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The Daily Star BUSINESS

DHAKA THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 4, 1997



HYUNDAI
CARS THAT MAKE SENSE

Export promoter of UK due tomorrow

David J Burton, the first export promoter of UK Department of Trade Industry (DTI) for the Bangladesh market, arrives here tomorrow (Friday) on a week-long official visit, reports UNB.

During his official visit to Bangladesh, Burton will spend the week in both Dhaka and Chittagong. He will also call on senior officials of various ministries and public and private sector industries.

Export promoters are generally seconded from British industry to DTI for two years. Nearly all have responsibility for a particular country or region. Some specialise in one or more market sectors while others promote UK exports generally.

In bringing their experience, knowledge and expertise from industry they add an extra dimension to DTI's Overseas Trade Services which provides comprehensive help and advice for UK exporters.

Burton, a qualified mechanical engineer and a banker, joined the Department in mid-1996 to encourage exports, specially to Bangladesh and Sri Lanka.

He has expert knowledge of these markets, having recently been responsible for the marketing and supply of capital equipment, services and spare parts to both countries as Director of Refensa Ltd.

His priority market sector for Bangladesh are commercial, industrial and construction vehicles, plant and equipment, ports, railways and power generation.

Taiwan cracks down on TV manipulating on stocks

TAIPEI, Taiwan, Sept 4: Taiwan announced Monday it will investigate TV share tipsters who cash in on a stock by talking up its price, says AP.

The crackdown coincides with the Taiwan bourse's entry into the Morgan Stanley Emerging Fund Indexes, a major world indicator, which is expected to attract more foreign investment in the local market.

Finance Minister Chiu Cheng-hsiung said authorities will investigate station bosses and television anchors suspected of manipulating share prices.

At least 20 programmes tell audiences of "promising shares" which they are urged to buy. The shares are often in companies close to bankruptcy, and the TV tipsters, having bought the shares cheap, then sell them at a profit.

Chiu said the public is hurt because 90 per cent of trading on the largely closed bourse is done by housewives, company workers and other small investors.

China plans to build world's tallest building

BEIJING, Sept 4: China plans to have the world's tallest building by 1998, reports AP.

A 1,499-foot (450-meter), 100-story building in Chongqing in southwestern China will claim the record, now held by the 1,463-foot (445-meter) Petronas Towers office complex in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, the state-run Xinhua News Agency reported.

But the Chongqing complex will have a short turn holding the world record. Work is to start soon on what is planned to be an even taller building — 140 stories — in the southern city of Guangzhou, Xinhua said. It did not give the exact height.

A news agency report in New York last month said developer Donald Trump is proposing to build the world's tallest office building — a 140-story, 1,792-foot-high (538-meter) New York Stock Exchange tower.

Canada grants Tk 44 cr for landless Bangladeshis

Canada will provide a grant of 14.881 million Canadian dollar (approximately Tk 43.50 crore) to help the rural landless people of Bangladesh for alleviation of poverty through self-employment, reports UNB. A Memorandum of Understanding to this effect was signed here yesterday between the two governments for financing the Rural Bittaheng (landless) Institution Programme.

Besides the Canadian grant, Bangladesh government will also provide Tk 45 crore for the project which will be implemented during July 1996 to June 1999.

Economic Relations Division (ERD) Secretary Dr AKM Masihur Rahman and acting Canadian High Commissioner

in Dhaka Dr John Deyell signed the MOU on behalf of their respective governments. The main objective of the project is to transform Rural Development (RD)-12 project into a new autonomous institution, namely Palli Bittaheng (rural landless) Institution, to strengthen the activities of poverty alleviation programme in 139 thanas of 17 districts in Bangladesh.

Some 5,00,000 landless members will receive financial services for their income generation activities, thereby eliminating poverty through self-employment.

The new programme seeks to create a new autonomous institution to address the needs of the rural landless in credit and savings management, mobilisation and social development.

It also seeks to create a positive environment for small landless entrepreneurs to contribute to their individual and family well-being, enterprise stability and growth as well as economic development of their communities.

RD-12, one of the government's largest poverty alleviation programmes, was developed and implemented by Bangladesh Rural Development Board (BRDB) in cooperation with the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA).

This is one of Canada's largest bilateral aid programmes in the world. It has consisted of training, credit facilities, technical assistance, support to BRDB project staff, equipment and supplies, monitoring and evaluation.

Rio Group summit in Bolivia to discuss econ development

COCHABAMBA, Bolivia, Sept 4: Eleven Latin American heads of state arrived in Bolivia Monday for the Rio Group summit, where they will seek greater regional cooperation in economic development and the war on drugs and corruption, reports AP.

The summit begins Tuesday in this colonial city 450 kilometers (280 miles) east of La Paz. Bolivia heads the Rio Group this year.

The Bolivian National Secretary of Foreign Affairs, Jaime Aparicio, said drug trafficking and corruption are among the problems that will be addressed.

The Bolivian and Brazilian presidents are scheduled to sign a historic agreement Wednesday that will begin the construction of a 1.8 billion dollar natural gas pipeline between Santa Cruz, Bolivia and Sao Paulo, Brazil.

The Rio Group was formed in 1986 to strengthen democratic processes through greater political and economic integration between Caribbean and Latin American nations.

Attending the summit are the presidents of: Argentina, Carlos Menem; Bolivia, Gonzalo Sanchez de Lozada; Brazil, Fernando Henrique Cardoso; Colombia, Ernesto Samper; Chile, Eduardo Frei; Ecuador, Abdala Bucaram; Mexico, Ernesto Zedillo; Panama, Ernesto Perez Balladarez; Paraguay, Juan Carlos Wasmosy; Peru, Alberto Fujimori and Venezuela, Rafael Caldera.

Also attending as an observer is the Secretary General of the Organization of American States, Cesar Gaviria, and United States United Nations envoy Madeleine Albright.

The Caribbean is represented at the summit by the Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago, Basdeo Panday.

UN Ambassador Albright is expected to meet with Latin American foreign ministers to discuss the UN position on the re-election of UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali. The United States opposes Boutros-Ghali's re-election.

McDonnell Douglas said the aircraft would be flown into India in a couple of weeks for the demonstration flights.

"We are thrilled to be bringing an MD-90 to India. It is a great aircraft that will impress many people," Vice-President Donald Black said.

McDonnell Douglas said the India stop-over was part of a demonstration tour which also included visits to the Farnborough air show in England and to Turkey before the aircraft was delivered to China northern airlines.

"The MD-90 is powered by two V2500 turbofans which, combined with the aircraft design, help make the jetliner the quietest commercial aircraft in the skies," said the statement.

"In addition, the aircraft is designed to be more fuel efficient while reducing emission levels to well below international standards."

Polio eradication Dhaka to get Tk 16 cr grant from Tokyo

Bangladesh will receive from Japan a grant assistance of 446 million yen, equivalent to about Taka 16 crore, for the eradication of polio, reports UNB.

An Exchange of Note to this effect was signed here yesterday between the two governments to meet the partial expenditure of the National Immunisation Day 1996-97.

Economic Relations Division (ERD) secretary Dr AKM Masihur Rahman and Japanese Ambassador in Dhaka Yoshikazu Kaneko signed the note for their respective governments.

The grant money will be spent to procure some 28 million doses of polio vaccine for

Bangladesh's next National Immunisation Days, expected to be held on December 8 in 1996 and January 8, 1997.

Polio eradication through national immunisation day is an integral part of the Expanded Programme on Immunisation (EPI).

The grant will be executed by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare. Vaccine and equipment will be procured from the UNICEF.

This grant will cover some 60 per cent of all polio vaccines plus cold boxes required to immunise some 20 million children under five years. UNICEF, WHO, USAID and Rotary International assist the government in polio eradication programme.

MD 90 to get foothold in Indian market soon

BOMBAY, Sept 4: United States-based aircraft manufacturer McDonnell Douglas said on Monday it would showcase its MD-90 jetliner in India in an effort to get a foothold in the market, reports APF.

The company, following in the paths of rivals Boeing Co. and Airbus Industries, announced it would show the plane, which it claims is the quietest in the world, in Bombay and New Delhi.

The MD-90 is an advanced mid-size, medium-range twin jet aircraft, that can seat 153 passengers and is the quietest commercial aircraft in the world and the cleanest in its class environmentally, said a company statement issued here.

The company is also currently trying to sell its 300-seater M-11 to Air India.

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A company public relations consultant said the MD-90 entered commercial service in 1992 and about 100 jetliners were being operated by various airlines.

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BOI, Privatisation Board being revitalised: Tofael

Commerce and Industries Minister Tofael Ahmed Tuesday said the Board of Investment and Privatisation Board were being revitalised to accelerate the industrialisation process and attract investment, reports BSS.

All bottlenecks in the way of investment would be removed so that the foreign entrepreneurs can invest easily, he told Philip Tose, Chairman of Peregrine Investment Holding Ltd, a Hong Kong-based firm, when he called on the minister at his office in the city.

The minister said the government has passed a bill allowing private companies to establish Export Processing Zones (EPZs) to encourage export-oriented industries in the country. He said Korea has already placed a proposal to establish a private EPZ on over 2000 acres of land in Chittagong, and Japan has also shown interest in this regard.

Tofael said another 214 acres of land was acquired for the extension of Savar EPZ and related work including land development would be completed within the next month. He said another EPZ at Joydevpur on 500 acres of land would be established within a year.

The minister sought cooperation of the Peregrine Company in privatisation and industrialisation process.

The Peregrine chief expressed willingness of his company to help Bangladesh government in privatisation and showed interest to invest in power generation and industrial sector.

Chairman of Peregrine Group Philip Tose also called on Minister for Energy and Mineral Resources Lt General (ret'd) Muhammad Noor Uddin Khan and Shipping Minister A S M Abdur Rob at their offices yesterday.



Dr Sadat Hossain, Chairman, National Board of Revenue, inaugurated the discussion meeting organised by the Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Dhaka with the representatives of the nine sectors, where VAT has been extended up to the retail level, at the Chamber building on Tuesday. Samson H Chowdhury, president, MCC&I, S I Khan, member (VAT), NBR, and Latifur Rahman, former president, MCC&I are also seen in the picture.

Tea prices fall at Ctg auction

CHITTAGONG, Sept 4: The weekly tea sale that held here on Tuesday witnessed a good demand but at easier rates, said markets sources, reports UNB.

Prices were generally declined due to less activity both from the export and internal buyers.

Poland and Russia supported bold and large brokers at firm rates while Pakistan, Afghanistan, Sudan and Jordan operated for medium brokers and fannings.

Dust market witnessed an easier trend as well.

CTC Brokers: Bold brokers were absorbed at firm to slightly dearer rates with the progress of sale but large brokers were generally slightly

lower. Medium brokers fetched a good market but generally prices declined by Taka 2 to Taka 2.50.

Smaller Brokers attracted more interest but also eased generally upto Taka 2 to Taka 2.50.

Popular types also eased slightly and were sold between Taka 48 and Taka 50.20.

CTC FANNINGS: There was a fairly good demand for all fannings but at easier rates declining by up to Taka 3 per kg. But the clean good liquoring types generally eased by Taka 2 to Taka 2.50 following competition.

Popular varieties were also easier and sold between Taka 48.50 and Taka 51.50.

Green Tea: Some 120 chests on offer met with much less interest. Grades were withdrawn owing to lack of suitable interest. Only one line of FYH sold at Taka 60.

DUST CATALOGUE: A total of 3,431 chests, 764 gunny sacks, 166 bags and two chests of old season on offer met with a fair demand.

All grades eased by Taka 2, and more following market competition. Internal buyers including blenders lent a fair support.

There were in total 24,978 chests. Some 70 gunny sacks and 72 chests of old season were offered for auction.

The next sale will be held on September 10.

Mozambique set to lose label as world's poorest country

MAPUTO, Sept 4: Mozambique will soon shrug off its label as the poorest nation on earth, says the World Bank's representative in the country, Roberto Chavez, reports APF.

He bases his optimistic forecast on a combination of peace after a long civil war, good harvests after killer droughts, and efforts by the formerly-Marxist government to create a free market economy.

"The reason we have Mozambique in some of our reports catalogued as the world's poorest country is because the statistical indicators showed GDP per capita being 80 dollars," Chavez told AFP in an interview in Maputo.

"We are in the process of revising this GDP per capita and in fact we think it is probably quite a bit higher, probably more in the range of 120 dollars or so."

He says the big jump, which

would still leave this former Portuguese colony among the poorest nations, is partly through getting the statistics right and definitely a result of change and development.

"Mozambique is one of the few countries that have gone successfully from war to peace, then to fairly democratic elections, and of course the challenge now is to get the economy back on its feet."

Chavez says that while World Bank-backed economic reforms have played a role in Mozambique's revival through the privatisation of moribund state companies and price liberalisation, "to be fair I think a great deal of this dramatic recovery in the economy is simply a result of the end of the war."

The government began an economic reform programme in 1988, formally dropped Marx-

ism in 1989 and signed a peace agreement with the rebel Mozambique national resistance (Renamo) in 1992 after more than a decade of civil war.

The war left the country devastated, with 70 per cent of the primary school network closed down, 60 per cent of the population of 15 million without access to any health services and roads and bridges destroyed.

The end of conflict and democratic elections in 1994 saw more than 1.7 million refugees return from neighbouring countries and another 3.2 million internally displaced people return to their homes, immediately boosting agricultural production in this fertile land.

But in a country dependent for years on international assistance, aid flows account for over half of GDP and about two-thirds of the government budget.

New Chairman of Agrani Bank

H T Imam, first Cabinet Secretary of Bangladesh and freedom fighter, has joined Agrani Bank as Chairman of the Board of Directors, says a press release.

Imam, an economist, management specialist and institutional and human resource development expert, born in January, 1939.

He obtained masters in Economics with honours and also earned a post graduate diploma in "development administration" from London School of Economics in the year 1966.

As the first Cabinet Secretary Imam was directly involved in the reorganisation of the ministries, divisions, departments and corporations, setting up institutions like the Planning Commission, National Economic Council and his Executive Committee and held responsible for rehabilitating a war-ravaged country in preparing of policies and strategies for development.

He played a vital role in establishing and operating State owned banks.

Economic study report Serious economic difficulties pose threat to Pacific growth

MAJURO, Sept 4: Lagging economic growth and rapidly increasing populations are posing a serious threat to Pacific island living standards, a major economic study of the region released here yesterday concludes, says APF.

"Although poverty in the Pacific cannot be compared with levels found in some other parts of the developing world, nevertheless there is mounting evidence that poverty, inequality and vulnerability are increasing in Pacific islands, particularly in urban areas, the report said.

The economic policy overview was prepared by the South Pacific Forum Secretariat for the summit of leaders of 14 forum island countries plus Australia and New Zealand opening here this week.

It called for a series of major

structural reforms in the 14 island.

The island nations are experiencing serious economic difficulties with at best modest growth rates which are not expected to improve in the short term.

Governments are being forced to sharply reduce spending as aid is cut back and foreign direct investment fails to materialise, the report said.

Aid to Pacific island nations had declined two per cent in real terms over the 1983-1993 period although by international standards it remained extremely high, the report said.

In 1987-1988, aid accounted for an average of more than 40 per cent of gross national product in Pacific island nations but had declined to 24.3 per cent by 1992-93.

The report said the World Bank was projecting growth

from about 4 per cent planned for this year. It is based on a monthly inflation rate of 0.8 per cent.

The government expects to increase revenues to 15.7 per cent of GDP in 1997, up from 12.2 per cent this year, by slashing tax exemptions and cracking down on tax evasion.

Revenues in 1996, however, have been running far below targets, causing the International Monetary Fund to delay release of July's loan tranche.

Government advisers insist that the 1997 budget is realistic, despite the poor performance this year.

Russia is expecting 3.2 billion dollars in credit from the IMF in 1997.

Icelanders hope to restart whale business

REYKJAVIK, Iceland, Sept 4: Ulfar Eysteinnsson lifts a huge block of jiggling pink meat onto a cutting board, delicately slices a thin piece — then with great gusto plops the raw whale into his mouth, reports AP.

"We are trying to eat the best things the Earth can give us," Eysteinnsson said. "It's very tender. You cannot find the counterpart of the beef so tender."

Despite the fresh flavor, Eysteinnsson says the meat has been frozen since 1989 — the last year when Iceland permitted whaling for scientific purposes. But that could change in coming months as Iceland's parliament decides whether to resume whaling, despite risks of economic sanctions from countries opposed to whaling.

Eysteinnsson grew up near a now-idle whale processing plant in Hafnarfjordur, and says he's doing his part to help Icelanders stay ready for the day when the whalers get back in business.

Years ago, he cut a mammoth deal with the wholesaler. He bought about 7 tons of meat, and he has about 3 frozen tons

left. "It's for people not to forget the taste," Eysteinnsson said.

But changes in Iceland's whaling policy could be near.

The fisheries minister, Thorsteinn Pálsson, plans this fall to present Iceland's parliament, the Althing, with a proposal for resumed whaling. Although the details have yet to be worked out, the idea is likely to be warmly received by lawmakers.

"It's a question of when and not if, said Ari Edwald, a special assistant to the minister. "I believe and certainly hope in the future we will have the opportunity to start whaling."

It would be tricky. Although Iceland dropped out of the international Whaling Commission in 1992 and can ignore its ban on whaling, any resumption of whaling carries the risks of economic sanctions from the United States and other countries which have taken a strong anti-whaling stance.

Iceland could conceivably follow the lead of Norway, which resumed whaling in 1993

and cut it in little pieces. Despite the ban, whale meat is not hard to find in Reykjavik.

Many Icelanders say with a nod and a wink that whale ends up on the market due to "accidents," such as small ones landing in fishing nets. Some retailers put up special signs to show they have whale for sale.

At one neighborhood "fishbudin," or fish market, a visitor asked for whale. The proprietor promptly pulled out a small darkish slab from the freezer — at 490 kronur a kilogram (about dls 3.32 per pound — nearly half a kilo).

That's four or five times the price Gier Luduksson paid when the whalers were still in business. His wife, Gudrun Bjardottir, used to soak the whale meat in milk, and Luduksson would fry it in a pan with onions.

They want the whalers back at sea.

"It's only a matter of politics," Luduksson said, while out on an evening walk on the dock, next to the old whaling boats. "Everybody's ready."

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Singapore on \$5.35b target of fixed-asset investment

SINGAPORE, Sept 4: Singapore is on target to achieve its goal of drawing 7.5 billion Singapore dollars (5.35 billion US dollars) in fixed-asset investments this year, Economic Development Board (EDB) Chairman Philip Yeo said yesterday, reports APF.

Yeo, speaking at a news conference, expressed determination to achieve his goal of hitting average annual investments of 10 billion dollars over the next decade in order to constantly update Singapore's industrial base.

"At today's technology, the assets depreciate faster," he said.

Fixed-asset investments totalled 3.84 billion dollars in the first half of this year, 38 per cent higher than the same period in 1995, Yeo said.

The total for all of 1995 was a record 6.8 billion dollars. "I think the job for Singapore is going to get tougher every year," Yeo said, citing competition for foreign investment from such emerging and lower-cost locations as China, Vietnam, Indonesia and the Philippines.

Yeo also remained bullish about key industries like electronics and chemicals where the EDB is investing money.

The EDB has the dual role of attracting private investment and putting its own funds into starting up strategic industries, serving as a magnet for private investment and then pulling out when the firms have established themselves.

The EDB currently administers a 1.3-billion-dollar fund, including venture capital, for co-investment programmes with multinational and Singapore companies on local and foreign projects.

The EDB has so far poured a cumulative total of 360 million

dollars into 13 projects under the co-investment scheme, compared to 225 million into 13 projects under the co-investment scheme, compared to 225 million dollars at the end of 1995, an EDB statement said.

Six more projects requiring very high capital inputs, mostly in chemicals and electronics, are currently under discussion and should be finalised in the next six-to-nine months, Yeo said.

Yeo remained bullish about electronics, which accounts for more than half of Singapore's manufacturing output, despite the current slump resulting from excess inventories and weak demand, particularly in the crucial US market.

He said a recovery was expected to start in the fourth quarter with a projected surge in computer demand during the Christmas holidays.

Japan, Thailand to carry out new telecom experiments

TOKYO, Sept 4: Japan and Thailand will jointly carry out experiments on new telecommunications services, including a remote medicare system by satellite, a newspaper said yesterday, reports APF.

The two governments are to sign an accord on the project on September 10, the Asahi Shimbun said, quoting officials of Japan's Posts and Telecommunications Ministry.

Japan plans to ask other Asian countries, including Indonesia and Malaysia, to join the project as early as October, the