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# The Daily Star BUSINESS

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**HYUNDAI**

CARS THAT MAKE SENSE

## Export credit insurance seminar today

A one-day promotional seminar on Export Credit Insurance jointly organised by the Islamic Corporation for the Insurance of Investment and Export Credit, and affiliate of the Islamic Development Bank and the Export Credit Guarantee Department of Sadharan Bima Corporation will be held at Dhaka Sheraton Hotel today, says a press release.

Abul Hasan Chowdhury, State Minister for Foreign Affairs, will inaugurate the seminar as chief guest.

Yussuf A. Harun, President, of Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry, will be the special guest.

Bankers and exporters are expected to attend the seminar.

## Birendra opens Indian trade exhibition in Kathmandu

KATHMANDU, Mar 15: King Birendra of Nepal inaugurated Friday India's most prestigious industrial and commercial exhibition organized to mark jointly the silver jubilee of the monarch's accession and 50th anniversary of India's independence, state-run radio said, reports AFP.

Sharma, who is also Nepal's Finance and Foreign Minister, said: "I hope the Indian trade exhibition will encourage Nepalese craftsmen and industrial entrepreneurs to develop the industrial and trade relationship between Nepal and India."

Indian Minister in charge of Industries Ramalal expressed gratitude to the King for inaugurating the week-long exhibition.

"I hope the trade relation between the two close neighbours will help expand bilateral and industrial cooperation, he said. Indian Prime Minister HD Deve Gowda was scheduled to come to Nepal on a three-day official visit beginning Friday to speak at the opening of the exhibition but the sudden changes in the political scenario in this Himalayan kingdom forced him to cancel.

A new coalition government took office this week, under the new Prime Minister Lokendra Bahadur Chand, when former premier Sher Bahadur Deuba resigned after failing to win a confidence motion he had tabled himself.

Around 100 major Indian businesses and industrialists are participating in the trade exhibition, the organizers said.

More than 100,000 people are expected to attend.

## UAE biggest Gulf market for China

ABU DHABI, Mar 15: The United Arab Emirates (UAE) has become the biggest Gulf market for China, which is seeking to grab a larger share of the lucrative consumer region, an official report showed yesterday, reports AFP.

China's exports to the emirates stood at 1.07 billion dollars in 1996, down by around two per cent from the 1995 exchange of 1.2 billion dollars, Al-Bayan newspaper said, citing figures by the Chinese Embassy in the UAE.

The UAE was the top market in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) for Chinese exports in 1998 while it was the fourth biggest exporter to China after Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Oman," the paper said.

Chinese exports to the UAE included clothes and textiles, manufactured products, machinery, auto tires, food and home appliances.

The UAE's exports to China of around 68 million dollars covered mainly aluminium and fertilisers, especially urea.

China's trade with the six-nation GCC, which also includes Bahrain and Qatar, was negligible in mid 1980s before it started to grow rapidly due to an export blitz by the Asian giant two-way trade between the two sides hit a record 1.8 billion dollars in 1996.

## US industrial output up

WASHINGTON, Mar 15: US industrial output rose 0.5 per cent in February, the Federal Reserve said Friday, reports AFP.

The increase was in line with the consensus forecast of Wall Street economists.

Industrial output fell a revised 0.1 per cent in January, compared with an initial estimate that output in January was unchanged.

Output of automobile products rose 0.5 per cent in February after a 2.2 per cent gain in January.

Excluding motor vehicles and parts, industrial output in February was up 0.5 per cent, compared with a 0.2 per cent fall in January.

On a year-on-year basis industrial output in February was up 3.8 per cent.

# Tea export up in 7 months

Country's tea production totalled 37.081 million kg and export stood at 19.578 million kg in the first seven months of the current fiscal year, reports UNB.

The tea production was 1.072 million kg more in seven months up to January than the corresponding period of last fiscal year, according to the monthly statistical bulletin of Bangladesh Tea Board received Friday.

From July to January of the 1995-96 fiscal year, production of this export item was 36.009 million kg compared to 35.008 million kg in 1994-95 fiscal.

Although tea production falls from November, the beginning of the lean period extending up to February, the Tea

Board sources are hopeful of achieving its target for the current fiscal year.

The production target has been fixed at 54 million KGs for fiscal 1996-97.

The bulletin also said the country has earned Taka 969.633 million by exporting 19.578 million kg loose and packet tea up to January this year compared to Taka 780.352 million by exporting 14.336 million kg in the same period last fiscal year.

A Tea Board source said the possibility of achieving the export target in fiscal 1996-97 was bright compared to last two fiscal years when targets could not be achieved. The export target of the current fiscal is 34 million

kg, four million kg more than the last fiscal year.

The Tea Board bulletin said regular buyer Poland has so far imported the highest quantity of tea from Bangladesh, but export to Poland dropped compared to the last corresponding period.

Pakistan and Afghanistan also took increasing interest in buying Bangladesh tea than previously.

Poland imported 6.017 million kg tea, followed by Pakistan (4.457 million kg) and Afghanistan (3.595 million kg) up to January.

Among the new tea importers, China bought 1.247 million kg Sri Lanka 37,000 kg, Taiwan 14,000 kg, Ukraine 22,000 kg and Kuwait 9,000 kg

up to the month.

United Kingdom and Germany, who were less interested in Bangladesh tea in the last two fiscal years, imported 204,000 kg and 52,000 kg respectively up to January this fiscal year. UK bought 22,000 kg loose tea up to January in last fiscal year while Germany 1,000 kg.

Greece, India, Jordan and Russia were the other countries where export of Bangladesh tea marked improvement.

Among the tea exporters, MM Isphani sold highest 574,000 kg in January while HRC Syndicate Ltd exported the highest 3,901 million kg in seven months up to January.

## Semiconductor council meets April 11

WASHINGTON, Mar 14: The semiconductor council, an industry organization formed by Japan and the United States, will hold its inaugural meeting April 11 in Hawaii, US and Japanese trade groups said Wednesday, reports AFP.

The council is a creation of a US-Japan bilateral agreement last August that settled a long-standing row over the future of a five-year 1991 semiconductor accord.

As part of the deal last August, the council was established to provide a forum for industry-to-industry cooperation on semiconductor sales worldwide and was to be opened to trade groups from other countries committed to eliminating semiconductor tariffs.

The 1991 accord was designed to boost the foreign share of the Japan computer chip — or semiconductor — market to 20 per cent.

## Dhaka for solving unemployment on priority basis

Deputy Speaker Mohammad Abdul Hamid Advocate has focused on solving the global unemployment on priority basis saying that sustainable development would be difficult without it, reports UNB.

According to a message received in the city Friday, the Deputy Speaker was taking part in a discussion on the same day at the three-day Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) Committee meeting for Sustainable Development in Geneva.

Addressing the meeting Abdul Hamid called for immediate global action for eradication of poverty and unemployment.

Earlier, taking part in the 2nd session of the meeting, he said dredging of rivers and conservation of forests in Bangladesh have become matters of urgent necessity.

The Deputy Speaker said that these steps along with other measures were necessary to implement action plan as per UN Conference on Environment and Development (Rio Declaration of 1992).

## Wisnbraun visits CSE

Stephen Wisnbraun, Political and Economic Counselor of US Embassy, visited Chittagong Stock Exchange (CSE) Wednesday, says a press release.

During the visit, he held a courtesy meeting with the CEO AGM Shamsul Kamal and other senior officials.

He saw various departments including CSE's trading floor.

He was impressed at the rapid development of CSE in a very short span of time.

Wisnbraun was accompanied by the Economic and Political Officer Timothy Forsyth and Economic Specialist Kamal U Bhuiyan of the US Embassy.

## UN experts warn of fresh water crisis

GENEVA, Mar 15: Shortages of fresh water in the next century could spark widespread conflicts leading to a worldwide crisis, experts in Geneva warned here yesterday, reports AFP.

The environmental experts "warned that a world water forum would be held in Morocco later this month."

"During the next 50 years, problems associated with a lack of water or the pollution of water bodies will affect virtually everyone on the planet," a preparatory forum document said.

"The result could be a series of local and regional disasters and confrontations leading to a crisis of global proportions," said the paper, prepared by the World Meteorological Organisation (WMO) and the UN Environmental, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO).

Available fresh water accounts for just 0.26 per cent of the earth's hydraulic mass, of which 97.5 per cent is salty ocean water.

The demand for fresh water, vital for agriculture, is growing twice as quickly as the global population, itself set to almost double by 2050, the paper said.

"Many say that in the 21st century, water could be a source of serious conflict," Andras Szollosi-Nagy, UNESCO Water Sciences Director, told a press briefing.

These pressures could be especially intense "between nations sharing a river basin," said Dieter Kramer, a WMO Director.

Ways to manage finite water resources must be thought of now to avoid future conflicts, the two environmentalists said. The Marrakech forum will take place between March 21 and 22 with participation of six UN agencies, major development banks and representatives of non-governmental organisations and the private sector.

## Indonesia's giant cigarette co defrauded of \$ 3.5m

JAKARTA, Mar 15: Indonesia's leading cigarette maker Pt. Gudang Garam has lost some 3.5 million dollars to a fraud, police said yesterday, reports AFP.

"Based on the results of an investigation, Gudang Garam as defrauded of a 8.5 billion rupiah (3.5 million dollars) by a deputy cashier who made a fictitious financial report for the company," East Java police spokesman Lieutenant Colonel Sofwat Hadi said in Surabaya, East Java.

Hadi told the state Antara news agency the losses were discovered after the company conducted an internal audit following the disappearance of the deputy cashier of the company's Surabaya branch office last month.

He has not returned to work since early February and his current whereabouts were unknown. Hadi said he was on the police wanted list.

Gudang Garam, established in 1971, went public in 1990. It does the cigarettes it produces account for about 49 per cent of the Indonesian market.



Visitors at the Arvind-Sidko's exhibition of denim fabrics at Dhaka Sheraton Hotel on Wednesday. — Star photo

## Team leaves for KSA to boost manpower export

A three-member delegation left here for Riyadh of Friday night on a five-day official visit to promote manpower export to Saudi Arabia, reports UNB.

State Minister for Labour and Manpower MA Mannan is leading the delegation, said an official handout.

Other members are Director General of Bureau of Manpower, Employment at Training ANM Hafizul Islam and Joint Secretary of Labour and Manpower Ministry Abdur Rouf.

During the visit, the delegation will meet the Saudi Labour

and Social Affairs Minister, Health Minister, Governor of Jeddah and members of local Chambers of Commerce and employers for the above purpose.

They will also meet the community representatives at the Bangladesh Embassy in Riyadh and Saudi-based Bangladeshi recruiting agents and their representatives.

The delegation members will perform Umrah at Makkah and Jiarat in Madina. They will come back on March 20.

## Pakistan plans to reduce food imports

ISLAMABAD, Mar 15: Pakistan will attempt to reduce its dependence on imported food under a new agriculture package to be announced next month, reports here said yesterday, reports AFP.

The government plans to increase its wheat procurement price, giving farmers more incentive to increase crop yield, the Dawn newspaper said.

Officials are hoping the next harvest, due in May, will lower staple food prices and combined with the new policies, reduce the country's current dependence on imports.

The report added that Agriculture Ministry experts were hoping to maintain wheat production at 16.9 million tonnes this year. However this is still about two million tonnes short of Pakistan's needs.

Wheat is in particularly short supply in the northwest of the country. Large quantities of foodstuffs are smuggled into neighbouring war-torn Afghanistan, where they can command a price double that in Pakistan.

Following his landslide victory in the February 17 elections, Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif has embarked on a crusade for economic self-reliance in order to cut Pakistan's massive trade deficit estimated at 3.2 billion dollars.

Pakistan also owes around 30 billion dollars to foreign creditors including the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. If it fails to make repayment deadlines, it could face being credit black-listed.

## Ukraine's GDP falls 9pc

KIEV, Mar 15: Ukraine's gross domestic product plummeted nine per cent in the first two months of 1997, compared with the same period last year, the presidency announced here yesterday, says AFP.

Last year, GDP dropped by 10 per cent, compared with 1995.

The nation's GDP has been falling since independence in 1991. In 1996, the rate of decline slowed down for the first time.

## Focus on consumer credit—5

# Uttara Bank achieves grand success

By Inam Ahmed

Achieving half the target in one third of the time is what can be called a grand success and a grand start for Uttara Bank's new consumer credit scheme — *Uttaran*.

Launched in October last year, it had set a consumer credit disbursement target of Taka five crore in a year. Barely four months later, it had disbursed Taka 2.34 crore among some 1128 clients.

"It is a grand success for us," said an executive of the bank. "Loan recovery rate is one hundred per cent. If this continues, we will definitely increase our target for the next year."

Behind *Uttaran*'s success is the bank's speedy loan processing system, friendly approach of the officials, and easy systems of loan repayment.

"Our aim is to encourage savings habit among the people with limited income base," said an executive of the bank, "and at the same time improve their living standard. People can use our loans to enhance their work efficiency."

One can use Uttara Bank's loans to buy the following items: new or reconditioned motorcycles and cars, refrigerators and deep freeze, TV and VCR, audio systems, air conditioner, water cooler, and water

pump, computer, UPS, printer and typewriter, washing machine, wooden and iron furnitures, sewing machine, oven, micro-wave oven, toaster, pressure cooker etc, photocopier, cellular telephone, fax, ceiling, pedestal or table fan, dish antenna, bi-cycle, baby taxi, tempo, and macro-bus.

### Who are eligible?

Four categories of people in the age group of 20 to 55 are eligible for *Uttaran* loans. The categories are: a) permanent employees of government, semi-government, autonomous bodies, banks, insurance companies and people serving in the armed forces, BDR police and Ansar, b) people working in private organisations who the bank thinks as eligible, c) university, college and school teachers, and d) professionals like doctors, engineers, chartered accountants and lawyers.

### Eligibility of loanees

Interested persons should have monthly incomes which the bank thinks as sufficient to pay loan instalments. Employees will have to submit income certificates from their employers.

Applicants have to have accounts with the concerned bank

branch. A candidate with Uttara Bank can not apply for loans from any other bank.

### Amount of loan and equity

A person can take a highest of Taka three lakh loan under the *Uttaran* scheme by paying certain amount of equity. For new cars, and motorcycles, one has to pay 35 per cent of loan as equity, for reconditioned car and baby taxi and tempo the equity will be 40 per cent of loan, for refrigerator, deep freeze, washing machine, air conditioner, personal computer, photocopier, fax and cellular phone, the equity portion will be 25 per cent and for other products, it is 20 per cent of the loan amount.

### Rate of interest and other charges

Uttara Bank charges 12 per cent simple interest rate on its consumer loans. If one fails to repay in time, he will be charged another two per cent on the defaulted amount. The bank takes a onetime service charge of Taka 200 on loans up to Taka 50,000 and Taka 500 for above Taka 50,000. On top of this, an applicant has to pay a non-refundable amount of Taka 200 or two per cent of the

loan to the risk fund of the bank before taking loan.

"We also offer a unique interest rebate opportunity to the loanees," said an executive of the bank. "If a person pays all the instalments in time, he will get back five per cent of the total interest paid."

### Repayment schedule

Repayment period of loans for new cars is four years while it is three years for other items except baby taxi, tempo and microbus for which the time period is two years.

Loanees have to pay the instalments within the seventh of each month. "If one fails to do so with that date, he will be classified as a defaulter and will be charged with penalty interest of two per cent," said the official.

### Security

The loanee will need to hypothecate the product he buys. Service holders will need to take personal guarantees from any bank official having the rank of principal officer or above. Professionals also need to take personal guarantees from persons of same rank, or, at least, from first class gazetted officers, or principal officers of any bank.

## Coming AGMs

Company	Book Closure	AGM/EGM	Date	Venue & Time	Dividend Proposed
Chittagong Cement	01/03/97-20/03/97	AGM	20/03/97	Hotel Agrabad City 10 am	182.20 (R2/Pr & Tk 1000)
National tube	01/03/97-20/03/97	AGM	25/03/97	Factory Premises 11 am	182.15
Eastern Cables	01/03/97-20/03/97	AGM	25/03/97	—	185
BD Luggage (deb)	16/02/97-04/03/97	AGM	19/03/97	—	10
Eastern Lubricant	13/03/97-19/03/97	AGM	19/03/97	—	35
City Vegetable	20/03/97-28/03/97	AGM	28/03/97	—	3R1 (Pr: Tk 50)
Bengal Distill	19/03/97-28/03/97	AGM	28/03/97	Hotel Sonargang,	18.5
Atlas Automobile	22/03/97-28/03/97	AGM	28/03/97	—	2R1 (Pr: Tk 150)
Bescon (deb)	22/03/97-19/04/97	AGM	19/04/97	Interest for 12th instalment	—
Umanan Glass	02/03/97-21/03/97	AGM	21/03/97	Regi. Office 10:30 AM	25
Saver Refractor	22/03/97-21/03/97	AGM	27/03/97	Hotel Sandanah 11:30 AM	—
Singer BD	22/03/97-19/04/97	AGM	19/04/97	Hotel Sonargang	75.182
Padma Oil	22/03/97-28/03/97	AGM	28/03/97	Head Office, House No. 98, Road 9A (New) Dharmad 12 Noon	20
Jute Spinners	24/03/97-30/03/97	AGM	30/03/97	Jute Spinners hall, Hotel Putabari 4 PM	15
Wata Chemical	01/04/97-09/04/97	AGM	09/04/97	60, Motipheel C/A, BCC Auditorium 10 AM	25
Pharmaco Int.	17/03/97-20/03/97	AGM	30/03/97	—	30
BTC	01/04/97-20/04/97	AGM	—	—	—
Anwar Galva	20/03/97-27/03/97	AGM	27/03/97	Party Center Dharmad	22
ULC	02/04/97-29/04/97	AGM	29/04/97	Hotel Sonargang, 3 pm	25.181
ICLC	05/04/97-13/04/97	EGM	Do	Do	—
Reckit & Colman	19/04/97-08/05/97	AGM	08/05/97	—	35

## CHITTAGONG STOCK PRICES

### Saturday's market performance

Company Name	Closing Rate	Previous Rate	Difference	No of Securities Traded
Janata Insurance	344.36	347.25	-2.89	220
Central Insurance	241.29	248.38	-7.09	240
Federal Insurance	257.92	265.00	-7.08	600
Pragati Insurance	988.00	950.00	+38.00	50
Sandhani Life	261.00	275.00	-14.00	150
Prime Textile	250.00	253.54	-3.54	200
Apex Weaving	139.06	138.81	+0.25	880
Beximco Textile	165.60	169.71	-4.11	250
Beximco Synthetics	343.22	358.43	-15.21	360
Beximco Denims	253.33	255.00	-1.67	150
Beximco Knitting	158.50	163.50	-5.00	100
Padma Textile	626.05	671.11	-45.06	400
Sajib Knitwear	83.00	82.19	+0.81	1000
Chic Text Ltd	18.43	18.81	-0.38	9000
Sreepur Textiles	108.78	187.67	+1.11	450
Monno Fabrics	189.73	183.26	-2.53	6350
Eagle Star	31.44	32.25	-0.81	3100
Altex Ind	115.67	116.97	-1.30	600
BD Dyeing	396.63	384.60	+12.03	80
Dynamic Textile	85.78	86.88	-1.10	180
Ashraf Tex	42.23	43.17	-0.94	900
Square Pharma	1279.93	1303.19	-23.26	860
ACL Ltd	169.00	174.49	-5.49	5250
Beximco Pharma	210.57	217.53	-6.96	27400
Reckit & Colman	275.71	292.57	-16.86	1350
Amber Pharma	50.00	49.69	+0.31	1250
Imam Button	165.00	168.75	-3.75	50
Orion Infusion	262.58	262.00	+0.50	180
BCIL Ltd	265.00	261.00	+4.00	100
Bengal Biscuit	197.00	198.09	-1.09	200
Beximco Fisheries	322.29	326.94	-4.65	140
BTC	189.67	204.22	-14.55	1600
Ctg Vegetable	328.18	353.25	-25.07	100
Tripti Industries	530.00	515.63	+14.37	10
Meghna Vegetable	280.00	280.00	0.00	150
Confidence Cement	910.00	947.50	-37.50	40
Ctg Cement	2699.38	2699.82	-0.44	230
Meghna Cement	758.68	766.00	-7.32	110
Aziz Pipe	312.58	309.00	+115.00	100
Gaussen Drycells	109.71	111.60	-1.89	1600
Anwar Galvanizing	298.91	305.33	-6.42	550
Aftab Auto	800.00	865.97	-65.97	90
Olympic Industries	916.11	938.89	-22.78	65
BD Zipper	167.62	155.00	+12.62	90
Bd. Luggage	210.00	205.00	+5.00	50
Apex Tannery	792.60	781.11	+11.49	820
Apex Footwear	644.60	628.33	+16.27	100
Mark Bangladesh	240.00	265.00	-25.00	300
Excelsior Shoes	200.00	216.00	-16.00	600
Shine Pukur	246.65	249.94	-3.29	340
Eastern Housing	213.77	219.17	+3.60	132
BOC (BD) Ltd	208.50	207.71	+0.79	250
6th ICB MF	212.90	207.00	+1.00	10
Usmania Glass	1200.00	1172.00	+28.00	40
Beximco	318.00	313.59	+4.42	40
Monno Ceramic	1065.00	1045.50	+19.50	70
GO Ball Pen	381.33	389.00	-7.67	30