

Arab League to
participate in
ME econ summit

CAIRO, Oct 24: The Arab League will participate in a three day Middle East economic summit opening in the Moroccan city of Casablanca on October 30, Egypt's Middle East news agency reported Sunday, says AFP.

Arab League Secretary General Esmat Abdel Meguid will head the League's delegation to the summit, and will also hold talks on Arab issues with Moroccan officials and other delegations, MENA said.

The 22-member League based in Cairo imposed an economic boycott on Israel in the early 1950s, but recently the six-nation Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) lifted the indirect boycott of companies doing business with Israel.

Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres said in Cairo Sunday the conference would represent an approach towards a new Middle East economy.

It would be the first economic summit to bring together Palestinians, Israelis, Arab States, Americans, Asians and Europeans, Peres said.

47th auction of
BB bill held

Eighteen bids for a total amount of Tk. 620 crore were received at the 47th auction of the 91-Day Bangladesh Bank Bill held yesterday, says a press release.

Three bids were accepted. Face value of the bids accepted was Tk. 100 crore. The weighted average price of the accepted bids was Tk. 99.71 per 100 Taka. The corresponding yield is 1.9 per cent per annum.

Entrepreneurs under EPF
to receive EPB help

By Staff Correspondent

The Export Promotion Bureau (EPB) of Bangladesh will provide financial help to the new entrepreneurs under the Export Promotion Fund (EPF).

The decision was taken at a meeting of the EPF committee on Sunday.

The government has already allocated Taka five crore for the fund to help increase exports from the country.

According to sources, the committee is planning to provide money from the fund to those new export-oriented enterprises which have appropriate technology but suffering from money crisis.

The capital would be given on the basis of equity participation which means the fund will bear certain portion of the paid up capital of the company and get profit according to the share. The company is required to be enlisted with the joint stock exchange.

The committee is now finalizing the rules and procedures in this regard.

"The programme may begin from January next, if our recommendations are approved by the Ministries of Commerce and Finance, a close source of the EPB told The Daily Star.

The committee has divided the new enterprises into four

categories: micro, small, medium and large. The enterprises which have capital from Taka one to five crore have been marked large while others with Taka 5 to 25 lakh capital micro.

Under the programme, the fund may provide up to 90 per cent share of the capital.

The next meeting of the committee is scheduled to be held on Thursday.

According to an informed source, the amount of this fund is too small for the purpose. More money is needed to expedite our export sector. The government should give more attention in this regard.



The Vice-President of Chinese Textile Corporation for Foreign, Economic and Technical Cooperation Qian Wei Yi called on Industries Minister A M Zahiruddin Khan at the latter's office in the city on Sunday. —PID photo

Canadian aid for
poverty alleviation
in Bangladesh to
continue

Canada would continue to help Bangladesh in its bid to alleviate poverty, said the Canadian High Commissioner in Dhaka, reports UNB.

Jon J. Scott was speaking at a seminar on "The Role of the UN in Poverty Alleviation" in the city on Sunday. It was jointly organised by the "Bangladesh 2000" and the United Nations Information Centre.

He said Canada's support for poverty alleviation programme in Bangladesh has several aspects. The largest Canadian contribution is channelled through the Rural Maintenance Programme which benefits poor women in rural areas.

This is one of the largest projects of its kind in the world and is administered for Canada by CARE.

Scott told the seminar that over the past 10 years Canada had provided 145 million dollars to this programme through the monetisation of food aid.

Canada has also supported the Grameen Bank in its formative stages for some 10 million dollars and Proshika Kendra for up to 25 million dollars over the past 20 years. BRAC has also been a major beneficiary of Canadian aid, the envoy said.

The government of Bangladesh also receives Canadian aid in its rural development programme. The target group of one such programme — Rural Development 12, is landless women and men.

Scott said his country was also working with UN agencies such as UNDA, UNICEF, UNHCR, WHO, UNFPA.

Biswas tells IJO seminar

Revitalise jute sector

President Abdur Rahman Biswas yesterday asked all concerned to strengthen research and technology development efforts and market promotional activities for revitalising the jute sector, reports UNB.

New avenues of bulk use of jute need to be identified and pursued vigorously alongside the production of traditional jute goods, he said inaugurating a seminar at a local hotel.

President Biswas noted that the recent global environmental consciousness had strengthened the position of jute as a natural commodity which, he said, is going to have a long-term bright future.

International Jute Organisation (IJO), the Dhaka-based association of jute producers and users, organised the day-long seminar on "Jute and IJO" to mark the completion of ten years of its operation.

Pointing at the decline in demand for jute, the President stressed the "need to consider as to why the jute sector has not progressed as per our expectations."

He said the technology, for both agricultural production and industrial manufacturing, remain largely old and traditional, and no significant efforts had been made to develop new processes and products.

The technology for the overall development of the commodity, facing stiff compe-

tion from various substitutes has not developed in the jute industries necessary for the modern world economy, he added.

ROK pledges \$ 4b to promote projects in Pakistan

SEOUL, Oct 24: A visiting Pakistani business delegation said it had obtained South Korean pledges to promote projects worth four billion dollars, including two power plants, newspapers reported Sunday, says AFP.

Memoranda of Understanding were signed with South Korean businesses to promote 15 projects in Pakistan. Asif Ali Zardari, delegation leader and husband of Pakistani Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto, told a news conference before winding up his mission here.

The memoranda covered two power plants worth 900 million dollars between South Korea's Saehan Consultants Co. and Pakistan's Akhtar Group, and an 800 million dollars oil refinery between Hyundai Engineering and Construction Co. and Pakistan's State Oil Co. he said.

"South Korea was the second largest investor in Pakistan last year, following the United States," Zardari was quoted as saying.

He also offered to provide favourable treatment to South Korean investors in Pakistan.

Lauding the IJO role in catalysing meaningful international cooperation for jute development, he said the organisation might work out policies, programmes and priorities for overall development of jute, kenaf and allied fibres.

President Biswas mentioned the measures to be taken under the 250 million US dollar Jute Sector Reform Programme and said these are expected to create a viable jute industry essentially in the private sector to run on commercial basis in a reformed environment.

Besides, measures have been taken to intensify jute cultivation as well as local consumption through bulk use such as the production of paper pulp from green jute.

Recalling the past glory of the golden fibre, the President urged all related with jute and jute industries to augment production in the fields, mills and factories to make it a viable and profitable sector.

"To achieve this, we are to ensure fair price to the growers, efficient management, higher productivity and no stoppage of work under any circumstances," he said.

The inaugural session of the seminar was also addressed by Jute Minister ASM Hannan Shah, International Jute Council Chairman H De Brabander and IJO Executive Director KM Rabbari.

Biman
BANGLADESH AIRLINES

Zia International Airport, Kurmitola, Dhaka. Phone: 994771-9, 994730-4. Cable: Airbangla. Fax: 642649 DABG BJ.

Stores & Purchase Directorate

Ref: DACPB/Int'l Tender/005/94 Fax: 880-2-893028 Dtd: 12-10-1994

International Tender

Sealed tender is hereby invited by Biman Bangladesh Airlines from Manufacturers/Local agents/Suppliers/Indentors for supply of following item:

Item No	Description	Qty
01	High Lift Plat Form for maintenance of DC-10 Aircraft	01 unit

Tender schedule with detailed specification/terms and conditions will be available at a cost of USD 20/- (USD Twenty) or BDT 800/- (Tk Eight hundred) only per set with Accounts Officer, Cash & Banking, Biman Admin Building, Zia Intl Airport, Dhaka as well as with Finance Manager, Biman, Singapore, Amsterdam, Hong Kong, Frankfurt, London, New York and Tokyo on cash payment (Non-refundable) on all working days up to 29-11-1994. The last date of tender submission is 30-11-1994. Biman management reserves the right to accept/reject any or all the tender, increase the quantity of item without assigning any reason whatsoever.

DDP-7757-1910
G-54E

General Manager (S&P) ACTG

Government of Bangladesh
Office of the Executive Engineer, (RHD)

Phone: 20678

Road Division, Khulna

Notice Inviting Tenders

1. Tender Notice No: 50 of 1994-95 of Khulna Road Division.
2. Name of work: Construction of boundary pillar at 33rd KM to 65.00 KM of Belgram-Tala-Paigacha-Koyra Road under (RHD), Road Division, Khulna during 1994-95.
3. Charge to: 266-Janaguruttapurna.
4. Estimated cost: Tk 1,41,347/-
5. 2% Earnest Money: Tk 2,827/-
6. Time allowed: 25 (Twenty five) days.
7. Eligibility of contractor: "A" to "E" General category contractor.
8. Last date and time of receipt of the tender: Up to 12-30 PM on 2-11-94.
9. Date and time of opening of the bid: At 12-45 PM on 2-11-94.
10. Date and time of opening of the bid: a) Superintending Engineer, (RHD), Road Circle, Khulna.
b) Executive Engineer, (RHD), Road Division, Satkhira.
c) Executive Engineer, (RHD), Road Division, Bagerhat.
AND
d) Executive Engineer, (RHD), Road Division, Khulna.
11. Name of offices where tender schedule will be sold on all working days except Fridays and other Govt. holidays: Executive Engineer, (RHD), Road Division, Khulna/Satkhira/Bagerhat and all Sub-Divisional Engineer's offices under (RHD), Road Division, Khulna.

Quazi Ghulam Mustafa

Executive Engineer, (RHD), CC
Road Division, KhulnaDDP-7774-1910
G-1051New super rice likely to
boost output by 25 pc

WASHINGTON, Oct 24: A new super rice strain could boost rice production by 25 per cent, enough to feed an additional 450 million people a year, the International Rice Research Institute reported, says AFP.

Rice, the major crop for developing nations, feeds half of the world's population. However, demand is slowly outstripping production.

The "super rice" has the potential to increase production while using the same amount of land as current strains, an important factor in rapidly developing Asian nations, experts said.

"This rice will go a long way toward feeding the world's people through the next century, especially in Asia where rice is the staple," said Ismail Serageldin, Chairman of the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR), which the IRRI and 16 other scientific centres are part of.

Super rice and other global agricultural research projects are being discussed at the CGIAR international centres week in Washington from October 24 to 28.

Development of the new variety also comes as rice production faces a host of pressures.

"It's not possible to step up rice production dramatically by planting on new land," Serageldin said.

"Some of the best rice land is being lost to population growth and rapidly expanding urban centres, while remaining virgin lands are not suited for rice," he added.

In addition to these factors, some 10 per cent of traditional

rice farming land is showing signs of fatigue from monoculture farming practices.

According to IRRI figures, super rice production could reach 12.5 tonnes per hectare (2.47 acres) up from conventional strains producing 10 tonnes per hectare.

If the super rice were planted widely it could produce 100 million more tonnes per year, providing some 450 million people with the annual average consumption of 200 kilograms (440 pounds), the IRRI said.

With population figures predicted to hit 8.3 billion people by the year 2025 from the present 5.5 million, the new variety may prove pivotal.

"We don't know yet how many people will live on earth in the middle of the next century, but we know that we have to produce at least more than twice the food we harvest today," said Klaus Lampe, Director General of the Philippines-based IRRI.

"We don't have the technology yet to make that happen. The new generation of rice, however, is a very important building block to achieve this goal," he added.

The new super rice comes from strains selected from some 80,000 rice samples the IRRI maintains.

After five years of development, the end yield produced prototypes with thick and sturdy stems as well as thicker, darker green and erect leaves to achieve the increased yield.

Researchers will now try to breed enhanced resistance to pests and disease as well as culture different tastes and cooking qualities.

China running up against hostile foreign markets

Lu Xiaoming writes from Beijing

China is running up against hostile foreign markets as it tries to double its export volume to 200 billion dollars by the end of the decade. A surge in anti-dumping charges against Beijing has Chinese officials claiming trade protectionism by Western governments.

"It is only because China is most vulnerable," says Zhang Yuqing, Director of the Anti-Dumping Division of the Ministry of Foreign Trade and Economic Cooperation (MOFTEC).

China has grown for the world's 32nd largest exporting nation in 1978 to its current position of 11th, Zhang notes. That growth has been fuelled by 15 years of export expansion at an annual rate of 16 per cent compared to a global average of eight per cent, he adds. "When a hog gets too fat, there comes the slaughterer," Zhang said quoting a Chinese proverb.

Dumping is the international trade language used when exporters are accused of selling their goods on foreign markets

below the cost of manufacturing them.

According to MOFTEC figures, in the past 15 years up to June, a total of 172 anti-dumping cases were filed against China in 27 countries. After only two cases against China in the 1970s, the frequency increased to six a year in the 1980s and has soared to an annual rate of 22 in the 1990s.

In the first half of this year, 19 anti-dumping cases were filed against Beijing. At 54, the European Union has the largest number of cases against China followed by the United States with 50.

For the Chinese officials, charges are not about dumping but trade protectionism. They say that although the completion of the Uruguay Round of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) promises a freer flow of trade and the GATT members have been obliged not to increase customs duties and import quotas, anti-dumping remains a handy hedge for trade restric-

tion. Zhang points out that anti-dumping charges are on the rise around the world not just against China. The country's vulnerability comes from the perception that it is not a market economy despite the efforts of economic reform in recent years, he adds.

Labelled a non-market economy, China is perceived as a country where the state controls electricity cost, commodity prices, salaries, foreign exchange rate and whatever else may affect the cost of a product, and consequently, its domestic price.

The domestic price of a product from a non-market economy is not accepted as fair price in an anti-dumping investigation, which means other so-called surrogate countries are called upon to compare their prices with the exporting price of the product in question to decide whether or not dumping has taken place.

The surrogate countries

serve as elastic rulers," says Zhou Shijian, Deputy Director of the Beijing-based International Trade Institute. "They are picked up randomly."

Zhou recalls a case while working in the Chinese Embassy in Washington when both China and India were charged with dumping — at the same price — some construction products. The Chinese goods were slapped with a duty of nearly 12 per cent when surrogate countries Japan and France ruled they were dumped while Indian products were left unchanged.

"Two countries with similar development level sell the same product with the same price to the same market at the same time," Zhou says. "One is dumping and the other is not. What would you call this if not prejudice?"

Considered even more outrageous by Beijing was a move by Mexico in April 1993 when 10 categories and thousands of Chinese products were slapped with duties ranging from 18 to

1,100 per cent. Some of the products involved cannot be produced in Mexico while others have never been exported to the country.

"This is absurd," says Dong Yi, a MOFTEC official who deals with legal affairs in trade with Latin American countries. He explains that an anti-dumping petition normally comes from local industries who feel injured by less expensive imported substitutes. But a country which does not produce a certain product should not be questioning the price, Dong says.

To the dismay of Chinese trade authorities, China lost most of the anti-dumping cases against its products, with many of the cases undefended due to legal expenses and a lack of expert legal counsel.

Export losses are estimated at billions of dollars. A pending petition against China's shoe exports to European Union is threatening to decimate the country's annual two billion dollars footwear export market.

Faced with mounting anti-dumping cases and economic losses, Chinese trade authorities have taken some action. Guidelines for responding to dumping charges were brought into effect and within a year regulations for punishing exporters who sell products at lower than production cost will be put in place.

Officials also stress that market elements are rapidly increasing in the economy to the point that more than 90 per cent of commodity prices in the country are already determined by the market.

While local manufacturers and exporters are getting familiar with the procedures of anti-dumping investigations making them more adept at dealing with the charges, officials say foreign anti-dumping authorities are also gaining a better understanding of the transitional Chinese economy. — Gemini News

Lu Xiaoming works for China Features in Beijing.



Ambassador of Qatar in Bangladesh Atique Nasser Al-Bader called on State Minister for Civil Aviation and Tourism Abdul Mannan at the latter's office in the city on Sunday. —PID photo