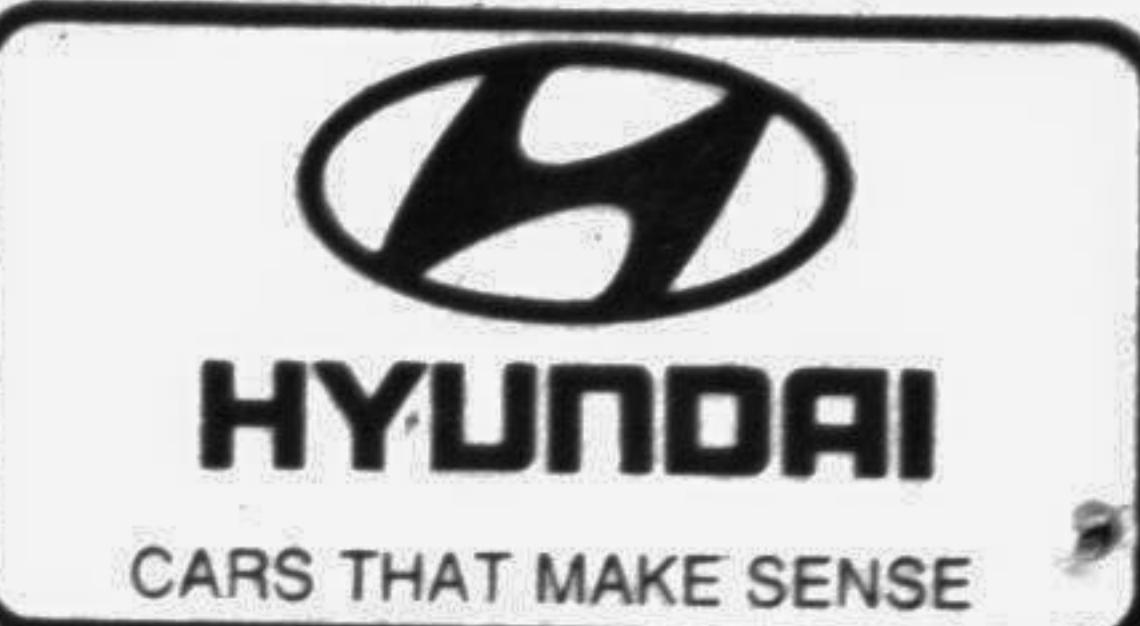




The Daily Star BUSINESS

DHAKA FRIDAY, JUNE 28, 1996



Working condition improvement drive

Bangladesh Nat'l Garments Fed to join int'l campaign

By Govinda Shil

A registered trade union in the export-oriented Ready-Made Garments (RMG) sector of the country is planning to join an international campaign to assist the Netherlands based NGO Clean Cloth Campaign (CCC) which intends to help improve the working condition and increase the wages of workers.

"Clean Cloth Campaign (CCC), the Dutch consumer pressure group, will soon launch a massive campaign in London, Paris, Brussels and Amsterdam against 'unhealthy' working environment and low wages in the ready-made garments exporting factories of the country," said leader of Bangladesh National Garments Workers Federation (BNGWF).

The 'Campaign' aims at signing a Charter between the apparel buyers of Europe and garments manufacturers of Bangladesh and other Asian countries," said Amirul Hoque Anin, General Secretary of BNGWF.

Some local trade union

leaders who are working with the garments' labour organisations might help sign the proposed Charter which will soon be finalised.

Traded union leaders of India, Indonesia, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Hong Kong and the Philippines are providing facts and figures about the working environment and wage structures of their respective countries to the CCC.

Trade union leaders of these countries met the CCC in Amsterdam last month to chalk out programmes and exchange views on the matter.

CCC leaders visited these countries last November and December to gather knowledge about the garment factories, trade union leaders pointed out.

"We would support CCC initiatives to improve the working condition of garments factories," said Amin.

He said, CCC would not call for a boycott of products of a particular country rather it might deny to import goods of

a particular factory which would not abide by the proposed charter.

The formal initiative to sign the Charter might be taken late this or early next year, sources said.

"There are some similarities regarding wage level and working condition in the garments factories of some Asian countries," said Amin quoting a CCC official who also pointed out that irregular payment, forced overtime and low wages are the general features of garments industries of Bangladesh, India, Sri Lanka, Indonesia, the Philippines and Hong Kong.

The CCC along with some other Dutch NGOs and trade unions have already developed a Fair Trade Charter (FTC) based on the ILO Conventions. This Charter might be finalised after talking to major European ready-made garments importers and their exporter-partners from these countries.

The 'Campaign' would involve consumer organisations, human rights organisations, garments manufacturers, government officials and women organisations to monitor the factories whether they are respecting the Charter.

DCCI president welcomes govt's recent policy proclamation

Ali Hossain, President of the Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry, has welcomed the recent policy proclamation of the government, says a DCCI press release.

In a statement, issued Wednesday he expressed that the government's view to maintaining a non-politicized administration would inspire the public servants to render their services free from bias and at the right earnest to the national cause.

The DCCI Chief said in view of the global scenario, the government's stand to pursue an economic diplomacy will augment better results.

Lift of permit system for essentials will help ensuring commodity for the commoners at fair prices and shall aid to keep the society corruption free, he added.

He said this will also expedite setting up of a private sector-led growth as is the demand of the day.

The DCCI president assured of all possible cooperation from the business community in any such positive measures of the government.

BKB disburses Tk 3 cr credit in Magura

MAGURA, June 27: Bangladeshi Krishibank disbursed a sum of Tk 3.32 crore as credit among the farmers of four thanas of the district during the fiscal 1995-96.

BKB regional Manager told UNB that this year credit disbursement target has been fixed at Tk 5.19 crore. In the same period the bank realised outstanding loan of Tk 3.80 crore from the peasants.

The credit has been given for purchasing bullocks for cultivation and irrigation pumps, livestock, cultivation of crops, small business and pisciculture.

Meanwhile, Agriculture Development Corporation distributed high yielding variety seeds among the farmers in the current season.

The seeds supplied to the growers included 1000 kg aus paddy, 33,000 kg transplanted aman, 15 kg vegetables, 30 kg pulse and 1000 kg oil-seeds.

Seedmen's Society demands abolition of import duties

The Seedmen's Society of Bangladesh has called for abolishing import duties and other taxes from all seeds for saving the seed industry in the light of the national seed policy, says a press release of the Society.

The Society feels that it is necessary to abolish 2.5 per cent advance income tax and 2.5 per cent licence fee from import on all seeds in order to develop seed industry of potato crops in the country.

The Society says that the Agriculture Secretary has already recommended a proposal to the National Board of Revenue (NBR) for withdrawing 7.5 per cent duty from seed potato.

The import duty for the import of seed potato under H S code No 0701-01 has been specially fixed at 7.5 per cent in 1992-93.

As a result, there is an exorbitant price of imported seed potatoes and an insufficient supply started which has created an adverse reaction among farmers who are facing uncertainty in every rabi season.

ADFIAP confce in Phuket Development banks argue for policy-based finance

The financing of development must be given strong government support by way of strengthening development banks and other financial institutions that are engaged in policy based finance, says a press release.

In this time, when the distinction between development and commercial banking is blurred, refocusing on the development mission of financial institutions is needed.

These observations were made by Orlando Pena, Secretary General of the Association of Development Financing Institutions in Asia and the Pacific (ADFIAP), on his return from the 19th ADFIAP Annual Conference held in Phuket, Thailand.

ADFIAP has about 80 member banks in 33 countries including the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank.

Among the member banks in Bangladesh are: Bangladesh Shilpa Bank, Bangladesh Shilpa Rin Sangstha, Industrial Promotion and Development Company of Bangladesh Ltd.

Pena said policy based finance, which is described as

"directed credit" to ensure the success of development priorities, was the focus of discussion at the Phuket meeting because of the growing needs for development in the region.

He said while the large all-purpose banks are encouraged to go into government projects, "they cannot by themselves effectively support national development priorities."

He said, "like any other business, banks will go where it is profitable but not necessarily to projects which support national development policy."

Pena said there is a need for real development oriented financial institutions that can support development priorities especially in the small and medium enterprise sectors.

To sustain economic development in the Asia-Pacific region, the ADFIAP official said, "banking for the country or policy based finance, which is essentially the role of development banks, need to be reinforced by government incentives and insurance against risks to make development banking business worthwhile."

What is happening, accord-

ing to Pena, is that commercial banks and even DFI's would rather invest funds in government securities than support government projects "because of less risk and sure yields."

Pena quoted from a paper read at the Phuket meeting to describe the success of policy based finance in Japan. Tsumoto Shibata, Director General of the international cooperation department of the Japan Development Bank, reported that national funds coursed through the JDB now consti-

ute 8 per cent of GNP and 50 per cent of the General Account.

As far as bad loans are concerned, Shibata said the record of JDB is 0.3 per cent of total portfolio or one-tenth of that of commercial banks in Japan.

Similarly, the representatives from Malaysia cited the role of the Malaysian Development Finance Institutions (DFI) in spearheading Malaysia's economic growth. Also, the experience of the Business Development Bank of Canada on policy based finance has also been very positive.

Essential goods being marketed without proper testing

and loaf lose food value after 24 hours, but the manufacturers do not abide by the rules.

Besides, the litre system for weighing liquid substances has not yet been introduced in hats and bazaars in rural areas of the district and as a result, the buyers are being cheated.

Some 130 items like packet and tin foods, edible oil and powder milk need BSTI certificates before marketing.

It is alleged that Khulna BSTI does not test and examine such essential commodities manufactured in the region due to reasons best known to them.

There are about 70 bakeries in this region most of which do not maintain hygienic standard of production.

According to BSTI, food items and mineral water must bear manufacturing and expiry date of the production as bread

not bear test marks.

Spurious Indian goods like Keocardin oil, Colgate tooth powder and paste, Fair and Lovely face creams are sold at cheap rates. Low quality sand-mixed salt and urea-mixed sugar are being sold in different markets with impunity.

No ban has yet been imposed on selling these goods by the government, local people said.

The BSTI regional Khulna office sources said due to lack of adequate manpower they are not in a position to inspect the goods in the 10 south-western districts.

The untested breads, biscuits, loaves, sweetmeat, cold drinks and powder milk which are being sold in the market have been causing health hazards.

দশম বার্ষিক সাধারণ সভা ১৯৯৬
ডেল্টা লাইফ ইন্সুরেন্স কোম্পানি লিমিটেড
TENTH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 1996
Delta Life Insurance Company, Ltd.



Shafat Ahmed Chaudhuri, MD and Actuary of Delta Life Insurance Co. Ltd., addressing the 10th annual general meeting of the company at a city hotel yesterday. The company has declared 12 per cent dividend for its shareholder for the year 1995.

Largest gold nugget found in Switzerland

DISENTIS, Switzerland, June 27: A gold prospector has discovered the largest gold nugget ever found in Switzerland, a piece weighing almost 50 grams. Swiss newspapers reported yesterday, reports AFP.

August Braendale found the 48.77 gram nugget in the Canton of Grisons, between Disentis and Medel, in a place called "La Ruine."

The prospector, who has been surveying in the area for eight years had already found a 20 gram nugget.

Comilla Poura budget announced

COMILLA, June 27: Comilla Pourashava Chairman yesterday announced a surplus budget of Taka 10.39 crore for fiscal 1996-97 at a press conference held at the Pourashava conference room, reports BSS.

The budget had a surplus of Taka 1.19 without proposing any new taxes.

The budget lay out includes revenue receipt of Taka 4.23 crore and government grant of Tk 5.5 crore.

Thai govt legalises labour by illegal immigrants

BANGKOK, June 27: The government has decided to allow illegal immigrants to work legally in half of Thailand's provinces to control them better, officials said Wednesday, reports AP.

The proposal, put forward by the country's National Security Council, was approved Tuesday by the Cabinet.

The ruling marks an attempt by Thailand, a wealthy industrial magnet in Southeast Asia, to come to grips with a tide of migrants from poorer countries in search of work. They are often blamed for social and economic problems like crime and beggary.

Employers in the agricultural, industrial, fishery and mineral sectors are all in need of low-priced labour.

According to Labour Ministry statistics, more than 700,000 illegal foreign workers live in Thailand. More than 300,000 come from Burma, impoverished by decades of isolated military rule.

It does not mean we turn on a green light for them to immigrate into our country," said the Labour Ministry official, speaking on condition of anonymity. "But this way, we can organize and control those who have been lurking in our country better.

Under the decision, illegal immigrants will be able to work legally in 39 of Thailand's

76 provinces. Most are in border areas, particularly next to Burma, and in central industrial regions.

Employers in the agricultural, industrial, fishery and mineral sectors are all in need of low-priced labour.

It does not mean we turn on a green light for them to immigrate into our country," said the Labour Ministry official, speaking on condition of anonymity. "But this way, we can organize and control those who have been lurking in our country better.

Under the decision, illegal immigrants will be able to work legally in 39 of Thailand's

76 provinces. Most are in border areas, particularly next to Burma, and in central industrial regions.

Employers in the agricultural, industrial, fishery and mineral sectors are all in need of low-priced labour.

It does not mean we turn on a green light for them to immigrate into our country," said the Labour Ministry official, speaking on condition of anonymity. "But this way, we can organize and control those who have been lurking in our country better.

Under the decision, illegal immigrants will be able to work legally in 39 of Thailand's

76 provinces. Most are in border areas, particularly next to Burma, and in central industrial regions.

Employers in the agricultural, industrial, fishery and mineral sectors are all in need of low-priced labour.

It does not mean we turn on a green light for them to immigrate into our country," said the Labour Ministry official, speaking on condition of anonymity. "But this way, we can organize and control those who have been lurking in our country better.

Under the decision, illegal immigrants will be able to work legally in 39 of Thailand's

76 provinces. Most are in border areas, particularly next to Burma, and in central industrial regions.

Employers in the agricultural, industrial, fishery and mineral sectors are all in need of low-priced labour.

It does not mean we turn on a green light for them to immigrate into our country," said the Labour Ministry official, speaking on condition of anonymity. "But this way, we can organize and control those who have been lurking in our country better.

Under the decision, illegal immigrants will be able to work legally in 39 of Thailand's

76 provinces. Most are in border areas, particularly next to Burma, and in central industrial regions.

Employers in the agricultural, industrial, fishery and mineral sectors are all in need of low-priced labour.

It does not mean we turn on a green light for them to immigrate into our country," said the Labour Ministry official, speaking on condition of anonymity. "But this way, we can organize and control those who have been lurking in our country better.

Under the decision, illegal immigrants will be able to work legally in 39 of Thailand's

76 provinces. Most are in border areas, particularly next to Burma, and in central industrial regions.

Employers in the agricultural, industrial, fishery and mineral sectors are all in need of low-priced labour.

It does not mean we turn on a green light for them to immigrate into our country," said the Labour Ministry official, speaking on condition of anonymity. "But this way, we can organize and control those who have been lurking in our country better.

Under the decision, illegal immigrants will be able to work legally in 39 of Thailand's

76 provinces. Most are in border areas, particularly next to Burma, and in central industrial regions.

Employers in the agricultural, industrial, fishery and mineral sectors are all in need of low-priced labour.

It does not mean we turn on a green light for them to immigrate into our country," said the Labour Ministry official, speaking on condition of anonymity. "But this way, we can organize and control those who have been lurking in our country better.

Under the decision, illegal immigrants will be able to work legally in 39 of Thailand's

76 provinces. Most are in border areas, particularly next to Burma, and in central industrial regions.

Employers in the agricultural, industrial, fishery and mineral sectors are all in need of low-priced labour.

It does not mean we turn on a green light for them to immigrate into our country," said the Labour Ministry official, speaking on condition of anonymity. "But this way, we can organize and control those who have been lurking in our country better.

Under the decision, illegal immigrants will be able to work legally in 39 of Thailand's

76 provinces. Most are in border areas, particularly next to Burma, and in central industrial regions.

Employers in the agricultural, industrial, fishery and mineral sectors are all in need of low-priced labour.

It does not mean we turn on a green light for them to immigrate into our country," said the Labour Ministry official, speaking on condition of anonymity. "But this way, we can organize and control those who have been lurking in our country better.