

Tokyo to provide
\$ 207m to
Colombo

COLOMBO, July 26: Japan will provide 207 million dollars to Sri Lanka to improve water supply, telecommunications and the irrigation system in the island nation, reports AP.

Sri Lanka will spend 96.5 million dollars on setting up a new supply station in Colombo that will pump water from a nearby river, Mangala Samaraweera, the media and telecommunications Minister, said on Thursday.

A 86.4 million dollars project would improve the telecommunication network in Colombo, the Sri Lankan capital. Nearly 24.4 million dollars would be spent on developing waterways in central Sri Lanka, the minister said.

New ASEAN
award to be
launched

KUALA LUMPUR, July 26: Foreign Minister from the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) agreed Friday to launch a new "ASEAN award" for individuals and organisations at next year's summit in Vietnam, reports AFP.

The new award will recognise "outstanding work and contribution towards the promotion and development of regional cooperation aimed at sharing prosperity through human development, technological competitiveness and social cohesiveness," a joint statement said.

Bestowed every three years when ASEAN summits are usually held, the award will carry a 20,000 dollars prize for individuals and a 200,000 dollars research study or project grant for organisations, the statement said.

China to set up
giant wind power
plant soon

BEIJING, July 26: China is putting final touches on an ambitious plan to set up a giant wind power plant in the vast northwestern semi-desert region of Xinjiang, the China Daily Business Weekly reported, says AFP.

Three wind plants in the area of Urumqi, the regional capital, are to be combined into a single facility with installed annual capacity of more than 25,000 kilowatts — 44 per cent of China's total wind-power production, it said.

The new plant will be the largest wind power base in Asia, the newspaper said.

New Zealand keen
to expand trade
with Indonesia

JAKARTA, July 26: New Zealand Foreign and Trade Minister Don McKinnon said Tuesday his country wants to expand trade with Indonesia, says AP.

"We consider Indonesia as not only an important trading partner but one which will continue to grow for many years to come," McKinnon said after talks with President Suharto.

He said bilateral trade between Indonesia and New Zealand is growing at between 10 and 12 per cent a year. He gave no further figures.

Indonesian Foreign Minister Ali Alatas said discussions between McKinnon and Suharto focused on ways to expand trade.

HANOI, July 26: Two shareholders of a Vietnamese commercial bank were arrested on fraud charges after failing to pay off loans made by the bank, a company executive said Friday.

Nguyen Tien Long and Bui Kim Truong were arrested in a Hanoi police raid earlier this month, but company officials, in fear of ruining the bank's reputation, have kept the incident out of the public eye.

An executive of the bank — known as VP Bank — confirmed the arrests, while saying the operation of the bank has not been affected by the scandal. He demanded anonymity.

He said the government, however, has warned it would closely oversee the bank's activities.

Earlier this month, state-run media reported government inspectors found that VP Bank's management made dividend payments to 14 people who were not really holding shares in the bank.

Despite recent scandals, VP Bank's General Director Huynh Bui Son was quoted Friday as saying business had not been affected by the scandal, and that deposits had risen by hundreds of billion dong (tens of millions dollars) so far this year.

Son made the comments in an interview with the English-language newspaper Vietnam News.

VP Bank is among a few Vietnamese joint stock banks that have up to 30 per cent foreign capital equity. Its two foreign investors are the Ho Chi Minh City-based Dragon Capital Ltd. and the Vietnam Fund Management Co.

Talks on tariff cut begin in Nepal next week

More products likely
on SAPTA list

KATHMANDU, July 26: Senior officials from South Asian nations will begin a third round of talks next week in the Nepali capital on tariff cuts intended to boost trade in the region, officials said on Friday, reports Reuters.

"This round will enlarge the schedules of items for tariff cuts under SAPTA (South Asian Preferential Trading Arrangement) by adding more products in the list," an official of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) said.

The officials said the third round of negotiations is expected to be completed before

December this year when the commerce ministers from the region meet in Karachi to discuss liberalisation of trade in South Asia, home to one-fifth of the world's population.

Member countries of SAPTA during the first and second rounds of talks, have agreed on a list of more than 1,800 primary, manufactured and consumer goods for tariff cuts between 10 and 100 per cent.

The least developed member countries are entitled to additional tariff cuts on a non-reciprocal basis.

SAARC was formed in December 1985 to improve the economies of the region. It

groups Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, the Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.

Member countries provide tariff cuts for imports within the region under SAPTA which came into force in December 1995. They have set a goal to launch South Asian Free Trade Area (SAFTA) by the year 2001.

"This round of talks will accelerate the negotiations to attempt to cover much larger number of products," Ashok K. Attari, director of the Kathmandu-based SAARC Secretariat said.

Trade between the seven South Asian nations currently represents only 3.4 per cent of the total global trade.



Workers of the Unimet factory in Longwy, eastern France, demonstrate Thursday during a gathering for the defence of employment in the region after the closing of JVC and Panasonic plants and of a unit at Unimet.

Dubai major secret centre for
Indian exports to Pakistan

by Sanjay Suri

With Islamabad still reluctant to open up trade with India, Dubai has emerged as a major centre for clandestine Indian exports to Pakistan.

"The Pakistani government over last week allowing import of an additional 14 industrial raw materials and products from India is unlikely to reduce the importance of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) as the transit point for clandestine Indian sales to Pakistan."

"The Dubai route might still be cheaper for Indian exports to Pakistan," a wholesale trader in Dubai told IANS. "Indian exports to Pakistan through Dubai have grown rapidly over years and this will continue because Pakistan has not given India MFN (most favoured nation) status," he said.

Pakistan now officially allows the import of 601 items from India, but not many of them are actually imported. Many of these items are sent to Pakistan by Indian traders through Dubai with Indian and Pakistani traders working closely together here.

Tyres constitute one of India's biggest exports to Pakistan, now covered in the additional 14 items sanctioned for direct import. The other items that Pakistani Commerce Minister Ishaq Dar said would be cleared for direct import include cotton and yarn, nickel cadmium batteries, cutting dies for shoes, carbon brushes, anti snake-bite venom serum, hides and skins, wood, whole chillies and lightweight steel rail.

Dubai is by far the largest trading centre among the seven emirates.

In 1996-97, UAE imports from India added up to about 1.7 billion US dollar making India the fifth largest exporter to the Gulf state after China, Japan, the U.S. and South Korea.

A large part of these were meant for re-export to Pakistan. Indian goods are also re-exported from Dubai to Iran, Saudi Arabia and the Central Asian Republics.

In 1995, Dubai imported two billion rupees worth of plastic and rubber products from India. Official figures say that Dubai also imported Rs 12.2 billion worth of goods which were labelled "textiles and articles."

Many of these "articles" were left unnamed to cover re-export. The re-export of Indian goods to Pakistan done in two ways, according to a trader.

"Many of the Indian goods are marked actually for export to Afghanistan, but most of them never get beyond Peshawar," he told IANS. "The other way is that they are simply stamped as products of another country, or of the UAE, and exported to Pakistan," he explained.

Dubai agents expect to continue trading in goods cleared for direct export as well because only we know the markets of both countries," the wholesaler said. The trade route might change for goods cleared for direct export, but the traders will remain the same, he said.

Some of the other Indian products imported into Dubai for re-export to Pakistan are engineering goods like pumps, motors and tools, automobile spare parts, consumer goods like sewing machines and bicycles, and base metals like aluminium.

India exported 6.76 billion rupees worth of machinery and appliances and 4.5 billion rupees worth of base metals and associated products to Dubai in 1995. The sale of Indian machinery, base metals and chemicals has been rising rapidly.

But there is growing demand in the UAE itself for imports from India. Tata buses and trucks are a common sight in the UAE; Indian textile machinery is being increasingly bought by garments factories here; and the demand for Indian consumer goods such as kitchen appliances and fans is rising.

The demand in the UAE is limited as it has a population of only 2.7 million.

India too is primarily a centre for re-export of goods imported from Dubai. India imported 2.5 billion rupees worth of goods from Dubai in 1995 for sale in India, and another 9.2 billion rupees worth of goods that were marked for re-export to other countries.

The import bill of Dubai increased by 4.6 per cent in 1995. The import of goods from India the same year rose 13.5 per cent. The growth of Indian exports in 1994 from the previous year had been 3.25 per cent.

Source: — India Abroad News Service

Wheat worth 100m rupees
damaged in India

NEW DELHI, July 26: Careless preservation of wheat reserves in the heart of India's bread basket has robbed the country of thousands of tonnes of wheat estimated to be worth 100 million rupees.

Sources said wheat stocks in the Fazilka area of Punjab state, damaged by termites, fungi and insects due to negligence on the part of officials responsible for running the large granaries, was only fit for cattle.

The destroyed wheat was part of the buffer food stock built up in granaries around Fazilka town, one of the largest wheat markets in the region. The Tribune newspaper reported.

The Food Corporation of India (FCI), the federal agency that monitors trade in foodgrains, had invited traders to

buy off stocks from the Fazilka stores in a bid to bring down spiralling cost of the grain, official sources said. But some 257,000 sacks were rejected because of the rot.

The FCI said the Punjab Warehousing Corporation, a state agency, was negligent. The FCI claimed the agency did not use enough insecticides to save the wheat.

Sources claimed Punjab Warehousing Corporation tried to cover up the problem six months ago (when it spent two million rupees to stuff the rotten grain into fresh sacks. The rotten wheat was still lying in the warehouses and posed a threat to some 425,000 fresh bags of grain added to the reserve stock.

— India Abroad News Service

'Filipino maids in Malaysia
must get 50 pc rise in pay'

KUALA LUMPUR, July 26: The Philippine government has basically decided that Filipino maids working in Malaysia should receive a 50 per cent increase in their minimum wage, a report said Saturday, according to AP.

The Star newspaper quoted Philippine Embassy labour attaché Jeffrey Cortazar as saying the increase would bring the maids' salaries closer to those being paid to Filipino maids in Hong Kong, Taiwan and elsewhere.

The increased minimum wage, to take effect between August and October, applies to new recruits. Filipino maids working in Malaysia under old contracts will continue to receive the lower wages until their contracts expire, Cortazar said.

The current minimum wage set by the Philippine government for Filipino maids working in Malaysia is 500 ringgit (200 dollars) per month. The government wants them to be guaranteed at least 750 ringgit (300 dollars) a month, he said.

There are about 23,000 Filipino maids in Malaysia, compared to about 150,000 Indonesian maids, who are paid only about 350 ringgit (140 dollars) per month.

The new wages will see better-qualified Filipinos applying for work here and also bet-

ter work performance," Cortazar was quoted as saying.

Cortazar and other Philippine Embassy officials were unavailable for comment Saturday.

The maids are recruited by private agencies at specified wages and the Malaysian government generally does not interfere with their salaries unless the agencies or employers appeal to the Labour Ministry to intervene for any reason.

The Malaysian Association of Foreign Workers Agencies president, Ishak Kamaruddin, said some employers pay more than the minimum wage.

Meanwhile in Pasir Gudang, 300 kilometers (180 miles) south of Kuala Lumpur, the Indonesian navy ship KRI Tanjung Orsina took home 1,535 Indonesian illegal workers on Friday. They had been rounded up by authorities over the past few months. The Star reported.

On January 3, 1,026 Indonesian illegal immigrants were taken home by another navy ship. Two more vessels are to arrive in the next few months to take away another 6,000 Indonesians being held in centers for illegal immigrants.

There are about 1.8 million foreign workers in Malaysia, including an estimated one million who have no work permits.



Leftist protesters wearing mask of President Fidel Ramos (L) and Uncle Sam (R), plastered with fake US dollar notes, hold a man representing the Filipino people to dramatise the fall of the Philippine pesos, during a rally outside the Central Bank in Manila on July 25. The Philippine peso was one of the Southeast Asian currencies hit by speculators this month, resulting in its de facto devaluation two weeks ago.

— AFP/UNB photo

Global business briefs

tal Ltd. and the Vietnam Fund Management Co.

TOKYO: The top bureaucrat of Japan's Economic Planning Agency said Friday the effect of the April's consumption tax hike will likely linger until the July-September quarter.

"The impact of the tax hike will likely slightly affect July's private consumption," said EPA vice minister Shimpel Nukaya at a regular press conference. "It will likely affect the economy in the July-September quarter."

Nukaya said the impact is expected to subside toward the end of the year.

He also said that the rise in Japan's trade surplus was due to expansion of economies around the world and the weaker yen. He said exports increased temporarily due to a fall-off in domestic demand after the consumption tax hike.

He said the trade surplus has not reached a level to cause trade friction," he said.

SYDNEY: Australian businesses believe Indonesia, Thailand, Russia and Nigeria are high-risk countries for fraud, according to a survey by international accountancy firm KPMG.

However, the perceptions of

risk expressed by some of the 480 companies that responded to the survey often did not tally with the countries where they had actually experienced fraud.

In its 1997 fraud survey, KPMG found Indonesia, Thailand, Europe, in general and Russia in particular featured in the perception/experienced category.

While the whole of Africa was perceived as risky business, Nigeria in particular is seen as a problem country, even though not one company surveyed had been defrauded by the Nigerians.

In the Asia-Pacific region, Vietnam, Thailand, Taiwan, China and Indonesia are considered at risk of fraud, yet the countries where companies had actually experienced fraud were Fiji, Hong Kong, Indonesia, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vanuatu.

PERTH: Smart card technology group Intellect Holdings said it has a new 9.75 million US dollars (13 million Australian dollars) contract to install 17,000 Intellect terminals throughout Indonesia.

The company said its rollout will begin at the end of the third quarter of 1997 and installations are expected to be completed during the first half of 1998.

Intellect general manager for the Asia Pacific region, Geoff Gander, said the deal provides continued return on Intellect's research and development

investment in producing a new family of products capable of supporting multiple payment applications.

He said Intellect is well placed to capitalise on the shift in technological emphasis in the region and expected to announce further relationships with major financial institutions in coming months.

Intellect's products range from smart card readers, payment systems, electronic wallets and mobile terminals to cryptographic processors that secure facilities such as banking networks.

Intellect products are sold in 25 countries including the Netherlands, Belgium, Norway, Austria, Switzerland, Australia, New Zealand, Singapore, Brazil and the United States.

Its customers include major multinational computer companies such as NCR, and major banks and leading retailers throughout the world.

SINGAPORE: After years of debate and several gambling scandals, Singapore will finally have a legal soccer betting system.

Announcing the decision Friday, Communications Minister Mah Bow Tan said soccer pools will be introduced in time for the 1999 season. Soccer, or football as it is commonly known in Singapore, is widely followed in the city-state.

Mah, also the adviser to the Football Association of Singapore, said the government gave approval after studying a report

by Singapore Pools Pte Ltd, a government company which runs other betting activities allowed in Singapore.

A special task force chaired by Mah, is to control soccer betting, he said. Singapore Pools has been appointed to operate the football pools as it has the necessary infrastructure and experience, he said.

The minister said earlier proposals for football betting were shelved because the local football league was not professional then. But when the league turned professional last year, it became viable to adopt legal betting.

ST LOUIS: Trans World Airlines said Tuesday it will cut about 1,000 jobs — 4 per cent of its work force — by the end of the year partly because it doesn't need as many mechanics since it added new planes to its fleet.

The airline said it is consolidating its 23 domestic maintenance stations into 13. The cuts include about 250 jobs at the airline's overhaul base in Kansas City, 200 jobs at its domestic line maintenance stations, 200 jobs from airport operations and 225 jobs from reservations, the airline said.

CHICAGO: The parent of United Airlines and Shuttle by United Tuesday reported its second-quarter profits rose a record 34 per cent as strong gains in its international operations offset declines from the reinstatement of a domestic ticket tax.

On a fully distributed basis that adjusts for UAL Corp's majority employee ownership, net income for the three months ended June 30 rose to 373 million dollars, or 2.82 dollars a share, compared with 287 million dollars, or 2.18 dollars a share, a year ago.

The year-ago results include a charge of 30 million dollars, or 36 cents a share, for paying off debt and preferred stock repurchases. Excluding the charge and preferred stock transactions, net income was 2.52 dollars a share last year.

The current quarter results easily exceeded Wall Street expectations of 2.70 dollars a share, according to a survey of analysts for First Call Corp.

Coming AGMs

Company	Book Closure	AGM/EGM	Date	Venue & Time	Dividend Proposed
BCIL (Del)	17/06/97-27/07/97	Half year interest			
IFC	17/07/97-06/08/97	AGM	27/07/97	Hotel Sonargaon, 3 pm	158:100
Pragati Ins	17/07/97-06/08/97	AGM	06/08/97	Hotel Sonargaon	30
Peoples Ins	13/07/97-31/07/97	AGM	31/07/97	Hotel Sonargaon, 5:30 pm	22.50
Eastern Housing (Del)	24/06/97-30/06/97	(Half yearly interest)			
Eastind Ins	17/07/97-31/07/97	AGM	31/07/97	Hotel Purbani 3:30 pm	18
Amber Pharma	14/07/97-31/07/97	AGM	24/07/97	Taigang Reg Office 3:30 pm	15
BD Zipp (Del)	14/07/97-31/07/97	AGM			
BGIC	09/08/97-07/09/97	AGM	07/09/97	Esikalon Garden, 12 noon	24
BLTC	16/08/97-23/08/97	AGM	23/08/97	Hotel Purbani, 11:45 am	16.5
UCBL	13/08/97-27/08/97	AGM	27/08/97	Hotel Sonargaon, 3:30pm	42.5
Square Pharma	24/07/97-13/08/97	AGM	13/08/97	RAOWA Club New DOHS 11:30 am	35
Sonargaon Tex	22/07/97-05/08/97	AGM	05/08/97	Hotel Sonargaon, 3:30 pm	12.5
Map Paper	22/07/97-28/07/97	AGM	28/07/97	Gulshan Youth Club	16
Peoples Ins		EGM	31/07/97	Hotel Sonargaon, 5 pm	—

Shipping Intelligence

Chittagong Port

Berth position and performance of vessels as on 24.7.97.

Berth No	Name of Vessels	Cargo	L Port Call	Local Agent	Date of Arrival
J/1	Kuan Yin	CI	Wall	Litmond	29/7
J/2	Martine Faith	M Seed	CI	Rainbow	4/7
J/5	Sea Harvest	CI	Sing		6/7
J/6	Ocean Falcon	Fert	Adab	Litmond	5/7
J/8	Chosun Hope	CI	Lian	OWSL	28/6
J/9	Violetta	Cement	Dali	PSAL	29/6
J/11	Sea Elegance	Cont	Sing	Pil (BD)	11/7
J/12	Fong Shin	Cont	Sing	BDShip	1/7
CCT/1	M Regina	Cont	Sing	Pil (BD)	10/7
CCT/2	Diligence	Cont	Sing	QCSL	11/7
CCT/3	QC Pintail	Cont	Sing	QCSL	16/7
OCJ	Standwear	C Clink	Dali	Litmond	R/A
GSJ	Freedom-K	Cement	Lans	USTC	6/7
RM/4	Amanah Satu	Tallow	Sing	JF	19/7
RM/5	George	Cement	Chin	PSAL	11/7
RM/6	Shanon	SKO/MS	Sing	ECSL	17/7
DDJ/1	Tanary Star	Idle	Para	PSAL	
DDJ/2	Barge: Jamuna-VRepair	Chand	Karna	R/A	30/7
RM/8	Ocean-1	Repair	Cal	Cross	29/6
RM/9	Zara	Repair	Cal	Nishan	2/7
CUFLJ	Blue North	Cement	Qing	PSAL	3/6
KAFCO (U)	Penguin	Urea		Cross	R/A
KAFCO (W)	Banglar Asha Wheat (G)	Mong	BSC	15/7	23/7

Vessels due at outer anchorage					
Name of Vessels	Date of Arrival	L Port Call	Local Agent	Cargo	Loading Port
Banglar Gourab	24/7	Kar	BSC	GI	-
Lopard Tide	24/7	-	B Bay	Survey Purpose	-
Tug Bridge-16	24/7	Sing	AHZ	-	-
Explorer-1	24/7	Sing	AHZ	Scraping	-
Star Bid	25/7	Col	SML	GI (Equip)	-
Vanessa	26/7	Sing	RSL	Cont	Sing
Ye Yang	25/7	Long	OLM	Cement	-
Yu Yang	25/7	-	PSAL	Cement	-
Navigator	5/7	S Hai	Prog	R Phos/GI	-
Al Muzhba	6/7	Cal	CLA	GI (Wt Cargo)	Yang
Asha Global	6/7	-	Seaglorj	Cement	-
Caraka	-	-	-	-	-
Jaya Niaga-III	6/7	Sing	Beelle	GI (Wt C ement/St. Coll)	-
Kota Pusaka	16/7	26/7	Sing	Pil (B)	Cont
Jiang Cheng	26/7	-	BDShip	GI	Sing
Kota Berjaya	16/7	27/7	Sing	Pil (B)	Sing
President Frei	27/7	-	UMTL	Scraping	-
Banglar Robi 17/7	27/7	Sing	BSC	Cont	Sing
Meng Kiat 16/6	27/7	Col	AML	Cont	Col
Danyal Express	27/7	-	-	Sugar/GI	-
Eastern Mars	27/7	-	Prog	GI	-
Freesia 21/7	27/7	Sing	RSL	Cont	Sing
Steamer Future	21/7	28/7	Col	BDShip	Cont
Galtina-1	28/7	Niko	Litmond	MOP	Col
Padma 21/7	29/7	Sing	RSL	Cont	Sing
Yong Lee 24/6	30/7	Sing	BDShip	Cont	Col
Banglar Momb 17/7	30/7	Sing	BSC	Cont	Sing
Able Lieutenant (Roro/24) 26/6	30/7	Yoko	BBA	Vehi	-
Dragon Dragon	-	-	-	-	-
Sentos 22/7	30/7	Col	Baridhi	Cont	Col
Dona-1	1/8	Col	OTB	-	-
Kota Bintang	20/7	1/8	Sing	Pil (BDL)	Sing
QC Teal (Cont)	22/8	Sing	QCSL	Cont	Sing
Grant Orient	2/8	Dail	MBL	C Clink	-
China Star (48) 21/7	2/8	-	Everett	GI	-
Yong Jiang	31/7	Momb	RSA	GI (St Coll)	-