

Pakistan to get \$490m WB loan

ISLAMABAD, Dec 2: The World Bank has approved 490 million dollars in aid to help Pakistan build power plants and develop energy projects, newspapers reported Friday, says AP.

The World Bank loan includes 250 million dollars that will go into a private sector energy development fund established six years ago.

The bank also is providing 240 million dollars in loan guarantees for the massive Hub Power Plant, a 1.8 billion dollar project outside the southern port city of Karachi.

Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto has focused her efforts on the energy sector as she tries to revitalize Pakistan's economy, which has shown little growth at a time when many Asian economies are booming.

US dollar climbs against yen in Tokyo

TOKYO, Dec 2: The dollar climbed against the Japanese yen in Tokyo Friday on hopes for another rise in US interest rates, reports AP.

The US currency ended the week at 99.58 yen, up 0.57 yen from its Thursday close in Tokyo and above its overnight finish in New York at 99.34 yen.

After opening at 99.40 yen, trades ranged between 99.38 yen and 99.59 yen.

The dollar continued to rise in Tokyo after its advance Thursday in New York to a seven-week high as a spate of strong economic figures fueled expectations of a further rise in key US interest rates.

Currency dealers said the dollar moved somewhat narrowly as many players awaited the release later in the day of November US employment data.

If the data suggest persistent inflationary pressure in the US economy, dealers believe that prospects for another rate hike may become stronger, thus increasing the return on some dollar-based investments. The US Federal Reserve raised its key lending rate by 0.75 percentage points November 15.

Scientists warn of food shortage

COLOMBO, Dec 2: Governments worldwide must improve crop production or face shortage of food in the future because of population explosion, water shortage and shrinking amounts of cultivable land, scientists said Thursday, reports AP.

"At the moment there is no shortfall but looking 20 years down the road we see a different picture," Randolph Barker, the new head of the International Irrigation Management Institute told scientists at the 10th anniversary of the organization.

"There is an alarming complacency that everything is all right on the food front. But we must learn to make more food with less land and water, and the research must start now because science takes time," said Roberto Lenton, the outgoing director-general.

"The nightmare of world hunger that was stopped by the green revolution in agricultural production in the 1960s may return to haunt us," said M S Swaminathan, Chairman of the Institute.

Global population is projected to total 7.1 billion by the year 2010, compared to 5.2 today, according to the World Bank.

The amount of water available for irrigation is a declining due to increased demands from growing population. At present, 80 per cent of the water is for irrigation, but competition is increasing from household and industrial consumers.

Most countries taking low-key approach to GATT accord

GENEVA, Dec 2: After eight years of turbulent talks to draw up the new world trade accord, countries around the globe now are rushing the mammoth agreement through their national parliaments, according to AP.

Nearly 40 countries, including most of Southeast Asia, have ratified the 124-nation pact. About 40 more — including trade giants Japan, the European Union and Canada — have indicated they will do so by the end of the year.

Three countries — Switzerland, Liechtenstein and Cyprus — have already told the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade that domestic politics will prevent them from ratifying the accord this year.

But their absence alone won't stop the pact from taking effect as scheduled on January 1. All that is needed is for

Even after Bhopal mishap India pays little heed to industrial safety

NEW DELHI, Dec 2: Ten years ago, the world was shocked into taking a new look at the safety of its industries after a killer gas escaped from a Union Carbide plant and rained death on the central Indian city of Bhopal, reports AP.

But the world's worst industrial disaster spurred little more than empty legislation in India, where a Bhopal could happen again, environmentalists warn on the eve of the landmark anniversary.

"Bhopal created awareness of the need for industrial and environmental safeguards, but what is the use of such awareness?" said Mahesh Chandra Mehta an environmental lawyer who has dragged many hazardous industries to court.

"Many laws have come into existence but no one complies with them and nothing is done to enforce them," he said. "The lessons of Bhopal have not been learnt."

The leak of the lethal methyl isocyanate gas on the night of December 1984 killed about 2,500 people in the immediate wake and maimed thousands more. The death toll has crept up to at least 6,954 over the years.

In the United States, the disaster prompted the responsible care programme and the right to know law which taught citizens how to deal with such a crisis and gave them access to information about potentially hazardous industries.

Canadian PM for free trade between Europe, N-America

PARIS, Dec 2: Prime Minister Jean Chretien of Canada on Friday proposed a broad free-trade agreement between the world's two largest trading blocs, Western Europe and North America, reports AP.

In a speech to French businessmen, Chretien welcomed the growth of regional trading blocs, such as the European Union and the US-Canada-Mexico alliance forged by the North American Free-Trade Agreement (NAFTA).

"Yet this also entails its share of risk, and I am particularly sensitive to defensive and protectionist attitudes that might lead the major regional blocs to withdraw timidly into their own shells," he said.

"We must overcome the trade disputes that weigh down our relations and create unnecessary fears," he said. "We should look carefully at the idea of a global trade liberalisation agreement between NAFTA and the European Union."

He said Canada, which

India legislated the environment protection act in 1986 to deal with industrial danger and followed it up with norms for the manufacture, storage, and dumping of hazardous chemicals, but they have remained in the books.

About three dozen minor industrial accidents of the Bhopal kind have occurred since then and hazardous industries continue to proliferate in populated areas in gross violation of zonal laws, lawyer Mehta said.

A public liability insurance act was introduced in 1991, making it compulsory for hazardous industries to buy insurance policies so they can compensate victims of an accident.

A minuscule fraction of the tens of thousands of factories across India have complied. A proposal to set up special courts to deal with errant industries has made no headway.

"The government does not have the infrastructure or the machinery to implement the laws," an official of the Central Pollution Control Board said. "It is a Herculean task and we have no teeth to tame industries."

Thousands of small and big industrial units from power, cement and steel plants to tanneries and chemical units dump toxic wastes where they please in the absence of specific dumping sites and safety standards.

Few industries have disaster management plans or adhere to norms and few have the resources to build plants to treat

emissions and effluents, experts say.

"The awareness is there but the economic motivation to comply with the law is lacking," said Seema Arora, Deputy Director of the Environment Division at the Confederation of Indian Industry, which is popularising an environmental audit among its members.

She said fiscal incentives and disincentives were needed to force industries to toe the line, adding that India still had a "long way to go" before industrial and environmental safety became a way of life.

The 10th anniversary of the Bhopal disaster comes at a time when Indian industry is expanding rapidly after tuning itself to the demands of greater competition brought by market reforms launched in 1991.

With foreign investors coming into the liberalised market with "cleaner and better technology," Indian industries would be forced by the market to match them, Arora said.

"They will have to clean up their act to survive," she said.

Big-cash-rich industries may be forced to reform but some 2.5 millions small factories growing without fetters are the problem, said P.K. Gupta of the National Productivity Council, partly funded by the Industry Ministry.

"Bhopal was an eye opener. We became aware at the expense of the victims," Gupta said. But it can happen again, judging from our housekeeping."

US initial jobless claim drops

WASHINGTON, Dec 2: The number of Americans filing the first time for state unemployment benefits dropped last week to the lowest level in two months, reports AP.

The Labour Department reported Thursday that initial jobless claims totaled a seasonally adjusted 317,000 in the week ended November 26, the smallest number since September 24.

Initial claims dropped 12,000 from 329,000 in the previous week, the biggest decrease since July 30. That figure was revised upward from the 326,000 initially reported.

The same report showed the four-week moving average of jobless claims declining for the first time in eight weeks. The average was 326,250, down 1,250 from the previous week's revised 327,500. The initial report, released last week, put the figure at 326,750.

The four-week average had not declined since October.



The certificate-awarding ceremony of 31st Basic Flight Service Course was held at BATC on Thursday. Managing Director, Biman and Chief Guest Ahab Ahmad is seen with the 41 participants who successfully completed the course.



Japanese Ambassador in Bangladesh Shigeo Takenaka inaugurated the week-long 'Japanese Food Promotion' at Sonargaon Pan Pacific Hotel in the city on Wednesday.

Asian stock markets close lower

HONG KONG, Dec 2: Asian stock markets closed mostly lower Friday, with the key index in Hong Kong tumbling to 13-month low on expectations of another round of interest rate increases in the United States, reports AP.

TAIPEI: Share prices closed higher as pro-government companies continued to buy stocks in a bid to win support from investors for Saturday's local election. The market's Weighted Index rose 35.77 points to 6,479.82.

WELLINGTON: New Zealand share prices lower in heavy trading, with brokers saying the market is expected to stay volatile as long as short-term interest rates remain high. The NZSE-40 Capital Index fell 33.50 points to 1,942.56.

MANILA: Share prices closed lower on selling by overseas investors. The Philippines' PSE index of 43 selected shares fell 48.61 points to 2,596.75.

BANGKOK: Thai share prices closed lower on remarks by Interior Minister Chavalit Yongchaiyudh that he would be resigning. The

Stock Exchange of Thailand index fell 33.49 points to 1,338.11.

SEOUL: Share prices closed lower because of local institutional selling after the ceiling on foreign stock ownership was raised to 12 per cent from 10 per cent on Thursday. The Korea Composite Stock Price Index fell 12.58 points to 1,053.63.

SYDNEY: Australian share prices closed lower, dragged down by the slump in Hong Kong and a corresponding weakness in the local share price index futures. The All Ordinaries Index fell 20.3 points to 1,880.1.

KUALA LUMPUR: Malaysian share prices closed lower on foreign institutional selling. The KLCSE Composite Index fell 8.39 points down to 977.74.

SINGAPORE: Share prices closed lower in thin trading. The 30-share Straits Times Industrials Index lost 40.33 points to 2,189.02.

JAKARTA: The stock exchange's Composite Index fell 11,079 points, closing at 471,050.

NAFTA results in net loss of 10,000 US jobs

WASHINGTON, Dec 2: The North American Free Trade Agreement has failed so far to deliver on its promise of more US jobs and instead has resulted in a net loss of 10,000 jobs, according to a congressional analysis, reports AP.

A Joint Economic Committee study requested by Democratic Senator Byron Dorgan of North Dakota estimates that while NAFTA created roughly 127,000 jobs in its first nine months, increased imports from Mexico have cost 137,000 US jobs.

NAFTA, which went into effect this year, brought the United States, Mexico and Canada into a single trading bloc.

Dorgan issued the study as the Senate ratified the 124-nation accord negotiated under the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade.

President Clinton, meanwhile, is expected to announce his intention next week to broaden NAFTA to include Chile and call for a hemisphere trade agreement.

"NAFTA and GATT are trade agreements that make it easier for American jobs to go where labor is cheap," Dorgan said. "It's a bankrupt trade strategy that weakens our country but strengthens corporations who want to employ cheap labor elsewhere and ship their goods here."

Commerce Department officials questioned the findings.

saying their own analyses show job gains as a result of increased trade with Mexico.

"We are quite confident that NAFTA has been a net plus for jobs in 1994," said Commerce's chief economist, Lewis Alexander.

Commerce officials questioned the study's premise and the assumption that increased imports necessarily translate into job loss.

The officials were reluctant to assign specific job gain numbers from NAFTA, saying it's very difficult to separate the trade agreement's effect on jobs from overall trade patterns with Mexico.

Nine-month NAFTA figures released by Commerce last month showed US exports to Mexico hit record levels, rising almost 22 per cent over a year earlier. Imports from Mexico were up almost 213 per cent.

But opponents contend that NAFTA backers are ignoring the fact that the United States trade surplus with Mexico is shrinking. After hitting a high of 5.3 billion dollars in 1992, the trade surplus is expected to reach 2.8 billion dollars this year if current trends hold.

The congressional study's authors themselves expressed some discomfort with pinning job loss numbers at this early stage. "It will take at least five to 10 years for the full effects of the agreement to manifest themselves," they wrote.

US agri export may hit \$45b

WASHINGTON, Dec 2: US agricultural exports are expected to hit a record 45 billion dollars in 1995, an increase of 1.5 billion dollars over this year, the US Agriculture Department says, reports AP.

If this estimate holds, the total would top the previous record of 43.8 billion dollars in 1981.

Although the new General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade pact is not cited as a cause, the world trade accord has been promoted as a boost to future US agricultural exports. A report by the House Ways and Means Committee said exports could be as much as 8.5 billion dollars higher by the time GATT is fully implemented in 2005.

USDA estimates that agricultural imports for the upcoming year also will set a record.

Exchange Rates

Following are the Sonali Bank's dealing rates to public for some selected foreign currencies effective as on December 1 and 2.

Currency	Selling		Buying		
	TT & OD	EC	TT	OD	Transfer
US Dollar	40.3805	40.4115	40.1000	40.0355	39.8740
GBP	63.5804	63.6293	62.1567	62.0567	61.8064
DM	26.0038	26.0237	25.2957	25.2550	25.1531
F Franc	7.5842	7.5901	7.3804	7.3685	7.3388
C Dollar	29.6354	29.6582	28.8259	28.7795	28.6634
S Franc	30.7806	30.8042	29.9457	29.8975	29.7769
Jap Yen	0.4144	0.4147	0.3992	0.3985	0.3969
IRS	1.2931	1.3028	1.2714	1.2523	—
Pak Rupee	1.3189	1.3288	1.2967	1.2772	—
Iranian Ryal	0.0232	0.0234	0.0227	0.0224	—

A) T. T. (DOC) US Dollar Spot Buying Tk. 40.0677

B) Usance Rate:
30 Days 39.7497 '60 Days 39.4656 90 Days 39.1816 120 Days 38.8976 180 Days 38.3295

C) US Dollar sight bill 3 months forward purchase: Tk. 40.0355

D) US Dollar sight bill 3 months forward sale: Tk. 40.6115

Currency	Selling		Buying	
	T.T. & O.D.	O.D. Transfer	O.D. Transfer	O.D. Transfer
S Riyal	10.7664	10.6308	—	—
UAE Dirham	10.9954	10.8560	—	—
Kuwaiti Dinar	134.8264	133.0908	—	—
D Guilder	22.9696	22.6686	—	—
S Krona	5.3444	5.2721	—	—
Malaysian Ringgit	15.7983	15.5941	—	—
Singapore Dollar	27.5974	27.2326	—	—

Shipping Intelligence

Chittagong Port									
Berth position and performance of vessels as on 1-12-1994									
Berth No	Name of Vessels	Cargo	L. Port	Local Agent	Date of Arrival	Date of Leaving			
J/1	Banglar Shobha	Idle	Col	ISC	27/11	—			
J/2	Alfira	R Sees	Mong	Benam	27/11	4/12			
J/3	Kwang Myong	GI/Gl	Sing	Seacom	22/11	1/12			
J/4	Banglar Kallol	GI/Gl	Peng	ISC	24/11	4/12			
J/5	Ocean Envoy	Rice (P)/GI	Kara	Karna	25/11	5/12			
J/7	Irene	Cement	Hong	PSAL	23/11	1/12			
J/8	Al Swamuz	GI	Mong	ASSL	25/11	3/12			
J/11	Good Spirit	Sugar (P)	Seacom	R/A	5/12	—			
J/12	Pratita	Cont	Sing	AML	29/11	3/12			
MPB/1	Fong Yun	Cont	Sing	BDSHP	26/11	1/12			
	Sintra	Cont	Sing	CTS	28/11	2/12			
MPB/2	Imke Wehr	Cont	Sing	APL (B)	27/11	1/12			
CGJ	Sea Nymph	Urea	Shek	PSAL	23/10	4/12			
GSJ	Ken Pelidae	Wheat (G)	Sing	Ancient	27/11	2/12			
TSP	R Phos	Chin	RISA	22/11	1/12	—			
RM/5	Argirionissos	HSD/JF-1	Sing	MSPL	27/11	1/12			
RM/6	Skaubolt	ISCO	Sing	MSPL	30/11	3/12			
DOJ	Banglar Shourabh	C Oil	Kara	ISC	R/A	1/12			
DOJ/2	Banglar Kiron	Repair	Kara	ISC	27/10	6/12			

Vessels due at outer anchorage									
Name of vessels	Date of Arrival	Last Port	Local Agent	Cargo	Loading	Port			
Paradise	1/12	Col	CLA	GI	—	—			
Hallvard	1/12	Agaba	SST	R Phos	—	—			
Apj Priti	2/12	—	CSL	C Clinker	—	—			
Lhotse	2/12	Sing	RSL	Cont	—	—			
I Yamburenko	2/12	Sing	CT	Cont	—	—			
Star Craft	2/12	Sing	EBPL	Vehicles	—	—			
Donetsk	2/12	Yalta	Royal	M Seeds	—	—			
Komsomolski	2/12	—	Litmond	Mop	—	—			
Al Tajwar	3/12	Sing	AML	Cont	—	—			
Meng Kiat	3/12	—	—	—	—	—			
Zita	3/12	Tampa	Benam	GTSP (P)	—	—			
Robert-e-Lee	3/12	Para	Karna	GI (Lash)	—	—			
Trans Friendship	3/12	Vanc	Royal	M Seeds	—	—			
Fong Shin	4/12	Sing	BDSHP	Cont	—	—			
Banglar Mni	3/12	Sing	ISC	Cont	—	—			
Banglar Umi	3/12	Mong	ISC	Cont	—	—			
Aras	4/12	Col	ISC	J Goods	—	—			
Sidi Krier	5/12	Mong	MMI	For Bunkering	—	—			
Vishva Kumudi	5/12	—	SSL	GI	—	—			
Nikolay Morozov	5/12	Col	Baridhi	Cont	—	—			
Kota Bimlang	6/12	Sing	CTS	Cont	—	—			
Vigornuzon	7/12	Sing	RSL	Cont	—	—			
Karabievceci	8/12	Sing	EBPL	GI	—	—			
Optima	8/12	Sing	RSL	Cont	—	—			
Lanka Mahapala	8/12	CTO	Baridhi	Cont	—	—			
Andrian Goncharov	9/12	—	CT	Cont	—	—			
Vera	9/12	Mass	Ancient	Wheat (G)	—	—			
Gold Bridge-1	10/12	Sing	Aeka	Cement	—	—			
Petr Starostin	22/12	—	CT	Cont	—	—			