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DHAKA, TUESDAY, DECEMBER 10, 1996

Oil talks end in Goa

Emerging economies urged to end barriers to energy investment

GOA, India, Dec 9: Oil consuming and producing countries wrapped up three days of talks on Sunday with calls for energy-hungry emerging economies to help themselves by dismantling barriers to energy investment and trade, reports Reuter.

All sides endorsed the need for stable prices, but any unfashionable talk of intervention in the market remained vague and out of tune with the prevailing laissez-faire philosophy.

And they remained divided over how to protect the environment without hampering economic growth.

Oil-thirsty Asia was in the spotlight at the gathering, the fifth such meeting since the 1991 Gulf War oil price scare.

Crude oil prices are bubbling close to six year highs, cheering producers but leaving emerging economies sick over widening trade and budget deficits.

Rising energy import bills have severely hit countries like India, creating a difficult choice of whether to pass international price increases on to their consumers.

This is a dilemma for the

entire developing world." Indian Foreign Minister Inder Gujral said.

But he added volatile prices can also cause headaches for producers, who are unsure when to invest or how much.

Two of the world's biggest oil exporters, Saudi Arabia and Iran, said supplies were assured for some time — if buyers can guarantee — the right investment climate and market access.

"Countries such as Japan, China, Korea, Malaysia, Taiwan, India, Pakistan and Thailand should note that they may enjoy security of supply from the Persian Gulf if they provide us with security of demand," Iran Oil Minister Gholamreza Aghazadeh said.

"Asia should strive to eliminate trade barriers with the Persian Gulf."

Western consumers told their Asian counterparts they could only ensure supply security by opening markets of free competition and allowing more foreign investment in their energy sectors.

"As regards security of supply Asia can do a lot to help itself," said Britain's Junior Trade Minister Lord Fraser.

Those countries which retain state controls can give more freedom to the developing and strengthening of the market mechanism.

Consumers want stable, lower prices, but producers are happy with crude now at 24.50 dollar for benchmark North Sea Brent.

"If the prices are not right the investment will not flow," said Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) Secretary-General Rihwanu Lukman.

Ultimately you will end up with very low supplies and high demand and therefore prices will shoot up, 30-40 dollars a barrel, and that would be even worse for countries like India."

While cheap new methods of extracting crude ensure world reserves won't run dry any time soon, concerns remain over the huge finances needed to bring new oil and gas fields on stream.

The International Energy Agency (IEA) has estimated the

cost of meeting the expected rise in world oil and gas demand by 2010 at 1.7 trillion dollar, or 120 billion dollar a year.

Oil products also took a swipe at high taxes levied on petroleum products by industrialised consumers, warning against stifling investment for bringing on stream future supplies.

Delegates agreed on the need to develop reserves of cleaner-burning natural gas. However, while abundant, it is far tougher to transport than oil and involves massive expenditures.

Delegates also agreed to meet again next year in South Africa and to consider the formation of a world energy organisation to collect data on demand and production and possibly coordinate a more unified global energy policy.

Norway's new Energy Minister Grete Faremo called for future talks to focus on how to combat global warming.

Concern over environmental damage from a rapid rise in fossil fuel use left OPEC producers and developing nations unmoved.

Leather goods fair today

A three-day 'Leather Goods Fair' begins at the Dhaka Chamber auditorium at 10 this morning, says UNB.

Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry (DCCI) in cooperation with German Technical Cooperation (GTZ) and German Confederation of Small Business and Skilled Crafts (ZDH) will organise the fair to boost leather goods export.

German Ambassador in Dhaka Bruno Weber is expected to inaugurate the fair as chief guest, said a press release Sunday.

DCCI Acting President Fazle RM Hasan will preside over the inaugural function while Vice-Chairman of the Export Promotion Bureau, Faisal Ahmed Chowdhury will attend it as special guest.

Twentyfive reputed firms will display their products in the fair, the release added.

Dragonair, Cathay extend through check-in service to Hiroshima

Dragonair has extended the through check-in service with Cathay Pacific Airways to Hiroshima, says a press release.

This is effective from Nov 7. Dragonair passengers departing from Hiroshima to Hong Kong and travelling on the same day to other Dragonair or Cathay Pacific Airways destinations will be able to obtain the boarding pass for their onward flight at Hiroshima airport.

This Through check-in service is already provided by Dragonair and Cathay Pacific Airways in Beijing, Dalian, Hangzhou, Kunming, Shanghai, Xiamen, Kota Kinabalu and Kaohsiung.

Dragonair also provides this convenient service to passengers flying onward with CAAC, Lufthansa, Alitalia, Air France and China Airlines.

Prime Textile officials complete foreign training

Two senior officials of the Prime Textile Spinning Mills Ltd, Alhaj Monzur Elahi and S S K Goswami have returned from UK after receiving higher training on recent management techniques, says a press release.

The training was organised under the auspices of ODA, a British Government-funded executive development programme.

Rice prices fall, winter vegetables still dear

By Govinda Shil

Prices of rice have declined in the retail market during the past one month, but seasonal vegetables are still dear despite steady downward trend in their prices with winter supplies pouring into the bazaars.

Nazirsail, one of the fine quality varieties of rice, is now being sold at Taka 15 to 16 per kg while its price was between Taka 17 and 19 just 15 months ago.

Pajam, another moderate quality rice, is being sold at Taka 12 to 14 while the price of coarse 'IRRI' rice is between Taka 11 and 12. Pajam was sold at Taka 15.50 to 16 one month back. The price of IRRI was also higher by at least Taka two one month back.

However, the prices of flour and 'ata' are still high in the market, fluctuating between Taka 16 and 18 per kg.

The prices of 'masur' pulses which are being imported from Nepal and India fluctuate between Taka 36 and Taka 48. The local 'masur' is costlier, and the price varies from Taka 50 to 52 per kg. The price of 'chik-pea' (chholai) varies from Taka 24 to 28, retailers said.

Although the winter vegetables are available in the markets but their prices are high. One kg of local tomato is being

sold in between Taka 36 and 40. The price of imported tomato which is available at Taka 40 to 50 few months back, is still maintaining a 'high' price. Meanwhile, the price of zinger has declined from Taka 50 to about 36 within one and a half month, retailers noted.

The price of egg which fluctuates frequently is now varying from Taka 12 to 15 for a haail. The price of sugar, another important consumer goods for the city dwellers, declined slightly from Taka 36/38 to 32/34 within two months.

The prices of edible oil, mainly, soyabean oil (locally tinned or packed), fluctuate between Taka 55 to 60 for one litre. However, imported packed-oil is being sold at more than 60 taka per litre.

The prices of seasonal potatoes (new potato) vary from Taka 15 to 18 per kg.

A medium-sized cauliflower is sold at Taka 8 in Karwan-bazar while it is taka 12 at Hatirpool. The price of 'chabage' (Bandhacop) also varies between Taka five to eight.

The prices of new garlic varies between Taka 12 and 14 per kg while the old garlic is being sold at Taka 16 to 18. The price of onion is racing between Taka 36 and 40, sellers

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Keynote speaker observes

SAPTA failed in achievements due to political reasons

CHITTAGONG, Dec 9: The South Asia Preferential Trade Arrangement (SAPTA) which came into being on Dec 8, 1995, failed to attain significant achievements during the past one year due to political and psychological reasons of the SAARC countries. However, it is hoped that it would progress gradually, reports BSS.

Prof Abdul Mannan, Vice-Chancellor of Chittagong University, said this while presenting a keynote paper in a seminar on 'South Asia Free Trade Area in Bangladesh Perspective' at chamber house here yesterday.

The vice-chancellor traced the history and said, before 1947, huge quantities of commodities used to be exported, from this sub-continent, the war ships were used to be built at Sandwip for the Roman emperors and as such gold and silver were exported from Chittagong.

Prof Mannan said following the disintegration of the Soviet

Union different regional trade blocks sprang up in the world and SAPTA came into being with the objective of trade cooperation among SAARC countries.

Bangladesh, Bhutan, Maldives and Nepal have been identified as least developing countries in the block, Prof Mannan said.

Citing statistics, Prof Mannan said the total export of the SAARC countries was only one per cent while the import was less than 1.25 per cent in comparison to the global export-import extent. The volume of trade should be increased in the SAARC countries for mutual economic benefits of the region, he said.

The export figure of the country came down to 2.2 per cent in 1994 from 6.1 in 1986, however, the total export of the country to the SAARC countries rose to 14.8 in 1994 due to increased export of garments, Prof Mannan said.

US lauds Bangladesh child labour MOU at UN

UNITED NATIONS, New York, Dec 9: A US delegate to the United Nations, speaking about the promotion and protection of the rights of the child, said the Memorandum of Understanding between the Bangladesh Garments Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA), the International Labour Organisation (ILO), and UNICEF to end child labour in Bangladesh's garment factories is one of the "advances in the battle against child labour," according to UNIS.

Delegate Prezel Washington recently told the UN General Assembly's Third Committee that the issue of child labour is an "issue of paramount concern to the United States."

Washington noted the US Department of Labour has, for the past three years, been "researching, investigating, and reporting on child labour worldwide." The Department's first two reports, he said, "have sensitised the American public to the horrific conditions under which children work in different parts of the world — children in glass factories, their bodies scorched by intense furnace heat, their feet unprotected from broken glass; children on sugar cane plantations, whose machetes cut their own flesh along with the crop."

Washington pointed to the

Department's third study on practices in the garment industry and said "Here we can point to some advances in the battle against child labour. For example, last year Bangladeshi garment manufacturers signed an agreement with UNICEF and the ILO to remove underage workers from factories and place them in specially designed educational programmes. Given our commitment on this issue, we take a special interest in the implementation of this agreement."

"We must reinforce global efforts to combat exploitative child labour," said Washington. "Awareness of the problem will help but will not of itself bring results. We must provide resources for education and law enforcement and do more to find incentives to make the exploitative employment of children unprofitable."

The US delegate praised UN agencies, NGOs, bilateral donors, and host governments that have been "providing emergency relief, health care, clean water, and other components for economic and social development." In addition, he noted, UN agencies "help protect children from violence and abuse by promoting good governance, national reconciliation, and policies consistent with the best interests of the child."



Singapore Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong (C) delivers his opening remarks at the inaugural session of the World Trade Organisation in the Singapore International Convention Center on December 9. The Prime Minister opened the five-day meeting where 150 nations are represented. —AFP/UNB photo

Agenda for WTO meet

SINGAPORE, Dec 9: The World Trade Organisation began its inaugural meeting Monday, bringing together trade and foreign ministers from 128 member nations and some 30 other observers, reports AP.

Some of the major issues facing the delegates. **LABOUR STANDARDS:** The question of making labour standards part of the WTO is the most divisive issue. Many Western nations led by the United States and Norway want the WTO to take an active role in pushing for better labour standards around the world.

Developing countries in Asia, Latin American and Africa say the West is only using labour as an excuse to block cheaper imports from poorer countries. They say labour issues should be confined to the International Labour Organisation. Britain and Germany support the developing nations.

TELECOMS PACT: The United States wants to push Asian governments to open up their telephone monopolies to worldwide competition. Freeing telecommunications trade is part of the unfinished business of the previous Uruguay Round of trade liberalising measures completed in 1994, the most ambitious international trade pact ever signed.

Countries now have until February 15 to complete the deal.

Telephone, fax and other telecommunications business amounts to some 500 billion dollars every year. The United States, which has some of the biggest telephone companies in the world, is crucial to the deal.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY PACT: The United States is pushing an agreement on abolishing tariffs by 2000 on computers, software, semi-conductors and telecommunications equipment. In a market estimated at some 500 billion dollars annually, the United States exports some 100 billion dollars of such products. Japan supports the proposal, but other

Asian nations foresee little benefit.

CHINA'S MEMBERSHIP: Despite its giant economy, China is not a member of the WTO because of opposition from many members led by the United States. Washington says China must first open its markets to the level required by WTO rules. Otherwise, they say, China will benefit from other members' markets but keep others out of its own market.

INVESTMENT PACT: A pact on setting global rules for foreign investment is being pushed by the European Union, Japan, Canada and others, although the United States appears indifferent so far. Developing countries are opposed as they want to continue to direct foreign investments to sectors of their choice.

TEXTILES: The conflict is between developing countries led by India and Pakistan, the world's main textile exporters, and the West. The United States and the European Union are meeting obligations under an old agreement to gradually remove quotas on textile imports. But the restrictions still apply to a great deal of the developing countries' clothing exports.

GOVERNMENT PROCUREMENT: The United States is seeking more transparency in government contracts. In many parts of the world, some contracts have been tainted by corruption. Some major members, including the United States and the EU, have reached an agreement on free-trade rules in government procurement, a massive market for infrastructure and other projects.

AGRICULTURE: WTO member countries agreed two years ago to reopen negotiations to further remove subsidies in this sector.

COMPETITION POLICY: The European Union wants to discuss setting up global rules to prevent some companies from gaining an unfair advantage. But so far, the United States has shown no interest in this issue, which remains on the sidelines.

Iran-India \$5b gasoline project

Indo-Pak conflict should be resolved for implementation

GOA, India, Dec 9: Iran yesterday told India to resolve its "political problems" with neighbouring Pakistan so that a proposed five-billion dollar gasoline project can get underway, reports AFP.

The political problem is between India and Pakistan and it is for them to settle it for progress on the project," Gholamreza Aghazadeh, Iranian Oil Minister told newsmen here at the fifth international energy conference.

The pact for the 2,000-kilometer (1,240 miles) gasoline project from Iran, through Afghanistan and Pakistan, was signed in 1993, but ran into problems with Islamabad refusing to grant approval for a joint feasibility study.

It was meant to supply about 100 million cubic meters per day of liquefied natural gas to

India and Pakistan.

"One possibility is that the three of us sit together and talk. We are waiting for the elections to be over in Pakistan and we will talk to the democratically-elected government as the project will benefit all the three countries," Aghazadeh said.

"Our priority is that the pipeline is laid," he said. "We are trying to convince Pakistan."

But a senior Pakistani official rejected Iran's offer and said he favoured "bilateral talks" with India for finding a solution to the project.

"We also need natural gas. Let the deal not wait there that we do not want this," said Gulfaraz Ahmed, Pakistan's Petroleum Secretary. "We need gas soon, we have some other options and we want gas at the lowest prices."

BB governor asks

private banks to evolve efficient management

By Staff Correspondent

Governor of the Bangladesh Bank (BB) Lutfar Rahman Sarkar has urged the country's private sector banks to help change the status of the poor by redesigning their age-old banking tradition.

"You should be creative in evolving an efficient management," the BB Governor told the bankers while opening the 76th branch of the City Bank at Chamber Bhavan yesterday. He also asked the bankers to have accountability in every day businesses, says a press release of the city bank.

Chairman of the bank Ibrahim Mia presided over the opening function. Vice Chairman of the bank A K Mehmood, directors of the bank Deen Mohammad, Anwar Hossain and Anwarul Haque Chowdhury spoke on the occasion.



Lutfar Rahman Sarkar, Governor, Bangladesh Bank inaugurating the 76th branch of the City Bank Limited at Chamber Bhavan, Motijheel yesterday.

Tender Notice

বিদ্যুৎ ব্যবহারে মিতব্যয়ী হোন

Name of works : For cleaning the plants, its buildings, roads, adjacent areas and bathrooms etc of 128 MW Power Station, Ashuganj, B'baria.

Category of : All categories of PDB enlisted Contractor

Estimated cost : Tk 1,19,533.65 only.

Cost of tender : 190.00 only.

Tender document : i) Chief Engineer (Generation) available and date PDB, WAPDA building, Motijheel C/A, Dhaka-1000. ii) Janata Bank, Ashuganj Branch, Ashuganj, B'baria. Dated up to 22-12-96.

Tender receiving : 23-12-96.

and Opening date Biddul/Jan-583(3)/96/97 DFP-26593-20/11 G-1827

Executive Engineer (Opn) 128M Ashuganj Power Station Complex PDB, Ashuganj, B'baria

Notice Inviting Tender

1. Tender Notice No. : 25/96-97.
 2. Name of work : Repairing of pontoon No. P.I. 055/89 of Mokterpur Ferry ghat under Ferry Maint. Sub-Divn., Katchpur, Dhaka.
 3. Estimated cost : Tk 5,54,033/56
 4. Earnest money : Tk 11,081/-
 5. Form No. : Bangladesh Form No. 2911.
 6. Eligibility of : Enlisted 'A to C' general category contractors of RHD, 'D' general category contractors of Mechi Ferry Circle, Dhaka & 'E' general category contractors of RHD, Ferry Maint. Divn., Dhaka.
 7. Name of office of : EE RHD, FMD Dhaka/FCD availability of : Dhaka/Ferry Divn, Sylhet/ tender documents : Planning & Programming Divn., Dhaka/SDE R&H, Ferry Maint Sub-Divn, Katchpur, Dhaka. Tender documents will be available on or before 18.12.96.
 8. Name of officers : SE RHD, Dhaka Ferry Circle, to receive tender : Dhaka/SE RHD, Monitoring & Evaluation Circle, Dhaka/EE RHD, FMD Dhaka/FCD Dhaka/Ferry Divn, Sylhet.
 9. Date of receipt of : Up to 12:00 Noon of tender : 19.12.96.
 10. Date & time of : 12:30 PM of 21.12.96. opening of bids
- Md Golam Mostafa
Executive Engineer, R&H
Ferry Maint Divn, Postogola
Dhaka
- DFP-28308-5/12
G-1820

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Office of the Executive Engineer PWD, Division, Lakshmpur

Notice Inviting Tenders

Tender No (Civil) 36 of 1996-97

Sealed tenders in BD Form No. 2911 are hereby invited from the approved class-I, sanitary & plumbing contractors of PWD & class-II, sanitary & plumbing contractors of PWD Zone, Ctg. for the undermentioned work and will be received by the undersigned as well as by the Executive Engineer, PWD Division, Comilla/B'Baria/Chandpur/Noakhali/Feni in their respective offices up to 12-00 Noon on 18-12-1996 and will be opened on the same day at 12-15 PM in presence of the tenderers who may like to remain present. Each tender shall be in sealed cover with the name of work superscribed on it.

1. Name of work : Constn. of IC at Hazirah under Ram-goti PS in the District of Lakshmpur (Sub-Head: Providing sanitary & water supply arrangement of 2-unit 800 sft SI qrts.) during the year 1996-97.
2. Estimated cost : Tk1,63,894/09
3. Earnest money : Tk 3,400
4. Time for completion of work : 60 (Sixty) days from the date of issue of work order.
5. Tender form will be sold up to : 17-12-1996.
6. Contract documents consisting of BD Form No. 2911, tender notice, schedule of items, additional terms and conditions etc. can be seen and obtained from the office of the undersigned & all Executive Engineers under Comilla PWD circle on payment of usual charges of Tk. 400 (Non-refundable) per set of schedule (Notice inviting tenders, schedule of items additional terms and conditions etc.) and a sum of Tk. 25 (Non-refundable) per copy of tender Form No. 2911.
6. The intending tenderers shall have to produce their registration book of enlistment letter bearing the photo & full signature of the contractor duly attested by an Executive Engineer of this Deptt. along with challan for depositing the current fees at the time of purchasing of tender form as in absence of which no tender form will be sold. No complaint in this respect will be entertained.
7. The contractor/firm shall have to submit VAT registration certificate along with the tender failing which their tender will be summarily rejected.
- 7(a). In case of lowest equal rate the contractor will be selected by drawing lottery. The lottery will be held on 3-12-1996 of 12-00 Noon without further information.

M. A. Rob
Executive Engineer
PWD Division, Lakshmpur

DFP-28155-4/12
G-1819