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DThe Paily Star DUSINESS

CARS THAT MAKE SENSE



'HK to retain position as int'l financial centre'

BEIJING Aug 25: A top Chinese central bank official has vowed that Hong Kong will retain its position as an international financial centre after it

in 1997, reports AFP. the Hong Kong dollar will con-Deputy Governor Chen Yuan was quoted as saying by the

sustain Hong Kong's prosperity and it position as an international financial centre after

and our responsibility."

Hong Kong's foreign reserves -

"We believe this reserve can withstand clashes from outside." Chen said, "But the cen stabilise the Hong Kong dollar."

any special privileges when raising money in Hong Kong, and it would continue to pay

able for a commercial bank, the BOC would play an "active role" in Hong Kong financial circles.

China's inflation may be 8 pc this year

BEIJING, Aug 24: China's flation will be held to eight per cent this year, lower than pre-

percentage points lower than gave last month. Speaking at a financial systems. Dai also predicted that the country's for eign exchange reserves would year end, the newspaper said. At the end of July reserves totaled 90.8 billion dollars.

First-ever free trade bloc in Southern Africa

create the sub-continent's firstever free trade bloc, says AFP.

ment Community (SADC) nations had signed the pact, which commits signatories to phase in free trade in the region gradually over a period of eight

one of them was Angola, which cited "technical reasons."

Tofael addresses Commerce Ministry officials

Govt firm to expand economic activities

Commerce and Industry Minister Tofael Ahmed yesterpresent government is to expand economic activities through increasing participation in international trade. savs UNB.

this regard". Tofael said while addressing the officials of Commerce Ministry and attached departments and organisations at the conference room

will formulate policies on the basis of need of the people in consultation with all con-

ISLAMABAD, Aug 25: The

International Monetary Fund

(IMF) has delayed a mission to

Pakistan, blocking the release

of more than 300 million dol-

lars in standby credit, a news-

paper reported yesterday, says

clined" to send its mission to Is-

lamabad in the near future.

without giving a reason, the

hinges on a favourable report

from the IMF mission, which

was due to come here in August

to review the economy ahead of

a September IMF board meeting

in Washington to approve dis-

million dollars standby credit

to Pakistan in December, 1995.

about half of which has already

The IMF committed 600

The release of the funds

news reported.

bursements.

been received.

The IMF had "politely de-

The Commerce Minister said the government wants to establish a good governance by utilising knowledge, expertise and long experiences of the civil

velopment which warrants consensus between government and opposition political parties. With this end in view Awami League formed the gov

ernment of 'national consensus

The activities of attached departments and organization

maintaining neutrality.

CPA keeps vigil over handling of containers

CHITTAGONG Aug 25: Chittagong Port Authority has been maintaining constant vigil over smooth handling of containers at the port and the equipment operators are in no way connected with creating any complexity in this regard. a port press release said on Saturday, reports BSS.

The press release pointed out that equipment operators of the port had no connection with the dock-workers and stevedores who had differences over some mafters. No port employee is connected with the differences existing between shift-based dock workers and stevedores. it a

Chittagong Port authority has also been keeping constant touch with all agencies connected with port activities in order to ensure smooth functioning of the port, the press release said, adding all concerned have been requested to refrain from publishing any mislead

Bangladeshi restaurants getting new identity in UK

Some 10,000 Bangladeshi owned restaurants in Britain and other European countries which used to be known as Indian for last 40 years are now becoming familiar as Bangla deshi restaurants, reports UNB.

The mistaken identity is being cleared because of campaigns launched by The Dine Bangladeshi Campaign and The Guild of Bangladeshi Restauranteurs to popularise these as Bangladeshi restaurants where about a lakh Bangladeshi are working.

This was disclosed by a team of the UK-based The Guild of Bangladeshi Restaurateurs when they called on Speaker Humayun Rashid Chowdhury at his office yesterday.

Talking to them Speaker Humayun Rashid called upon the expatriate Bangladeshis to invest in the country for its socio-economic development.

He also advised them to undertake different projects here for the supply of ingredients for the restaurants in Britain. The Speaker also called for

large-scale investment in the country taking the privilege of existing congenial atmosphere. President of the organisation Enam Alı led the team. Coordinator for Bangladesh Muhammad Faizur Rahman, Shah Azizur Rahman MP. Muhibur Rahman Manik MP and Editor of the Bangla Bazar Patrika Matiur Rahman Chowdhury were present on the

5 held for fraud Bank Indonesia loses \$1m

JAKARTA, Aug 25: Five posple have been arrested and accused of phoney transactions that caused Indonesia's central bank to lose some two billion rupiah (one million dollars), the police said Saturday, re-

ports AP. Bank Indonesia's security system detected seven billion rupiah (3.5 million dollars) missing and officials took quick action, seizing all documents related to the transactions and calling in staff for questioning.

Police spokesman Brig. Nurfaizi said nearly five billion rupiah (2.5 million dollars) have been returned by the perpetra tors, which include three employees of the bank and two businessmen.

The remaining two billion rupiah (one million dollars), was apparently already spent. Police made the arrests on Thursday after a report from Bank Indonesia or the Central

added.

ing news about Chittagong port.

Jute sector task force report likely soon

State Minister for Jute and Textiles A K Faezul Hug has emphasised the need for formulating short and long-term jute policies which have to be pursued precisely so that the once golden fibre could again help boost Bangladesh exports, reports BSS.

in the picture.

"I see the jute sector in total ity. Jute has plus points as the raw materials of this industry are produced entirely domestically. We are now waiting for the jute sector task force report which is expected in a number of days and then on it we would act and hope to begin a good start," the minister told the members of Bangladesh Jute Spinners Association here at the association conference room vesterday.

Association Chairman Sabbir Yusuf. Vice Chairman Moinul Islam Khan, past presidents Giasuddin and Mohammad Ali also spoke.

Hug assured the association members of positive consideration of setting up of a seed bank

for reviving the jute and said the government has to clean up a lot of past mistakes.

AK Faizul Haq (3rd from left). State Minister. Ministry of Jute & Textiles, addressing the

members of the Bangladesh Jute Spinners' Association in the city yesterday. Shabbir

Yusuf, Chairman, and Moinul Islam Khan, Vice-Chairman of the association, are also seen

Welcoming the State Minister. Yusuf demanded a ten per cent export marketing support for jute yarn and twine, reduction of rate of interest on bank loans, abolition or deduction of tax at source and provision for export processing zone, facilities for jute industry to save and flourish this vital sector of the national economy

He said 28 per cent of the total export earnings from jute and jute goods now comes from jute yarn and twine. Export earnings from jute yarn and twine stood at Taka 294 crore in 1994-95 compared to Taka 15.70 crore in 1979-80 indicating the huge potentials of this thriving sub-sector.

Khan said the 35-member spinning mills association are now exporting over one lakh metric tons of jute varn and twine and with some little incentives and EPZ facilities, this sector can export double of this quantity.

Businessman held in Indian telecom scam

NEW DELHI, Aug. 25: An businessman accused of colluding with a government minister to sell the telephone company electronic parts at inflated prices was remanded to custody Saturday, an Indian news agency reported, says AP.

Rama Rao, managing director of the Advanced Radio Masts Ltd was arrested Friday in the southern city of Hyderabad and brought by federal police to a New Delhi court a day

A judge ordered Rao to be in police custody until Tuesday, United News of India news agency reported. Charges will be pressed later as permitted under Indian laws.

Rao's arrest came a week the Central Bureau of Investigation

recovered about 36 million rupees (dirs 1.01 million) in cash stashed in suitcases, bed sheets and plastic bags from the house of former telecommunications minister, Sukh Ram.

Police also arrested Ram's top aide in the Telecommunications Department who allegedly helped push through controversial deals, ignoring standard government procedures. Police also recovered more than 200,000 rupees (5,5000 dollars) in unaccounted cash from the house of the aide, Runu Ghosh, All three persons have de-

nied any wrongdoing. Ram is in London for a medical checkup and is expected a to return to New Delhi next week; local newspapers reported Sat-

GE to build \$1b gas power station near Riyadh

RIYADH, Aug 25: General Electric of the United States plans to build a 1,300-megawatt gas power station near the Saudi capital at an estimated cost of 1.4 billion dollars, the official SPA news agency reported Saturday, says AFP.

Work on the power station described as one of the largest in the world, is scheduled to be completed by the year 2001, the

news agency said Saudi Arabia has earmarked more than 2.8 billion dollars for investment in electricity generation over the next five

Lego toy building competition held

. A Lego Toy Building Competition among schoolchildren was heldat Toy Park on Sonargaon Road in the city on Saturday, says a press release.

25 students from city's distinguished schools partici-

Matiur Rahman, Managing Director of Eagle Auto Industry Ltd. a unit of Uttara Group of Company, presided over the competition. Ms. Karin Pedersen, Regional Manager of LEGO Overseas A/S Denmark, was the chief guest.

Among others, the meeting was addressed by Mukhlesur Rahman, Chairman, Uttara Group of Company and Waseeana Parvin, Principal,

Scholastica School In her speech Ms. Karin Pedersen emphasised the need for

such competition among the Later she distributed prizes

among the best performers. Ms. Karin Pedersen also made a presentation on "Toy Market Potentials and Lego Toys in Bangladesh" at a city hotel and about 50 toy business

In the presentation she disclosed that Bangladesh has a good market potentials of lego toys which she bolieves will help develop children's creativity, imagination, curiosity and process of learning.

promoters attended.



Eagle Auto Industries Ltd organised the Lego Toy Building competition at Toy Park in the

Turkey unveils defence industry deals

ANKARA, Aug 25: Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan. who completed a tour to five Asian nations yesterday, announced major defence industry accords with Pakistan. Malaysia and Indonesia, says

"Turkey. Pakistan and Indonesia are in agreement to jointly produce military transport aircraft," Erbakan told a news conference. He said the three countries

jointly manufacturing military helicopters; submarines and

would also seek cooperation in

frigates. Erbakan said Turkey would

also sell 700 armoured vehicles

to Pakislan and 400 others to Malaysia under accords reached during his visit.

Erbakan's Asia tour from August 10 to Wednesday covered Iran, Pakistan, Singapore, Malaysia and Indonesia.

Erbakan said Iran could also take place in some of the defence technology deals with the other Muslim Asian states he had visited.

"These countries have a strong defence technology potential," the Prime Minister said, singling out Indonesia which has an indigenous aircraft industry producing military and civilian planes.

Iran-Kazakhstan oil deal inked

TEHRAN, Aug 25: Kazakshtan signed a deal yesterday to export at least two million tonnes of its crude oil through Iran annually, the official news agency IRNA reported, says

Iran will take delivery of the crude at its northern ports on the Caspian Sea and return the same amount to Kazakshtan at Iranian southern ports on the

Tehran will also refine Kazakh oil for domestic consumption, IRNA said.

were dented by a hurricane which halted production in the

But the market had its eyes

turned firmly toward the imminent return of Iraqi crude to the international market.

Gulf of Mexico.

ducer country. London dealers Purchases by American investors increased prices of TSR rubber, which comes largely from Indonesia and Malaysia.

Dealers have shown ever-increasing interest in TSR type rubber because it is more compact and easily transported COCOA: See-saw. Cocoa prices rose to 1,040 pounds per

tonne at the start of the week. before slipping back to 1.020 pounds under the influence of technical trades. There was no fresh information about the size of the cocoa crop in the world's leading producer coun-

cent less cocoa in the 1996/97 season than during 95-96.

GNI predicted that the harvest would come in at about 850,000 to 900,000 tonnes. Heavy rains in July did not seem to have damaged the crop. COFFEE: Lift. Robust prices

week.

The market continued to react to the low stocks of raw coffee held in New York waretightening of supply for the months ahead.

signments of Assam tea to hit the London market this season were snapped up by traders in the auction houses here.

SUGAR: Sticky. Sugar prices stuck around the relatively high level of 345 dollars per tonne under the

effect of technical trades, GNI

Given the small volume of trades, each large transaction had a visible impact on prices. the trading house added.

VEGETABLE OILS: Tense. The market remained under pressure in the face of uncer tainty over the size of the forthcoming soya crop in the United States. On the Rotterdam market soya oil prices fell by about one guilder to 94 guilders per hundred kilos.

PALM OIL: Rise. Prices rose by 17.5 dollars to 535 dollars per tonne, on the wings of speculative purchases on the Kuala Lumpur market, which is the centre of trade in this oil around the world. Despite signs that the world's leading palm oil producer. Malaysia, would step up production this year, hopes that India, Pakistan and China would buy large quantities of the oil lifted prices.

SUNFLOWER OIL Fall Fell by 20 dollars to 580 dollars per tonne and rapseed oil held firm at 95 guilder per hundred

increased grain prices last week, the threat of infected cereals sent cold shivers through the market this week

fears of a poor maize harvest

On the Chicago Board of Trade (CBOT) wheat prices fell by seven cents to 4.50 dollars per bushel (of 27.216 kg for delivery in September). In London, wheat prices held at about 107 pounds per tonne.

COTTON: Shrinkage. A bumper harvest in Pakistan, which is one of the leading cotton producers in the world,

dented prices this week A viral infection which ravaged some of the country's cotton bushes did not deplete yields and the harvest looked set to exceed the record year of

The cotton outlook index which covers the cash market fell by three cents to 74 cents

tish wool index, which covers high grade wool, rose by six pence to 423 pence per kilo and Australia's eastern index rose by two Australian cents to 614 cents per kilo under the effect of increased demand.

returns to Chinese sovereignty To secure financial stability tinue to be pegged to the US dollar and China's debt and credit relations with Hong Kong will be the same as with any other country. People's Bank of China

China Daily yesterday We will make every effort to

1997." Chen said. "Anything that might risk its stability or harm its interest will be prohibited. We do this because it is ear historic to i.

Chen reiterated that the central bank would never. "under any circumstances." draw on primarily used to adjust the local currency's exchange rate.

tral bank will provide cash to Chen also stressed that the mainland would not receive

delate to Hong Kang creditors as before. Meanwhile, the Bank of China (BOC) - the country's main foreign exchange bank -"will not exercise any prerogative or enjoy any privileged treatment that would be unsuit-Chen said, while adding that

central bank chief believes invious officials projections, the state-run China Dally reported Saturday, reports AP. The prediction, made Friday by People's Bank of China gov-

ernor Dai Xianglong, was two the government's target, set in March, and one percentage point lower than an estimate he seminar on reforms in China's reach 100 billion dollars by

MASERU, Aug 25: After decades of apartheid, civil wars and regional strife, southern African leaders signed an historic agreement Saturday to

The pact is the first is of its kind under new regulations laid down by the world trade organisation, diplomatic sources said. South African President Nelson Mandela said here in Lesotho's capital that 10 of the 12 Southern African Develop-

While Mandela did not name the two countries that did not sign, diplomatic sources said

off its recent sluggishness and

abuzz with buyers this week, re-

consignments of Assam blends.

among the most highly prized

Indian teas, as soon as they ar-

* rived from the Indian sub-con-

Drinkers snapped up fresh

The high quality of this

The former eastern bloc also

gave the market some cause for

celebration. Russia and other

East European countries whose

economies have shown signs of

revival after the collapse of the

Berlin Wall have increase im-

oil prices clung to recent highs.

Among other commodities.

year's crop in part explained

the frenzied buying, as did

undying consumption in

Britain, where the drink re-

mains the most coveted brew.

ports AFP.

tinent.

ports of tea.

LONDON, Aug 25: Britain's silver prices encouraged dealers favourite pick-me-up, tea, to start buying gold. The price of which is enjoyed by little old the metal gained a dollar to 387 ladies and builders alike, cast

dollars per ounce. SILVER; Shining. Silver the London auction houses were shone brightly this week, after investors launched a wave of speculative buying on the New York market on Monday. Over the week, silver prices rose by 15 cents to 5.20 dollars per

> COPPER: Calm. Threemonth copper prices fluctuated modestly this week on the London Metal Exchange (LME), ending some 15 dollars lower at 1,935 dollars per tonne. Some dealers are warning of a price meltdown scenario later this year as supplies flood the mar-

GNI trading house pointed to "big concern" that China may be about to inundate the market. with 100,000-150,000 tonnes of copper it has accumulated in recent months. It also predicted that the linked to cooper's decline. But analysts said that lead prices were likely to rally soon, as demand for new car batteries

- the main use for the metal -

LME reserves rose by 1,075 tonnes to 102,775 tonnes. ZINC: Falle Prices fell by about 100 dollars to 1,025 dollars per tonne as investors eschewed the market. But brokerage house Paribas capital markets said the prices outlook re-

begins to take off.

mained "excellent".

Although the market was weighed down by the continued high level of stocks (down 6.850 tonnes to 561,125 tonnes) demand was now picking up in the US; and continued to be verystrong in Asia, the finance house said.

about 1,480 dollars per tonne. LME reserves rose by 8.175 tonnes to 932,250 tonnes this The announcement by the

ALUMINIUM: Fall. Weighed

down by the burgeoning levels

of aluminium stocks, prices fell

by 20 dollars to end the week at

50,600 tonnes per day failed to provide any cheer. NICKEL: Rise. After a decline in prices last week. nickel, used mainly to make

unchanged in July from June at

stainless steel, rose by 150 dollars to 7,050 dollars per tonne, thanks to strong industrial buying. LME stocks increased by 342 tonnes to 35,478 tonnes. TIN: Stable. Tin prices re-

per tonne.

Chinese tin exports have been growing strongly, GNI trading house said. Added to the big output expansion planned in Indonesia, Brazil and Peru, it is unlikely that consumption can grow as fast as supply, which could provoke a collapse in prices, GNI said. LME reserves rose by 105 tonnes to 10,745 tonnes.

mained steady at 6,160 dollars

barrel. A number of factors con-

OIL: Burning. Technical

trades drove brent North Sea oil

prices up to 20.8 dollars per

In general, prices remained high as dealer expected the country to harvest 10 to 15 per

the London trading house said. cast off recent bitterness and rose to their highest level since the beginning of July at 1,700 dollars per tonne, about 40 dol-

TEA: Ecstasy. The first con-

pence per kilo commanded the exceptional price of 299 perice per kilo.

per pound. WOOL: Warming. The Bri-

day said the main task of the

"Commerce Ministry should have to play pioneering role in

of the ministry. The political government cerned, including officials and successful implementation of these policies is the prime responsibility of the servants of the republic", he said.

, He said political stability and normalcy in law and order were imperative for overall dealthough Awami League bagged the majority seats in the last election, he added.

The minister asked the chief executives of the organisations to take necessary steps to accelerate the activities of the organizations for greater interest of the nation. He arged the offcials to discharge their duties with honesty, sincerity and

were discussed in the meeting.

Commerce Secretary Syed Alamgir Faroog Chowdhury also spoke on the occasion.

Delay in IMF team's visit blocks release of funds to Pakistan

was immediately available from government officials. The report said IMF Middle East Director Paul Chabrier had informed Islamabad about the postponement, without indicating a new date for the mission's visit to Pakistan. .

"they indicate to us that they are in a position to implement a credible, comprehensive and decisive policy package. Financial and government. sources here said snags in negotiations on the release of the standby funds followed changes

He said in a letter the IMF

looked forward to discussions

with government officials once

made by the government to its 1996-97 budget after it came into effect on July." The government agreed to adjust some taxes in response to post-budget protests from some

gap between the government and the IMF, the news report said, adding the IMF had insisted on implementation of macro-economic reform to remedy economic ills. Prime Minister Benazir

> in release of the IMF credit would not lead to a "crisis. The changes to the budget would mean reducing revenue targets, but reforms introduced in agreement with the IMF would in "no case be tampered with," he told The Dawn newspaper in an interview published

Bhutto's Adviser on Finance, V

A Jafarey, earlier said the delay

last Monday. Pakistan's 500 billion rupee (14.2 billion dollars) budget showed a deficit of around 200 billion rupees (5.7 billion dollars) which was to be met through new taxation, bank borrowing and external assis-



AQ Siddiqui, Managing Director of Sonali Bank, visited different sections of Sharifa Printers & Packagers (Pvt) Ltd, financed by the bank, in Khulna yesterday. The bank's General Manager for Khulna Abdul Jalil Joarder and the entrepreneur were also present.

The accord was signed in Almaty between an Iranian oil delegation and Kazak officials,

Bank.

Commodity market: Prices of gold, silver, tearise while lead, rubber fall

RUBBER: Tumble. The price of RSS latex, which comes mainly from Thatland, fell by 15 pounds to 867 5 per tonne because of huge stocks in the pro-

than the RSS variety.

lars more than at the end of last houses and to an uncomfortable

The price of medium quality teas rose by two pence to 102 High grade tea from Burundí

kilos

GRAINS: Jumping. After

1991/92.

market "could collapse in the despite the threat of an imminent return of Iraqi crude to the tributed to firmer prices in the near future," as a result of burinternational market place. geoning production worldwide. United States. The closure of try, Ivory Coast. GOLD: Sparkle. The preci-LEAD: Falf. Lead prices fell international primary afuone refinery after a fire broke ous metal regained a little by seven dollars to 817 dollars out there hit supply of refined minium institute that daily avsparkle this week, as a rally in per tonne, for technical reasons products and crude supplies erage primary production was