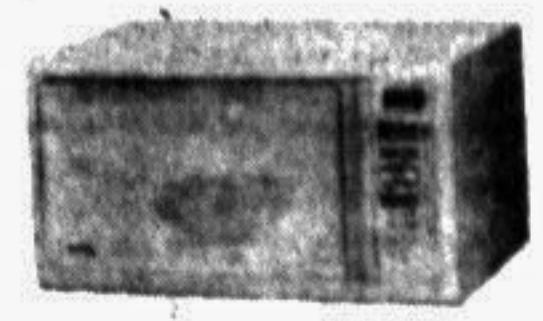


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Bangladesh to get Tk 35 cr Norwegian grant

Bangladesh will receive Norwegian kroner 49,554 million (equivalent to Taka 35 crore approximately) from Norway as grant for small enterprises development project under an agreement the two governments signed yesterday in the Economic Relations Division (ERD), according to an ERD press release, reports BSS.

The main purpose of the project, under the banking division of the Ministry of Finance is to promote economic and social development of the people of greater Faridpur and Mymensingh districts by providing credit to the small scale entrepreneurs engaged in different types of income generating activities.

The credit operation of the project envisaged to continue upto the year 2000 would be executed through the Agrani Bank, it said.

AKM Rezaur Rahman, Joint Secretary, Economic Relations Division, Ministry of Finance and Beril Flady, Charge d'Affaires, Norwegian Embassy in Dhaka signed the agreement on behalf of their respective governments.

Asia's largest railway station in Beijing opens

BEIJING, Jan 21: Asia's largest railway station became operational here today with the inauguration of the 600 million dollars project by Chinese Premier Li Peng in the capital's southwest, reports PTI.

The first train to roll out of the Beijing station at 0800 hours this morning was the Mao Zedong train, bearing on its front a large metallic image of the late Communist

Speaking at the inaugural ceremony, Vice Premier Wu Bangguo said this is a major achievement in railway construction under our eight five year plan (1990-1995) and an important success in the modernisation of the capital, reports the Xinhua news agency.

Rapport training course for CARE officials ends

A week-long management training course for the mid-level officers of CARE-Bangladesh was concluded at Bangladesh Public Administration Training Centre (BPATC) at Savar on Friday, says a press release.

Organised and conducted by Rapport Bangladesh Limited, the course was participated by 21 project officers of five different projects drawn from various parts of the country.

The Principal Trainer was M. Mosharraf Hossain, Managing Director of Rapport Bangladesh Limited.

A number of senior faculty numbers of BPATC delivered lectures on various topics.

The programme devoted to subjects like management, communication, leadership, team-building and time management.

A number of modern training methodologies like group work, case work, film show, presentation skill and role play were followed for effective learning.

Johny M Sarker, Project Coordinator (LIFT) and Aminur Rahman, Programme Development Officer (Training) were present at the concluding session and distributed certificate to the participants.

Work on Thai-Lao road to begin next month

BANGKOK, Jan 21: Work will begin next month on a road across Laos that, when ready in two years, will help open up that hermit nation and provide the first ground link between Thailand and China, a news report said yesterday, says AFP.

The 250-kilometer (155-mile) toll road will begin at Huayxay in Bokeo province opposite Chiang Rai, Thailand, 800 kilometers (500 miles) northeast of Bangkok, the Bangkok Post quoted a senior Laotian official as saying.

It will end at Luang Namtha in northwestern Laos on the border with China, Leuane Somboukhane, Deputy Chairman of Laos' Committee for Planning and Cooperation told a chamber of commerce seminar Friday in Chiang Rai.

He said there is an existing road part of the way, but much of it is unsealed and becomes unusable during the rainy season.

The work will be carried out by the Economic Quadrangle Joint Development Corp, a joint Thai-Laotian operation. Bridge construction will start in February.

Dhaka-Islamabad trade may rise

CHITTAGONG, Jan 21: The volume of trade and investment between Bangladesh and Pakistan would be increased further in the future, reports BSS.

This was disclosed by the visiting leader the trade delegation of Pakistan Sheikh Jameel Mehboub when he met the members of Chittagong Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCCC) at the CCCC auditorium here yesterday.

The leader of the delegation said Pakistan would largely import tea, jute and jute products, betel leaf and handicrafts from Bangladesh.

He further said that Bangladesh is rapidly marching toward economic growth. He further informed the CCCC members that a display centre of Pakistani goods is being set up in Dhaka.

He urged the Bangladeshi counterpart to set up similar display centre of Bangladeshi goods in Pakistan.

Earlier, welcoming the trade delegation, CCCC President Sarwar Jamal Nizam elaborated the present government's free import and liberal investment policy.

ADB, Exim Bank loans for Indian infrastructure projects

NEW DELHI, Jan 21: Three Indian financial institutions have signed a 600 million dollar loan agreement with the Asian Development Bank and the Exim Bank of Japan to finance infrastructure projects, it was reported yesterday, according to AFP.

They are the Industrial Credit and Investment Corporation of India (ICICI), the Industrial Finance Corporation of India (IFCI) and the Shipping Credit Investment Corporation of India (SCICI). ICICI will get 300 million

dollars, while ICICI and SCICI will receive 200 million dollars and 100 million dollars respectively.

The loans can be taken at either a floating rate, a fraction of one per cent above the Libor (London interbank), or a fixed rate of about six per cent, the Business Standard said.

The Asian Development Bank and Exim Bank decided to operate through the three Indian institutions because it would have been costly for them to assess and monitor small projects, officials said.

In the telecommunications sector, only projects falling outside the metropolitan areas of Bombay, Delhi, Calcutta and Madras will qualify for loans.

The money will be used for power, telecommunications, roads and ports development.

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