

Finance Minister hosts lunch for dignitaries in Madrid

Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman hosted a lunch in honour of the visiting dignitaries who attended the 50th anniversary conference of the World Bank and IMF at Madrid on Saturday, reports UNB.

The lunch was attended among others by former interim Prime Minister of Pakistan Moeen Qureshi, Belgium Finance Minister Philippe Maystadt, Finance Minister of Morocco Mourad Cheriff, President of the Islamic Development Bank Osama J Fouqui and delegates from the United States, India, Sri Lanka, Bhutan, Nepal, World Bank and IMF, according to a PID handout.

The Bangladesh Finance Minister who is also the chairman of the Board of Governors of the World Bank and the IMF exchanged ideas with them on matters relating to economic cooperation particularly World Bank and IMF's monetary and fiscal support to developing countries. Issues relating to interest rates, foreign exchange fluctuations and SDR also came up for discussion.

Faridpur Chamber election held

FARIDPUR, Oct 2: Election of the executive committee of Faridpur Chamber of Commerce and Industry for 1994-96 was held at the Chamber Bhaban on Tuesday, reports UNB.

Mir Nasir Hossain was re-elected as President while Ahmed Jamal was elected as Vice President in the election. Mohammad Jahangir Mia and Mohammad Nurul Islam were also elected junior vice-presidents.

Yangon invites foreign cos to explore, produce gold, copper

YANGON, Oct 2: The Ministry of Mines on Saturday invited foreign companies to explore and produce gold and copper in Myanmar, where such activities have been controlled under a state monopoly, reports AP.

The ministry issued the invitation in an advertisement in the official New Light of Myanmar Daily. It called for sealed bids for the prospecting and exploration of minerals in 16 blocks, each about 540 square miles (1,400 square kilometers), in the centre of the country. All bids are to be submitted in Myanmar before Nov. 30.

To develop the gold and copper mineral resources in Myanmar, the government has decided to open up opportunities to foreign companies to conduct prospecting and exploration activities, the advertisement said.

Dhaka receives spot export orders of \$14.78m in '93-'94

Dhaka received a total of 14.78 million US dollars of spot orders and 17.06 million US dollars of potential orders by participating in the 20 trade fairs in different countries of the world during the last fiscal year 1993-94.

Sources in the Export Promotion Bureau (EPB), the lone organisation monitoring the country's export said the participating export houses have also received 822 trade enquiries during the fairs.

According to the EPB sources, a total of 128 export houses participated in these fairs. Of them: 11 are government owned and 117 are private firms.

The name and date of the

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participated fairs are:

Single Country Exhibition
Melbourne and Sydney, Australia, Melbourne from August 31 to September 2, 1993, Sydney from September 7 to 9, 1993.

Single Country Exhibition
Kobe, Japan from August 24 to September 19, 1993.

Single Country Exhibition
Riyadh, Saudi Arabia from February 5 to 8, 1994.

International Fairs
Taejon Expo '93 Seoul, South Korea, August 7 to November 7 1993, Asia Super Market Fair, Singapore, September 22 to 25, 1993.

Tehran International Trade Fair, Tehran, Iran, October 2 To 12 1993, Malaysia International Fair, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, October 5 to 10, 1993, South Africa International Trade Fair, Johannesburg South Africa, October 19 to 22, 1993, Dubai Interna-

tional Trade Fair, Dubai, UAE, November 14 to 18, 1993, India International Trade Fair New Delhi, India, November 14 to 23, 1993, International Houseware Fair Chicago, USA, January 16 to 19, 1994, Madras Leather Fair, Madras, India, January 31 to February 4, 1994, International Menswear Fair Cologne, Germany, February 4 to 6, 1994, Stockholm Fashion Fair, Stockholm, Sweden, February 18 to 20, 1994, Las Vegas Leather, Shoe, Jacket and Leather Goods Fair, Las Vegas, USA, February 22 to 24, 1994, Boston Sea Food Fair, Boston, USA, March 15 to 17 1994, International Leather Fair, Hong Kong April 19 to 22, 1994, International Consumer Expo, Bucharest, Romania June 1 to 7, 1994, Overseas Import Fair, Berlin, Germany, June 8 to 11, 1994, 5th Asia Pacific Trade Fair, Beijing, China, June 7 to 13, 1994.



The visiting Deputy Minister for Building Construction of Kazakhstan Poussembekov Jetpisbai called on Commerce Minister M Shamsul Islam at the latter's office in the city on Saturday. — PID photo

US Senate vote on Uruguay Round bill deferred till Dec

WASHINGTON, Oct 2: The Senate leadership, unable to overcome resistance by one key senator to a vote in the next few days, has postponed action on the Uruguay Round multilateral trade agreement until a special December session, says a USIS press release.

Majority Leader George Mitchell announced on the Senate floor September 30 the deal worked out late the previous day, allowing 20 hours of debate November 30-December 1 on the bill for implementing the agreement and a vote at the end of the two-day session.

He said the Senate would adjourn in the first week of October and reconvene for the two-day session after the November elections, but before the new members take office in the new Congress in January. During the special session the Senate will conduct no business other than consideration of the trade agreement legislation.

If the United States and its major trading partners ratify the agreement in time, it will enter into force January 1. The agreement would reduce tariffs on a wide range of traded

goods and services, create the World Trade Organisation, which would subsume and expand the existing General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), as well as reduce agricultural trade subsidies, broaden intellectual property protection and lower investment restraints.

The man who blocked the vote for October was Senator Ernest Hollings of South Carolina, an avowed protectionist who has power as chairman of the Senate Commerce Committee to delay a vote up to 45 legislative days.

Dhaka-Doha air service discussed

Salem Da'en Al-Kuwari, an executive of Civil Aviation Affairs of State of Qatar called on State Minister for Civil Aviation and Tourism Abdul Mannan at his office Sunday, reports UNB.

They discussed matters relating to air service between Bangladesh and Qatar. Shaidul Alam Chowdhury, Joint Secretary of the Ministry of Civil Aviation and Tourism was present during the discussion.

Pindi quarantines ships coming from India

KARACHI, Oct 2: Pakistan port authorities Saturday ordered all ships coming from India quarantined for clearance by health inspectors to prevent the spread of plague from the neighbouring country, reports AFP.

An official announcement said the Karachi Port Trust had ordered that all ships coming from any port in India must anchor 16 to 19 kilometers (10 to 12 miles) offshore at the quarantine anchorage.

Only those cleared by the port's health department will be allowed entry.

Vessels arriving from any other port with crew members who had recently served on a ship from India will also be subject to the "special quarantine."

China wants stable oil imports from Kuwait

BEIJING, Oct 2: China wants stable, long-term oil imports from Kuwait as it becomes a major oil importer, the Xinhua news agency said Friday, reports Reuters.

In a report from Kuwait, it said that a high-level delegation, led by Liyizhong, Executive Vice President of China Petrochemical Corp (Osinope), will pay a working visit to Kuwait at the end of October for this purpose.

It will discuss Kuwait's exporting oil to China and possible Kuwaiti investment in refineries in coastal regions of China to process Kuwaiti crude, it said.

Earlier this month, Li said that China will become a major importer, with a sharp increase in imports in 1995, because of rapid economic growth and an increase in refining capacity in coastal cities.

In the first eight months of this year, China imported 6.7 million tonnes of crude, up from 6.33 million in the same 1993 period, and exported 11.82 million tonnes, down from 12.44 million.

Kuwait has already exported crude to China but the two countries have not signed a long-term contract to supply oil and other petroleum products, the agency said.



A M Zahiruddin Khan, Minister for Industries, addressing a farewell reception in honour of Ahmad Fuzi Bin Haji Abdul Razak, outgoing High Commissioner of Malaysia organised by Islami Bank Bangladesh Limited at a city hotel on Saturday.

Industries minister says Regional ties vital for dev of Muslim world

Industries minister AM Zahiruddin Khan has said regional cooperation is important for the development of the Muslim world, says a press release.

He was addressing a function to bid farewell to the Malaysian High Commissioner in Bangladesh Ahmad Fuzi Bin Haji Abdul Razak at a city hotel on Saturday.

The minister said the concept of South-East Asian Cooperation (SEACO) is significant in the economic background of this region.

He lauded the role of the Islamic Chamber for the development of small and medium industry adding that collective efforts of the Muslim countries would be helpful in developing the potentiality of Islamic Ummah.

The function was addressed among others by Mohamed Kamal Elmiligy, Ambassador of Egypt; Hadi Ahmad Wayarabi Al-Hadar, Ambassador of Indo-

nesia; Abdullah Omar Barry, Ambassador of Saudi Arabia; Mohammad Abbas Zadeh, Counsellor of Iran and Commodore Mohammad Ataur Rahman (Retd) Chairman of Islamic Bank.

The Chairman of the Bank handed over an insignia of the Bank to the High Commissioner.

The Minister mentioned about the deep bond of relationship that exists between Bangladesh and Malaysia and appreciated the role of outgoing High Commissioner in this respect.

In his speech, Ahmad Fuzi Bin Haji Abdul Razak, the outgoing High Commissioner of Malaysia, spoke about the brotherly relation between Malaysia and Bangladesh that so happily exists and lauded the people and the government of Bangladesh for the co-operation extended to him during his stay in Bangladesh.

G-7 ministers vow to fight inflation

MADRID, Oct 2: Finance chiefs from the seven leading industrial nations pledged Saturday to fight inflation and support increased lending to needy nations, reports AP.

The Group of Seven ministers gathered ahead of annual meetings Tuesday and Wednesday of the World Bank and International Monetary Fund, the global lending institutions that are celebrating their 50th anniversaries.

"I'm optimistic we're going to be able to continue sustained growth, low inflation," said US Treasury Secretary Lloyd Bentsen. "These are the best numbers I've seen in 20 years."

Bentsen ducked in and out of the G-7 meetings for up-

dates on the US-Japan trade negotiations in Washington, where a breakthrough agreement was reached on opening Japan's market to US exports averting a threat of American trade sanctions. The US-Japanese talks had threatened to overshadow the Madrid meetings.

Japanese Finance Minister Masayoshi Takemura said he dealt by telephone with Trade Representative Mickey Kantor in Washington and reached final agreement on opening Japan's insurance market to foreign underwriters. Other agreements covering telecommunications products, medical equipment, and glass were announced in Washington.

Oil workers in Brazil ignore court order

RIO DE JANEIRO, Oct 2: Most of Brazil's 50,000 striking oil workers ignored a federal labour court order to return to work Saturday or face a stiff fine, reports AP.

A spokeswoman for the oil workers union in Rio de Janeiro said most strikers would stay off the job, although 7,000 workers returned to work on the oil rigs in the Campos basin.

Strikers were demanding a 108 per cent rise to counter the effects of inflation, but Petrobras, the state oil monopoly, offered a 13.4 per cent increase.

The court approved a 13.5 per cent increase Friday and said that workers will lose pay for days spent on strike.

Each of the 22 striking regional unions will be fined 50,000 reais, about 56,000 dollars, each day until their workers return, the court said, and Petrobras could fire workers who stay on strike.



SCB Regional Treasurer due today

Standard Chartered Bank's Regional Treasurer for Middle-East and South Asia (MESA), Claude Lobo, arrives in Dhaka today on a 4-day visit to Bangladesh, says a press release.

During his stay, he will meet senior officials in Bangladesh Bank, commercial banks and inspect banks local treasury operations.

Commodity markets: Prices of gold, silver, tea higher while cotton, sugar lower

LONDON, Oct 2: Gold rose once again this week, lifting towards the key level of 400 dollars per ounce as dealers feared renewed inflationary pressures in the United States, reports AFP.

This week, prices touched their highest level since August 1993 at 397.6 dollars per ounce after the US Federal Reserve failed to raise interest rates at its meeting on Tuesday.

The precious metals followed gold up, but the base metals dropped on the London Metal Exchange (LME) after reaching record highs the previous Friday, although copper and aluminium remained at a high level.

Light rain on Brazilian coffee plantations damped speculation and prices slipped from their extremely high level during the previous week.

Oil lifted slightly after state-owned Brazilian company Petrobras stopped exports, as striking workers paralysed the company.

Rubber continued to rise, grains remained firm while cocoa and sugar fell.

GOLD: Higher. Gold jumped to its highest level for 13 months at 397.6 dollars per ounce on Wednesday, on renewed fears of inflationary pressures in the US.

The market reacted swiftly to the decision by the US Federal Reserve not to raise interest rates after its meeting on Tuesday, as dealers feared the economy was expanding too fast.

"Gold returned to its classic role as refuge amid inflationary pressures," said Charles Kermit, analyst for Credit Lyonnais Laing.

Towards the end of the

week, prices dipped to around 395 dollars per ounce, as dealers said the metal was likely to consolidate before any further rises.

The announcement of possible restrictions on gold in Russia, the world's second producer, only briefly influenced the market. One senior official indicated that the government was likely to implement a system by the end of the year making it unprofitable to sell gold outside the country.

But a number of dealers believe Russia has too strong a need of foreign currency to properly implement such practices.

Elsewhere, the British proposal to sell some of the International Monetary Fund's gold reserves had little effect. The Gold Council said that gold sales by central banks worldwide had been limited to 100 or 200 tonnes in 1994, so far, compared to 475 tonnes in 1993.

SILVER: Higher. In the wake of gold, silver rose to its highest level since March at 5.70 dollars per ounce.

PLATINUM: Higher. Platinum rose to around 420 dollars per ounce at the end of the week, also essentially in the wake of gold.

COPPER: Sinking. Copper ended the week 40 dollars lower at around 2,531 dollars per tonne, dipping from a closing high since September 1992 at 2,571 dollars per tonne on Friday.

LEAD: Higher. Lead rose two dollars over the week, ending at 639 dollars per tonne after touching a two-year closing high at 647 dollars per tonne on Wednesday as the

metal followed copper's push.

News that Japan's lead production is expected to fall to average less than 17,000 tonnes per month in the October-March period, down sharply from the planned 19,908 tonnes per month in the preceding six months, also boosted the metal.

STOCKS: Rose 4,700 tonnes to 371,775.

ZINC: Slipping. Zinc ended the week 15 dollars lower at around 1,031 dollars per tonne, dipping from a high since May 1993 at 1,046 dollars per tonne on Friday.

Dealers said the market has so far dismissed the ongoing labour disruption at Peruvian producer Centromin, which turned out 138,450 tonnes of zinc in the first half of this year.

The producer has reduced production by 50 per cent, although the strike has only been in operation a week, spokesman said.

Centromin's last major strike, in 1989, resulted in force majeure and the stoppage lasted 45 days. Centromin also produced 23,705 tonnes of copper in the first half of 1994, compared with 21,272 in the same period in 1993.

Figures from the European Zinc Institute (EZI) showed a 27,760 tonne decline in world producer inventories at the end of August from 366,560 tonnes in July, and a 52,500 tonne fall compared with stocks of 391,300 in August 1993.

Stocks on the LME fell 650 tonnes to 1,233,550.

ALUMINIUM: Slipping. Aluminium dipped around 12 dollars during the week to 1,620 dollars per tonne, after

reaching 1,632 dollars per tonne on Wednesday — the equivalent to Friday's high since November 1990.

"It feels as if it wants to come a bit lower. Most people are bullish but we could see a bit of a pullback this week," said one trader.

Reynolds Metals, the second largest US aluminium group, reported European orders for flat rolled metal up 20 per cent from last year, with extrusions up 10 per cent.

Reynolds envisages this translating into a five per cent rise in 1994 primary consumption — a sign of improving European economies, they said.

GNI said that far east demand remained strong while US imports increased 45 per cent to 4,073 billion pounds in the first seven months of 1994, from 2,811 billion in the same period a year earlier.

TIN: Down. Tin fell 95 dollars during the week to 5,395, mainly following the complex lower.

Dealers said that while the Association of Tin Producing Countries (ATPC) meeting was constructive — members agreed to reduce exports to 90,600 tonnes in 1995 from 98,000 tonnes this year — the world's largest producer, Indonesia, is already talking of breaking its quota.

Indonesia's Timah Mine is likely to become publicly listed next year and the government will find it difficult to control production, GNI said.

COCOA: Routine. The market remained relatively dull and trading fluctuated in the range between 980 and 1,000 pounds per tonne in the ab-

sence of any news.

Dealers saw the first real clues about the size of the Ivory Coast harvest — the largest in the world — would not come before mid-October, when the first consignments for cocoa for export would arrive in the ports.

Elsewhere, the Alliance of Cocoa Producers (ACP), which includes the principal producing countries, is expected to announce details of world production cuts at a meeting at the end of October.

Last week, the International Cocoa Organisation (ICCO) agreed to cut world production by 75,000 tonnes per year.

COFFEE: Lower. Some light rainfall on the Brazilian coffee plantations which have been recently suffering from drought appeared to act as the signal for speculators to withdraw.

After the heights reached last week, prices slumped over 100 dollars to end the week around 3,900 dollars per tonne as dealers took profits.

But the rains were extremely light, and independent weather forecasters believe the dry period could remain until mid-October, jeopardizing the flowering process of the plants.

Dealers fear that the future Brazilian harvest, which has already been hit by frosts, will be even lower than expected and the market will suffer shortages for years to come.

Elsewhere, the main producer countries decided to reinforce the power of the Association of Coffee producing Countries (ACPC), which is partly responsible for the rise in prices due to its retention plan.

Also Jorge Cardenas, President of the Colombian Coffee Federation, added that ACPC members agreed in principle not to extend the plantation zones and to increase the return on existing plots.

SUGAR: Lower. The price of refined sugar dropped three dollars during the week to around 328 dollars per tonne, falling as speculators withdrew from the New York market.

In Europe, however, the market remained well oriented with a drop in the sugar beet harvest after a dry summer.

Globally, the 1994/95 (October to September) season should show a deficit of 1.79 million tonnes, said Brokers ED and F'Man.

The predicted production would be 110.71 million tonnes — below the 113.24 million tonnes estimated by the International Sugar Organisation and the 114.25 million tonnes estimated by 114.25 million tonnes.

A specialist from the brokers GNI speculated that the outbreak of plague in India could affect the sugar cane harvest there as workers flee the area. In the longer term this could lead to a rise in imports, he indicated.

VEGETABLE OILS: Lifting. The price of vegetable oil rose slightly on the Rotterdam market, particularly palm oil, despite analysts' estimations that it was due for a correction after recent highs and an increase in Indonesian production.

Soya also lifted slightly despite a downturn on the Chicago market where estimates of a large US harvest

with favourable weather conditions have weighed on prices.

Groundnut oil and rapeseed oil rose, while sunflower oil remained stable.

OIL: Routine. The price of Brent crude North Sea oil ended the week slightly higher at around 16.90 dollars a barrel after trading in a tight range between 16.3 and 16.7 dollars a barrel. Midweek, prices were affected by US stocks figures showing a rise in crude oil.

Prices rose after Brazilian state-owned oil company Petrobras suspended exports in reaction to a strike by workers demanding higher wages.

Brazilian production reached 670,000 barrels a day in 1993, around one per cent of world production, while exports were around 180,000 barrels per day.

Elsewhere, the clearing of the oil pipeline between Iraq and Turkey where supplies have been blocked since Iraq's 1990 invasion of Kuwait, could begin this winter, the Turkish foreign minister said.

RUBBER: Firm. Prices rose to above 900 pounds per tonne on large-scale buying by China and western countries.

Speculation became active again on the Japanese market with dealers attracted by renewed prospects of a rise in prices.

GRAINS: Stable. Grain prices were stable on the London market with wheat trading at around 106 pounds per tonne and barley trading at 103 pound per tonne.

The European market rose on sales of French grain to Algeria and Morocco, but was quiet elsewhere. In the United States, the

Chicago futures market dropped but dealers believed the pace of US export would slow down.

Elsewhere, the prospects of a sizeable drop in the normally large Australian harvest which has been hit by drought.

Dealers believe Australian production could slump by over 50 per cent to around nine or ten million tonnes.

TEA: Higher. The price on the London auction market rose slightly on improved demand for top quality Assam tea from India.

Prices of top quality tea rose by 10 pence to 210 pence per kilo, while medium quality tea remained at 120 pence and lower quality tea was stable at 85 pence.

Elsewhere, the Rwandan government said the country had run out of stocks of tea — the best quality in the world — after the plantations were destroyed by the bloody civil war there.

COTTON: Lower. The main price indicator declined by three cents to end the week around 0.73 dollars per pound after speculators left the US market and dealers anticipated a large US harvest in 1994-1995.

Elsewhere, the Egyptian government said production should drop by a quarter this year after a reduction in the area planted.

WOOL: Decline. The Bradford reference price dipped by 10 pence to end the week below 4.65 pounds per kilo on a technical decline on the Australian market after the highs reached in recent weeks.

Dealers believe operators indulged in some profit-taking after the particularly high prices.