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# The Daily Star BUSINESS

DHAKA WEDNESDAY, JUNE 5, 1996

**HYUNDAI**

CARS THAT MAKE SENSE

## ICDDR, B plans \$10m fund by 2000

A 3-day meeting of the Board of Trustees of the International Centre for Diarrhoeal Disease Research, Bangladesh (ICDDR,B) ended here Monday, reports UNB.

It was chaired by Dr Maureen Law, Chairperson of the 17-member International Board of Trustees which include three Bangladeshis nominated by the Government of Bangladesh.

The meeting was informed of the results of immunisation of pregnant mothers with pneumococcal polysaccharide vaccine that showed a novel possibility of protecting infants from pneumonia in their first months of life.

This method has the potential of reducing infant deaths by as much as 20 per cent. A field trial would be required to verify these findings.

The Centre plans to build a fund of five million US dollars by 1996 and dollar 10 million by the year 2000 to meet the expenses of patient treatment.

Already business firms, entrepreneurs, and patients have contributed to this Fund.

To protect and nurture this national asset the Centre is seeking contributions from Bangladeshis philanthropists. The ICDDR,B press release added.

An ICDDR,B press release said the Centre also disseminates these research results by fostering closer relationship with the government of Bangladesh and NGOs in the fields of health and family planning, environment and the control of epidemic.

Several recommendations from the Centre on alternative service delivery strategies, offering combined health and family planning services through satellite clinics, involvement of the community for social mobilization in water and sanitation issues, developing surveillance system for epidemic control, have already been applied in the government health programmes.

Since 1960, the Centre has earned a well-deserved reputation for excellence. Its work is often cited as the authority for important health and population related decisions taken by multilateral, government and development agencies throughout the world.

The results and findings of ICDDR,B's health research activities, like discovery of ORS, have greatly influenced and assisted the formulation of both national and international health policies.

Building upon this impressive history, future research of the Centre will be directed towards finding cost-effective solutions. The Centre will emphasize three key areas of research, child survival with emphasis on diarrhoeal disease, population and reproductive health with post-Cairo initiatives on family planning, and how these interact with application and policy.

The Centre has developed into a unique and remarkable infrastructure of health and population research that has enriched global programmes and their effectiveness.

The jewel in this unique infrastructure is Matlab, known today to scientists and researchers across the world for research that has been critical in developing and testing interventions against major health and population problems of developing countries.

At this meeting, the Government of Japan announced further support for the Matlab infrastructure with fresh funding for construction of a training centre there.

The meeting also re-emphasized the need to strengthen the Centre's Hospital Endowment Fund as a long-term solution to meet the costs of providing free clinical services to over 120,000 patients treated at the Mohakhali Hospital.

## BSFIC's 1st sugar consignment reaches Ctg Port

Twelve thousand 500 metric tons of sugar from India carried by vessels M V 'Dubai Glory' reached Chittagong Port on Monday last, reports BSS.

BSFIC has made arrangements for prompt unloading of the consignment. This is the first consignment of one lakh 21 thousand metric tons of sugar to be imported this year by Bangladesh Sugar and Food Industries Corporation (BSFIC).

Seven contracts covering 87 thousand 500 metric tons of sugar have already been finalized by BSFIC.

Besides the first consignment 25 thousand metric tons of sugar will arrive at Chittagong Port by this month 21 thousand 500 MT in July 25 thousand MT in August and 12 thousand 500 MT in September.

Arrangements for import of remaining sugar are underway.



Chairman of Karachi Port Trust (KPT), presenting KPT Crest to M R Ali, Chairman of Shippers' Council of Bangladesh (SCB) during SCB delegation's visit to Karachi recently. Md Rezaul Karim, Senior Vice-Chairman of SCB, among others, also seen in the picture.

## EC eases ban on British beef

LUXEMBOURG, June 4: European Union Farm Commissioner Franz Fischler said on Monday the European Commission would lift the ban on British gelatine, tallow and bull semen following a majority vote by EU farm ministers in favour, reports Reuter.

"We will now go ahead and lift the ban," he told reporters.

Fischler was speaking moments after six EU farm ministers voted against easing the ban on British beef derivatives, part of a broader worldwide ban imposed because of fears of Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE).

The six votes were not enough under EU rules to stop the commission from deciding.

Plan to eradicate mad cow disease

AFP says, Britain yesterday launched a concerted push to end the "beef war" with the rest of the EU by proposing for the first time a detailed and unconditional plan for the eradication of BSE, or "mad cow" disease, from its cattle.

The plan included a new commitment to making it illegal for farmers to possess foodstuffs containing animal remains. These are thought to have been responsible for the BSE epidemic.

## Asia-Pacific region warned Rapid growth in air traffic may lead to safety hazards

SINGAPORE, June 4: The Asia-Pacific region was warned today that rapid growth in air traffic could lead to potential safety hazards and financial losses due to airspace gridlock, reports AFP.

Experts attending an international aviation conference said airspace capacity improvement was lagging behind airport development in the region, where air traffic control infrastructure was groaning under severe strain.

Assad Kotaitte, president of the Council of the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO), said air traffic was growing most rapidly in the Asia-Pacific.

"Air passenger travel within the region is expected to grow by about six per cent yearly and by seven per cent across the Pacific," Kotaitte said.

With such anticipated growth, our work together takes on an ever-increasing importance," he told delegates who are to discuss the implementation of a satellite-based system for air traffic management, surveillance and navigation.

Pierre Jeannot, Director General of the International

Air Transport Association (IATA), said the total number of passengers using the seven leading international airports in the Asia-Pacific region grew by 47 million in 1991-95.

By 1999, a further 59 million passengers will be added, Jeannot said, adding that forecasts pointed to the Asia-Pacific accounting for more than half the world's air traffic by 2010, up from one-third in early 1990s.

"The region has already recognised the need for airport development and over the past 10 years the Asia-Pacific region has put far more investments into airports than any other region of the world," he said.

The attention now should be on improving airspace management to support the traffic growth, he said.

Jeannot said safety was the primary concern driving the need for a satellite-based future air navigation system to resolve "the problem of airspace congestion."

Such a system would enhance communication links between aircraft and air traffic controllers, improve a pilot's ability to safely navigate his

aircraft and increase the capacity to monitor flights.

Jeannot said IATA's goal was to reduce the annual aircraft loss rate by 50 per cent by the year 2004, "thus saving a lot of lives, passengers and crew."

He said peak-period airspace congestion was also adversely affecting airline operations in the region and denting profitability.

"With the airspace increasingly unable to accommodate the growth of non-stop flights between Southeast Asia and Europe... the airlines have estimated that severe congestion is costing them some 100 million US dollars annually," Jeannot said.

"These losses result from excessive operations at low and uneconomic altitudes, inefficient routing, en-route holding and departure delays as well as lost revenue earning ability when additional fuel has to be uplifted to cope with contingencies," he said.

Tony Laven, the IATA's Regional Technical Director, said most airlines plan their schedules to leave Southeast Asia for Europe late in the evening.



A large number of imported cars are parked at Chittagong Port, after being released from the ships. These cars occupy a huge port area making congestion acute. Importers sell the cars at the port before they are brought into the market. —Star photo

## Global defence spending declines in relation to income

WASHINGTON, June 4: Rapid decline of the military in former Soviet states has reduced global military spending to a low of 2.4 per cent of global income, the International Monetary Fund reported Monday, according to AP.

Annual spending on weaponry and armies declined by 120.7 billion dollars over the last five years, the IMF said in a report. In 1990, spending accounted for 3.6 per cent of the combined income of 130 countries.

Former Soviet states registered the biggest drop, from 7.9 per cent of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) — annual income — to three per cent over five years. The spending drop in those countries alone was 120.6 billion dollars.

The rest of the world accounted for the small remaining decrease of about 100 million dollars, according to the

report published in Monday's issue of "IMF Survey."

US military spending was not listed separately. Figures vary according to what is included, but the latest United Nations Development Programme report last year showed US spending had declined from 6.5 per cent of GDP in 1985 to 5.3 per cent in 1992.

This year's US military budget of 254 billion is four times that of Russia, according to the Centre for Defence Information, which advocates reduced military spending.

If world military spending had continued at the pace of a decade ago, spending last year in 130 countries in the IMF would have been 740 billion dollars more than it was, the reports said.

Despite the huge drop, some countries still are increasing military spending in relation to income, but 90 na-

tions report decreases.

Latin America, which has the lowest average military expenditures of any region, increased annual spending by six billion dollars from 1990 to 1995, although defence spending remained steady at 1.2 per cent of the region's GDP.

The dramatic reduction in military spending during the last decade implies a large and growing global resource savings," the report by the fund's

Fiscal Affairs Department said, but it also said the benefits of the peace dividend are difficult to measure.

Its overall assessment: "Countries that have made sharp cuts in military spending have also tended to reduce their non-military spending and their overall fiscal deficits while at the same time boosting social spending."

"Declines have come in both rich and poor countries, the

report said, with military spending in developing countries as a share of GDP dropping nearly by half, from 4.9 per cent in 1990 to 2.6 per cent last year.

Asian countries showed a small reduction, putting them just under the world average at 2.3 per cent of income. In dollar figures, military spending actually increased by 15 billion dollars in Asia.

The report does not include separate analysis of China, which has been increasing military spending.

The report said that while military expenditures are expected to decline further, they are not likely to fall at the rate of recent years.

"The decline in military spending over the last five years reflects in part a sharp cut in nominal spending by countries of the former Soviet Union, which are not expected to be repeated," it said.

## Tourist arrivals in S'pore rises 6.4 pc

SINGAPORE, June 4: Tourist arrivals in Singapore rose 6.4 per cent from a year earlier to 584,121 in April taking the number of visitors for the first four months to 2.42 million, according to figures released yesterday, reports AFP.

Visitors arrivals during January-April increased 5.2 per cent from the first four months of 1995, the Singapore tourist promotion body said.

Japanese arrivals rose 11.8 per cent in April alone to 80,079 while the number of Malaysian visitors was up 17.0 per cent to 54,472.

Arrivals from South Korea rose 27.6 per cent to 26,761 thanks to strong holiday traffic and a large number of honeymooners, while the number of Thai tourists fell 14.2 per cent to 31,643, it said.

For January-April, Japanese arrivals increased 9.1 per cent from year before to 392,727, Indonesians made up the second-biggest group of tourists to the island republic despite their number declining 2.7 per cent to 322,859.

The number of Malaysian arrivals was up 5.9 per cent to 219,069. Visitors from China showed the biggest increase of 26.7 per cent to 77,038.

A record seven million tourists visited this city-state last year.

## Jobless graduates in Morocco on strike

RABAT, June 4: Moroccan riot police yesterday reinforced their siege of a trade union building in central Rabat where a sit-in by hundreds of jobless graduates demanding jobs entered its third week, reports Reuter.

Eyewitnesses and union officials said dozens of riot police came to prevent the strikers from leaving the Rabat headquarters of the Moroccan Labour Union (UMT), where the strikers have been holed up in appalling sanitary conditions since May 20.

More than 1,000 men and women are estimated to be packed into the three-storey building, the eyewitnesses said.

The strikers are crammed into every available space including the cellar and roof, where dozens of youths could be heard chanting slogans and waving banners.

The latest stand-off between the jobless graduates and police comes amid rising social discontent in Morocco.

The two main trade unions have called a general strike on Wednesday to try to force the government to honour previous commitments to raise wages and respect union rights.

Prime Minister Abdel Latif Filali last Thursday ordered immediate talks with the unions to try to avert the general strike, backed by some opposition parties.

Morocco has been hit by a series of strikes in various sectors of the economy since January.

Health workers Tuesday staged their third stoppage this year.

The strikers tried to stage a sit-in outside UMT headquarters on Sunday night but clashed with riot police ringing the building, a union spokesman said, adding that some were hurt.

The Interior Ministry spokesman could not be reached for comment.

## BIBM workshop on 'performance planning system' ends

Bangladesh Institute of Bank Management (BIBM) conducted a 3-day workshop on "Performance Planning System" which was concluded yesterday, says a press release.

The workshop was organised to stress the necessity and importance of performance planning and to develop skills in preparing and implementing the performance plan in banks.

It mainly dealt with setting goals and specifying action plan at each level of management, environmental analysis etc.

Senior level officers of banks and financial institutions participated in the workshop. The Director General of BIBM, AHM Nurul Islam Choudhury, chaired the concluding session of the workshop and gave away the certificates to the participants.

AKM Khairuddin Choudhury and P K Banerjee, BIBM faculty members, jointly coordinated the workshop.

## New York Attorney General probing into Lloyd's securities fraud

WASHINGTON, June 4: The New York state Attorney General's office is investigating Lloyd's of London, the British insurance market that's battling fraud allegations in 11 other states, an official said Monday, reports AP.

The probe adds to a growing list of legal problems for the legendary insurance market and its dealings with some 3,000 US investors. Lloyd's also faces private lawsuits and an investigation by the US Postal Inspection Service into possible mail fraud.

New York Attorney General's office spokeswoman Jennifer Farina declined to provide details of the state's ongoing probe, except to confirm that "we are conducting an investigation."

Ronald Sandler, Lloyd's chief executive, said he was unaware of the New York investigation. Lloyd's has denied charges that it engaged in securities fraud when it recruited US residents to join the 308-year-old insurance market.

Lloyd's reputation is much, much bigger than its market impact," said John Head, spokesman for the group.

The study, commissioned by the Utah Securities Commission, said Lloyd's wrote a total of 14.3 billion dollars in insurance premiums in 1994, which gave it a 0.59 per cent share of the total US insurance premiums for that year.

Robert Hunter, a former Texas insurance commissioner with Consumer Federation of America, said the study's figures were misleading because they include all forms of insurance, whereas Lloyd's plays a major role in reinsurance and difficult commercial policies.

Charles Quackenbush, California's insurance commissioner, told reporters Monday that he virtually every hospital, airport and public transit agency in his state had insurance with Lloyd's.

"Every government entity that I can find is insured by Lloyd's. If they fold, who's going to insure them?" Quackenbush said.

Head disagreed, saying the world's reinsurance market has ample capacity to fill Lloyd's role if it went out of business.

Japan's foreign reserves hit new record

TOKYO, June 4: Japan's foreign reserves, presumed to be the biggest held by a single country, rose 2.65 billion dollars in May to a new record high of 208.38 billion dollars, the Finance Ministry said yesterday, reports AFP.

The total of convertible foreign currencies, gold and International Monetary Fund (IMF) special drawing rights increased for the 31st straight month, the ministry said.

The margin of increase in May was relatively small as the Bank of Japan refrained from active intervention to prop up the dollar against the yen in foreign-exchange markets, officials said.

## New GM of Meghna Petroleum



M A Jalil has recently taken over the charge of General Manager of Meghna Petroleum Limited, says a press release.

M A Jalil began his career as Sales Officer of formerly "Easo Eastern Inc", and international petroleum company in 1971.

Jalil is married and father of two sons and a familiar face in the petroleum sector of Bangladesh.

## Presidential decree All foreign exchange operations suspended in Angola

LUANDA, Angola, June 4: President Jose Eduardo Dos Santos dismissed Prime Minister Marcelino Moco and suspended all foreign exchange operations Monday in response to the country's deep economic and social crisis, reports AP.

A presidential decree named Fernando Franca Van Dunem, president of the Parliament, as the new prime minister. Van Dunem, 61, has five days to present a proposed Cabinet to Dos Santos.

Another decree announced the dismissal of the Angolan central bank governor, Antonio Furtado, and suspended "all foreign exchange operations until the new government takes office."

Moco's ministers continue in their duties until the new Cabinet is sworn in to ensure stability in the interim.

In a televised speech to the nation late Monday, Dos Santos said the economic crisis required profound political changes. But he made no reference to the presidential de-

crees signed during the afternoon.

"The social breakdown is evident, the population's poverty is extreme and desperation is setting in," Dos Santos said in his address.

"The moment of truth has come and those that failed must modestly recognize their errors."

Riot troops patrolled streets and activists were arrested last week after the government banned a protest rally.

Dos Santos' aides said he would propose an economic rescue package to control runaway inflation, currently at 4,000 per cent annually, and lift purchasing power.

Dos Santos said short-term measures will aim to boost the supply of products and control the country's foreign exchange market.

While the former Marxist government and UNITA rebels are on the verge of ending two decades of civil war, little progress has been made in rebuilding the economy.

The government and UNITA began the process to merge their armies Monday with a view to forming a government of national reconciliation after July 31.

## Raw jute crisis in West Bengal

CALCUTTA, June 4: West Bengal government has persuaded jute mill owners to keep the mills open and not to retrench workers by reducing the number of shifts due to the raw jute crisis, according to official sources, says PTI.

At a tripartite meeting of the jute industry held here last evening, trade unions feared retrenchment since the number of shifts have already been reduced in most of the mills owing to raw jute shortage.

The trade unions, the sources said, had argued that reduction of shifts is not in consonance with the spirit of the agreement in the jute industry.