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W Bengal team calls on land minister

Bangladesh can learn from the experience of West Bengal in land reform, said State Minister for Land Alhaj Rashed Mosharaf, reports UNB.

The State Minister was talking to the visiting three-member delegation of Land Record Department of West Bengal when they called on him here on Thursday.

In this regard, the State Minister expressed the desire to send a Bangladesh delegation to West Bengal.

The delegation told the State Minister that in the Indian state of West Bengal private owners can own up to 25 bighas of arable land while the ceiling is 20 bighas in case non-agricultural land.

The delegation also apprised Mosharaf about the land recording system and drawing of maps in the Indian state.

led by Brigadier JR Peter, Director Land Records and Boundary Department of West Bengal, the delegation members also included SB Pahari, Joint Secretary of Land and Land Reform Department, and S Chakravarty, Deputy Director of Survey Department.

Iraqi oil exports may resume next month

UNITED NATIONS, Aug 9: The United Nations gave final approval Thursday to rules governing limited Iraqi oil sales, and officials said exports could resume next month, reports AP.

The Security Council sanctions committee approved the regulations one day after the United States announced acceptance of the procedures. The United States was the last of the 15 committee members to accept the rules which had to be unanimously approved.

Washington said it held out until it was satisfied that the rules were strong enough to ensure that Saddam Hussein's government could not use money from the sales for its own benefit.

In Paris, French Foreign Minister Herve de Charette said France "is delighted over (the decision), which will allow for the alleviation of the suffering of the Iraqi people."

New executives of NASCIB

Shamsuzzaman Khan has been elected president and Deewan Taimur Year Chowdhury secretary general and central representative of Taimur Mymensingh district branch of the National Branch of Small and Cottage Industries of Bangladesh NASCIB for two-year term, says a press release.

Election Commissioner Abdul Wahed conducted the election held recently.

A 27-member executive committee was also elected with Mahmud Haidar, A B M Shamsul Alam and Rehana Haq as vice-chairmen.

The executive committee members are: Abul Hasnat, Sadekul Islam (Kanchan), Omar Bin Tasik, Md Nurul Alam, Shafiqul Islam Faruque (Vulu), Karam Ali, Alim Uddin, Latifur Rahman Sikder, Md Selim, Md Anisul Haq Mahmud, Md Shaim, Alhaj Jamal, Naser Ahmed Arif, Sreer Narayan Pal, Hadi M S Hasan, Nasir Uddin (Khasru), Gopal Ghosh, Md Zainal Abedin, Mahtab Uddin Bhuiyan, Abul Kalam, Alhaj Ajgar Ali Mondal and Md Abdul Hamid.

CEPZ may draw \$20m investments in 6 months

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Aug 9: The Chittagong Export Processing Zone (CEPZ) is likely to draw investments of over 20 million US dollars within the next six months with commissioning of 11 new industries now under implementation stage.

Official sources said these industries will produce electronics goods, camera lens, globes, textiles, padding, shoe, bag and sports good.

CEPZ has so far drawn investment of 170 million US dollars against its 72 operational units.

Meanwhile, more offers of investment are pouring in from Korea, Singapore, Hong Kong and Thailand, officials said.

Response from foreign investor prompted the authorities to go for further expansion of CEPZ.

The authority now plans to develop another 40 acres of

land to accommodate more industries.

CEPZ has so far developed 343 plots over 413 acres of land. Already 300 plots were allotted to the investors, officials said.

Presently, 31,254 people including 268 foreigners are working in CEPZ. With the installation of more units, more job opportunities will be generated.



Colin McClymont, Managing Director of the Pen Shop, with the world's most expensive fountain pen—an 82,000 Montblanc Meisterstück Solitaire Royal, at Heathrow Airport in UK on Thursday, where it is the star attraction at the yesterday's opening of the Pen Shop in Terminal 2. The pen is solid gold and covered with 4810 diamonds. — APPUNB photo

Oil diplomacy between US, Myanmar

BANGKOK, Aug 9: As the United States Congress debates economic sanctions against Myanmar, an American oil company executive is in Yangon discussing how to improve relations between the US and the country's military regime, reports AP.

John Imle, chairman of US oil company Unocal, met with Gen. Khin Myunt, chief of Myanmar secret police, and Generals David Abel and Khin Maung Thein, the country's economic and energy ministers, the state-run New Light of Myanmar reported Friday, a copy of which was seen in Bangkok.

The paper said they discussed improvement of bilateral relations, economic cooperation and offshore oil and gas projects.

Unocal has been under fire from some US lawmakers and democracy activists, environmentalists and human rights groups in several countries for its involvement in the construction of a 1.2 billion dollars pipeline that will pump natural gas from Myanmar to Thailand.

The company was part of successful lobbying effort in the US Senate last month, which passed a watered down version of a sanctions bill against Myanmar.

A tougher bill that would require Unocal to pull out Myanmar is still being considered by the House of Representatives. Several lawmakers are pushing for the harsher version as a means of forcing Myanmar's military regime towards a dialogue with Nobel

Peace Prize winner Aung San Suu Kyi and Myanmar democracy movement.

Opponents of investment in Myanmar argue that doing business there props up the military regime and lines the pockets of the generals who are using the cash to fund a massive military buildup.

The pipeline, which is being developed jointly by Unocal, Total of France and the Myanmar government, is the single largest investment project in Myanmar.

Democracy activists and human rights groups say that the Myanmar army is forcibly relocating ethnic villagers to make way for the pipeline, and rounding them up to work as forced labourers to build infrastructure necessary to construct it.

They charge Unocal with complicity in these actions. Imle has denied the charges, saying that human rights groups have no access to Myanmar but his company does and that his workers are welcomed by the local population.

But several human rights groups, including the ethnic Karen Human Rights Group, the Southeast Asian Information Network and Earth Rights International have published reports with eyewitness testimony documenting forced labour, relocations, arbitrary executions, rape and torture of villagers by the Myanmar army which has expanded its presence in the area since the pipeline contract was signed in 1992.

Egypt planning to build world's largest museum

CAIRO, Aug 9: Egypt, rich in ancient antiquities, is planning to build the world's largest museum to house them but hasn't yet figured out how to pay for it, the nation's chief archaeologist said Wednesday, reports AP.

Abdel-Halim Nouredin, Chairman of the Supreme Council for Antiquities, said the government has set aside more than 70 hectares (175 acres) of land for the project, which is expected to cost more than one billion dollars.

Italy and the European Union have helped with feasibility studies, he said, but architectural designs and a construction schedule have yet to be worked out.

Despite the work already done, plans for the museum had not been announced publicly.

Our initial plans and a feasibility study took six volumes of blueprints, Nouredin told a new conference sponsored by the Foreign Press Association. "But we have to see who will do the financing."

In addition to the land, along the main highway north of Cairo, the government has spent some two million Egyptian pound (\$588,000 dollars) so far on studies, including measures to protect Egypt's treasures from humidity and pollution.

Egypt already has more than 30 museums including the internationally known Egyptian Museum in Cairo with nearly 150,000 items on display. But the country still has tens of thousands of artifacts from Pharaonic, Greek, Roman, Coptic and Islamic eras in warehouses for lack of exhibit space.

Court declares Gdansk shipyard bankrupt

GDANSK, Poland, Aug 9: A regional court declared the historic Gdansk shipyard bankrupt Thursday, bringing to a close months of speculation about the future of the site where Poland's Solidarity movement was born, reports AP.

The year's creditors will have two months to lodge claims with the appointed administrator.

Ryszard Gluch, president of the shipyard, said that bankruptcy would release Gdansk from economically unviable ship-building contracts.

The bankruptcy will also make it easier for administrators to reach agreements with creditors on the year's 414 million zloty (152 million dollars) debt.

Although Ethiopia has not made a formal statement on sanctions, it has cut air links to Burundi. Ethiopian Airlines had two scheduled flights a week to the Burundian capital, Bujumbura.

In Tanzania, thousands of tons of freight were stuck in the port of Dar es Salaam, at the Lake Tanganyika port of Kigoma and at the Kabanga border crossing into Burundi, newspaper reports said Thursday.

At the Kabanga border crossing into northeastern Burundi, 40 trailer trucks were reported backed up.

But Tanzanian Foreign Minister Patrick Sumaye told a local radio station that the government has been allowing trucks loaded with humanitarian relief for thousands of refugees and displaced person to cross into Burundi.

Earlier this year, former Tanzanian President Julius Nyerere mediated talks on the crisis in Burundi.

Tk 25 cr frozen shrimps rotting at plants

From Our Correspondent

KHULNA, Aug 9: Frozen shrimps worth over Taka 25 crore are reportedly rotting at the freezing plants in Khulna due to frequent loadshedding.

A spokesman of the Frozen Food Exporters Association alleged that a section of the vested interests in the local PDB is responsible for this huge economic loss as they are conspiring against shrimp export business from this region of the country.

Expressing grave concern at this situation, the spokesman said that all the fish freezing plants in Khulna experienced forty hours of loadshedding at a stretch from the 5th to the 7th of this month.

Even generators of twelve freezing plants of the district fail to save the exportable shrimps from rotting due to lack of requisite temperature.

Islami Bank declares 18 pc dividend

Islami Bank Bangladesh Limited has declared 18 per cent dividend for its shareholders for the year 1995, says a bank press release.

The dividend was approved at the 13th Annual General meeting of the bank held at Bangladesh Shishu Academy auditorium in the city on Thursday with its Chairman Commodore (Retd) Mohammad Ataur Rahman presiding.

The bank earned income of Taka 109.76 crore in 1995 as against Taka 82.66 crore in the preceding year. The deposit of the bank increased from Taka 1022.67 crore to Taka 1266.93 crore with an increase of Taka 244.26 crore i.e. 23.88 per cent.

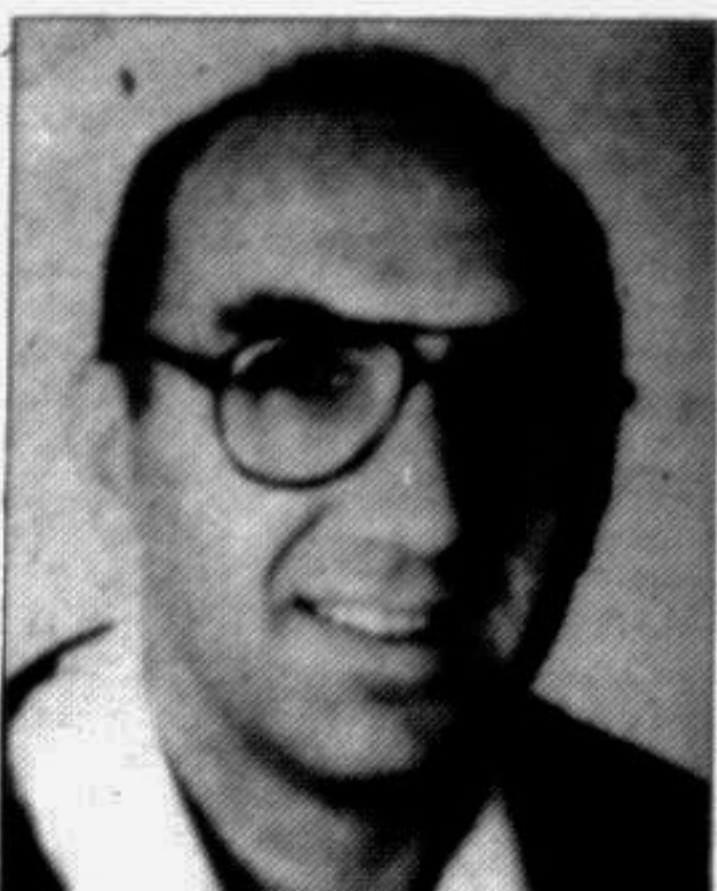
Investment of the bank also increased from Taka 807.65 crore to Taka 1153.28 crore. The growth rate of the bank is 42.79 per cent.

The bank transacted foreign exchange business to the tune of Taka 3468.13 crore in 1995 as against Taka 2535.69 crore in the preceding year recording an increase of 36.77 per cent.

The annual general meeting evaluated the overall performance of the bank and expressed satisfaction at the significant progress achieved during the year 1995.

Yousuf Abdullah Al-Rajhi, Representative of Al-Rajhi Company for Industry & Trade, Saudi Arabia; Sheikh Hamad Al-Hageri, Representative of the Public Institution for Social Security, Kuwait; Mohammad Younus; Maulana Mohammad Abdul Jabbar, Representative of Baitush Sharaf Foundation Ltd.; Engineer Mustafa Anwar; Prof. Mohammad Sharif Husain, Representative of Islamic Economics Research Bureau; Mohammed Ataur Rahman Khan and ANMA Zaher, Representative of Ibn Sina Pharmaceutical Industry Ltd. have been re-elected directors of the bank.

BTC's new finance director



Raymond Derek Venn recently took over as finance director of Bangladesh Tobacco Co Ltd., says a BTC press release.

He replaced Alastair Young who had been transferred to the BAT head office in UK.

Venn, 38, is British and a Cost & Management Accountant from the UK. He joined BAT in 1977 and has served in various capacities in the finance department before being posted abroad in 1987, since then he has served with BAT subsidiaries — Pioneer Tobacco Co. Ltd., BAT Zaire and BAT Benelux.

Prior to joining BTC he was the finance director of Aureol Tobacco Co. Ltd. in Sierra Leone, the press release added.

UK, Lanka sign power accord

COLOMBO, Aug 9: Britain has signed a formal agreement with Sri Lanka to provide electricity generators costing about 1.23 billion dollars to power the island's embattled northern peninsula of Jaffna, it was announced here today, reports AFP.

The British High Commission (embassy) here said that an exchange of letters was signed Thursday with the Sri Lankan government to restore power supply in Jaffna which was wrested from Tamil Tiger guerrilla control earlier this year.

Britain also agreed to appoint consultants to prepare a masterplan for fully restoring power to the Jaffna peninsula where Tigers maintained a de facto state until they were driven out after military operation begun in October.

India okays 64 foreign investment proposals

NEW DELHI, Aug 9: The Indian government on Thursday approved 64 foreign investment proposals including a bid by the United Arab Emirates-based Golden Falcon Hotels to set up a chain of luxury hotels here, officials said, reports AFP.

The total proposals worth 221 million dollars were cleared by Industry Minister Muralosi Maran after the foreign investment promotion board gave the green light on Wednesday, a government spokesman said.

Four proposals for setting up fully-owned subsidiaries including Golden Falcon Hotels, Essen Nutrition Corp, US-based Sea-Land Service Inc and Promolite International of Spain got the minister's go-ahead, he said.

Essen Nutrition has been permitted to set up a baby-food plant and conduct research in child healthcare with an investment of 2.2 million dollars.

Sea-Land Service Inc of United States will plough in 32 million dollars in infrastructural projects in sectors such as ports, railways and highways. Britain's Ritz-Cra's 11-million-dollar project to build iron-ore mines in the eastern Indian state of Orissa and a proposal from the Netherlands' Carlsberg to market its beer here were also cleared.

India has approved foreign investment proposals worth 17 billion dollars since the launch of free-market reforms nearly five years ago.

Future of shipping in Bangladesh: Role of professionals

By Khandaker R Zaman

The work practices in the water-side highly corrupt. But many of those same operators find such conditions an opportunity for profiteering. They do not give a damn to international conventions or practices and use Bangladesh to be their killing field.

The recent imposition of a surcharge by both foreign leader operators and carriers for a non-existent congestion at the port of Chittagong was a clear manifestation of such attitude. Polluting the rivers by foreign ships without giving any regard to international convention is another frequent occurrence at the ports of Bangladesh.

The fact is that the country is yet to formulate its shipping policy and enact law to govern the shipping sector. Until a strong legal regime is established as has been in any other country (in most of the Commonwealth countries, it is known to be the Navigation Act, which governs all aspects of shipping including ships' registration, sea worthiness, manning, compensation, coasting trade, penalties for pollution, wreck and salvage), the rule of law can not be enforced and violators would go unpunished. At the same time, there should be a professional institute for

the people who are responsible for managing and formulating policies for transport and that is to include civil servants in relevant departments in order to maintain the professional and ethical standard of its members and conduct courses in conjunction with a tertiary academy for people who either wish to join this industry or for people who are already serving this industry but wish to further develop their skill.

This kind of institutes are common in any recognised profession and even in Bangladesh, there is a College of Physicians and Surgeons for medical professionals, the Institute of Engineers for engineers and the Institute of Chartered Accountants for professional accountants.

The shipping professionals can develop an institute locally or if necessary a branch of the Chartered Institute of Transport may be established here.

The Chartered Institute of Transport was incorporated in the United Kingdom in 1920 and was granted a Royal Charter in 1926. It consists of professionals from all sectors of transport and logistics e.g. defence forces, shipping, air transport, rail and road transport, engineers, government

bodies related to any mode of transport, academics engaged in teaching transport subjects including transport economics, lawyers etc.

Membership of the institute is regarded to be a professional qualification and in many countries it is mandatory that people should possess such professional qualifications, to be considered for a senior management position. Since the institute maintains such a wide range of professionals, it regulates its own professional and ethical standard and contributes to the serving of its objective.

It is an absolutely necessary for countries like Bangladesh to have such institutes of professionals who not only work to improve and develop their respective fields of profession but as well assists government to formulate policies and regulate the industries accordingly.

In many countries, tertiary educational institutions formulate and conduct courses in conjunction with the Chartered Institute of Transport.

About the setting up of a new container terminal, it is necessary that our policy makers should take into consideration the following points: — That the new container

terminal must be capable of handling medium-sized container ships and not only feeder vessels. The medium-sized container ships are within the range of 1200-1500 TEUs.

That the channel and the entrance to it are dredged properly to accommodate the medium sized container ships even before the project is okayed for implementation in order to ascertain that the draft can be maintained at all times and must not hamper navigation of such ships in the long run. Otherwise, we may end up with billion dollar terminal not able to accommodate the desired ships and thus defeating the purpose.

That all the infrastructural facilities including rail and road communications to the terminal are built simultaneously with the terminal so that it can function efficiently from its inauguration. I remember an incidence while I was working in Australia and was having a discussion in the chamber of John Spurr, the then Managing Director of P&O Containers Australia Ltd in relation to the newly inaugurated modern container terminal Novo Sheva in Bombay. It was undoubtedly the most modern terminal in South Asia but it had to close

down its operation because of a boycott by customs agents for whom there was no working space at the terminal and then it was functioning very poorly because of a lack of railway communication which was not ready when the terminal opened. I was obviously not happy when a director of the company remarked that was an example of developing nations and how their policy makers work without paying any attention to infrastructures or basics. They love to make all things big but often fail to make those big things function efficiently and effectively as would have been expected. Our policy makers should learn from such events and ensure that same does not recur.

That the terminal is well equipped to achieve maximum productivity which would play a significant role in the long run. Particularly countries like Nepal would definitely decide to use Chittagong Port if it works more efficiently than the ports of Calcutta or Haldia. It may also happen that Chittagong port may become the transshipment point for West Bengal as well as for all other eastern Indian states and their containers would get railed from Chittagong making a

milestone progress in multimodal transport in South Asia. From a professional point of view, this is not only desirable but also feasible because it is much more cost effective to run a 1200 TEU vessel compared to running 4-5 250 TEU capacity small feeders. Ultimately these small feeder vessels will become obsolete and operators will be looking for a port having all the facilities to accommodate their ships as well as the necessary infrastructural set ups for multimodal transport to move containers to and from all adjacent regions.

That the terminal is operated in the private sector but since there is none in Bangladesh having the right know-how in port management, joint ventures should be encouraged with renowned overseas terminal operators which should bring in the know-how as well as capital investment.

That a feasibility study should be conducted by the Government of Bangladesh on its own in addition to the one conducted by World Bank for assistance from reputed maritime institutions in that respect who would make a thor-

ough investigations with due consideration to long term affects and benefits on economic, environmental, geographical, hydrological, legal and social issues. And only academics should be considered for undertaking such an investigation as they tend to be very detailed and specific in their findings unlike a job done in haste by some to suit the employer. To my knowledge, Australian Maritime College is capable to offer such services and perhaps the Government of Bangladesh may ask its Australian counterpart to assist since the college happens to be an Australian government institution.

It would have been wonderful if there was a branch of the Chartered Institute of Transport in Bangladesh which could have been used as a platform to invite local and international guest speakers who may include professionals as well as academics to deliberate on the issues of new container terminal, waterside reform etc. Furthermore, such institutes also stand guard against any malpractice, irrationality and inconsistency in the fields of port management and shipping.

(The writer was associated with the Australian shipping industry for a period over five years and completed his post graduate studies in shipping from the Australian Maritime College.)