

Emirates offers Dhaka-Ctg complimentary coach service

Emirates, the international airline of the UAE, now offers passengers complimentary coach services between the Zia International Airport in Dhaka and Chittagong, says a press release.

Emirates passengers can now travel to Chittagong in comfortable, air-conditioned coaches after arriving from Dubai or destinations across the Middle East and Europe.

The service is also available for transfers from Chittagong to ZIA. Reservations for the coach service can be made at the same time as flight bookings, and from any Emirates reservations office in the world.

The coach journey between ZIA and Chittagong takes about six hours. In Chittagong, passengers embark or disembark at Nasirabad.

Emirates Manager Bangladesh, Salem Obaidalla, said: "Emirates, always endeavouring to offer passengers only the very best, has taken the initiative to provide this end-to-end service, ensuring maximum convenience to our passengers."

Emirates' complimentary coach service is proving to be another factor influencing passengers' decision to fly with the airline. Those who have used the service praise it for its convenience, comfort and safety.

Emirates, which commenced flights to Dhaka in 1986, now offers five weekly services to Dubai, with connections beyond to over 20 destinations in the Gulf, Middle East and Europe.

Gulf Air wins best passengers service award

Gulf Air passenger service has been recognized as the best in the world by a top international aviation magazine. Washington based air transport world "ATW" named Gulf Air as the recipient of its passenger service award in their annual achievement awards for '95, says a press release.

ATW's awards began in 1974 to bring recognition of excellence in the airline industry. All awards result from nominations made by the editorial staff of ATW and from people associated with the industry. Final selection is made by the team of ATW editors.

The award has been presented at a gala function held in Singapore on February 5, on the eve of Asian Aerospace '96, the Singapore air show.

Executive vice president marketing Abdul Rahaman Al Busaidy has received the award on behalf of Gulf Air. We are delighted that our passenger service has been recognized by a team of experts, who work closely with all aspects of commercial aviation industry, said Al Busaidy.

It is especially gratifying as the editors are from different travellers and between them have probably flown every major airline. It is recognition of our efforts to combine a personalized service with a global network and young fleet. All Gulf Air staff should be very proud of this honour — he concluded.

DHL builds \$ 4m express facility in Dubai

DHL Worldwide Express has begun construction of a four million dollar express facility at Dubai International Airport, says a press release.

The 42,000 sq ft facility is the first large private sector investment announced for the newly-designated Airport Free Zone being developed at Dubai International Airport.

DHL says its new centre will fulfil no less than six different functions. Its operational status will be that of a country office, United Arab Emirates gateway, Dubai service centre, transfer point and logistics centre. It will also serve as the head office for the DHL region covering the UAE, Qatar, Oman, Kuwait and Bahrain.

The Dubai Department of Civil Aviation has already allocated two aircraft parking bays to DHL which will be adjacent to the new facility.

This will provide the company with direct ramp access to its own fleet of aircraft.

DHL currently serves 10 cities in and around the Gulf, Saudi Arabia and Iran, with a fleet of six aircraft operating 430 flights a month.

Bank holiday

The Bangladesh Bank (BB) and all scheduled banks will remain closed on February 17 on account of the holy Shab-e-Qadr, a press release of the BB said here yesterday, reports BSS.

Asia needs to resist temptation to coddle strained farms

Asian governments should beat off the temptation to insulate their farms from world competition, if agricultural systems are to escape being strait-jacketed into economic irrelevance.

Former Thai prime minister Anand Panyarachun gives this hard-nosed counsel in a paper on 'Prospects for Strengthening Food Security Through International Trade.'

The Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO) has just published the Cambridge trained economist's paper as part of its World Food Day proceedings. Anand serves also in the UN advisory Panel of Eminent Persons and roving UNICEF ambassador.

Searing food shortages in the late 1960s and early 1970s, traumatised Asian leaders, he recalls. Many still feel international markets for food cannot be relied on for national security.

"Who can blame them?" Anand asks. The US and Thailand, for example hastily banned soybean and rice ex-

ports then: India perennially gripes over misuse of US food aid to bring political concessions.

Yet, Asia's resource profile — large manpower pools and little land — argues: "To insist on growing one's own food is good, neither for the urban poor forced to eat expensive gain nor for the rural poor when the rural economy could be growing something else which yields higher values."

In past decade, many countries unfettered their economies — except agriculture. Export driven industrialization has therefore surged but also marginalized agriculture.

Runaway farms subsidies by OECD countries already burdened with over-nutrition, resulted in huge surpluses. Anand told the FAO meeting. Ironically, these stocks were priced beyond the reach of millions of impoverished people in this world countries.

"Various mechanisms to rebalance the situation, most notably food aid proved inadequate to the task," the Thai economist notes. "What the malnourished poor suffered from was inadequate purchasing power." Now the abundant harvests of the 1980s — and the complacency they bred — have crumbled. And a new historically unprecedented 'farm crisis' has emerged, as the 21st century approaches.

The Uruguay Round benefited the US, European Union and Japan "in that they are allowed to waste more money on an overpriced agriculture. These rights should not give us, in the rest of Asia, the excuse to waste our own money too. We can afford to do so less than they," he adds.

Industrialising Asia is tempted to close off its agriculture to the world as Japan and Korea did. But these have resulted in over-priced stockpiles "Can the rest of us afford this luxury?"

The Japan-Korea option "would freeze our agriculture to a pattern which would be increasingly irrelevant," Anand asserts. "An agricultural economy, divorced from world markets, is also unlikely to invest its scarce scientific resources wisely."

The mind-set acquired from the food crisis of an earlier era is no longer relevant," Anand stresses. Young people are flooding out of farms.

"The simple rule of maximising the pile of grains is no longer sufficient. Industrialisation in Asia... will require a different kind of agriculture."

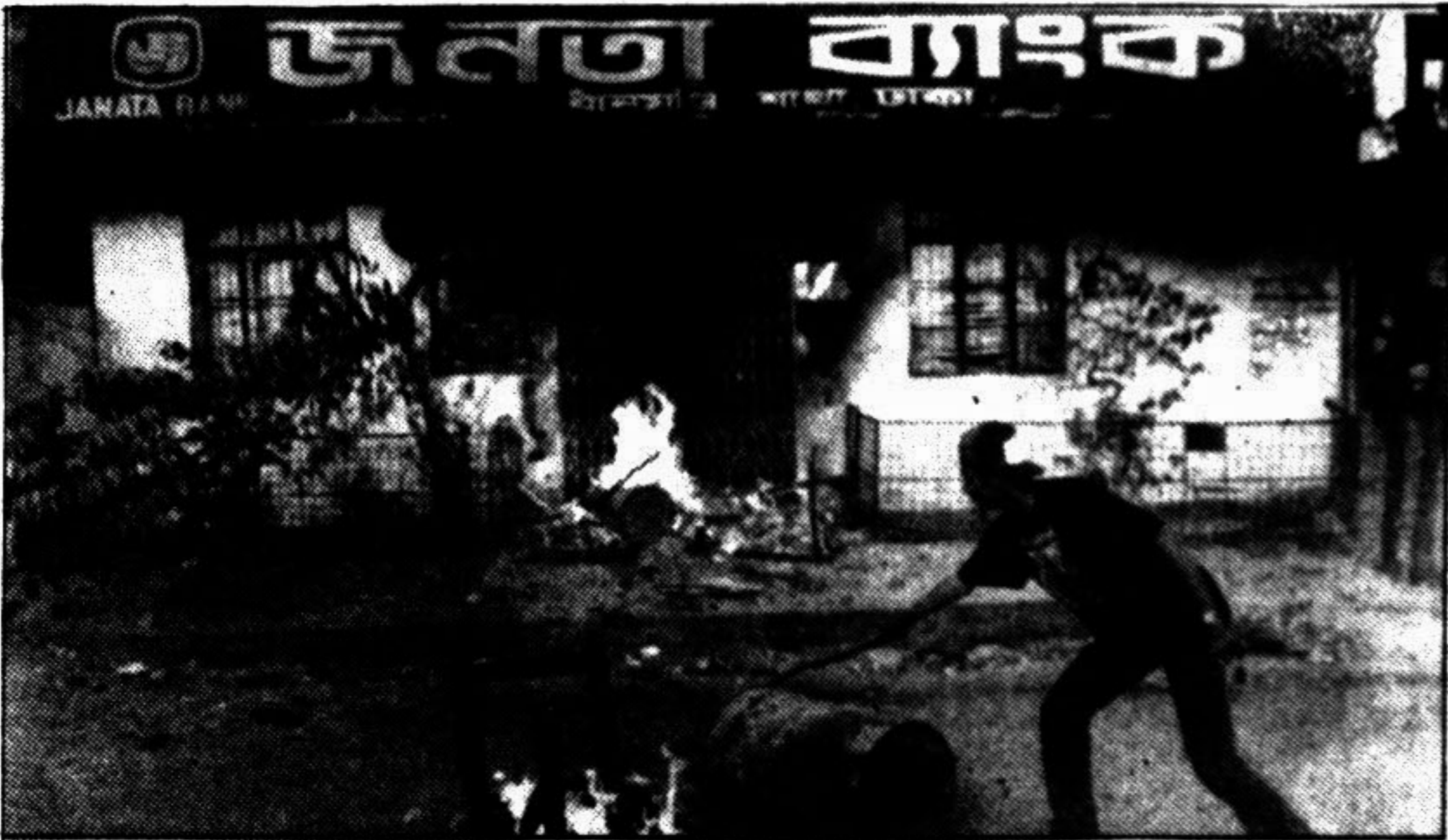
A vibrant agriculture — essential for sustained economic advance into the 21st century — does not depend on high prices, it depends on efficiency, Anand stresses. Protection freezes agriculture into a museum piece.

Food security requires Asia adopt a more open agricultural policy, investments and research funds should be funnelled into new economic structures, Anand notes. "The rural poor's fate is still tied up with agriculture."

(DEPTH NEWS)



Tapan Chowdhury, Managing Director, Square Pharmaceuticals Ltd, presented the Meril Lucky Coupon Draw 1996 first prize of 220 grams gold ornament to Md. Faruq of Sheorapara, Mirpur in the city on Wednesday. Shafiq Rehman, Editor, Jai Jai Din, model Sadia Islam Mou, Square Sales Manager SK Das, Senior Executive Sarwat Ahmed are also seen.



Failing to march towards Prime Minister's residence as part of six-day Opposition-sponsored programmes, pickets set on fire the Dhanmondi branch of Janata Bank yesterday. — Star photo

Clinton ready to sign \$ 265b defence bill, vows to fight AIDS provision

WASHINGTON, Feb 10: President Clinton is ready to sign a 265 billion dollar defence bill, but he promises to try to overturn its requirement that service members be discharged if they test positive for the AIDS virus, reports AP.

Administration officials say, however, that if the provision is not repealed by Congress or thrown out by the Supreme Court by the time it takes effect in six months, the Pentagon will have no choice but to enforce it.

"This provision, in the

president's judgement, is mean-spirited and serves no purpose other than to punish people who deserve the government's help, not its hatred," White House counsel Jack Quinn said Friday.

Clinton believes the AIDS provision, placed in the bill by Republican Bob Dornan, a California Republican, is unconstitutional discriminatory, Quinn said.

Acting on that belief, Clinton instructed Attorney General Janet Reno not to defend the AIDS provision as constitutional in any court test. Nonetheless, the adminis-

tration made clear that if the AIDS language is neither repealed nor found unconstitutional by the courts, the Defence Department will discharge service members testing positive for HIV, the virus that causes AIDS.

Those known to be HIV-positive now number 1,049 in an active-duty force of some 1.5 million. All have been deemed healthy and fit for service.

Quinn said the Pentagon will wait "until the last possible moment" before actually removing anybody from the military.

Indian goods flood Magura markets

MAGURA, Feb 10: The markets of the district town have been flooded with smuggled Indian goods causing a serious threat to the local products and industries, reports UNB.

Indian clothes, medicine, bicycles, toys, motor parts, eggs, rice and even vegetables are being sold at the local markets before the nose of law enforcing agencies.

The smugglers bring a huge quantity of Indian clothes every day from border areas and sell those to the local whole-sellers who supply the clothes to the other parts of the district.

India set to become leading FDI recipient

NEW DELHI, Feb 10: India is set to become one of the leading host economies in the world for foreign direct investments (FDIs), officials of the United Nations based in the Indian capital told SANA here yesterday.

The UN officials quoted a report on 'World Investment Report (WIR) 1995 Transnational Corporations and Competitiveness' listing several factors to support the view relating to India's potential as a host country for FDIs.

The report was prepared by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD). The major issues raised by the report are effect of transnational corporations on a country's overall economic performance, and role of transnational corporations in influencing the access of particular countries to global resources and markets.

According to the report, in spite of the renewed attractiveness of the developed countries, developing countries including India and Sri Lanka among the member states of the seven-nation South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) have succeeded in attracting growing investment flows, reaching 84 billion US dollars in 1994 to account for 37 per cent of the world FDI inflows.

The UN officials said this is a continuation of a trend that began in 1990 and has propelled developing countries to become a major force in the world FDI.

The success of the developing countries like India in

attracting FDIs lies in an investment climate characterised by growing markets and increasingly favourable regulatory framework, the officials noted.

India can attract considerably more investment if it sustains its liberalisation policy, they opined.

West Asia is still neither a major recipient nor source of FDI, although the success of the Arab-Israeli peace process could boost economic growth and open up new investment opportunities, the UNCTAD report said.

It pays special attention to the question of competitiveness, especially the interaction between the activities that transnational corporations (TNCs) undertake to enhance their competitiveness and the economic performance of countries.

The UNCTAD research showed that international investment by transnational corporations supersedes trade as the most important mechanism for international economic integration.

The research further showed that the international business investment has become a major engine of global growth and it is an important source of the competitiveness of corporations.

The report notes that many governments are offering incentives to attract FDI, many of which are wasteful or distortive.

This is an area in which international action is needed, the report noted and outlined some options in this respect.

S'pore computer maker to stop selling product to US market

SINGAPORE, Feb 10: The first Singaporean computer maker to enter the US retail market has admitted defeat, saying it will close its money-losing American operations, says AP.

"It is a question of whether we continued to carry the dead baby or let it go," said IPC Corp chairman Patrick Ngiam, in comments published Thursday by the Business Times newspaper.

IPC, one of the few Singaporean companies to expand overseas, said it will stop selling notebook computers and multimedia cards through 12 US distributors.

The company is to continue selling its IPC brand

computers throughout Asia, and to corporate buyers in the United States.

Market analysts said the losses from the US operations in 1995 are expected to total 25 million dollars.

The company informed the Singapore stock exchange late Wednesday that its 1995 earnings were likely to be some 38 per cent less than analysts' forecast of \$2.7 million (Singapore dollars) (\$8.57 million US dollars).

With one billion dollars in annual sales, IPC has become a point of national pride in Singapore, those factories are mostly assembly lines belonging to multinational companies.

Although this tiny island nation is the world's biggest maker of computer disk drives and sound cards, few Singapore companies in any industry have a major presence in world markets.

IPC is the top-selling brand in Singapore, and recently introduced the My GeNiE desk-top PC that incorporates a video CD player, FM radio, television, answering machine and fax.

The company will concentrate on the Asia-Pacific region, which will require a lot of cash," said Ngiam, a Thai-born ethnic Chinese who is now a Singapore citizen.

Over 80 pc homes bought by Asians in Vancouver

VANCOUVER, Feb 10: More than 80 per cent of homes in this Pacific port city worth a million dollars (730,000 US) or more are being bought by Asian immigrants, a survey revealed yesterday, reports AP.

The Vancouver Sun newspaper said the buyers were mainly Chinese immigrants from Hong Kong.

Although Asian immigrants account for only a quarter of greater Vancouver's population of 1.8 million, land registry office data show that they are buying about 50 per cent of all homes sold here.

And when the selling price hits the one-million-dollar mark, Chinese purchasers account for 80 to 90 per cent of the purchases.

The newspaper said another phenomenon of the new immigrants from Hong Kong was that many of them were paying cash for the most expensive houses, or at least making massive down payments.

A 1995 survey by DJC research found that 80 per cent of Vancouver's Chinese population owned a residence, compared to the overall average of just 57 per cent for all residents.

Vancouver real estate agent Maneyee Lui who sold 16 properties worth a million dollars or more last year, said 90 per cent of her clientele were Chinese and most of them were from Hong Kong.

"One or two buyers are from Europe or the US," she said, "but the vast majority of them are Asians." Lui said her biggest sale last year was a 5.1 million dollar residence which was snapped up by purchasers from Hong Kong.

China serious about copyright violations

HOUSTON, Feb 10: The Chinese vice minister of foreign trade said Friday his country is cracking down on copyright infringements by jailing producers of pirated compact discs, videos and computer software, reports AP.

"We are fully aware that it is a long and arduous task to protect intellectual property rights," Sun Zhenyu said at conference of business leaders.

The United States has threatened China with 1 billion dollars in trade sanctions if it doesn't do more to stop the illegal reproduction of material protected by copyrights, trademarks and patents.

The Chinese government has said that last year it seized and destroyed 20 million pirated laser discs, 800,000 pirated records and videotapes, 40,000 bootleg sets of software and 480,000 copies of pirated publications.

On Friday in Beijing, stevedores smashed 50,000 pirated and pornographic compact discs, laser discs and audio tapes in a public demonstration of China's resolve to stamp out trademark piracy.

At a Houston forum titled "China, the United States and Asia: Challenges for US Policy and Business," Sun said his nation is taking the issues seriously.

Blacksmiths facing enormous problems in Netrokona

NETROKONA, Feb 10: The blacksmiths of the district have been facing multi-farious problems pushing the age-old industry on the verge of extinction, reports UNB.

According to local sources, about 500 families in 10 thanas of the district are engaged in the occupation from generation to generation.

But a large number of them have already given up their traditional profession and the rests are also thinking about adopting other occupation to maintain their livelihood.

The prices of iron rods, coal and other materials have increased by many times in the past few years beyond the capacity of the poor blacksmiths. As a result, the prices of the tools are not commensurate with the production cost. Moreover, they cannot

Indian fertilizer TSP in Pabna

PABNA, Feb 10: Indian Single Super Phosphate (SSP) fertilizer is being sold in the local market in the name of indigenous Tripple Super Phosphate (TSP), reports UNB.

Local farmers alleged that some unscrupulous traders are selling the Indian SSP by changing the packet with local TSP to earn windfall profit of Tk 340 more as per bag.

They said, the price of Indian SSP is Tk 280 and the local TSP is Tk 620 in the local market.

'Meril toiletries to be made favourite'

Square Toiletries Ltd. will always endeavour to make Meril range of toiletries the most favourite toiletries of the consumers, said Tapan Chowdhury, Managing Director of Square Pharmaceuticals, listing steps taken by the two companies to ensure the quality of their products, says a press release.

He was addressing an Iftar party arranged at Square Centre, 78, Mohakhali by Square Toiletries Ltd. on February 7, 1996 to formally hand over the awards to the winners of the Meril Lucky Coupon Draw '96 held at the Square Toiletries pavilion at the Dhaka International Trade Fair 1996.

Shafiq Rahman, Editor of Jai Jai Din, star model Sadia Islam Mou, Square Sales Manager SK Das senior executives of Square Sarwat Ahmed, M. Toufik Ali and the lucky winner's and their families were present.

The first prize of 220 grams gold ornaments was presented to Md. Faruq of 64/1 (Old) Sheorapara, Mirpur. Shamima Akter (Sumi) of 668 East Dolaiapur was presented the second prize of 100 cc Suzuki motorcycle. There was no claimant of the Sony 20" colour television while the fourth prize of 8.5 cft Singer fridge was presented to Subarna Rani Shah of 5 Allama Iqbal Road of Galkata Pukur Par of Narayanjanj while the fifth prize of Sony 200 watt De Set was presented to Abul Kalam Azad, owner of Azad Store of Kawran Bazar Kitchen Market.

Israel-Egypt trade rises in '95

JERUSALEM, Feb 10: Trade between Israel and Egypt rose by more than a half last year after years of Israeli complaints over Egypt's reluctance to form economic ties, the Egyptian Embassy in Tel Aviv said, reports AFP.

Trade between the two countries stood at 70 million dollars compared to 45 million dollars in 1994, a rise of 55 per cent.

The figures do not include the two million barrels of oil that Israel imports each year from Egypt, the embassy said.

Since Egypt became the first Arab country to sign a peace treaty with Israel in 1979, the Jewish state has regularly complained of the "cold" peace between them and accused Egypt of failing to promote bilateral ties.

Israel's total external trade stood at 20.2 billion dollars in 1992.

Bundesbank official dies in Italy

ROME, Feb 10: An official of the German Bundesbank's stock and bond transactions department, believed to be an expert in bank computing, was fatally shot in northern Italy late on Thursday, officials said yesterday, reports AFP.

The banker Hans Otto Detmering 60, of Koenigstein near Frankfurt, died of head wounds in hospital at Bolzano early on Friday.

Police said enquiries showed he was international expert in bank computing and was to attend conferences in the United States in the next few weeks.

In the same attack his unmarried friend of five years, Clorinda Cecchetti, 46, employed by a school north of Rome, was found dead in the small town of Merano in northern Italy late on Thursday.



Justice Sultan Hossain Khan, Chairman of Bangladesh Press Council, addressing as chief guest a discussion meeting on 'Purification of Soul and Wealth: The role of Ramadan and Iftar Mahfil' organised by Islamic Bank Bangladesh Limited at Ramargaon Pan-pacific Hotel in the city on Thursday.