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100, Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue, Dhaka-1215

Telephone: 815306-09, 819625-29, Fax: 813062

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HYUNDAI
CARS THAT MAKE SENSE

EC assures Dhaka to continue GSP

The European Commission has assured Bangladesh to continue GSP certificates and set up composite textile industries in Bangladesh, reports UNB.

"We have enough reasons to continue GSP facilities to Bangladesh," EC Vice-President Sir Leon Brittan told Commerce and Industries Minister Tofael Ahmed, now in Brussels, when he called on him Monday, according to a message received here.

The EC Vice-President praised the performance of the present government, especially for creating a congenial investment climate by offering incentive packages to investors and maintaining political stability and law and order.

Sir Brittan said the liberali-

sation and globalisation policies adopted by the government in trade and financial sectors would positively influence the international trading partners of Bangladesh.

Reiterating Bangladesh's role in WTO Ministerial Conference, Sir Brittan said EU would now take the lead to implement the zero-tariff export of LDCs to the developed countries as they played pioneering role for inclusion of this huge tariff relaxation in the WTO Declaration.

Thanking the EU Vice-President, Commerce Minister Tofael Ahmed said Bangladesh is optimistic about the extension of generalised system of preference (GSP) facilities given by the EU to apparel exporters of

Bangladesh for another three to five years.

For that, the Minister said, Bangladesh will be able to attain self-sufficiency in producing knit-yarn required for knitted items.

The Minister said the present government is offering special incentives to the investors in setting up of composite textile industries.

He said the government has formed a committee to supervise the issuance of GSP certificates to the exporters. And now there is no chance to manage "false certificate," he added.

EGMEA and BKMEA presidents, Bangladesh Ambassador to Brussels, and Director General of Textiles were present.

Japanese trade team in city

A three-member Japanese business delegation led by Kazuyoshi Ariga, Vice President of All Japan Federation of Commerce and Industry Association and member of the Fukushima Prefectural assembly, is in Dhaka for a week's visit to Bangladesh, says a press release.

Other two members are: Hidio Matsumura, President of IB Brain Co Ltd and Kokichi Yashiro, President of New Maruetsu Co Ltd.

The Japanese team is acquainting itself with the programme and policies of the government for attracting foreign investment in Bangladesh and investment from Japan.

It is assessing the investment environment.

The delegation has already held meetings with FBCCI, BOI, BEPZA, EPB and other concerned officials and organisations.

UK keen to invest in power, gas sector

Chairman of the visiting British Overseas Trade Board, Sir Martin Laing said here yesterday that British entrepreneurs were very keen on investing in both power and gas sector of Bangladesh, reports BSS.

He mentioned that their visit to Chittagong was successful and they had visited Chaim energy's exploration area, agreement for which had recently been signed.

He said the British companies would like to bid for investment in more blocks.

Sir Laing said this when he and the members of his delegation called on Energy and Mineral Resources Minister Muhammad Noor Uddin Khan at the latter's office.

The minister thanked the British delegation for their interest in the development sector

of Bangladesh. He said the government has many reform programmes both in power and gas sectors and very openly encourage the skilled entrepreneurs to invest in these two sectors. He mentioned that in response to the attractive package offered by the government, many reputed companies from abroad had already shown their keen interest to invest in the power and gas sectors.

Referring to some technical problems in the power stations the minister urged the delegation to invest in the renovation and rehabilitation works of power stations. The minister also drew the interest of the delegation to the coal sector.

In response, the delegation said they would actively consider for investment in those areas.

Move to fund fleet growth in Asia

Int'l shipping finance exchange in S'pore mooted

SINGAPORE, Jan 28: An international ship finance exchange should be established in Singapore to ease access to the tens of billions of dollars required to fund fleet growth in Asia, a conference heard here on Monday, reports AFP.

The region's shipping community will face "enormous demand for capital in the near future," said Danny Ho, Executive Director of Singapore and Hong Kong-listed ship-owner IMC Holdings Ltd.

Bank loans provide about 70 per cent of shipping finance, but their pricing is subject to borrowers' credit rating and market conditions while there is an increasing tendency for syndication of credit to spread risk.

"However, syndication causes problems to owners as firstly it takes longer time to complete a deal and secondly it entails higher costs in documentation and communication," he said.

"Furthermore, if owners want to make any change to the loan or documents, they will have to seek approval from the majority or all of the syndicated banks. This situation is obviously not desirable at all."

He said a ship finance exchange comprising a number of syndicates run by ship lending banks with which borrowers

can negotiate loans, was an answer.

The exchange would allow inter-syndicate transactions involving swapping of shares and selling down of loans. Loan participation would be traded within or outside the syndicate.

It would work closely with rating and shipping research agencies, financial advisers, lawyers and insurance brokers.

The concept of international shipping finance exchange, like Lloyds in London, is to bring together all major components of shipping finance fraternity to work in co-operation towards the overall well-being of the industry," the Hong Kong-based Ho said.

The ship-owner said Singapore was an ideal location, citing the presence of most shipping banks, the sizable fleet under the Singapore ship registry, and its large shipbuilding and port operations.

He said Lloyds was also reportedly considering setting up an operation here, adding: "If we take what Singapore already has got and add to it marine insurance and shipping finance, Singapore will then truly become a one-stop international maritime centre."

Asia will be the engine of growth in world shipping as the region's importance in global trade expands, experts say.



Sir Martin Laing, leader of British trade delegation, speaking at a press conference held at a local hotel yesterday. — Star photo

July-Dec export earnings of EPZs rise by 23.5 pc

The enterprises of the Export Processing Zones (EPZs) exported goods worth 209.3 million US dollars equivalent to Tk 8999.9 million during the first six months of the current financial year, says a press release.

During the corresponding period of the previous fiscal year the export earnings were 160.11 million US dollars (Tk 6724.62 million). This shows an increase of over 23.5 per cent.

Of the total export of the current fiscal year, the share of the Chittagong Export Processing Zone is 158.45 million US dollars while that of the Dhaka Export Processing Zone 50.85 million US dollars.

The exportables included electrical and electronic goods, garments, sports goods, audio and video tapes, textile goods, camera lenses, leather products, caps and hats, stuffed toys, furniture, terry towels and surgical towels, automobile parts, bicycle and bicycle parts, padding materials, tents, backpacks and other camping items.

The countries of import included USA, Canada, Italy, France, Belgium, the Netherlands, Denmark, Sweden, Finland, Switzerland, Greece,

Spain, UAE, Austria, Norway, Australia, Saudi Arabia, South Korea, Japan, Singapore, Russia and Mexico.

The Bangladesh Export Processing Zones Authority has so far sanctioned 120 industries for Chittagong EPZ and 57 for Dhaka EPZ.

Of this, 73 industries are in operation in the Chittagong Export Processing Zone having an investment of 159.64 million US dollars or Tk 6864.56 million. Twenty three industries are operating in the Dhaka Export Processing Zone with an investment of 35.41 million US dollars equivalent to Tk 1522.63 million.

Of the 73 operating industries in CEPZ, 43 are 100 per cent foreign owned, 15 under joint venture and the rest 15 are owned by Bangladeshi nationals. Another 11 industries are in different stages of implementation. Among the operating industries in DEPZ 20 are totally foreign owned, two under joint venture and the rest one is owned by a Bangladeshi national. Another eight industries are under different stages of implementation.

Among the industries in the Chittagong Export Processing Zone, Japan is the highest investor with an investment of

over 46.29 million US dollars. Japanese investors have so far established 12 industries. Another seven Japanese industries will go into operation soon.

South Korea is the second highest investor in CEPZ with an investment of 46.706 million US dollars in 17 industries. Another nine industries are in different stages of implementation.

The other countries which have invested in CEPZ include USA, Hong Kong, China, Pakistan, UK, Germany, Sweden, Denmark, France, Thailand, Singapore, Malaysia, UAE and Bangladesh.

In the Dhaka Export Processing Zone, South Korea has invested the highest amount of 29.17 million US dollars equivalent to over Tk 1259 million. The other countries which have invested in DEPZ are Malaysia, Hong Kong, Panama, China, Japan, Germany, UK and host Bangladesh. Another ten industrial proposals are being processed.

It may be mentioned that two EPZs have so far employed more than 45 thousand Bangladeshi workers. Of them, 32112 are working in CEPZ and 13739 in DEPZ.

SCB executive in city

Goutam Vir, regional head for personal banking of Standard Chartered Bank has arrived in the city yesterday on a 3-day visit, says a press release.

Goutam Vir has wide experience in personal banking in India and Gulf.



Anders Johnson, Ambassador of Sweden in Bangladesh, along with Lennart Karlson, First Secretary, called on Samson H Chowdhury, President of Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Dhaka yesterday.

Asian stock markets close mixed

HONG KONG, Jan 28: Asian stock markets closed mixed Tuesday, with share prices rebounding both in Tokyo and Hong Kong after several days of declines, reports AP.

Tokyo's benchmark Nikkei Stock Average of 225 selected issues rose 461.67 points, or 2.66 per cent, closing at 17,796.57.

Tuesday's rebound in the Nikkei came after it had fallen a total of 678.98 points over three trading days, including a 354.46-point, or 2.00 per cent, fall on Monday.

Prices started slightly lower following an overnight 35.79-point fall in the Dow Jones industrial average, but buying by pension fund managers later reversed the course, traders said.

The Tokyo Stock Price Index of all issues listed on the first section was up 19.28 points, or 1.45 per cent, to 1,345.88. The TOPIX shed 26.88 points, or 1.99 per cent, the day before.

Meanwhile, the US dollar was quoted 120.36 yen in late trading, up 1.12 yen from late Monday in Tokyo and also above its late New York level overnight of 119.47 yen.

During the day, the dollar ranged from 119.55 yen to 120.53 yen — the highest levels since mid-February in 1993.

In Hong Kong, share prices surged after five straight sessions of declines.

The Hang Seng Index, the Hong Kong market's key indicator of blue chips, rose 108.39 points, or 0.8 per cent, closing at 13,403.29. On Monday, the

index had slumped 84.65 points.

Turnover amounted to 8.636 billion Hong Kong dollars (US \$1.11 billion), up slightly from Monday's 8.612 billion Hong Kong dollars (US \$1.10 billion).

Brokers attributed the rise to bargain-hunting after the key index fell more than 573 points in the past five sessions.

"A five-day drop is more than enough. We can't follow Wall Street every day," one broker said.

US-China textile talks resume

BEIJING, Jan 28: US and Chinese trade negotiators on Tuesday opened a final round of talks on renewing a textile trade agreement and heading off sanctions, reports AP.

The talks are scheduled to run through Thursday if necessary. The deadline is Friday, and there will be no more extensions, said Rita Hayes, who is leading the US Trade Representative delegation.

This will be the fourth round of talks on textile quotas and transshipment.

Under a 1994 agreement, the United States set strict limits on imports from Chinese textile makers. Washington has accused China of circumventing the quotas by transshipping its exports, or shipping them first to a third country.

The United States has threatened 19 million dollars in quota penalties for breaking the agreement.

kers said. Share prices continued their decline in New York on Monday.

TAIPEI: Share prices closed lower for the third consecutive session. The market's key Weighted Stock Price Index fell 10.75 points to 7,146.21.

WELLINGTON: New Zealand share prices closed lower. The NZSE Top-40 Index fell 14.78 points to 2,378.47.

MANILA: Share prices closed higher as foreign fund managers bought blue-chip stocks and select second-liners backed by strong earnings prospects. The Philippine Stock Exchange Index of 30 selected issues rose 18.89 points to 3,341.99.

SYDNEY: Australian share prices fell to their lowest close in three weeks, mainly on investors' concerns about recent heavy selling in the US market. The All Ordinaries Index fell 18.8 points to 2,404.2.

SEOUL: Share prices closed lower in relatively active trading. The Composite Index fell 1.85 points to 662.85.

SINGAPORE: Share prices closed mostly mixed. The benchmark 30-shares Straits Times Industrials index slipped 0.95 of a point to 2,226.30.

KUALA LUMPUR: Malaysian share prices closed mostly lower. The Composite Index of 100 blue-chip stocks fell 10.46 points to 1,228.89.

BANGKOK: Thai share prices closed mixed. The SET index rose 2.21 points to 842.63.

JAKARTA: The stock exchange's Composite Index rose 4.992, closing at 689.974.

Rail-2 project discussed with CIDA team

The visiting delegation of Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) Monday held a wrap-up meeting with the officials of Bangladesh Railway to discuss the progress of the "Rail-2" project, reports UNB.

Officials said the two sides discussed the progress of the project, undertaken with the financial assistance of CIDA, and exchanged necessary information.

The CIDA delegation expressed satisfaction over the progress of the project being implemented at a cost of Tk 271 crore, involving 95 million Canadian dollars from CIDA.

BIBM course on 'banking laws, practices' ends

A 15-day training course on 'Banking Laws and Practices' conducted by Bangladesh Institute of Bank Management (BIBM) concluded yesterday with AFM Nurul Islam Choudhury, Director General of BIBM, in the chair, says a press release.

A total of 26 officers from different banks and financial institutions participated in the course.

The objectives of the course were to acquaint the participants with modern laws and practices relating to banking and finance.

EU debate over econ management heats up

BRUSSELS, Jan 28: The debate over economic management in the European Union after the launch of the single currency heated up Monday with European Commission President Jacques Santer attacking French plans for a G7-style policy-making club of countries in the Euro-zone, reports AFP.

Proposals to set up a "stability council" to act as a political counterweight to the European Central Bank are unnecessary because the Maastricht Treaty already provided for a dialogue between the council of ministers and the ECB, Santer told the French daily Liberation.

"Let's stick to the treaty," Santer said. "For sure, the European Central Bank will be independent, but the council of ministers will also be strengthened."

Crucially, Santer's conception of a strengthened council would involve all 15 EU states in increased harmonisation of their economic policies. The French version would include only those states that adopt the Euro.

Germany has already made it clear it will not accept any proposals which compromise the ECB's independence.

Luxembourg's Prime Minister Jean-Claude Juncker, speaking at a meeting of EU Finance Ministers here, backed the principle of a stability council to allow ministers to

"talk but not negotiate" with the ECB.

"That is the way things happen in Germany now. I see no reason why they should not happen in Europe," he said.

Belgian Finance Minister Philippe Maystadt said the fact that the launch of the Euro was only 704 days away made it urgent for the EU to step up the pace of fiscal harmonisation, particularly in the taxation of companies and private investments held by non-residents.

"It is intolerable that companies can switch from one country to another to take advantage of lower corporate taxation," he said. Belgium was "very worried" by the scale at which this was happening among high-tech companies.

Germany, which has been angered by the loss of tax revenues as a result of investors depositing funds in secret accounts in neighbouring Luxembourg, France and Austria backed Maystadt's appeal for faster progress in this area.

"We must put an end to unfair fiscal practices," said German Finance Minister Theo Waigel.

The need to increase public awareness of the imminent changes the Euro will bring was also a prominent theme in Monday's talks. "We have to get the public used to the idea of the Euro," said French Minister Jean Arthuis.

Coming AGMs

Company	Book Closure	AGMEGM	Date	Venue & Time	Dividend Proposed
Chittagong Cement	01/03/97-20/03/97	AGM	20/03/97	Hotel Agrabad Ctg 10 am	1R2 20
Tripl Ind	16/01/97-30/01/97	AGM			1R2 (Pre & Tr 1000)
BD Zapper (Deb)	15/01/97-31/01/97	AGM			1R1 (Pre & Tr 125)
China Inflation	27/01/97-03/02/97	AGM	03/02/97	Hotel Sonargang, 10 am	1R2 (at par) 17
BOC Ltd	05/01/97-02/02/97	AGM	02/02/97	Sonargang Hotel 2 pm	1B5 30
Rahim Textile	16/01/97-30/01/97	AGM	30/01/97	Song Community Centre 11 am	
Rupali Bank	05/02/97-02/03/97	AGM	02/03/97	Sonargang Hotel 3 pm	1B2 15
National Tube	01/03/97-25/03/97	AGM	25/03/97	Factory Premises 11 am	1B5
Eastern Cables		AGM			10
BD Luggage (Pub)	16/02/97-04/03/97	AGM			
Best Synthetic (Pub)	16/02/97-28/02/97	AGM			

PEREGRINE BANGLADESH INDEX

Tuesday's market comment

The PBI closed in the plus column for the third consecutive day as it gained 0.8% to close at 939.31 on good volume. Trading was bullish as 15 issues advanced over 8 losers. Two issues remained unchanged. Olympic Industries and Bata Shoe benefited from retail demand as they led the winners with a 9.93% and 7.74% rise respectively. Apex Tannery recovered from yesterday's foreign selling with a 6.35% appreciation along with Beximco Synthetics which added 5.45%. Apex Foods topped the minus column dropping 9.99% as it continues to adjust in line with the market correction. Reckitt & Colman (4.43%) and Monno Fabrics (-1.85%) succumbed to retail selling whilst ACI fell 0.66% on institutional selling. Eastern Housing, Prime Textile, and Beximco Textile also suffered from retail selling as they fell 1.48%, 0.88%, and 0.58% respectively. Chittagong Cement and Shine Pukur remained unchanged in the absence of any trades.

Shipping Intelligence

CHITTAGONG PORT

Berth position and performance of vessels as on 28.1.97

No	Rising Tide	Oil/Gas	VIZA	OTL	20/1	25/1
J/1	Banglar Shobha	Urea (G)	MARC	BSC	11/1	1/2
J/5	Petko R Slavejkov	R Seed	Col	AASS	11/1	1/2
J/6	Globe Trader	GI (C. Peas)	Sing	Seacom	12/1	30/1
J/7	Fujishan Maru	Wheat (P)	Sing	AASS	10/1	5/2
J/8	Banglar Gourab	GI	Chin	BSC	R/A	30/1
J/9	AL Muztuba (48)	GI	Bomb	CLA	20/1	28/1
J/10	Mirna	GI	Sing	UMTL	14/1	31/1
J/11	Xuan Cheng	Urea (G)	UMSL	13/1	30/1	
J/12	Oriental Way	Cement	Vian	RML	10/1	30/1
J/13	Sea Elegance	Cont	Sing	Pill (BD)	26/1	30/1
CCT/1	Kota Binfang	Cont	Sing	Pill (BD)	24/1	28/1
CCT/2	Consistence	Cont	Sing	RSL	25/1	29/1
CCT/3	QC Teal	Cont	Sing	QCSL	26/1	29/1
CCJ	Progress	Cement	Sing	Delmure	4/1	31/1
RM/4	Shinhung-2	GSSPP	Sing	RRSA	17/1	30/1
RM/5	AL Badiyah	HSD	KUWA	ECSL	24/1	28/1
DOJ	Banglar Jyoti	C.Oil	Para	BSC	R/A	29/1
DDJ/1	Tanary Star	IDLE	Para	PSAL	7/6	31/1
DDJ/2	Splendid	Fortune (24)	PMat	Mad	MSTPL	25/1
RM/9	Banglar Moni	Repair	Mad	BSC	15/1	30/1
CUFLJ	Blue North	Cement	Qing	PSAL	3/6	31/1

Vessels due at outer anchorage

Name of vessels	Date of arrival	L. port cal	Local agent	Cargo	Loading port
Emeral Venture	28/1	-	Simu	Scraping	-
Floating Mountain	29/1	-	RM	C Clunker	-
Mighty tide	28/1	-	B Bay	Survey Purpose	-
X-Press Trisuli 19/1	29/1	Mong	Baridhi	Cont	Col
Banglar Robi 25/1	30/1	Mong	BSC	Cont	Sing
Kota Berjaya 25/1	29/1	Sing	Pill (BD)	Cont	Sing
QC Pintail 19/1	29/1	Sing	QC SL	Cont	Sing
Young Tong	28/1	Chin	Seacom	Urea (G)	11/6/97
Hong Xiang	30/1	Sing	UMTL	Urea (G)	11/6/97
Fong Yun 19/1	30/1	Sing	BD Ship	Cont	Sing
Tong He	30/1	Sing	Rainbow	Cement	-
Bi Ryu Gang	30/1	Safa	Katmon	GR Phos	-
Tug Tong Huat	30/1	Sing	Litton	Empty	-
Pachna 22/1	31/1	Sing	RSL	Cont	Sing

Tanker due

Name of vessels	Date of
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