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'Uttara, Pubali banks yet to implement govt decision'

Md Rezaul Karim, Vice-Chairman of Bangladesh Jute Association (BJA), has demanded immediate implementation of the government order by the private banks — Uttara and Pubali Bank Ltd — regarding waiver of interest and rescheduling of arrears bank loans in respect of the distressed raw jute traders and exporters, says a press release.

Karim said although the Ministry of Finance vide their latest circular dated December 12, '95, has made 'compulsory' for the private banks to implement the government decision, only IFIC Bank has so far implemented this order but Uttara and Pubali Bank Ltd. have not yet implemented.

He said in spite of Ministry of Finance's reminder letter dated 7th February 1996 these two private banks have not taken any steps in the matter resulting of which about 50 (fifty) distressed jute borrowers are being deprived of getting benefit from waiver of interest.

Karim urged the government to take necessary action at the earliest regarding implementation of the order. He also urged all concerned banks both private and government to finance the distressed jute traders and exporters so that they can repay the segregated amount by doing business.

Honda to build auto plant in Turkey

TOKYO, June 28: Honda Motor Co. of Japan said Wednesday it plans to build a five billion yen (45.9 million dollars) automobile plant in Turkey with its Turkish joint venture partner, reports AP.

Construction is to start in July, and the plant will start producing Honda's Civic four-door passenger cars in fall of 1997, the company said in a statement.

Secretary visits BSCIC complex

Habibur Rahman, Secretary, Ministry of Industries visited the Electronics Complex of Bangladesh Small and Cottage Industries Corporation set up at Mirpur of the city on Wednesday, says a BSCIC press release.

He visited the Goss Magnetics and Electronics and International Jewellery units installed in the complex and laid importance on quality development of the goods produced in the complex.

Md. Abdus Samad, Chairman, BSCIC, Lt Col (Rtd) ASM Waliullah, Director, Md Rezaul Karim, Regional Director of BSCIC, and proprietors of electronics industrial units were present on the occasion.

The Industries Secretary expressed satisfaction on coming to know that the electronics goods produced in the complex are being exported to the markets abroad. He pledged all sorts of cooperation in promotion and development of electronics industries.

He also directed BSCIC officials to ensure all kinds of opportunities in the complex.

Russian workers block streets, demand back pay

MOSCOW, June 28: Striking Russian workers blocked streets in two Volga River cities Wednesday, paralysing traffic and demanding several months of overdue wages, news reports said, according to AP.

The protests came a week before the presidential runoff July 3 between Boris Yeltsin and Communist challenger Gennady Zyuganov.

Alling enterprises across the country are plagued by wage delays, and workers have staged scattered strikes ahead of the election. While campaigning through Russia, Yeltsin has promised to pay workers billions of rubles (millions of dollars) in back wages.

In Ulyanovsk, some 500 workers from a large auto factory took over a major intersection after hearing rumours that the plant's director took a vacation bonus of up to 150 million rubles (30,000 dollars).

The workers, from Volzhskiy Motors, were demanding three months of back pay and full disclosure of wages and bonuses received by the factory's leadership, the Interfax news agency reported.

Ulyanovsk, some 720 kilometres (430 miles) east of Moscow, was Soviet founder Vladimir Lenin's hometown.

In Samara, striking workers from a local trade union blocked the city's main thoroughfare and several side streets. Most had not received wages since January, the ITAR-Tass news agency reported.

Samara is located about 160 kilometres (100 miles) down the Volga from Ulyanovsk.

German company keen to invest in wind power project

By Govinda Shil

A German company is likely to invest in a large-scale wind power project along the sea shore of Feni-Cox's Bazar-Teknaf region.

According to officials of the Bangladesh Atomic Energy Commission (BAEC), an initial outcome of a feasibility study to generate power using natural force of wind has been found positive.

The company named 'Deutsche fur Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ)' has installed four computerised data logger equipment at Patenga, Feni and Teknaf. A mid-term evaluation will be made in October this year.

"We and GTZ feel encouraged to see the initial data on wind speed which is quite suitable for commercial power generation," said M A Quayyum, Chairman of BAEC.

He said BAEC is likely to be the executing agency of the project if the result of the on-

going feasibility study is favourable and GTZ wants the proposed project run.

BAEC officials said a tripartite agreement between BAEC, Rural Electrification Board (REB) and GTZ might be signed if the techno-feasibility study was found cost-effective.

The proposed project is expected to be started early next year after a wind map of the country is completed. The wind map is being prepared by the Energy Cell of the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources.

A complete wind map will reveal the potentials of wind energy in the country," said S D Khan, Director General of Energy Cell. He said, many private and public organisations in the country have shown interest in wind power projects.

The officials declined to say anything about the cost of the project and its proposed capacity, but said the project

would feed the national grid.

BAEC experts told The Daily Star that the country's 724 kilometers long sea line and 200 kilometers hilly regions can produce as much as 2,000 MW power. The environment-friendly technology involves much less operation and maintenance costs.

REB might buy the power generated by GTZ and might sell it in the national grid, noted another BAEC official.

Talking to this correspondent, Kazi Abul Hasnat, Director of Nuclear Power and Energy Division of BAEC, said being an energy-deficit country, we should explore all potentials in the renewable energy sources.

According to experts, the prospective areas for wind energy application would be shrimp cultivation, salt production and crushing, ice production, fishing and offshore power supply.

Senate approves foreign aid bill in US

WASHINGTON, June 28: A US Senate panel approved a foreign aid bill Thursday that restores some of the money cut by the US House of Representatives, but still falls far short of what the Clinton administration requested, reports AP.

The Senate Appropriations Committee unanimously approved a bill providing 12.25 billion dollars earlier this month the House passed a 11.9 billion dollars foreign aid bill. The administration has asked for 12.9 billion dollars.

The Senate committee's total was 193 million dollars below the amount appropriated for the current fiscal year.

If the full Senate follows the lead of the committee, the long bitter fight between the House and Senate over abortion will resume.

Milk Vita earns Tk 2.65cr net profit in '95-96

By Staff Correspondent

Milk Vita has earned a net profit of Taka 2.65 crore in the fiscal year 1995-96.

This was disclosed at the budget meeting of the Managing Committee of the company held at its head office on Thursday.

The meeting has approved a revenue budget of Taka 72.96 crore for the year 96-97. The projected revenue expenditure is Taka 66.71 crore and the expected surplus stands at Taka 6.24 crore for the coming year.

Addressing the meeting Quamruddin Yahya Khan Majlish, Chairman of Milk Vita, said the company has been playing a very significant role for the socio-economic development of the rural milk producing farmers.

Vice-Chairman Hasib Khan Tarun, and other directors including Hatim Ali Khan Rais Uddin, Asmat Ali Hawlader, Rafiq Uddin, Akhtar Uddin Ahmed and Begum Mamtaz were present at the meeting.

Khan Majlish said the proposed budget has ensured the welfare of 37500 co-operative farmers and their four lakh family members are being provided with prices of their products.

Presenting the budget general manager Nasser Ahmed said the company has been earning net profit for fifth consecutive year due to relentless efforts by the officers and employees of all levels. This trend will also be maintained in the coming years, he added.



Habibur Rahman, Secretary, Ministry of Industries, visited Electronics Complex of BSCIC at Mirpur in the city Wednesday.

US Whitewater trial

Witness testifies Clinton aide wants to hide campaign withdrawal

LITTLE ROCK, Arkansas, June 28: As treasurer of President Clinton's 1990 campaign for governor, Bruce Lindsey wanted to conceal a 30,000 dollars campaign withdrawal from the IRS, the Whitewater prosecution's chief witness testified Thursday, reports AP.

Lindsey, a longtime Clinton friend and now a top White House aide, has denied any attempt to hide campaign withdrawals from the Internal Revenue Service. And the witness did not specifically accuse him of suggesting that the withdrawal not be reported.

But "I could tell he didn't want it to be filed," Neal T. Ainley, former president of Perry County Bank, said of the so-called currency transaction report required by the IRS for withdrawals above 10,000 dollars.

Prosecutors allege that Lindsey conspired with Perry County Bank owners Herby Branscum Jr and Robert M Hill to conceal campaign withdrawals from the IRS. Branscum and Hill are defendants in the US District Court trial.

A defense lawyer said he was notified by the government that Lindsey is an unindicted co-conspirator. Clinton is not charged with any wrongdoing.

Ainley, taking the stand for the first time Thursday, testified that he had discussed the IRS filing with Lindsey over the telephone.

"He told me he needed 30,000 in cash, preferably in 100s, and asked if it had to be filed," Ainley said, "I told him it did."

Ainley said he suggested that Lindsey go to different

banks to withdraw smaller amounts or withdraw smaller amounts on different days.

"He didn't want to do it that way," Ainley said. "He said he wanted to come get it and come get it now."

Ainley said Hill called before Lindsey arrived to pick up the money. Hill said he was aware of the withdrawal and that "if I would take care of the

transaction, it wouldn't have to be reported," Ainley testified.

Ainley pleaded guilty in May 1995 to two misdemeanors in connection with the concealment, in return for his cooperation with the government.

In his initial testimony, Ainley said that he spent six years as a state bank examiner and had been on a team that examined Perry County Bank in Perryville, Arkansas in 1987.

SAN DIEGO, June 28: After four years of bureaucratic and political delays, the Chinese government approved a 12-year loan of two giant pandas to the San Diego Zoo, officials said, reports AP.

The announcement came on the same day the US House of Representatives rejected a measure that would have denied normal trade status for China, home to the world's remaining 1,000 wild pandas.

"We got through trade sanctions and most favoured trade status," Douglas Myers, executive director of the San Diego Zoological Society, said Thursday. "Now we'll get back to science."

The rare black-and-white bears will be only the second and third held in captivity in the United States; the only other American panda lives at the National Zoo in Washington.

Final details still have to be worked out, and it's still not clear when Shi Shi, a 14-year old male, and four-year-old Bai

Telecom disrupted in Narail

NARAIL, June 28: Telecom communications between the district and the remaining parts of the country are being disrupted as the local public call offices (PCOs) are, grappled with various problems, reports UNB.

The genex machine at the local PCO frequently goes out of order to technical fault while its employees often make delay in transmitting important and emergency messages, local people alleged.

On the other hand, the local businessmen, professionals and newsmen of the district are being deprived of fax services as there is no fax machine in the district headquarters.

They further alleged that the PCOs at Tularampur, Mizepar, Naldi and Gobra were in deplorable conditions due to lack of necessary equipment.

Rupganj Bazar, a business hub of the area, also needs a card phone booth to meet the growing demands of the local businessmen for communication. A card phone booth can be installed in Ratananj Post office to meet the demand, the businessmen suggested.

Meanwhile, card phone booths have been installed at the district headquarters post office, collectorate building and Narail Press Club.

DPRK looking for Japanese investors

TOKYO, June 28: A North Korean delegation will visit Japan next month looking for investors in a free trade zone development project, officials said Thursday, reports AP.

These will be the North Koreans' first official seminars in Japan to introduce the Tumen River development project to investors and the Japanese of the United Nations Industrial Development Organization's Tokyo office.

Seminars are planned in Tokyo, Osaka, Niigata and Toyama starting July 15, he added.

An official of the General Association of Korean Residents in Japan, a pro-North Korean organization, confirmed the planned visit but refused to provide further details.

The Tumen project brings together North Korea, China, Russia and Mongolia in the development of a region near their shared border and Mongolia's closest outlet to the sea. It has been backed by the United Nations.

The North's economy has been reported in shambles, with acute food shortages. The communist state is appealing for outside aid following massive floods last year that destroyed much of its farmland.

South Korea has invested in the proposed Tumen project, but only a few small Japanese companies have expressed interest, Hyakutake said. None has actually made an investment, he added.

Last year, a North Korean university professor held a seminar in Japan on the project. The July delegation will be led by the Vice Chairman of the External Economy Commission, Kim Jong U, Hyakutake said.

United Arab Shipping Co makes profit

ABU DHABI, June 28: The biggest joint shipping venture in the Arab world climbed back into profit in 1995 after accumulating losses of more than 100 million dollars in the previous three years, reports AFP.

The United Arab Shipping Company (UASC) made a net profit of \$7.14 million dollars in 1995, the highest it comes since it was launched by six regional governments in 1976, according to its balance sheet.

The report, which will be endorsed at a UASC board meeting in Cairo late Thursday, did not give a reason for the profits but company sources in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) attributed it to global economic growth.

"Higher growth in the world economy boosted shipping business in general. Naturally we benefitted from such an upturn," one source said.

An earlier economic worldwide slump combined with growing competition in the oil-rich region to keep UASC in the red for three years forcing it to introduce austerity measures to safeguard development plans.

The Kuwait-based UASC suffered from a net loss of 17.2 million dollars in 1994, around 73.1 million dollars in 1993 and 33 million dollars in 1992.

In 1991, it reported high net profits of nearly 60 million dollars as the company monopolised services in the region after international shipping firms were scared off during the 1990-1991 Gulf crisis.

Company officials said the recovery in 1995 and expected good results in 1996 would encourage UASC to press ahead with expansion plans.



Commerce and Industries Minister Tofael Ahmed addressing a gathering of officers and employees of the Ministry of Industries and corporations under its control held at the BCIC auditorium on Thursday.

Industrial policy to be formulated thru' consensus, says Tofael

Minister for Commerce and Industries, Tofael Ahmed, has called upon the employees and officials at all level to rise above narrow partisanship and make united endeavour to build the edifice of Golden Bengal as visualised by the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, says a press release.

The minister was addressing a joint meeting of the office-bearers of the employees' unions and officers' associations of the ministry of industries and corporations and directorates under its control held at the BCIC auditorium in the city on Thursday.

The industries minister said Bangabandhu's struggle was to realise the twin objectives of political independence and economic emancipation of his people. Unfortunately, he

said, although the nation had been ushered in the dawn of the Silver Jubilee year of its independence, the economic emancipation for its people still remained a far cry. Terrorism, nepotism, favouritism, economic plunder and politicalisation of administration on party lines in the past had crippled and decimated the economy of the country, he observed.

Referring to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's address to the nation, the industries minister said, in pursuance of govt's policy of national consensus on major issues, strategy and policies for industrialisation in future would be designed and formulated through a consensus on the floor of the parliament. Such a consensus, he said, was vital so that investors did not feel nervous

and discouraged by change in policies with the change in regime which had hitherto been in practice in the country.

The minister asked the workers, employees and officers of the ministry of industries and corporations to work in unison with honesty, sincerity and dedication. He requested them to assist him in his discharge of duties with honest and sincere advice and valuable experience acquired through long tenure of their careers. The minister was unequivocal to state that no one should fear any discrimination and unfair treatment owing to difference of political opinion or subscribing to opposition views. He further said that he would even seek valuable advice and guidance from his predecessors in the ministry and his political college in other parties.

The industries minister regretted that while our neighbouring countries were forging ahead rapidly in investment growth and industrialisation, we were still lagging far behind them. It was terrorism and lawlessness that were acting as deterrent to the growth of investment in the country, he held. That's why, he said, the present government in its first cabinet meeting had accorded highest priority to curbing of terrorism and lawlessness.

Expressing his profound grief at the killing of eighteen peasants during the country wide fertilizer crisis, he declared that there would be no permit system for sale and distribution of essential items in industrial sector henceforth. The minister emphasised the need for stamping out red tapism from the ministries and called for injecting vigour, energy and dynamism to make them commensurate with changing time and requirements of a sovereign nation. He said, "we do not want to rule as ministers but serve as servants of the people".

Industries Secretary Habibur Rahman also spoke on the occasion.

Corruption scandal in Brazil Supreme Court questions former finance minister

BRASILIA, June 28: The Supreme Court on Thursday questioned former finance minister Zelia Cardoso de Mello on her alleged involvement in a corruption scandal that led to the downfall of a president, reports AP.

According to a Federal Police investigation, Cardoso de Mello benefited from one of the many fictitious bank accounts opened by Paulo Cesar Farias, the former presidential aid who was found shot to death Sunday.

Police say a deposit of 813,000 dollar was made in one of these accounts in 1990, one day before Cardoso de Mello, as finance minister, authorized a 17.4 per cent bus fare hike which benefited companies owned by Farias.

The money was reportedly

used to pay Cardoso de Mello's personal expenses, including 40,000 dollars for the remodeling of her house in Sao Paulo.

The former minister told the Supreme Court she had no knowledge of the fictitious bank account and that all her personal expenses were paid by her private secretary, Joao Carlos Camargo.

She said that most of the money to remodel her house was given to her by a wealthy cousin who has since died. She admitted, however, that she could not prove the money was donated and that she did not include it in her income tax statement.

Farias, the reputed mastermind of a corruption ring that brought down former President Fernando Collor de Mello,

Int'l trade union report says Tax-free zones hell for workers

BRUSSELS, June 28: Tax-free zones intended to aid the economics of developing countries are hell for the people who work in the industries they favour, according to an international trade union report published today, says AFP.

Employees are exploited and underpaid, and attempts to organise themselves are promptly suppressed, the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) said after a survey of its affiliated unions worldwide.

Last year, the ICFTU counted 230 such export zones in nearly 70 countries, including more than 100 in Latin America and the Caribbean, 64 in Asia and 31 in Africa, employing an increasing number of workers subjected to conditions bordering on the inhumane.

According to the International Labour Organisation, the number of employees in these areas grew at an annual rate of nine per cent from 1975 to 1986 and 14 per cent between 1986 and 1990.

In Africa they numbered 250,000, in Latin America 1.2 million and in Asia three million, to which should be added between 14 millions and 40 million Chinese employed in the coastal special economic zones, the ICFTU said.

But these "free" zones were free only for the employers, who enjoyed the same liberties as a fox free in the chicken house, the report, issued to coincide with the ICFTU's 16th congress here, charged.

Low wages and a "union-free environment" were the main advantages trumpeted by governments in trying to attract investors, in violation of ILO conventions, the ICFTU noted.

In Asia, for example, 30 per cent of workers in the export processing zones were paid below their national legal minimum wage in 1995.

In many cases employers imposed such high production quotas that the workers, mainly women, had to take work home with them to finish in order to be paid.

The ICFTU cited the case of a South Korean textile company in Honduras, where workers, often in their teens, had to labour up to 80 hours per week to achieve their quotas.

In a catch-22 situation, a 15-year old girl was quoted as saying: "When we reach the quota, the bosses raise it the next day so that we are always behind."

Another worker, Lesly Rodriguez, earning around 21.50 dollars a week, added: "They told me that a Liz Claiborne brand sweater costs 90 dollars in the United States. I earn 38 cents an hour making it."

Widespread poverty and unemployment are major obstacles to the organisation of trade unions in the countries concerned, the ICFTU said. Employers are able to rely on an inexhaustible labour pool for jobs that require little skill, take advantage of this to blackmail workers.

The ICFTU noted that the tax-free zones are established in countries close to industrialised states — Central America and the Caribbean for the United States, Malaysia and Indonesia for Japan and Australia, and North Africa for Europe — where it said political and social conditions were to be deplored.

Workplace sex discrimination growing in Singapore

SINGAPORE, June 28: Sexual harassment is a growing problem in the Asian workplace according to more than 68 per cent of executives in 10 countries polled by Asia Business News (ABN) and the Far Eastern Economic Review magazine, reports Reuters.

In a statement yesterday detailing survey results, ABN, an Asian satellite business channel, said one in eight female executives said sexual harassment was a major problem and most agreed it exists.

Over 36 per cent of executives said employees found guilty of sexual harassment should be "dismissed", while 35.2 per cent said they should be given a warning and 28.3 per cent recommended some other form of punishment.

In Singapore more than two-thirds of those surveyed said employees found guilty of harassing co-workers should be sacked.

The survey included nearly 300 top executives with an average age of 47 years.

Regarding equal opportunity, more than half the survey respondents felt women did not face discrimination, except for South Korea where all the executives polled said women did not enjoy the same opportunities as men.

Overall, more than half of those surveyed said a "glass ceiling" kept women from senior positions, but in the Philippines, Singapore and Indonesia the majority of respondents felt otherwise.