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HYUNDAI
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Shortage of doctors threatens livestock, poultry sectors

Country's livestock and poultry sector, after showing a surge in recent years, is threatened with a back-turn for want of doctors, reports UNB.

State patronisation saw establishment of some 25,000 dairy farms, mostly small and medium sized, and about 50,000 poultry farms over the last couple of years, according to figures available from the Livestock Department.

But increasing number of these farms, especially the ones in remote areas, are folding up unable to cope with diseases.

A senior livestock official, when contacted, admitted this and attributed the crisis to "extremely inadequate" treatment facilities, resulting from the shortage of doctors and medicine.

There has not been any recruitment in the livestock cadre since the 10th BCS, leaving some 500 posts of veterinary doctors vacant.

The posts of as many as 400 thana livestock officers have been lying vacant for years due to the freeze in recruitment in entry posts.

The deadlock is learnt to have emanated from a controversial rule which says only veterinary doctors are eligible for the BCS (Livestock) cadre.

As per entitlement only veterinary science graduates are considered doctors, but the graduates of animal husbandry discipline were also allowed till the 9th BCS.

The dispute has been awaiting a decision for about a decade, since the 10th BCS. Sufferers are the department and the livestock sector," said the official.

As an emergency, temporary measure, the authorities have appointed about 250 veterinary doctors under a development project. But still some 100 thanas are without veterinary doctors.

Moreover, a dispute over the graduation list in the livestock cadre, which remains unresolved for more than a decade, has seriously demoralised men in the livestock service.

Insiders complain that the cadre graduation list, which started some 12 years back, is yet to be implemented. None of the four graduation lists, prepared since 1990, has seen the light, causing despair in both mid and upper levels of the cadre.

Some 600 posts, including 500 entry posts, in the livestock department have been lying vacant due to freeze in recruitment and the crisis over graduation list.

Some 50 posts at district level and 30 at the divisional level are vacant. All the four posts of director are also vacant.

"Directors are retiring being in the current charge for 3/4 years at a stretch," said a

livestock official, and asked: How could he put his all in the service in such a frustrating situation?

The cadre members accused dilly-dally attitude on the part of the PSC (Public Service Commission) for keeping the graduation issue in cold chamber. They also suspected manipulation by some department officials, who entered the cadre midway from projects and other services, for the delay.

There are seven such men in the cadre who entered the service from BADC and development projects in 1978 and were encadred in 1985.

"These people are seeking to establish their service to be counted from 1978 instead of 1985 which the rule permits," said the official who stressed an immediate solution to the pending issues to save the livestock and poultry sector.

Russian finance minister, privatisation agency blasted

MOSCOW, July 26: Russian prime minister singled out the Finance Ministry and the country's privatisation agency for a scolding at Thursday's cabinet meeting, indicating their top officials might be replaced, reports AP.

Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin blasted them for failing to carry out presidential orders. "These aren't mistakes, this is disrespect," he said, according to the ITAR-Tass news agency.

Chernomyrdin said their failings would be taken into account as he forms a new Cabinet.

ITAR-Tass said other senior officials also blasted the Economics Ministry — which Yeltsin has criticised in the past — as another major violator of Kremlin orders.

President Boris Yeltsin has asked Chernomyrdin to put together a new government and officials say a major shakeup is in the works.

Finance Minister Vladimir Potanin has long been seen as a candidate for replacement since his distribution of extremely limited government funds has inevitably left powerful interests unsatisfied.

The State Property Committee is currently without a chairman. Yeltsin last week made his chief, Alexander Kazakov, deputy head of the presidential staff.

BSFIC incurs cumulative loss of Tk 339.22 cr till '93-94 period

By Staff Correspondent

Bangladesh Sugar and Food Industries Corporation (BSFIC) has incurred a cumulative loss of Taka 339.22 crore till 1993-94 period.

Of this loss, the share of the sixteen state-owned sugar mills of BSFIC has stood at Taka 328.16 crore.

According to BSFIC sources, the expenditures on overtime, telephone, repairing and maintenance, office rent, depreciation and other costs have exceeded much more than salary, medical and house rent allowances and other benefits.

During 1993-1994, BSFIC spent Taka 6.19 crore on salary, house rents, bonus and other expenses while its spending on overtime, telephone, repairing and maintenance stood at Taka 8.72 crore.

The main reasons for incurring losses are huge amount of overtime payment, corruption at mill areas, low productivity of labour and capital, and

Ex-US Treasury Secretary awarded

WASHINGTON, July 26: Former Treasury Secretary Lloyd Bentsen and a government banking agency director who died in the plane crash that killed Commerce Secretary Ron Brown were awarded the Treasury's highest award Thursday, reports AP.

Bentsen received the Alexander Hamilton award from his successor, Robert E. Rubin, who praised the former senator for Texas for a long history of public service and contributions to the department.

Citing Bentsen's achievements as secretary from January 1993 to December 1994, Rubin said, "The Lloyd Bentsen Treasury Department, like the man himself, was energetic, innovative, engaged and highly successful."

Also honoured was Lee F. Jackson, executive director of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, who died in the April 3 plane crash with the other members of a trade mission Brown led to former Yugoslavia.

"Jackson demonstrated the highest standards of dedication to public service throughout his career," Rubin said in presenting the award to Jackson's parents, Luther and Nettie Jackson of White Plains, N.Y.

US Senate adopts measure to tone down proposed economic ban on Myanmar

WASHINGTON, July 26: The US Senate has adopted a measure that would tone down proposed economic sanctions against Myanmar whose military rulers are accused of violating citizens' human rights and stifling a pro-democracy movement, reports AP.

The measure, sponsored by Sen. William Cohen, was supported by the Clinton administration. The administration opposed a move to impose more severe economic sanctions by barring all private and public US investment in Myanmar.

By a vote of 54-45 Thursday, the Senate defeated an attempt to kill Cohen's measure, which was offered as an amendment to the 1997 foreign aid bill. The Senate had not yet taken a vote on the full bill.

Cohen said his approach to Myanmar would enable the United States to maintain enough influence in that Southeast Asian nation to help foster movement toward democracy.

Cohen's proposal was presented as an alternative to stricter sanctions contained in the Senate's 1997 12.25 billion dollar foreign aid bill. The House version of the bill, passed in June, contains 11.9 billion dollars. The two versions will have to be recon-

ceded before the bill is sent to President Clinton for signing.

In a letter to Cohen, the State Department expressed the administration's support for his proposed amendment, saying it was consistent with US policy. The proposal would cut off US assistance to the Myanmar government except for humanitarian aid, counter-narcotics assistance under certain circumstances, and assistance promoting human rights and democratic values.

Myanmar government is accused of widespread repression of pro-democracy activists. It arrested 262 members of 1991 Nobel Peace laureate Aung San Suu Kyi's pro-democracy party in May in an attempt to block a meeting where she had vowed to draft an alternative constitution.

Cohen and others opposed a provision of the foreign aid bill that would take a tougher stance against Myanmar barring any US public or private investment there until Myanmar's military rulers give up power and allow free elections.

Those favouring the tougher approach said if the United States unilaterally cut off ties to Myanmar, others — possibly including the European Union — would follow suit.

"I don't think we'll be alone very long if we have the

courage to take this step, said Senator Mitch McConnell, who said Suu Kyi had made it known through associates that she favours the sanctions in his proposal.

On Tuesday in Jakarta, Indonesia, Secretary of State Warren Christopher accused Myanmar rulers of human rights violations and said its policies are increasing an international threat from drug traffickers.

The Myanmar military regime, which calls itself the State Law and Order Restoration Council, refused to accept a 1990 landslide victory by Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy.

The Senate voted on other amendments to the foreign aid bill, including a measure requiring that nations buying American weapons meet certain standards of conduct, such as not violating international human rights standards. The amendment by Sen. Byron Dorgan was defeated 65-35. The Clinton administration opposed Dorgan's proposal as being overly restrictive.

Also the Senate adopted, 96-3, an amendment by Sen. Pete Domenici to prohibit additional spending on military education and training for Mexico until Mexico arrests and prosecutes or turns over 10 most-wanted drug traffickers indicted in the United States and are believed to be in Mexico.

US trade deficit with China hits record high

WASHINGTON, July 26: US purchases of 45.4 billion dollars worth of goods from China last year resulted in a record US trade deficit of 33.8 billion dollars with the country, the US International Trade Commission reported Thursday, according to AP.

The 1994 deficit was 29.4 billion dollars. Purchases of Chinese textile products, particularly clothes, shoes and toys have increased since then.

US sales to China were up as well in 1995 but only to 11.6 billion dollars from 9.2 billion dollars the year before. Fertilisers, airplanes and cotton were the main US exports.

Figures released last week showed the deficit was still shooting up in 1996. The May deficit with China was 3.06 billion dollars up 31 per cent from the previous month.

Many economists think China will soon overtake Japan as the country with the biggest surplus in trade with the United States.

Miners' strike harming export credibility of Australia

BRISBANE, Australia, July 26: The latest national strike by coal miners and Australia's poor industrial relations record was harming its reputation as an exporter, the Industrial Relations minister said Thursday, reports AP.

Peter Reith said Asian coal buyers may turn to Canada and the United States for supplies if the coal strike heralded a return to unsettled industrial relations and interrupted supplies.

"Australia's level of industrial disputation is much higher than that of our competitors, and our reputation, tarnished as it has been, has yet to be substantially restored," Reith said.

He made his comments as some public servants struck for 24 hours to protest planned government funding cuts in the next budget which they say will cost 15,000 jobs, and as most coal miners around the country were about to return to work after a 48-hour strike.

Members of the Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union walked off the job Tuesday after eight miners at the northern New South Wales Vickery mine were arrested for refusing a safety officer entry to a coal loader.

The Australian Industrial Relations Commission recommended Wednesday that striking miners return to work, saying it was unreasonable and unwarranted for a local dispute to escalate on a national scale.

"The strike action yesterday, as the commission said, was unreasonable," Reith said.

"This latest dispute, sadly, is a reflection of one of the underlying problems we have with employee relations generally in Australia."

Britain lost an average of 14 days per 1,000 employees to industrial disputes, compared to up to 90 days in Australia, he said.



Pineapple, an oval-shaped sweet, juicy and yellow fruit covered with a thick and woody skin, is now available in plenty in the city markets, as elsewhere in the country, prices of course being within the reach of the commoners. — Star photo

Myanmar levies customs duties at open market exchange rate

YANGON, July 26: Myanmar's Finance Minister Brigadier General Win Tin said his ministry has recently been levying customs duties at the black market exchange rate instead of the overvalued official rate, state media said yesterday, reports Reuter.

Win Tin's comments mark the first time an official has publicly confirmed rumours in business circles that the government has been levying duties at the open market rate for the past couple of months.

On the black market, one dollar bought 155 kyats on Wednesday compared to the official rate of 5.9 kyats per dollar.

Previously, customs duties were high but the state suffered when values of imported items were calculated based on the official rate, state-run newspapers quoted Win Tin as saying in a speech.

"On the other hand, the items are sold based on the official rate. To be in accord with the policy of the market economy, customs duties were cut down to one-tenth and arrangements are made to evaluate imported items based on the open market rate."

Cos making bomb detection devices see stocks soar

NEW YORK, July 26: Companies that make devices to detect explosives saw their stock prices soar since the July 17 crash of TWA flight 800, which killed all 230 people aboard, reports AP.

Share prices for Magal security system doubled to seven dollars on Thursday on the Nasdaq. Share prices for American Science and Engineering rose 12 per cent to 11.12 dollars on the American stock exchange, while Themedic stock rose 20 per cent to 25.25 dollars.

Analysts say that these gains may be ephemeral, even though President Bill Clinton announced increased security measures in American airports on Thursday and encouraged the private sector to develop sophisticated detection systems.



UNDP's Resident Representative in Bangladesh, Emi Watanabe called on State Minister for Foreign Affairs Abul Hasan Chowdhury at the latter's office on Thursday. —PID photo

Sicom to launch new rubber contract in trading

SINGAPORE, July 26: The Singapore Commodity Exchange Ltd (Sicom) is to launch a new Technically-Specified Rubber (TSR) contract to add to the three rubber futures contracts traded on the exchange, reports AP.

The present contracts are Ribbed Smoked Sheet (RSS) 1, RSS 3 and TSR 20 (award), RSS 1 and TSR 20 are priced in Singapore cents while RSS 3 is traded in US cents.

Sicom said in a report received on the weekend that the fourth contract termed TSR 20 (fb) will be traded soon and priced in US cents.

Only Singapore and Japan trade in rubber futures contracts.

Industry players said that as trading for physicals was also done in the US currency, the new contract would become popular and that it would also make hedging and arbitrating more efficient.

Rubber futures prices have softened in the April-June quarter due in part to the end of the wintering season in producing countries, industry officials said.

Argentina's president denies reports of clash over economy

BUENOS AIRES, Argentina, July 26: President Carlos Menem denied reports of a new clash with Economy Minister Domingo Cavallo on Thursday, dampening speculation over the minister's future, reports AP.

"There was no fight, no argument... nothing of the sort," Menem told reporters, a day after allegedly warning Cavallo he was "tired" of his frequent threats to quit.

The speculation dented share prices on the Buenos Aires stock exchange, although the leading Merval index clawed back early losses of 3.2 per cent to end 1.2 per cent down.

Published reports of the latest bout arose late Wednesday after Cavallo refused to sign a decree reinstating a two per cent tax on bank industry transactions.

The tax was eliminated last year as a step toward bringing down interest rates and fueling a rebound in the recession-riddled Argentine economy.

Cavallo, newspapers said, allegedly told Menem in a heated exchange that he would quit if the president signed the decree.

Menem responded by saying: "I'm tired of your threats."

St. Petersburg N-plant workers on strike

SOSNOVY BOR, Russia, July 26: Workers of a nuclear plant near St. Petersburg went ahead with their strike Tuesday despite the resignation of the plant's director who hoped to prevent the strike, a news report said according to AP.

The director of the Sosnovy Bor power plant, Anatoly Yeferin, resigned on Monday, satisfying one of the workers' demands.

But the workers, who have not been paid since March, continued to demand back wages and an investigation into financial and administrative activities at the plant, the ITAR-Tass news agency reported.

The workers are owed 25 billion rubles (about five million dollars), and demand that they be paid by August 1.

Argentine trader begins legal proceedings against Britain

BUENOS AIRES, July 26: An Argentine businessman has begun legal proceedings against Britain claiming he suffered 50 million dollars in damages for being forced out of the South Georgian Islands, reports AP.

According to the suit, Constantino Davidoff had signed a contract with the Scottish firm Christian Savesant Ltd to develop shipping industry activities.

But he was ordered out of the islands by British troops in an incident that helped trigger the 1982 war between Britain and Argentina over the Falklands, another British ruled South Atlantic island group.

Davidoff claims in his lawsuit that once he set up business, British troops suspected that his presence was a smokescreen for Argentines seeking sovereignty over islands in the South Atlantic long claimed by Buenos Aires.

He claims he had to leave the country and was not permitted to take his business equipment with him.

He said the British tried to justify their actions by saying he had not fulfilled the terms of his business contract.

EU agrees to freeze next year's spending at \$104b

BRUSSELS, Belgium, July 26: European Union nations, facing austerity drives at home, agreed Thursday to freeze next year's EU spending at 81.6 billion European currency units (104 billion dollars), reports AP.

By a 12-3 vote, EU budget ministers approved a draft budget that marked a sharp break with recent annual increases of about eight per cent.

It was the first time the EU has ever failed to increase spending on agriculture subsidies, which make up about half the budget.

Germany and France championed a rollover of this year's spending total as a way to bolster their chances to meet strict economic conditions to adopt the common European currency — the euro — on schedule in 1999.

EU nations hope the freeze will help them cut public spending and rein in deficits, as required under the treaty laying out conditions for adopting the euro.

The ministers reached agreement after reassuring poorer EU members — Spain, Portugal, Greece, and Ireland — that aid programmes to boost their economies would not be cut disproportionately.

Belgium and the Netherlands opposed the deal, complaining concessions to the poorer countries went too far. Italy opposed a provision that enables more money to be added for agriculture spending later.

The European Parliament, which has final say over most of the budget, plans to consider the draft at meetings in October and December.

Egypt plans to expand settled areas

CAIRO, July 26: Egypt, whose population lives in only four per cent of the nation's total area, hopes to expand that amount to 20 per cent over the next twenty years, the government Daily Al-Ahram reported, according to AP.

The cabinet group on investment planning, headed by Prime Minister Kamal Al-Ganzuri, met Monday to review an "investment map" drawn up to show to the full cabinet, the paper said.

The map outlines a plan to expand settled areas to reach 20 per cent of the country's total area by 2017, Minister for Cabinet Affairs Talaat Hamad told the paper.

Egypt's population of around 60 million currently lives in only four per cent of the country's area, or around 40,000 square kilometers (16,000 square miles), almost all in the narrow fertile strip around the Nile river.

Maid assaulted in Singapore

SINGAPORE, July 26: A Singaporean woman pleaded guilty in a local court to hitting her Indonesian maid and throwing a cup of hot water at the maid's face and could be jailed up to five years, a news report said Friday, reports AP.

Tan Choon Bee, 40, struck Machaty Machytoy with a leather duster, pushed her with metal stool and pinched her right thigh at her home last December.

The court will hear a mitigation plea from Tan before passing sentence. She faces up to five years imprisonment and fine.

The Straits Times newspaper quoted government lawyer May Mesenas as saying in court that on the day of the abuse, Machaty forgot to follow her employer's instructions on how to do the laundry.

Tan had provided six basins for washing clothes by hand. There were separate basins for men's women's clothing, socks, undergarments, brae clothes and clothes of certain colours.