rahman, Managing Director and other directors attended the meeting.

Emirates leases third extra aircraft

Emirates has leased a third Airbus aircraft, to be delivered in April next year, to meet the airline's demand for extra capacity, says a press release.

Maurice Flanagan, Emirates' Group Managing Director, has signed a contract in Seattle with Steve Udvar-Hazy, President and Chief Executive Officer of USA-based International Lease Financing Corporation (ILFC), a principal operating lessor, for a new Airbus A 310-300.

The Airbus will be configured in three classes and will be equipped with Emirates Television in all three classes, plus inflight telephones and fax machine.

Tim Clark, Emirates' Commercial Director, said: "This third Airbus will provide us with the extra capacity we require and will gradually take over the work of our Boeing 727s."

On delivery, the third leased Airbus will bring the Emirates fleet to 18 aircraft, comprising 10 Airbus A 310-300s, six Airbus A 300-600Rs and two Boeing 727s.

US consumer confidence falls in Sept

NEW YORK, Sept 28: US consumer confidence in the country's economy fell in September, the Conference Board said Tuesday, surprising analysts who had expected confidence to improve, reports AFP.

The conference board's index of consumer confidence in the current state of the economy and its likely development stood at 88.4 per cent in September, down from a revised 90.4 per cent in August.

Initial estimates had put the August index at 89 per cent, and analysts had expected it to rise to 90 per cent in September.

This was the third consecutive drop and the lowest level since March when the index hit 86.7 per cent.

Consumers are clearly less optimistic than they were a month ago on the condition of the US economy.

However, "the aggregate loss has been relatively moderate," and the current level of consumer confidence has been associated, in the almost 30-year history of this survey, with a reasonably lively economy," said Fabian Linden, the conference Board's director, in a statement.

The number of consumers who think the economic conditions are bad increased moderately in September, while the number of those saying things are good declined slightly.

those who didn't," Edwards said.

Argentina, Costa Rica, Chile and Peru are noteworthy successes this year, while Venezuela and Honduras are struggling, he said.

Stable macroeconomic policy, low inflation, lowering of trade barriers and reliance on exports as the engine of growth were among the keys to the success stories, Edwards said.

In addition, Edwards said some countries, such as Chile, can be expected to continue selling off state companies, while other countries appear to have stopped the privatization binge that attracted major investment from abroad in recent years.

NAFTA should net members from South: Carlos Menem

NEW YORK, Sept 28: The Clinton administration is casting about for new members to its North American Free Trade Accord. What would be more natural than to invite Argentina, a mere 4,000 miles (6,400 kms) south of the border?

According to AP, President Carlos Menem, in town Tuesday for the 49th UN General Assembly, trumpeted the economic achievements of his country since he became president in 1989, saying Argentina's growth rate was third highest in the world behind China and Thailand and inflation just 3.5 per cent this year.

There should be a free trade pact from Alaska to Tierra del Fuego, at the southern tip of South America, Menem told 600 businessmen and international investors at the Americas Society.

"It would be excellent if we could do it with NAFTA," Menem said.

Besides the United States, the NAFTA members are Canada and Mexico, a free-trade market of 370 million consumers.

Chile has drawn the US administration's eye as a most-likely new entrant to NAFTA, due to its free-market economy, pro-democratic government and strong traditional ties to the United States.

Besides Chile, according to a draft paper prepared this summer by the office of the US Trade Representative, the

short-list for new members includes Argentina, Colombia and Venezuela — all in South America.

However, Venezuela is suffering severe economic, social and political problems, include coup attempts by the military, and Colombia has a drug-trafficking image that some US lawmakers would be hard-pressed to ignore.

In any case, neither Chile or Argentina expects an invitation this year to join NAFTA. Congress nixed that this month — it must authorize the president to pursue "fast-track" negotiations with NAFTA wannabes and Washington doesn't expect that until next spring.

Some lawmakers, mostly Republicans, held up enlarging NAFTA because they worried about language in any pact to enforce environmental protection measures abroad.

Menem noted Tuesday that Argentina, with 33 million people, has been a model of growth during his presidency, has abolished nearly all trade barriers, has a stable currency for the first time in years and no such thing as hyperinflation.

Inflation was 5,000 per cent annually when Menem was elected to replace Raul Alfonsin; it's expected to be 4.0 per cent next year, when the economy will expand a hefty seven per cent, he said.

Menem said all the right things to the investors in the audience at the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel: Intellectual property

legislation to protect private investment and the rights of companies like pharmaceuticals will become law shortly; judicial reforms and patent laws are in the offing.

Argentina has modernized its industrial base, made the Mercosur southern-cone free trade zone a thriving market, rapidly increasing trade with its rival Brazil, and this summer opened an oil pipeline between Chile and Argentina.

It ended a decade-long practice, mostly under Menem's Peronist party, of heavily subsidizing money-losing state companies, selling off the oil monopoly YPF, privatising telephones, gas and power, even reforming the pension system.

"After decades of misfortune," Menem said, "we have become a credible and trustworthy country."

The Argentine peso, which some international investors says is overvalued, is "at par with the US dollar. The peso is even worth a little bit more than the dollar," Menem said.

He admitted that three years ago, during a similar visit to the United States to court international investors, he promised great things for Argentina.

That prompted raised eyebrows, he admitted, "some looks... in the audience."

Like Lazarus, Menem said, "I can say without fear or error... Argentina has gotten up and is moving forward."

JS body to Finance Ministry Find out ways to lower agri-loan interest rate further

The parliamentary standing committee on the Ministry of Finance has instructed the ministry to find out ways to further lower the rate of interest on agricultural loan, reports UNB.

A meeting of the standing committee yesterday decided that the finance ministry, Bangladesh Bank and scheduled banks concerned would submit a report to the committee in this regard.

Meanwhile, the present 16 per cent interest rate for agricultural loan will be reduced to 11 per cent with effect from October 1.

The meeting, chaired by State Minister for Finance Mofijur Rahman at Sangsad Bhaban, took the decision after discussing a resolution on providing interest-free agricultural loan to the farmers the Parliament had referred to the standing committee.

Japan to give Pakistan \$11.6m

ISLAMABAD, Sept 28: Japan will provide Pakistan a grant of 348 million rupees (about 11.6 million US dollars) for the development of its agriculture sector, reports Xinhua.

Under an agreement signed here yesterday between the two countries, the amount will be utilized for the purchase of agricultural machinery.

Tea market remains dull

By Staff Correspondent

The tea market continued to remain dull as most tea prices declined further at this week's auction sale held in Chittagong on Tuesday.

According to a Unity Brokers market report, prices for most varieties eased by Taka one to three per kilogram, except for the larger broken. Better export demand led the prices for most larger broken to remain firm to dealer.

The major buyers at the sale were Russia, Poland, Pakistan and Jordan. Internal traders were also active.

Total withdrawals at the auction sale stood at 35 per cent of the offerings as against last week's 37 per cent.

In the leaf category a total

of 28,940 packages were offered at the sale. Of which, the export buyers accounted for 54 per cent of the sale while the local traders purchase 13 per cent and the rest was withdrawn.

In the dust category 4,824 packages were offered, of which, the local buyers purchased 34 per cent while the export buyers brought 22 per cent and the remaining 44 per cent was withdrawn.

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

CTC: Larger broken opened at around last levels but due to competition, prices moved up and these sold up to Tk 40.50. All others were

easier by Tk 1/2 below last rates. Few best lines sold between Tk 41.00-Tk 45.30.

Fannings in general were lower by Tk 2/3 with some withdrawals. Plainer types lost more. Selective lines sold between Tk 41.50-Tk 47.80 with one line selling at Tk 56.00.

GREEN TEA: 340 packages were on offer. FYH's and Hysons sold between Tk 70.00-Tk 73.70.

DUST: 4,824 packages were on offer. Prices declined by Tk 1/3 with the powdery sorts moving further down.

The next tea auction sale would be held in Chittagong on October 4 and offerings would consist of about 32,000 packages of leaf and another 5,000 packages of dust.

GCC economies grow by 5pc

DOHA, Sept 28: The economies of six Gulf Arab states grew by more than five per cent in 1993 despite a decline in their oil earnings due to weak crude prices, according to an official report, says AFP.

The Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of the six-nation Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) stood at 201.1 billion dollars in 1993 compared with 190.4 billion dollars in 1992, the Gulf Organisation for Industrial Consultancy (GOIC) said in its annual report, obtained on Monday.

Kuwait recorded the highest growth rate of nearly 32.1 per cent, with its GDP rising to 28.7 billion dollars in 1993 from 21.7 billion dollars in 1992.

The Doha-based group gave no reason for the sharp growth

but economists attributed it to a large increase in oil output after the Emirate completed repair of its oil sector that was badly damaged by the Iraqi invasion.

According to the Organisation of Arab Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), Kuwait produced an average 1.8 million barrels per day (BPD) in 1993 compared with one million BPD in 1992 and 197,000 BPD in 1991.

Saudi Arabia, whose oil production of eight million BPD accounts for nearly 12 per cent of the world's recorded a low growth rate of 1.9 per cent. Its GDP rose to around 113 billion dollars from 110.9 billion dollars.

The United Arab Emirates (UAE), the second biggest Arab oil producer, registered a similar rate, with its GDP

growing to 35.89 billion dollars from 35.2 billion dollars in the same period, according to GOIC, which advises on the industrial policies of member states.

The other members Oman, Bahrain and Qatar also recorded positive growth rates in 1993, the report said.

Although the total GCC growth rate was higher than the world average, it remains far lower than growth levels achieved during the oil boom of the late 1970s and early 1980s.

Most GCC states had reported their economies grew by as high as 10 to 15 per cent a year due to massive investment in the infrastructure.

But some of them started to record negative rates when oil prices began to decline in the mid 1980s.

Analysts apprehend Asia to continue facing petrochemical shortage

SINGAPORE, Sept 28: Asia will continue to suffer a shortage of petrochemicals despite feverish efforts to increase capacity to meet rapid economic growth in the region, industry officials and analysts said yesterday, reports AFP.

Demand for petrochemicals in the region would grow by up to nine per cent annually, more than double world growth, because of increasing Asian exports of value-added products, such as textiles, clothing, footwear and machinery, they said.

"Asia at large will remain a net importer for petrochemical products," said Mandava Rao of the National University of Singapore's Chemical Engineering Department at an

international seminar on petrochemicals here.

Rao said current shortages in Asia could not be overcome even if the booming Southeast Asian economies moved from a demand position of 3.1 million tonnes per year to an excess supply position of 200,000 tonnes in three years as projected.

Asia's petrochemical market was currently a business of more than 30 billion dollars annually and was going to expand more than double to 80 billion dollars by 2000, analysts attending the conference said.

To satisfy growing demand, many Asian nations had built up or were about to increase their petrochemical capacities.

BCIC Tender Notice

বিসিআইসি'র পণ্য শিঁয়ায়ে জাতীয় অঙ্গণতীর প্রতীক

Sub: Amendment to Tender Enquiry No. Pur-3.1396/94-95, dated 6-9-94 for 10,000 MT Phosphoric Acid (10% at buyers option) in bulk in tanker.

It is notified for information of all concerned that Clause No. 20.03 of above tender enquiry is deleted.

- State organisation participating either directly or through local agent shall have to submit earnest money/bid bond as per Clause No. 19.01 of the tender enquiry. In the event of awarding contract directly on the state organisation or through their local agent, they shall have to submit performance security/guarantee as per Clause No. 20.01 of the tender enquiry.
- Other terms and conditions of the tender enquiry shall remain unchanged.

BCIC 1006-249
DFP-5454-250
G-1487

SB extends Tk 104.21 cr to sick units in 22 months

Sonali Bank extended Taka 104 crore 21 lakh during the last 22 months as credit for rehabilitation of 102 sick industries, creating employments for about 3500 people, says a press release.

Under the bank's initiatives to implement government programme for sick industries rehabilitation, Sonali Bank has disbursed Taka 49 crore 90 lakh for rehabilitating 53 sick units at its own accord and Taka 54 crore 13 lakh for 49 sick units under recommendations of the Sick Industries Rehabilitation Cell of the Ministry of Industries.

Among the revived sick units, Taka 23 crore and nine lakh has been extended to 32 food and food products units, Taka 23 crore 39 lakh for 25 engineering units, Taka 20 crore 92 lakh for 16 textile units and Taka four crore 87 lakh for six garment units.

As a result of the fresh finance, most of the revitalised units attained full productivity.

Rehabilitation of more sick units by coming December is under active consideration of the bank.

Hanoi expects to receive 900000 tourists in '94

HANOI, Sept 28: Vietnam expects to receive almost 900,000 foreign tourists in 1994, slightly less than expected but still a dramatic increase, an official announced today, reports AFP.

In the first nine months of this year, 655,000 foreigners visited Vietnam, said Trung, who expects another 200,000 by the end of December.

Despite the tourism boom, authorities pointed to the lack of hotel rooms to accommodate visitors. Last year, there were 32,000 rooms available but only 17,000 were considered to meet international standards.

Latin American economies need to grow faster: WB

MADRID, Spain, Sept 28: Latin American economies need to grow twice as fast and sharply boost exports if they are to reduce the widespread poverty that still plagues the region, the World Bank said Tuesday, reports AP.

Latin American countries should end 1994 with an average rise of 3.5 per cent in their gross domestic products, a moderate improvement over last year's average of 3.2 per cent and 1992's rate of 2.8 per cent, the bank's chief economist for Latin America and the Caribbean, Sebastian Edwards, told reporters.

If the region's countries expect to reduce poverty, however, of rate of 3.4 per cent 3.7 per cent will not be

sufficient," Edwards said on the eve of the Washington-based bank's annual meeting here.

The bank, along with its sister institution, the International Monetary Fund, is the biggest supplier of economic assistance to developing countries, and exerts a major influence on the economic policies of Third World countries.

The bank's vice president for Latin America, Shahid Javid Burki, told reporters that the region should draw lessons from the success of Southeast Asia.

Burki said Latin America, which does only 18 per cent of its trade within its own region, should move toward Southeast



Mahbubur Rahman, President of the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry, addressing the participants at the two day workshop on "Association Management" jointly organised by FBCCI and German Federation of Small Business and Technonet Asia (ZDH-TA) at the federation auditorium yesterday. KM ShaGoull Islam (L), Vice-President, FBCCI Md Azizur Rahman (2nd L), Resident Representative, ZDH-TA Partnership Programme Dr NG Chowdhury (2nd R), Consultant, FBCCI, India, and Abdus Salam Bhuiyan, Project Director, RDL Cell, FBCCI(R) are also seen in the picture.

Asia's figure of 30 per cent.

It should also follow Southeast Asia's lead in maintaining a high level of spending on roads and other infrastructure projects, Burki said.

The bank expects to announce a new programme of infrastructure financing in the next few weeks, he said. He did not provide details.

Edwards said the bank believes Latin America has the capacity to grow by twice its current rate for the rest of the decade, but protectionism by industrialized countries may be a major obstacle to that growth.

He warned that the United States may resort to "disguised trade barriers" by requiring Latin American exporters to meet the stricter environ-

tal and labour standards of rich countries.

"This would mean raising the cost goods, which would keep them out of international markets," Edwards said.

He said proposals by the US Congress to set such standards as conditions for entry into the North American Free Trade Agreement or bilateral trade agreements were unfair because they amount to "rules of behaviour foreign to the region's level of development."

Besides selling more abroad, Latin American governments must greatly improve tax collection—among the rich and middle class, reform their generally "lamentable" school systems, and spend some \$60 billion a year to improve

roads, bridges and telecommunications, Edwards said.

Educating indigenous people and girls is particularly important, he said. Educating girls and women boosts development by improving nutrition and hygiene and affords greater control over reproduction.

Governments should also foster savings, he said because Latin America's current savings rate of 20 per cent of GDP will be "clearly insufficient" to finance investment in the long term. The region can still rely mainly on foreign investment in the short term, Edwards said.

"We are encouraged by the rising rates of growth in the region, but this average hides important differences among those who progressed and