

# Australia may finance WB study plan to help improve country's port facilities

From Nurul Alam

CHITTAGONG, Mar 1: The Australian government is expected to finance the World Bank's study project aimed at preparing an integrated 'Master Plan' for upgrading the services and facilities of the country's ports.

According to highly placed sources, preparations are underway for signing a memorandum of understanding (MOU) shortly between the two countries. The fund is, however, supposed to be routed through the World Bank which encouraged to initiate the study project for the master plan for Bangladesh ports.

The study project will cost Taka four crore fifty-six lakh and the work will begin soon. The project received the approval from the Ministry of Planning and other relevant bodies one year ago. But due to non availability of fund, the project was almost shelved out of its pledge.

If the project could be implemented, a master plan would be ready for providing advanced technology in cargo handling, extra port facilities, and a uniform tariff system at

the Chittagong, Mongla and Narayanganj ports.

Meanwhile, Mongla port authority has been assigned to carry out the study project as Chittagong Port Authority declined to do the same showing the reason of shortage of skilled engineers here.

Initially, the Ministry of Shipping was supposed to complete the study project but after approval Chittagong Port Authority was asked to do the job.

However, sources say that the necessity of a master plan for Bangladesh ports was felt in the backdrop of the latest

cargo handling demands.

## Health Ministry reviews progress of ADP projects

Progress of implementation of different projects under the annual development programme (ADP) of 1995-96 of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare was reviewed Thursday at the conference room of the ministry here with Health and Family Welfare Minister Chowdhury Kamal Ibne Yusuf, reports BSS.

The meeting was informed that there were 34 projects worth Taka 504 crore in the family welfare sector of the ADP of 1995-96.

# Retail sales of consumer goods grow in China

BEIJING, Mar 1: Retail sales of consumer goods grew by 10.3 per cent in 1995 over the previous year after adjustment for inflation, the government reported Friday, says AP.

Sales on the domestic consumer market reached 2.06 trillion yuan (248.2 billion dollars), an increase of 26.6 per cent of the previous year but only 10.3 per cent when price increase were deducted, the State Statistics Bureau reported.

Foreign trade volume in 1995 reached 280.9 billion dollars, an increase of 18.6 per cent over the previous year.

The value of export was 148.8 billion dollars, an increase of 22.9 per cent.

# Iraq wants release of \$50m frozen assets for Hajj

NICOSIA, Cyprus, Mar 1: Iraq called Thursday for the release of frozen assets worth 50 million dollars so Iraq Muslims can make the annual pilgrimage to Makkah in May, reports AP.

The appeal by Iraq's Minister of Religious Affairs covered assets frozen in Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain, said the official Iraqi News Agency, monitored in Nicosia.

The ministry urged international Islamic organizations and societies to support its appeal, saying failure to release the assets would prevent Iraqis from performing the pilgrimage.

A pilgrimage to Makkah for able-bodied Muslims is a pillar of the Islamic faith followed by

one billion people around the world. Makkah and Medina, Islam's holiest cities, are in Saudi Arabia. The UN Security Council imposed crippling economic sanctions on Iraq for its 1990 invasion of Kuwait. These included freezing all known Iraqi assets held abroad and a ban on oil exports.

In oil-for-food talks with the UN Security Council early in February, Iraq demanded that all its frozen assets abroad be freed, but there has been no UN response so far.

The talks centre on a UN offer to allow Iraq to sell oil worth \$1 billion every 90 days for an initial six-month period to buy badly needed food and medicine.

# BRIEFS

HONG KONG, Mar 1: The government announced Friday that spending will rise 14 per cent in the next financial year, Hong Kong's last full fiscal year before the British colony reverts to Chinese rule in 1997.

Spending will rise to 142.13 billion Hong Kong dollars (18.3 billion US dollars) in the year starting April 1 and ending March 31, 1997, according to draft government estimates. The government's full budget will be presented next Wednesday.

Most of the money — 137.93 billion Hong Kong dollars (17.84 billion dollars) — will go on recurrent spending, such as education, which accounted for 21 per cent of the total, support services, security, health and infrastructure, the government said.

Public expenditure as a percentage of Hong Kong's estimated gross domestic product will stand at 18 per cent.

KUALA LUMPUR: The first made-in-Malaysia van will be launched March 6, a spokesman for the builder said Friday.

Interest has been good in the model called Russ with more than 1,700 advance bookings, said the spokesman for Perushan Otomobil Kedia, who did not want to be identified.

Perodua now makes Malaysia's smallest car, the Kancil, with Daihatsu Corporation of Japan.

The two year-old Kancil is 660 cc and priced at about 30,000 ringgit (12,000 dollars), while the 1,300 cc van is expected to cost about 35,000 ringgit (14,000 dollars).

Malaysia has also been assembling an auto called Proton for the past 11 years as a variation of the Mitsubishi Lancer in collaboration with Mitsubishi Motor Corp of Japan.

TOKYO: Japan's securities watchdog on Friday recommended punitive action against Ciyoda Securities Co and its 14 officials and employees accused of illegally compensating their clients.

The Finance Ministry will decide on the penalty, which may be a confiscation of Ciyoda's license or a temporary suspension of its operations, a Securities and Exchange Surveillance Commission official told reporters.

This will be the first time the ministry takes punitive action against a securities company or its employees since compensating for trading loss became illegal in 1992.

ADLAIDE, Australia: The producer of Coca-Cola in South Australia on Friday announced a 2.6 million dollar deal to export 500-millilitre bottles of Coca-Cola to Japan.

Coca-Cola Amatil SA said 320 containers of the bottles would be exported during March, despite the international Coca-Cola organization having a production operation in Japan.

"A successful export philosophy is all about being able to do things better, faster and more effectively," General Manger Mike Jimerson said.

Jimerson said the new export contracts also means increase job opportunities from the extra shifts required at the Adelaide production facility.

# Jobless rate remains record high in Tokyo

TOKYO, Mar 1: Despite signs of an economic recovery, Japan's jobless rate stood at a record high of 3.4 per cent in January for the third month in a row, the government said Friday, reports AP.

A total of 2.3 million people were out of work in January, up 340,000 from the same month last year, the Management and Coordination Agency said.

The total unemployed was the highest monthly figure since the agency began taking statistics in 1953.

While industrial production and other economic indicators have turned upward recently, the employment situation remains severe, an agency official said.

Japanese companies are still trying to cut costs after a four-year recession, and many companies have taken steps to encourage older workers to retire early.

The unemployment rate for workers aged 55 to 64 was 4.8 per cent, up 0.9 percentage point from January 1995. Young people are having the hardest time: The jobless rate for the 15-24 age bracket was up 1.2 per cent from a year earlier to 6.4 per cent.

The agricultural sector continued to shrink, with total employment down 80,000 from a year ago to 1.26 million.

# HK's trade deficit rises

HONG KONG, Mar 1: Hong Kong's trade deficit increased to 16.1 billion Hong Kong dollars (1.31 billion US dollars) or 7.7 per cent of the value of imports in January, as both re-exports and imports showed marked increases over a year ago, the Census and Statistics Department said yesterday, reports AP.

Total imports increased 24 per cent to 130.3 billion dollars compared to a year earlier, reflecting continued strong import demand for production and capacity expansion purposes, a government spokesman said.

Meanwhile, total exports, comprising re-exports, goods which pass through Hong Kong without any physical changes, and domestic exports, increased 19 per cent.



Claudia Schiffer (C), and Cindy Crawford (R), spokesmodels for Revlon Inc, greet traders on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange on Thursday in New York while being escorted by Richard A. Grasso (2nd L), Chairman of the New York Stock Exchange. Revlon began trading on the NYSE February 29. — AFP/UNB photo

# Asian stock markets close higher

HONG KONG, Mar 1: Asian stock markets ended the week most higher Friday, with the key index rising in Sydney to a two-year high on expectations of a government change in Australia after Saturday's national election, reports AP.

James Pearson, a broker at Hartley Poynton Ltd, said people were pinning their hopes on a coalition (Liberal/National coalition) victory at the election tomorrow. "I think quite a few people also went in there to pre-empt the usual post-election rally," he added.

The Sydney's All Ordinaries Index rose 23.0 points, or 1.0 per cent, closing at 2,313.0, its highest level since Feb. 4, 1994. The all-time high closing level for the index, of 2,338.1, was set on Feb. 3, 1994.

In Tokyo, share prices closed higher for the second straight day.

The 225-issue Nikkei Stock Average rose 43.26 points, or 0.21 per cent, to 20,168.83. The Nikkei, which fell nearly 180 points earlier in the morning, had gained 205.40

points, or 1.03 per cent on Thursday.

The Tokyo Stock Price Index of all issues listed on the exchange's first section was up 4.37 points, or 0.28 per cent, to 1,564.83 points. The TOPIX rose 13.24 points, or 0.86 per cent, the day before.

Prices regained some ground Friday on buying by domestic institutional investors and trust funds. Earlier in the morning, prices were lower because of profit taking, discouraged by the fourth straight decline on Wall Street on Thursday.

Meanwhile, the US dollar was quoted at 105.54 yen, up 0.96 yen from late Thursday afternoon and also above its late New York overnight level of 105.25 yen.

The markets were closed in South Korea and Thailand for holidays.

MANILA: Share prices closed sharply higher on bargain-hunting following recent declines. The Philippines PSE index of 41 selected issues rose 65.58 points to 2,948.18.

Wellington: New Zealand share prices closed slightly higher. The NZSE-40 capital index rose 1.32 points to 2,142.40.

SINGAPORE: Share prices closed lower as the board in sluggish trading. The 30-share Straits Times Industrials (STI) index fell 17.08 points to 2,421.43.

KUALA LUMPUR: Malaysian share prices closed higher. The composite index of blue chip stocks closed at 1,093.56, up 9.15 points.

JAKARTA: The stock exchange's Composite Index rose 3,904 points, closing at 589,113.

# Russia allows 5 major military enterprises to sign export deals

MOSCOW, March 1: In a bid to boost arms sales, the Russian authorities have given five major military enterprises the green light to sign export deals independently, a spokesman for state arms giant Rosvooruzheniye said yesterday.

Valery Pogrebenkov told AFP that the decision, adopted by the government last week, "means that those companies can now either work with Rosvooruzheniye or choose another intermediary."

Previously only Rosvooruzheniye and the giant Mig-Mapo Aircraft Company had the right to sign independent deals with foreign purchasers.

Pogrebenkov named the five military enterprises as Rostvertol, which produces helicopter gunships and transport helicopters, Antei, a manufacturer of anti-aircraft systems, Gipromash, which produces hydraulic systems, the Ufim Engineering Plant, which

produces jet engines, and an anti-tank weapons manufacturer — the Tula Instrument design Bureau.

The decision followed five months of government deliberation on the issue.

Two enterprises failed to get the green light — Metrovagonmash, which produces the chassis for artillery and anti-aircraft systems, and light firearms manufacturer Izhmash, Pogrebenkov said.

"I expect many of those enterprises will work with us initially — we regard them as colleagues, not competitors," Pogrebenkov said, citing the example of Mig-Mapo, which has signed a cooperation accord with Rosvooruzheniye.

He named Southeast Asia as a major potential export market for Russian arms manufacturers in 1996.

Moscow confirmed earlier this month that it would supply Beijing with frontline Sukhoi SU-27 warplanes, which will expand China's

combat range significantly, in a deal potentially worth more than two billion dollars.

An agreement signed in December in Moscow provides for the supply of 24 SU-27s to the Chinese armed forces this year, adding to the 26 transferred in 1992.

The deal reportedly includes a licensing agreement to allow China to assemble the planes.

Malaysia bought 18 Mig-29 warplanes in 1994 and in December last year it hosted the giant Langkawi International Maritime and Aerospace (Lima '95) show, where Russia displayed the SU-27 aircraft.

The SU-27 and other state-of-the-art Russian military technology will also go on show at a major arms fair in Jakarta in June, Pogrebenkov said.

He named other important markets for Russian weapons systems as the Middle East, notably the Gulf, and India.

# 60 tycoons plan to visit Myanmar

BANGKOK, Mar 1: A group of 60 international business leaders plans to go to Vietnam, Cambodia and Myanmar — Southeast Asia's poorest countries — to explore business opportunities, the group announced Friday, reports AP.

On the April trip will be executives from Asia, Europe and North America who belong to the World Economic Forum, an independent group of business, government and academic leaders.

Members of the group traveled to the three countries last year, and business interest is such that they are returning, said a group statement.

In recent decades, war, revolution and political conflict have isolated Vietnam, Cambodia and Myanmar from the dramatic economic boom of the other countries of Southeast Asia. Reforms of recent years have opened them up to the world economy, and some international companies now consider them the last great unexplored markets of the region.

# Heroin production rises in Myanmar

YANGON, Myanmar, Mar 1: Heroin production in Myanmar increased in 1995, while the country remained the world's leading grower of the opium, an international monitoring group says, reports AP.

The International Narcotics Control Board gave no figures, however, for Burma's production of opium, the raw material for heroin.

Figures were not available, "largely because of the activity of insurgent groups in such cultivation areas along the border," said the board's annual report, received by The Associated Press Thursday in Yangon.

Several ethnic minorities who are or were fighting for independence from the government in Yangon funded their insurgencies by trafficking in opium.

The United States Drug Enforcement Administration estimates that about 2,000 tons of opium emanate from Myanmar each year.

About 60 per cent of the heroin sold on the streets of the United States originates in the area known as the "Golden Triangle," jungled, mountainous region where the borders of Myanmar, Thailand and Laos converge.

One of the chief warlords in the area was Khun Sa, who surrendered to the Burmese army in January.

United Nations Drug Control Programme officials recently expressed optimism that Khun Sa's surrender would decrease the flow of opium out of Golden Triangle by as much as 70 per cent.

Other international law enforcement officials were more pessimistic, noting that other ethnic groups that have signed cease fires with the Burmese have been allowed to continue narcotics trafficking.

The board expressed hope that with the improvement of the political situation in the insurgent areas, alternative development projects would begin and opium cultivation would decline.

# Asia-Europe summit begins: Two sides must rediscover each other — Chirac

SINGAPORE, Mar 1: French President Jacques Chirac, launching an ambitious trade offensive in Asia, Thursday urged the region to intensify its ties with Europe as the two continents march into the 21st century, reports AP.

In a speech on the eve of the Asia-Europe summit in Bangkok, Chirac said the two sides must rediscover each other after decades of indifference, prejudice and distorted images on both sides.

"Europe needs Asia, Asia needs Europe. The two must meet and together we must make the meeting a success," the French leader said of the unprecedented two-day 25-nation summit spearheaded by France and Singapore.

He proposed harmonising legal, administrative and tax frameworks between the two continents and — apparently referring to the strong influence of the United States — called for an equilibrium in global relations.

He said France, the world's fourth largest exporting nation, wants to triple in 10 years its share of Asia's trade, currently a mere two per cent.

This is certainly ambitious, but I repeat, our own future is also dependent on what is happening and what will happen in Asia, he said, adding that "France must become a full economic and financial partner of Asia."

Chirac, an Asian art connoisseur who admitted having had a "love affair" with the region since his teens, launched France's campaign for a stronger Asian presence one month after declaring an end to his country's nuclear tests.

The South Pacific tests enraged Asian nations, including most of those at the summit, but the furor has generally died. Chirac's surprise announcement last week of a cut back in France's nuclear arsenal further cleared the air for his visit.

Chirac told an audience led by Singapore Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong that France

was determined to sign the comprehensive test ban treaty this year.

He reiterated that France will sign in March the protocols backing the rarotonga

France will also adopt a "constructive attitude" toward a similar treaty signed by

Task force to discuss steps in July UK lauds Thai action plan to boost Euro-Asia trade

BANGKOK, Mar 1: European and Asian leaders agreed today that a task force of senior officials would meet in Brussels on July 25 to discuss ways of boosting investment flows between the two continents.

EU Trade Commissioner Sir Leo Brittan said, reports AP.

Brittan welcomed proposals from Thailand for the creation of an EU-Asia action plan on investment and said the Thai idea would provide the focus of the group's work.

"Today's talks had reflected a 'groundswell of recognition that investment is a key issue,' he said.

The group is also expected to work on the agenda for the December ministerial meeting of the World Trade Organisation (WTO), which the EU wants to launch as new round of liberalisation in Global trade.

Proposals for follow-up meetings next year of finance and foreign ministers from the 25 countries represented at the Asia-Europe summit were also agreed in principle "although no firm commitment was made."

France will also declare a nuclear-weapons-free zone in the South Pacific.

Chirac pressed France's claim to full membership in the ASEAN regional forum, the main platform for Asia-Pacific security discussions.

France is represented by the European Union at the forum, which includes the United States and Russia and is hosted by the Association of South-East Asian nations — Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam.

Talks on India's entry likely next week


Another report adds: A high-level European Union delegation will visit India next week for talks on India's possible inclusion in the next Euro-Asia summit in London in two years, diplomats told AFP.

"It will be more in the nature of a private visit," a Western diplomat said. "The talks will include Indian participation in the expanding dialogue between Asia and Europe."

He said the team would be headed by Italian Foreign Minister Susanna Agnelli and include her Spanish counterpart Carlos Westendorp, Irish Minister of State for European Affairs Say Mitchell and EU Vice-President Manuel Marin.

Marin told reporters earlier in London that the New Delhi visit, in which officials are slated to meet Prime Minister P V Narasimha Rao and Foreign Minister Pranab Mukherjee, were aimed at "maintaining a balance."

India has not been invited to the first Asia-Europe summit in Bangkok which opened today, following objections by European countries are participating in the two-day meet, also attended by EU Commission President Jacques Santer.



## Tender Notice

Sealed tenders are invited from A, B, C & D class contractors of Bangladesh Water Development Board who have 1994-95 enlistment & submitted 1995-96 renewal fees for different construction & repair works of the undermentioned project under development programme during 1995-96 financial year under Gaibandha O & M Division, WDB, Gaibandha.

Tender No	Name & site of work	Estimated cost & Group No	Amount of earnest money	Eligibility of contractor
16G/1995-96	Dam re-sectioning work at different places of the dam under Karatoa Flood Control Sub-project (EIP). Thana-Palshbari, district-Gaibandha.	Total estimated cost of the work is approximately Taka 51.97 lakh. The work is divided into total 12 groups, which include 5 LCS groups. In respect of groups, the highest estimated cost is Taka 7.55 lakh & the lowest Taka 2.71 lakh.	2% of the total cost of the respective group the tender will be submitted for.	C & D class contractors of Bangladesh Water Development Board who have 1994-95 enlistment & submitted 1995-96 renewal fees.
17G/1995-96	Reconstruction & repair work at flood-damaged parts of the dam under Karatoa Flood Control Sub-project (EIP). Thana-Palshbari & Govindaganj, district-Gaibandha.	Total estimated cost of the work is approximately Taka 68.42 lakh. The work is divided into total 5 groups. In respect of groups, the highest estimated cost is Taka 27.19 lakh & the lowest Taka 1.44 lakh.	-do-	A, B & D class contractors -do-
18G/1995-96	Re-sectioning work (periodic & routine) at different places of the dam & alternative dam construction work at flood damaged parts under Nurulla Beel Sub-project (EIP). Thana-Govindaganj, district-Gaibandha.	Total estimated cost of the work is approximately Taka 47.21 lakh. The work is divided into total 10 groups. In respect of groups, the highest estimated cost is Taka 7.30 lakh & the lowest Taka 2.58 lakh.	-do-	C & D class contractors -do-
19G/1995-96	Construction work of 3-hole regulator at Khalsi under Nurulla Beel Sub-project (EIP). Thana-Govindaganj, district-Gaibandha.	Total estimated cost is approximately Taka 92.11 lakh.	2% of quoted value	A class contractor -do-
20G/1995-96	Re-sectioning, repair & alternative dam construction work from 4.15 km to 19.30 km of the dam under Sonail Dam Sub-project (EIP). Thana & district Gaibandha.	Total estimated cost is approximately Taka 79.00 lakh. The work is divided into total 16 groups, which include 7 LCS groups. In respect of groups, the highest estimated cost is Taka 12.64 lakh & the lowest Taka 2.43 lakh.	2% of the total estimated cost of the respective group the tender will be submitted for.	A, B, C & D class contractors -do-
21G/1995-96	Construction work of 3 Nos 1-hole minor sluice/regulator at different places of the dam under Sonail Dam Sub-project (EIP). Thana & district-Gaibandha 1995-96.	Estimated cost are — Group No 1 Taka 33.12 lakh, Group No 2 Taka 39.21 lakh & Group No. 3 Taka 26.00 lakh, respectively.	2% of the total quoted value in each group	A & B class contractors -do-

1. Tender schedule can be purchased at the prescribed price (non-refundable) from Janata Bank, main branch, Gaibandha, Sonali Bank, BSCIC branch, Bogra; Janata Bank, main branch, Sirajganj & Sonali Bank, WAPDA branch, WAPDA Building, Motiheel Commercial Area, Dhaka up to 11-3-96 during banking hours.

2. Tenders of all class of contractors will be received at the office of the undersigned; Executive Engineer, Bogra O & M Division; Executive Engineer, Sirajganj O & M Division; and of only 'A' & 'B' class at the office of the Superintending Engineer, Dhaka O & M Circle, Rupai Sadan, 156/157 Motiheel Commercial Area, Dhaka; and of only 'C' & 'D' class at the office of the Executive Engineer, Dhaka O & M Division-2, Rupai Sadan, 156/157 Motiheel Commercial Area, Dhaka on 10-3-96 & 11-3-96 during office hours and on 12-3-96 up to 12-00 Noon. Tenders will be opened on 12-3-96 at 12-30 pm before the tenderers willing to be present.

3. Detailed description and other terms & conditions regarding the tender can be obtained from the office of the undersigned during office hours.

4. The authority reserves the right to reject any or all the tenders without assigning any reason.

**Md Habibur Rahman**  
Executive Engineer  
Gaibandha O & M Division  
WBDB, Gaibandha.

Water-436/95096  
DFFP-4482-25/2  
G-317