

BGMEA urges  
further Taka  
devaluation

Star Business Report

Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA) President Mostafa Golam Qudus hailed a recent World Bank evaluation of the country's foreign exchange reserves and called for further devaluation of Taka.

The World Bank in a report says the government's measures to check further decline in forex reserves are inadequate.

The local currency has been devalued by only 4.6 per cent against US dollar which is not enough to protect the country's export sector as huge currency devaluation was made in the neighbouring countries, BGMEA opined in a press release.

"Bangladeshi exporters would face hard competition with the exporters of neighbouring countries like India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka as much higher devaluation was made in those countries, Qudus said.

To avoid stiff competition from southeast and South Asian garment exporters and prevent mounting forex reserves, the BGMEA President has urged the government for devaluation of taka again.

Land dispute settled  
Tofael steps in to  
clear the way

By Rafiq Hasan

Commerce and Industries Minister Tofael Ahmed yesterday personally intervened to end a land dispute that delayed construction of the country's first private special industrial zone.

The dispute over a 33-acre piece of land in Chittagong between two multinational companies was settled when the minister called senior officials of both the companies at his chamber yesterday noon and held detailed discussions. Youngone Corporation chairman Rihak Sung, KAFCO managing director of KAFCO and the land secretary were also present at the meeting in which they reached consensus, official sources said.

The meeting agreed that 19 acres will be given to KAFCO for its residential quarters while the rest will go for the Youngone's 2500-acre EPZ.

The ministerial intervention followed a Daily Star story

published yesterday.

Now, the ministry of land will finalise the details of the arrangement and send it to the prime minister for approval.

A senior official in charge of private EPZ affairs at the prime minister's office told The Daily Star yesterday that the proposal would be sent to the Deputy Commissioner of Chittagong for handover of the land according to the new settlement after the PM's approval.

"A key problem has been resolved and the Korean Company is going to have the promised land soon", the official said.

The DC would put up a notice with the price of the land to be acquired and request land owners to receive money against their land. About 1800 acres out of total 2500 acres, however, are government's khas land. The government would get the money against the khas land, the official said.

## SOEs need to be energised

The state-owned enterprises (SOEs) should improve efficiency and dynamism to contribute their due share to achieve the projected industrial growth of 6.01 per cent for fiscal 1997-98, reports UNB.

This was the opinion of a review meeting on 'Problems and Probable Solutions of the Public Sector Industrial Development', held here yesterday with Commerce and Industries Minister Tofael Ahmed in the chair.

The meeting was informed that the total ADP allocation for 1997-98 is Tk 29,091 crore, of which 44 per cent is for the public sector and the rest for private sector.

Out of the public sector allocation of Tk 12,800 crore, the share of industrial sector is only 1.17 per cent (Tk 150 crore).

Bangladesh Chemical Industries Corporation (BCIC), the main contributor to the public sector industries, could utilize only Tk 34 crore from the ADP allocation. Of this, Tk nine crore would be BCIC's own contribution.

The meeting observed that

the target of public sector industrial growth, which has been fixed for this year, would be difficult to achieve, mainly due to shortage in ADP allocation.

But country's overall industrial growth is being computed through the summation of growth in the sectors of mining and quarrying, industrial production, including jute and textile, construction, transportation, infrastructure, including road, and energy production and other services sectors.

Conceding the nominal share of public sector corporations to overall industrial growth, the commerce and industries minister said in the era of globalisation and liberalisation of trade and investment, government has given priority to the private sector development.

At the same time, the government is very sincere to make the SOEs competitive and profitable, he said, adding the government is interested to up new industries on joint-venture.

Referring to the directive of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina regarding setting-up of new in-

dustries in the public sector, Tofael Ahmed said, "We have huge reserve of natural gas and its extraction would be started from coming April in full swing."

"We will set up gas-based industries, including urea and diammonium phosphate plants, to export more value-added products after meeting the local demand."

The minister added: "We have to modernize the SOEs with the limited allocation. As such, sincerity, honesty and missionary real should be the precondition to achieve the target."

The meeting discussed the on-going production, maintenance and modernization programmes in the SOEs under the Industries Ministry.

The discussion specially focussed on the future of the proposed Shahjalal Fertilizer Factory, DAP plant and the BMRE of Karnafuli Paper Mills and Sylhet Paper and Pulp Mills.

Industries Secretary M Akhter Ali, BCIC chairman M Anwarul Haque and officials of

the industries ministry and sector corporations attended the meeting.

SCB-AB Bank  
arrangement

Standard Chartered Bank (SCB) signed an agency arrangement deal with Arab Bangladesh Bank Ltd (ABBL) yesterday at the head office of ABBL, says a press release.

Under the arrangement, Bangladesh working in Malaysia can remit Taka directly to their relatives in Bangladesh by utilising Speed Remittance Facility (SRF) of Standard Chartered Bank (SCB) Malaysia through its 35 branches in Malaysia to 30 selected branches of Arab Bangladesh Bank Ltd (ABBL) in Bangladesh.

Mamun Rashid, head of Treasury & Institutional Banking, SCB, Dhaka and M A Awal, Deputy Managing Director, ABBL, signed the agreement.

Geoff Williams, Chief Executive of SCB Bangladesh and A Rahim Chowdhury, Managing Director of ABBL, were present on the occasion.

CSE members  
observe Indian  
systems

A delegation of Chittagong Stock Exchange members led by Azizul Hakim recently visited National Stock Exchange, Bombay Stock Exchange and Pune Stock Exchange in India. The tour was aimed at gathering practical knowledge about screen-based trading system, which is expected to be launched in CSE by the end of this year, says a press release.

The tour was jointly organised by CSE and Indian computer software developer CMC Ltd.

During the visit CSE members observed practical demonstration on "screen-based on-line trading system" computerized back office management system, central (local-based) settlements system, and regional (area-based) settlements system along with various other aspects.

The team members also observed a presentation on "VECTOR" (Versatile Engine for Centralized Trading and on-line Reporting) system, which will be installed in the CSE.

The members visited some brokerage houses in Mumbai and exchanged views.

Italian employers  
reject 35-hour  
working week

MILAN, Italy, Oct 15: The Italian Employers' federation rejected outright on Tuesday any cut to a 35-hour working week which is at the heart of a compromise between the outgoing government and Communists to rescue the EMU-qualifying budget, reports AFP.

The Communists last week all but brought down the centre-left government by rejecting cuts in the welfare programme to bring the public deficit into line with targets for Economic and Monetary Union (EMU). Under a compromise to be completed on Tuesday, the length of the working week would be reduced to 35 hours from January 1, 2001.

But the number two of the employers' federation, Innocenzo Cipolletta, told the 'Il Sole-24 Ore' newspaper: "The economy cannot be the scapegoat for this crazy crisis as laid down by (prime minister) Romano Prodi."

The reduction, on a given date "in the same way as is planned in France" amounted to "a system which increases the cost of labour without creating a single job but destroying jobs," he said. This was "universally recognised."

FICCI secretary  
honoured

International Biography Centre, Cambridge, has honoured the Secretary of Foreign Investors' Chamber of Commerce & Industry (FICCI), Jahangir Bin Alam, by including his biography in the 25th Edition of its 'Directory of International Biography' published in March 1997, says a press release.

This was communicated to the FICCI Secretary by the Senior Editor of the UK-based Centre, Sean Tyler, through a letter dated September 19, 1997.

Two American  
researchers  
share World  
Food Prize

WASHINGTON, Oct 15: Two American pest control researchers received this year's World Food Prize Tuesday for their work on reducing insecticide use while maintaining or increasing yields, reports AP.

Ray F. Smith, 78, and Perry L. Adkisson, 68, will share the \$250,000 dollar cash award that accompanies the prize.

"Working separately and together over the past 30 years, Smith and Adkisson helped bring about a fundamental shift in agricultural production marked by a dramatic reduction in the use of chemical pesticides," said a statement on the award.

It said their work on new approaches to agricultural pest control had sparked a global ecological revolution, reducing insecticide use on US crops alone by 50 per cent.

Their approach — known as "integrated pest management" — employs combinations of biological, ecological and chemical techniques to protect crops from insect damage in an environmentally safe manner.

Smith worked at the University of California, Berkeley, and Adkisson was a professor and administrator at Texas A-and-M University.

Indian move to combat  
economic slowdown

NEW DELHI, Oct 15: Indian Prime Minister Inder Kumar Gujral on Tuesday said the government would announce a series of steps within a week to combat an economic slowdown in the country, reports AFP.

"The government will come out with both short-term and long-term measures to check the sluggish growth in the economy," Gujral told industrialists and businessmen at a meeting here.

Gujral said the government would also review the pace of reforms in oil, coal, telecommunications, power and transport sectors to boost industrial growth.

The Indian economy slowed

down in the fiscal year to March 1997, due to high interest rates, a cash shortage, poor demand and a dip in exports.

Companies have complained that interest rates remain high and consumer demand sluggish, while stock markets, which dipped at the end of last year, remain at low levels.

Gujral said an "expert committee" would be set up to look into the capital goods sector to stimulate consumer demand.

Finance Minister Palaniappan Chidambaram, who was present at the meeting said the slowdown was a "temporary phenomenon" and the economy would recover in the second half of the fiscal to March 1998.

Pak hope to attain food  
autarky in 2 years

ISLAMABAD, Oct 15: Pakistani Finance Minister Sartaj Aziz said that his country would achieve self-reliance in food within the next two years, reports Xinhua.

It is an irony that, despite being an agro-based economy, Pakistan has to import wheat and other edibles to meet its domestic demand, Aziz said while inaugurating a "one-window" agricultural credit scheme in Chakwal, about 80 kilometres south of here, according to official sources.

Agriculture is the most important sector of the country's economy involving around 70 per cent of its population, but the sector has been ignored during the past few years, Aziz said.

As a result, prices of fertiliser, tractors and other farm materials have increased but farmers remain deprived of any

incentives, he said.

He said the government has been trying to raise prices for agricultural products and reduce rates of farm materials and agricultural inputs like good seeds and fertiliser will also be made available.

Meanwhile, the government has allocated an amount of 30 billion rupees (750 million US dollars) for credits to small farmers throughout the country, the minister noted.

Under the "one window" scheme, the relevant departments have been brought under one roof to ensure that a loan will be granted in one day, he said, adding that it used to take about three months to materialise a single case.

Aziz called upon farmers to fully cooperate with the government to achieve food self-reliance in two years.



First annual general meeting of Pioneer Insurance Co Ltd was held recently with Syed Manzur Elahi, chairman of the company, presiding. Shareholders including all the directors were present at the meeting. The AGM expressed satisfaction over the performance of the company.



Pearl collectors making a pittance, a Daily Star picture story published October 12, touched an expatriate's soul. Chandra M Black, an Indonesian living in Dhaka for more than four years, took a trip to the collectors' hub at Kanchpur and distributed food among some members of the bedey community.

— Star Photo by A K M Mohsin

FAA fines  
World Airways

WASHINGTON, Oct 15: The Federal Aviation Administration has fined a US-based airline \$10,000 dollars for violating security rules in a leasing arrangement with an Asian airline, reports AP.

The FAA said the Virginia-based World Airways agreed to pay a civil penalty and signed a consent agreement related to nine cases involving violations of US aviation regulations. Eight of the cases involved a "wet lease" agreement between World Airways and Malaysia Airlines. A wet lease is the leasing of an aircraft and its crew by an aviation company to another carrier.

World Airways' aircraft are required to be operated at all times in compliance with US Federal Aviation Regulations, and the FAA charged that the aircraft violated security regulations while conducting flights in Cape Town and Johannesburg, South Africa, five months of last year.

The ninth case occurred in Belfast, Northern Ireland, in June 1996.

None of the violations occurred in US airspace, and the FAA declined to discuss details. The settlement requires World to immediately pay \$405,000 dollars and to work with the FAA to improve compliance with regulations.

If world meets all the provisions and does not commit any security violations for 12 months, the remaining 205,000 dollars of the penalty will be suspended.

## Exchange Rates

The following are the Janata Bank's dealing rates (BD Tk for one unit of Foreign Currency) to public as on 15/10/97.

Name of Currency	Buying			Selling		
	TT Clean	OD Sight	OD Transfer	TT Clean	OD Sight	OD Transfer
US Dir	44.4350	44.2519	44.1433	US Dir	44.4300	44.2545
GB Pound	71.6202	71.3166	71.1417	GB Pound	71.6079	71.3250
D Mark	25.2773	25.1702	25.1084	D Mark	25.2761	25.1762
24.0726	7.5349	7.5051	7.4887	F Franc	32.9976	31.8712
JP Yen	0.3644	0.3628	0.3619	S Franc	30.3209	30.2011
C Dir	31.9991	31.8635	31.7853	JP Yen	0.3625	0.3611
S Franc	30.3224	30.1938	30.1198			

The following are the Sonali Bank's dealing rates (BD Tk for one unit of Foreign Currency) to public as on 15th Oct '97.

Name of Currency	Buying			Selling		
	TT Clean	OD Sight	OD Transfer	TT Clean	OD Sight	OD Transfer
US Dir	44.4300	44.2545	44.1580	US Dollar	44.7105	44.7505
GB Pound	71.6079	71.3250	71.1695	GB Pound	72.6345	72.6995
D Mark	25.2761	25.1762	25.1213	D Mark	25.7060	25.7290
F Franc	7.5349	7.5051	7.4887	F Franc	7.6626	7.6694
C Dir	32.9976	31.8712	31.8017	C Dollar	32.5350	32.5641
S Franc	30.3209	30.2011	30.1353	S Franc	30.8401	30.8677
JP Yen	0.3625	0.3611	0.3603	JP Yen	0.3725	0.3728

TT (DOC) US Dollar Spot Buying Tk. 44.3422

Coming AGMs

Company	Book Closure	AGM/EGM	Date	Value & Time	Dividend Proposed
Beem Ltd (Deb)	29/09/97-10/10/97	Half Yearly Interest	30/10/97	Hotel Purbani, 3pm	—
ICB	16/10/97-30/10/97	AGM	30/10/97	—	—
Quessen Dryoil	26/09/97-30/09/97	AGM	30/10/97	—	SR3 (pre 15)
Best Pharma	10/11/97-30/11/97	AGM	30/11/97	—	30 (102)
Shree Pukur	—	—	—	—	100
Uttara Bank	20/10/97-18/11/97	AGM	18/11/97	Officers Club, Dhaka, 11am	—
Wata Chemical	16/10/97-30/10/97	EGM	16/10/97	Hotel Purbani, 4pm	—
Basco Ltd (Deb)	09/10/97-20/10/97	AGM	20/10/97	Factory Premises, City 3pm	—
Al Baraka Bank	07/10/97-16/10/97	EGM	16/10/97	Hotel Purbani, 3pm	—
Green Inds Inc	—	—	—	—	—

## Shipping Intelligence

CHITTAGONG PORT  
Berth position and performance of vessels as on 15.10.97.

Berth No	Name of vessels	Cargo	L Port	Local Agent	Date of Leaving
J/1	Kimberley	C Clink	Dali	MHL	9/9
J/2	Ocean Crest	GI (Log)	Yang	OWSL	2/10
J/4	Phoenix	—	—	—	19/10
J/6	Vega-SS	Sugar (G)	Darb	Seacom	4/10
J/7	Dong Fah	Sugar (G)	Town	Limond	4/10
J/8	An Jiang	—	Xing	ECSL	23/9
J/9	Ultima	Cont	Mong	Baridhi	14/10
J/11	Qc Teal	Cont	Sing	QCSC	12/10
J/12	Helios-II	Urea	Damm	Move	R/A
J/13	Tirguc Neamt	R Seed	Roue	AASS	29/9
CCT/1	Vanessa	Cont	Sing	RSL	11/10
CCT/2	Banglar Robi	Cont	Sing	BSC	12/10
RM/14	Sheng Yuan	Cement	Peng	RML	19/8
CCJ	Golden Ocean	Urea (G)	Sara	CTPL	12/10
TSP	Pearl Dammam	R Phos	Vize	BMA	1/9
RM/6	Ras Al Zour	HSD	Mina	MSTPL	11/10
DOJ	Shao Shan	Cement	Delmure	R/A	20/10
DD	Banglar Shourabh	Repair	Idle	PSAL	R/A
DDJ/1	Tanary Star	Repair	Idle	PSAL	30/10
DDJ/2	Prudent	Repair	Idle	PSAL	30/10
RM/8	Star-Glory 308	Cement	Vize	Prog	30/9
RM/9	Banglar Shourabh	Repair	Vize	Prog	30/9
Kafop (U)	Tyng Ocean Echo	P Mat	Sing	MSC	30/9

Vessels Due at Outer Anchorage

Name of Vessels	Date of Last Port	Local Agent	Cargo	Loading Port
Tug Tong Ah	15/10	Sing	ILA	—
Albatros-III	15/10	Raw	Cross	Urea (BCIO)
Banglar Moni 1/10	16/10	Sing	BSC	Cont
M Regina 5/10	16/10	Sing	PIL (BD)	Cont
QC Pintail 8/10	16/10	Sing	QCSL	Cont
Lamphun Navet 7/10	16/10	Sing	RSL	Cont
Kommunist	16/10	Sing	Sinni	Scraping
Ventura	17/10	Fuja	Sinni	Scraping
Alan Tenaga	17/10	—	Rainbow	GI
Ruslan	18/10	—	Limond	Map in Bulk
Kota Pusaka 8/10	18/10	Sing	PIL (BD)	Cont
Padma 9/10	18/10	Sing	QCSL	Cont
Diligence Cont 12/10	19/10	Sing	RSL	Cont
Tempest	20/10	Long	HSL	Cement
Xuan Cheng	20/10	—	Seaglor	GI
Anilda	20/10	Sing	BNSC	Cement
Sarah-I	20/10	Bomb	Cross	GI (St Cargo)
Sin Hai 12/10	21/10	Sing	QCSL	Cont
Stelia-F	22/10	—	Oil	GI
Xpress Resolve 13/10	22/10	Sing	RSL	Cont
Dragon Sentosa 4/9	23/10	Col	Baridhi	Cont
Kota Bintang 14/10	23/10	Sing	PIL (BD)	Cont
Astro Joyjin (Roro/24)	30/10	Col	JF	Vehi
Abie Lieutenant	30/10	—	BEA	Vehi
(Roro/24) 7/10	—	—	—	—

Tanker Due

Name of Vessels	Date of Last Port	Local Agent	Cargo	Loading Port
Mavra	16/10	Seacom	CDSO	—
Spiros	18/10	Jebe	BEL	Crude Oil

Vessels At Kutubdia

Name of Vessels	Cargo	Last Port	Local Agent	Date of Arrival
Ismaya	—	—	B Bay	9/1
Orizont	—	Sing	B Bay	25/10
Smit Lloyd-72	—	—	B Bay	R/A (24/9)
Oxy Two	—	—	B Bay	R/A (10/10)