

**US, Pakistan sign  
\$2.5b accords on  
power projects**

ISLAMABAD, Dec 19: Pakistan and US businessmen signed eighteen agreements amounting to an investment of 2.5 billion US dollars for setting up power projects in Pakistan, reports PTL.

This was announced by the US Secretary of Energy William H. White here yesterday. White, who has been in Pakistan since December 12, is accompanying a 60-member delegation of private American businessmen and government officials to explore new opportunities for trade and investment in the energy sector of Pakistan.

While four agreements were signed for setting up coal and gas fired power stations, the others were for cooperation in the field of oil and gas and research in energy efficiency and renewable energy technology.

These were in addition to the agreements worth over 4.5 billion US dollars signed between US and Pakistani businessmen for development of Pakistan's energy sector in September.

White said that some of these deals would be in place within six months.

**Toyota predicts  
10pc rise in  
vehicle sales**

TOKYO, Dec 19: Toyota Motor Corp, Japan's largest automaker, said Monday it expects to sell 10 per cent more vehicles in Japan in 1995 than it did this year, reports AP.

It also plans to boost foreign production by 18 per cent to 1.25 million vehicles, while decreasing exports 17 per cent to the same number of vehicles, it said.

The rise of the yen, which makes exports more expensive, was the main reason for moving more production overseas, a Toyota spokesman said.

Toyota, which has 40 per cent of Japan's auto market and had eight trillion yen (80 billion dollars) in sales worldwide in fiscal 1994, expects to sell 2.24 million vehicles in Japan in 1995.

The projected increase is in line with the market as a whole. After shrinking nearly two years in a row, domestic auto sales began rising above the previous year's levels in June.

The company declined comment on how much the vehicle sales would represent in financial terms.

**Nepalese PM tells entrepreneurs  
Help make SAFTA a success**

KATHMANDU, Dec 19: A two-day seminar of Chambers of Commerce and Industry of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) on preferential trading arrangement was inaugurated here yesterday, reports Xinhua.

Inaugurating the seminar, Prime Minister Manmohan Adhikari said that entrepreneurs, particularly members of chambers of commerce and industry, need to play a crucial role in making SAFTA (SAARC Preferential Trading Arrangement) a success.

The seminar was organised by the Federation of Nepalese

Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FNCCI) under the auspices of Frederick Naumann Foundation and SAARC Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

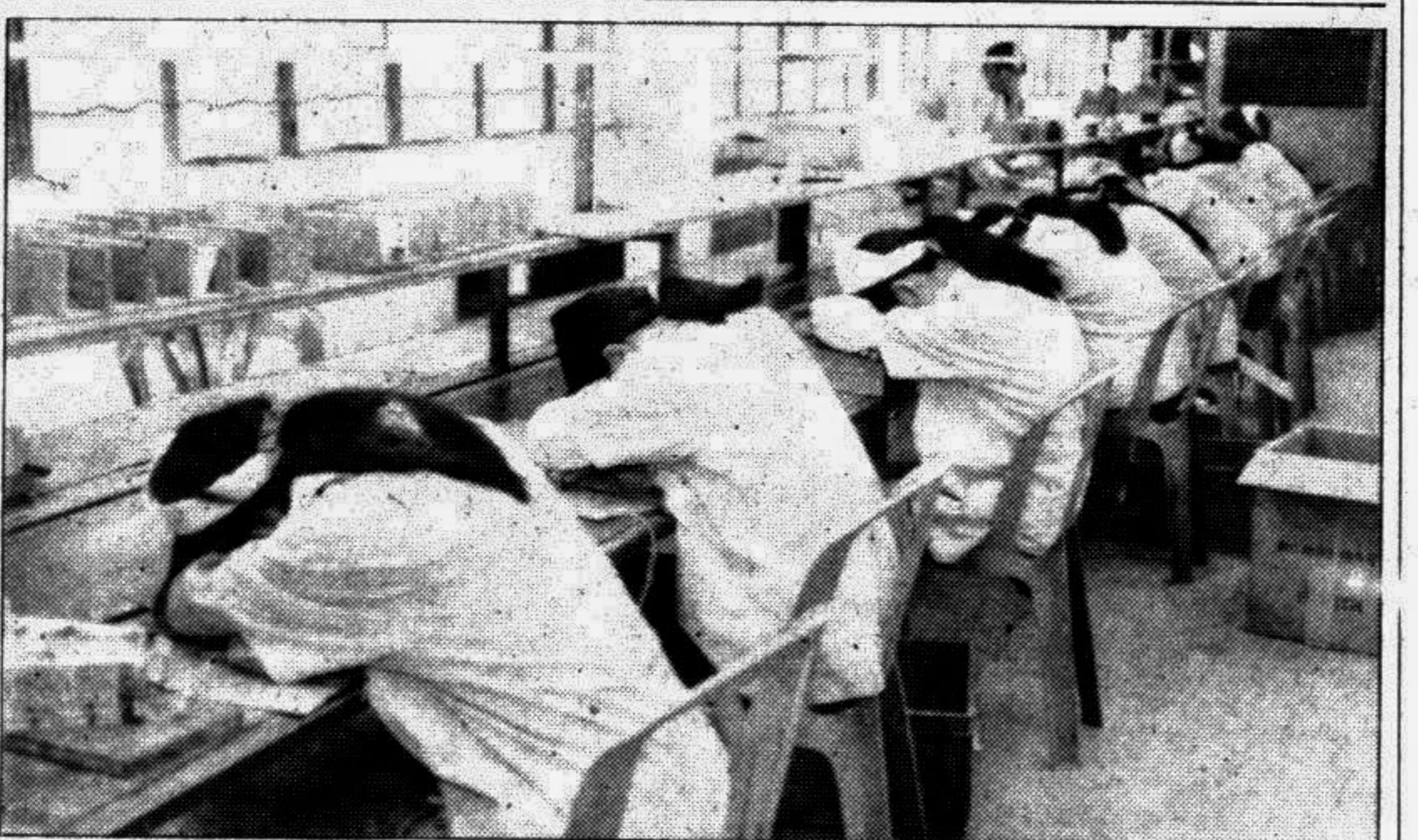
The prime minister said, SAFTA provides only a policy framework for gradual liberalisation of intra-SAARC trade. But the actual realisation of its great potential rests in the hands of key economic players in the private sector.

Nepal's close ties with the SAARC countries were nurtured and sustained over the years by long historical tradition, uniform culture, common

economic interest, harmony in development needs, cherished understanding and cooperation, the prime minister noted.

Adhikari expressed his belief that participation in the joint investment, transfer of appropriate technology, sharing of experiences and innovations among the member countries would assist in achieving the common goal of intra-regional trade and economic cooperation.

Nepal was the first country to ratify the SAFTA agreement after it was signed in Dhaka in 1993.



Workers in a car alarm factory in Shanzhan, China take a quick nap during their ten-minute afternoon break on Saturday. The Hong Kong owned factory, like hundreds of others, has switched its manufacturing base from the territory to the mainland because of cheaper production costs.

— AFP photo

**Foreign investment not needed in  
Riyadh's privatisation: Experts**

ABU DHABI, Dec 19: Foreign investors may be barred from taking part in massive privatisation programmes planned by Saudi Arabia in sweeping economic reforms to cushion the impact of weak oil prices, a Gulf banker said yesterday, reports AFP.

Such a contribution could become possible only after new laws and legislations are enacted to regulate such investments.

Saudi Arabia, the world's top oil producer and exporter, has not made clear if it would allow foreigners to buy shares it intends to float as part of plans to enable the private sector to play a greater role in development.

Experts said Riyadh did not consider foreign involvement was needed as its private sector possesses large resources inside Saudi Arabia and abroad. They estimated such funds at more than 200 billion riyals (53.3 billion dollars).

They noted the funds could cover most of the shares the government plans to float from such key sectors as the post, telephone, ports and industry.

Foreigners are allowed to be sold off.

The decline in oil prices has hurt Gulf states but it has also prompted them to acknowledge the importance of the private sector, which has not been given a chance to tap its enormous potential, said Yusuf Khalifa, an economics professor at the Emirates University.

The high Gulf War bill has also forced it to borrow, turning it from a pure creditor into a debtor.

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