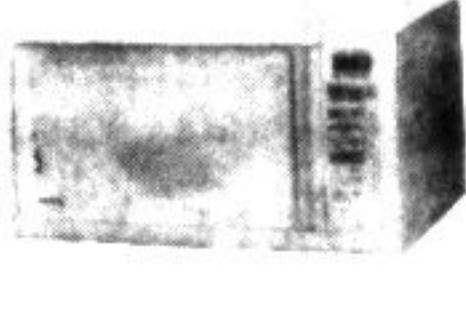



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The Daily Star BUSINESS



HYUNDAI
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DHAKA THURSDAY, AUGUST 31, 1995

Dhaka to participate in 37 trade fairs abroad

By Staff Correspondent

The Export Promotion Bureau (EPB) in its "aggressive salesmanship" derive to enter into new product markets overseas, has planned to almost double its Market Development Programme in the current fiscal, according to EPB sources.

The EPB will organise 41 Market Development Programmes in the current financial compared to last fiscal's 28.

Under the programme, Bangladesh will participate in 16 international fairs, 7 sin-

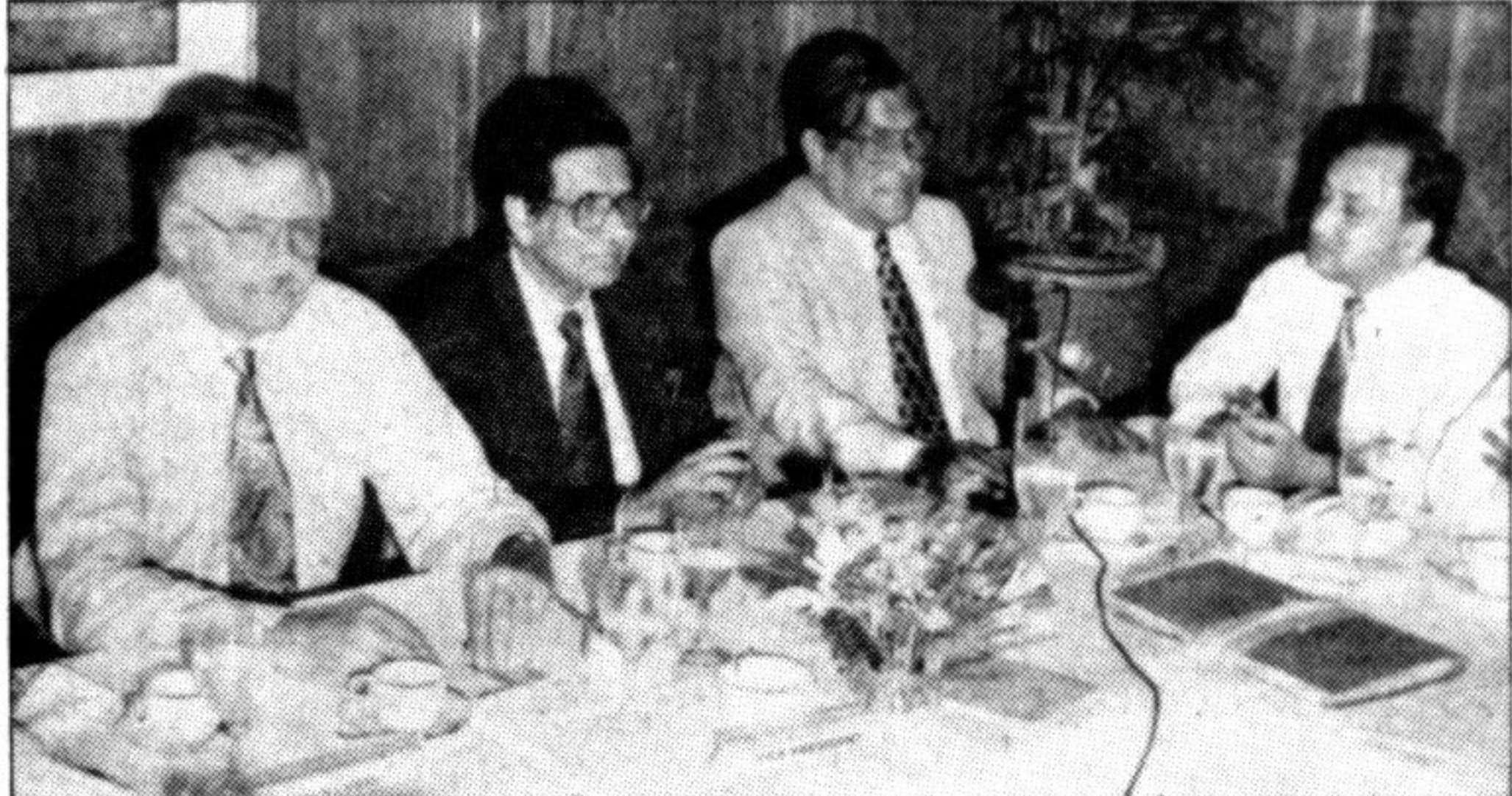
gle-country exhibitions, 7 fairs one each, in SAARC countries and 7 mini fairs, hold one 'commercial contact development programme' and send 3 marketing missions. The 16 international fairs will include 4 countries where Bangladesh products will be exhibited this year for the first time.

"We have decided to participate in international fairs in those countries where Bangladeshi non-traditional products have their market and potentials to secure new

markets", said Anisul Haq Chowdhury, vice-chairman of the EPB.

The EPB has also shifted its focus from Western Europe and United States to the Asian countries to widen and diversify its market base in these countries, he said.

The Market Development Programme will involve an expenditure of Taka 18.9 million, of which Taka 12.5 million to be spent for participation in international fairs including those in the SAARC countries.



Dr Akbar Ali Khan, Chairman, National Board of Revenue, speaking at the monthly luncheon meeting of the Foreign Investors' Chamber of Commerce & Industry held at a city hotel on Tuesday. Seen on his right are: FICCI President Mahub Jamil and Vice-President Gerhard G Doege and on his left, FICCI Secretary Jahangir Bin Alam.

Drive to explore new labour market

The government has initiated drive to explore new labour market to provide jobs to the country's labour force and earn foreign currency, reports BSS.

The drive has been taken despite recent shrinking of opportunities in the international labour market, a PID handout said.

The handout said South Korea is one of the newly explored labour market in recent time. The Korea Federation of Small Business (KFSB) has recently announced its demand for 3,500 trainee workers from Bangladesh. Silver Line Associate Recruiting Agency has been given permission by the Ministry of Labour and Manpower to send 700 such trainee workers to South Korea.

Earlier, the Bay Eastern Limited, Unique Eastern Limited and Rupsa Overseas were given permission to send 2,800 such workers to South Korea, the handout said.

Dhaka to receive TK 12.20 cr Norwegian grant

Bangladesh will receive Norwegian Kroner 20 million equivalent to about Taka 12.20 crore from Norway as grant under two agreements signed in the Economic Relations Division (ERD) here yesterday, reports UNB.

The amount will be utilised for the development of rural electrification programme in Bangladesh through supplying wooden poles and electric meters from Norway to Rural Electrification Board (REB) of Bangladesh.

AKM Rezaur Rahman, Joint Secretary of the ERD under the Ministry of Finance, and Berit Fladdy, Charge d' Affaires of the Norwegian Embassy here, signed the agreements on behalf of their respective governments, said a press release.

MOU signed with Canada to implement RMP

Bangladesh and Canada signed here yesterday a Memorandum of Understanding to implement the Rural Maintenance Programme (RMP), reports UNB.

ERD Additional Secretary M Fazlur Rahman and Dr John Deyell, Counsellor of the Canadian High Commission and Head of Aid, CIDA signed the MOU on behalf of their respective governments.

Canadian High Commissioner in Bangladesh Jon J Scott and Secretary of Local Government Division, LGRD Ministry, Syed Alamgir Farooq Chowdhury were present on the occasion.

About 50,000 destitute women, in cooperation with 3600 Union Parishads, will get employment under the programme (phase-III) to maintain important earthen roads of the country round the year, said a press release.

Canada will provide about 56.6 million Canadian dollar while the Bangladesh government and concerned Union Parishads will provide about 17 million dollar in local currency during the 1995-96 to 1997-98 years.

Rhone-Poulenc Rorer Vice-President tells The Daily Star Company to invest Tk 170m to upgrade manufacturing facilities

By Rashed Mahmud Titumir

The country has bright prospects of becoming the industrial hub of the pharmaceutical sector in South Asia with a promise of regional markets, as the contribution from the industries are growing more than the GDP growth rate, observed Michel R Lienard, the visiting vice-president of a French multinational company.

The Rhone-Poulenc Rorer (RPR), starting as an import based company, now has a turnover of more than Taka 500 million which is entirely derived from the local manufacture. Taking advantage of low cost, low price prevailing in Bangladesh, we are now planning to export a series of products to Myanmar, Sri Lanka and have already exported some items to Hong Kong," said Lienard, who is now visiting Dhaka in connection with the centenary celebration of the multinational.

Talking to The Daily Star yesterday, he said that his company would invest Taka 170 million for upgradation of manufacturing facilities to current good manufacturing practice (GMP) standards, computerisation of major operation and acquisition of modern and high-speed machineries during 1996-1998.

He also said that the RPR would make a significant "soft" investment in human resource development, as innovation is achieved by the dedication of employees.

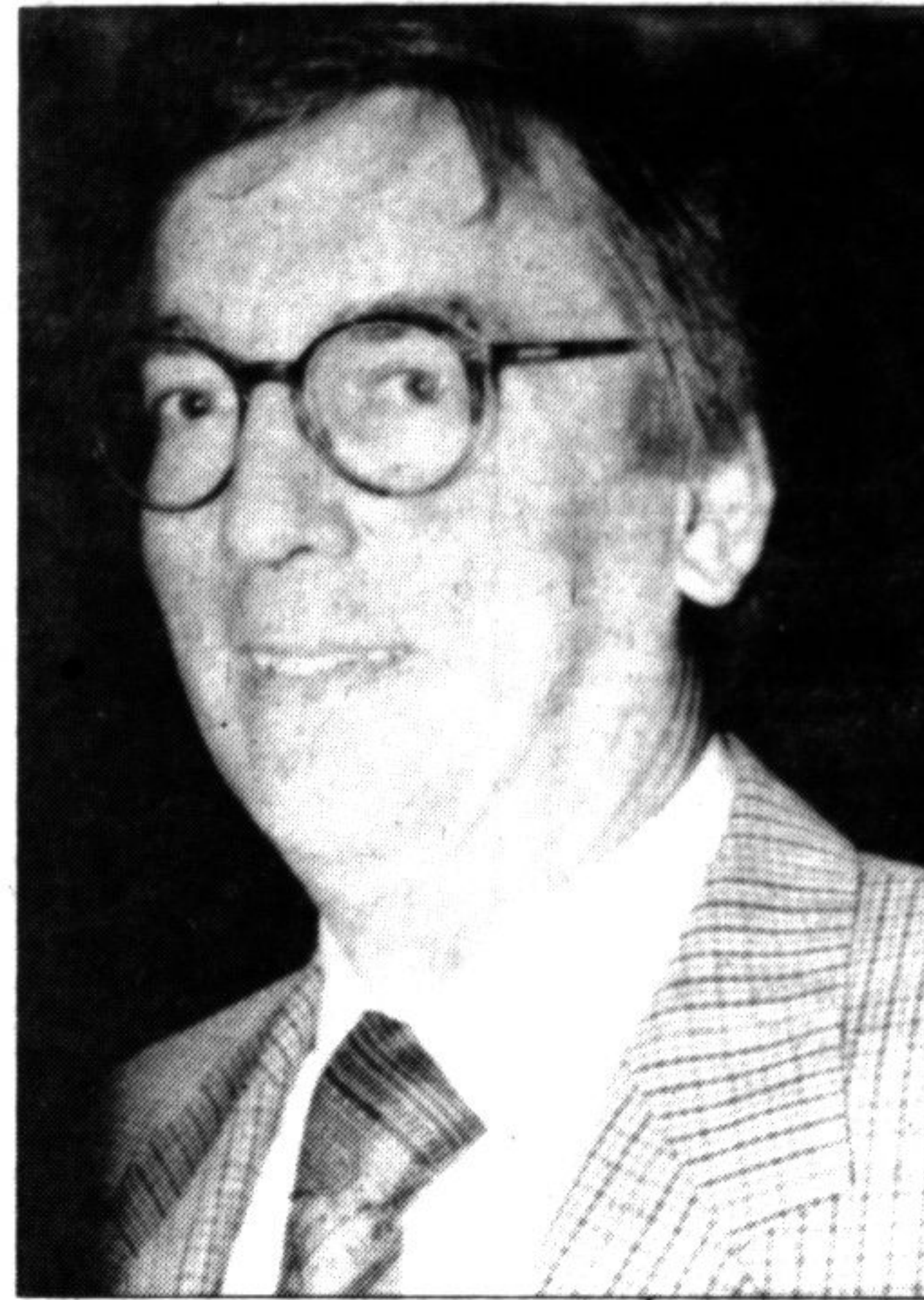
With worldwide sales of 4.5 billion US dollars, including 1.5 billion for research and development, and more than 25 thousand employees, Rhone-Poulenc Rorer is the third largest pharmaceutical company in Europe. Present in more than 140 countries,

RPR produces its drug in more than 40 production units including one in Bangladesh.

Michel R Lienard, a Belgian national, also said

of anti-biotherapy, respiratory diseases, malaria and parasitology.

Referring to the "miracle" growth of Asian economies, he said, "Earlier, our com-



Michel R Lienard

pany's focus was primarily concentrated in the USA and Europe. But now we are shifting our attention towards the Asian region including Bangladesh."

He added that the RPR would introduce new research products in the areas

that consultants have been employed to chalk-out a master plan for the all-out development of the RPR, Bangladesh.

Asked about the problems his company is facing, he

identified unpredictability of climate change, bureaucratic delay by the Drug Administration and infrastructural constraints in Bangladesh as the main problems. He, however, said, "Our company is fairly doing well like other sensible companies."

When his attention was drawn on the merger of his company with other multinationals, he said, "Those mergers are taking place to reaching critical mass. It is neither because of that they are losing their competitive edge over local companies nor that to merge with a company in a market where it sells well to maintain monopoly."

Referring to the high cost of research undertaking, he said, "We need to reach alliance with similar companies to finance research and development especially in cases like bio-technology research shifting from that of chemical based ingredients."

Asked to comment on local pharmaceutical industry, he said, "They are well developed and run by efficient people which perfectly match international standards."

In response to a question on the macro-economic environment prevailing in the country, he said currency stability, low inflation rate, low interest rate, intelligent workers, recent changes in the drug policy and tariff reduction are in the positive direction.

According to him, the country needs to register product patents, increase labour productivity, management training institutions to supply managers and establish ancillary industry.

Tk 16 cr Swedish grant for EPI

Sweden will provide Swedish kronor 30 million equivalent to about Tk 16 crore to Bangladesh as grant, report UNB.

An agreement to this effect was signed between the governments of Sweden and Bangladesh in the Economic Relations Division (ERD) of the Finance Ministry here Tuesday, said a press release.

The amount will be given for a period of six months to support the Expanded Programme for Immunization (EPI).

The main objectives of the programme are to achieve and sustain immunization coverage of infants with 3 doses of DPT and OPV and one dose of BCG and measles, to eliminate neo-natal tetanus by immunizing women aged 15 to 45 years with 5 doses of TT and pregnant mothers with booster dose of TT, to reduce measles death compared to pre-immunization levels and to eradicate polio by the year 2000.

Supply of dairy milk falls

By Staff Correspondent

Supply of dairy milk to the city market has fallen due to floods in the country's northern region, according to market source.

Shopkeepers at Mohamudpur, Shyamoli and Mirpur complained that they were not getting supply of dairy milk from last week, while shopkeepers at Dhanmadi said supply has been halted.

An official of the Milk Vita, a dairy milk producer told The Daily Star yesterday that supply has fallen as production has been affected due to floods in the milk producing northern regions of the country. The official, however, assured that price of their milk will remain unchanged.

US-Japan accord on software standard

WASHINGTON, Aug 30: Japan on Tuesday agreed to drop a proposed new quality standard that might have curtailed Japanese imports of foreign computer software, the American National Standards Institute said here, reports AFP.

The Japan Accreditation Board (JAB) agreed to drop a demand that all foreign software imports be certified to the Japanese quality standard, a measure that might have cost US software companies up to 20 per cent more in development costs, according to American Software Association Vice President Jon Englund.

Tea auction witnesses strong demand in Ctg

CHITTAGONG, Aug 30: The weekly tea market held here Tuesday witnessed a strong demand, market sources said, reports UNB.

Polish buyers dominated the market for bolder and larger brokens which were initially steady but were easier towards the close shedding by up to 50 paisa. There was quite a strong demand for medium and smaller brokens from export buyers which maintained its level. Internal buyers also operated strongly on smaller brokens. Fannings, however, were once again easier except for selected hnes which were dearer following quality.

CTC: Bold brokens were a steady market but eased by 30 to 50 paisa toward close. Larger brokens were barely steady while medium brokens were about firm. Smaller brokens were mostly firm with a few lines being dearer following competition. Popular types sold in line with market realising between Tk 48 and Tk 51.50.

In the primary Fannings category, except for a handful of bright liquoring clean leaf types which were firm to dearer following competition, all declined by Tk one or more with fair withdrawals. A few popular types met with a fairly good demand and sold between Tk 45.50 and Tk 52.30.

GREEN TEA: 240 chests on offer met with an improved demand. Prices were fully firm over last. FYH sold at Tk 77. YH sold between Tk 60 and Tk 62 and Hysan sold at Tk 66.

DUST: 1,818 chests, 140

gunny sacks and 15 chests of old season on offer met with fairly good demand at slightly easier rates. Good liquoring types met with some competition and were firm to occasionally dearer. Internal buyers, including packeteers operated in this section of the catalogue.

There were total 20,977 chest and 17 chest of old season was offer for auction. Next sale will be held on September 5.

Meet on bio-gas tech expansion held at BCSIR

A joint meeting organised by BCSIR with Bangladesh Krishi Bank, Sonali Bank, Janata Bank, Agrani Bank and LGED on expansion of bio-gas technology in the country was held at the conference room of BCSIR on Tuesday, says a press release.

The meeting presided over by Dr. M. Eusuf, Chairman, BCSIR, expressed opinion that BKB, Janata Bank, Agrani Bank, Sonali Bank and LGED would develop skilled manpower for setting up bio-gas plants and its supervision in various places of the country.

BCSIR will arrange extensive training taking at least five engineers and officers having science background from each bank for two weeks.

BCSIR will provide design, banks will provide loan and LGED will give break-up service for setting up bio-gas plant, the meeting was told.

World Bank keen to cement ties with NGOs in Bangladesh

MOULVIBAZAR, Aug 29: The World Bank is examining ways to cooperate better with the voluntary organisations in Bangladesh, said the bank's Vice President Joseph Wood here Tuesday, reports UNB.

He is anxious to extend our cooperation to voluntary organisations in Bangladesh," he said while visiting a project for the welfare of dis-

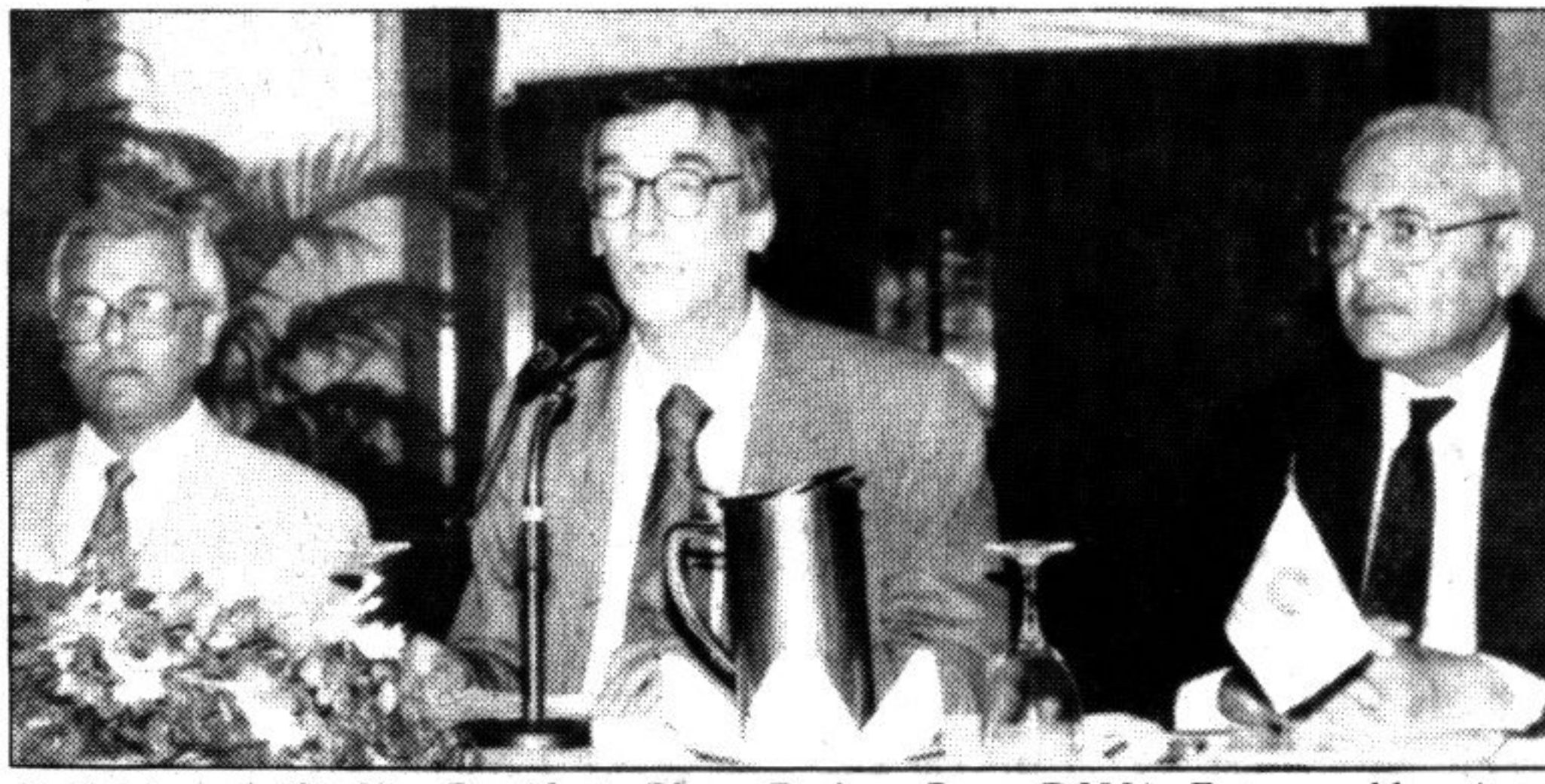
tressed women at Giashnagar in Srimangal thana. The project is being run by Association for Social Advancement (ASA), an NGO.

During his brief address, Wood said that the World Bank was preparing an assistance strategy for Bangladesh.

Joseph Wood, who is accompanying Finance Minister Saifur Rahman on a two-day

trip to Sylhet division, today visited more than a dozen development projects on health, education and agriculture in different areas in Moulvibazar and Habiganj.

He visited a number of schools to see the functioning of Food For Education Project and Girls' Education programme.



M R Lienard (C), Vice-President, Rhone-Poulenc Rorer DOMA, France, addressing a press briefing on the occasion of centennial of Rhone-Poulenc Group at Sonargaon Hotel in the city yesterday. AKM Shamsuddin (L), MD Rhone-Poulenc Rorer Bangladesh Ltd, and DD Chopra (R), Vice-Chairman and MD, Rhone-Poulenc (India) Ltd, are also seen in the picture. — Star photo

UN sanctions force Iraqis to sell possessions for food

LONDON, Aug 30: UN sanctions against Iraq are hitting even rich and middle-class Iraqis, forcing them to sell carpets and other valuable possessions to pay for food, Britain's Channel Four News reported on Tuesday, reports Reuter.

"There is now widespread evidence of more than just economic hardship — as we found at this auction house, the poor and the rich alike are selling off their possessions just to raise cash for food," the programme's Diplomatic Editor Nick Gowing said in a report from Baghdad.

"Here we found middle-class Iraqis selling their carpets in order to have cash to buy eggs," Gowing said over footage of a busy carpet auction. "Family wealth is being sold off to merchants with cash."

The report also showed footage of an emaciated eight-year-old girl in Baghdad's Saddam Children's hospital and quoted a local UNICEF official as confirming that malnourishment in Iraq was widespread, and getting worse.

Malaysia poised to become new economic tiger

KUALA LUMPUR, Aug 30: Malaysia celebrates its 38th anniversary of independence with economic growth that marks the coming of age of this southeast Asian tiger cub, reports AP.

On Thursday, a military parade in Kuala Lumpur followed by colourful cultural pageantry emphasizing racial harmony will celebrate the country's progress since it became independent from Britain on Aug 31, 1957.

At that time, Malaysia was a colonial backwater of tin mines and rubber plantations. Unemployment was rife and much of rural Malaysia was mired in poverty with few hospitals and no running water.

That is a stark contrast from modern Malaysia, a growing manufacturing hub of Southeast Asia that is taking away millions of dollars worth of investment from neighbouring Singapore.

Singapore is one of the so-called Asian tigers along with

Hong Kong, Taiwan and South Korea that other countries in the region including Malaysia aspire to emulate.

Signs of prosperity are everywhere in cities and villages connected by super-highways, modern airports and world class telecommunications.

In two more years, the 88-story twin Petronas towers — two of the world's tallest buildings — will be completed in Kuala Lumpur, dwarfing dozens of skyscrapers around it, and a price tag of dils 4 billion.

In 1998, a state-of-the-art 5 billion dollar airport will replace an older one in the capital. Near the new airport, an 8 billion dollar city is under construction, the new federal capital expected to be completed by 2005.

A look at the vital signs tells the story: About 80 per cent of the 20 million people are literate, nearly half of the population lives in cities, and

people expect to live up to an average of 71 years. The infant mortality rate is 12 in 1,000 compared to 60 in neighbouring Indonesia; there is one telephone for about seven people compared to 93 people vying for one telephone in India, another developing nation.

Other statistics are as impressive: the economy has been growing by more than 8 per cent for eight consecutive years and hit an all-time high of 9.6 per cent during the first six months of 1995. Inflation is below 4 per cent, although the high economic growth is raising concerns of overheating. Malaysia has virtually no unemployment and in fact gives jobs to about 1.1 million foreign workers.

Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad, the architect of the country's industrial progress, says "there is no mystery" how Malaysia achieved so much in 38 years.

"We did the obvious. Very early the government recognised the vital importance of the role of the private sector," Mahathir said recently. Soon after coming to power in July 1981, he privatized many government corporations, including telecommunications, airlines, electricity and shipping.

Privatization saved the government about dils 16 billion in investments since 1983 and shifted 93,000 people from the government to private sector jobs.

Mahathir also lowered income tax for companies from 60 per cent in 1981 to 30 per cent now.

Malaysia "is clearly a world class producer," the US Trade Representative Mickey Kantor said on Aug 15 while announcing that the US will no longer grant trade concessions under a programme to help developing countries. He cited the country's "extraordinary economic success."

Malaysia also is strutting on the international stage and has emerged as a vigorous proponent of the Bosnian Muslims' rights to retaliate against Serb attacks, which they cannot because of a United Nations arms embargo.

On Thursday, 24 armoured vehicles will roll in the national parade and then be sent to Bosnia to take part in peacekeeping operations. Malaysia also has 1,610 troops there even though Mahathir has been a frequent critic of the UN's inability to stop the bloodshed.

The economic progress is, however, dependant on racial and religious harmony. About 55 per cent of Muslim Malays live with a huge Chinese minority who comprise 30 per cent of the population. Indians, who are mainly Hindus make up 8 per cent.

The last ethnic violence was in 1969 when an election dispute led to Malay-Chinese bloodshed in the

streets of Kuala Lumpur that left more than 500 dead.

More than anything, the government keeps a close watch on religious fundamentalism. Last year, it disbanded the Al Arqam Islamic group for spreading deviationist teachings and briefly detained its top leaders under the Internal Security Act.

It allows for indefinite detention without trial and has been the target of widespread criticism by human rights organisations. Since taking power, Mahathir has released about 500 people from detention, but still holds about 50 others.

Another concern area is labour rights. US trade unions are sore that workers in the electronics sector, which hosts many US investments, are not allowed to form unions.

Mahathir has steadfastly refused to repeal the ISA and has dismissed allegations of inadequate labour rights.

Microsoft sells 1m copies of Windows '95 in four days

SEATTLE, Aug 30: Microsoft Corp sold one million copies of Windows 95 during its first four days of availability, the company said Tuesday, reports AP.

However, the number of phone calls from people who were having trouble with the new software from Thursday to Sunday was also staggering, leaving many people who called Microsoft with a busy signal.

"We're doing everything we can to help customers access the technical information they need and apologize for this inconvenience," Deborah Willingham, Vice-President of Support at Microsoft, said in a statement.

Microsoft said it can handle 20,000 calls per day for Windows 95 and has been at capacity since Thursday. It has 1,600 employees answering questions and contracted five other companies to supply hundreds more technicians.