

**JV with French co**

**Tk 1b cement factory in Sylhet soon**

SYLHET, Dec 11: A joint-venture cement industry in the private sector will be set up in Sylhet with a production capacity of 12 lakh tonnes a year, reports UNB.

A French company is collaborating with a Bangladeshi entrepreneur to set up the industry at Noaral and Thengrajan area in Chhatak thana of the district.

The construction work, which was estimated to cost about Tk one billion, is to start early next year.

Sources said, the industry, named LeFarge Surma Cement, is expected to go into production at the middle of the year 2001.

**Russia willing to buy jute worth \$ 17m**

Russia has expressed keen interest to purchase raw jute and jute goods worth 17 million US dollar from Bangladesh, reports UNB.

A two-member delegation, led by vice president of Russian Public Fund Anatole V Tikhonov, disclosed this when they called on State Minister for Jute and Textiles AK Faizul Huq at his office yesterday.

The delegation members also expressed their hope to buy textile goods from Bangladesh.

The minister informed them that under the leadership of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, a free market economy and free trade policy have been introduced in the country to attract foreign investment.

The Russian delegation praised the government's present investment policy.

Russian Ambassador Eugeny P Ivanov and joint secretary of Jute Ministry AKM Rezaul Rahman were also present during the meeting, said an official handout.

**OPEC fund to extend more aid to Bangladesh**

OPEC Fund for International Development (OPECFID) will extend financial assistance to implement various projects of rural electrification and infrastructure development in Bangladesh, reports UNB.

The visiting Director General of OPECFID, Y Seyyid Abdulah, gave the assurance during a meeting with Finance Minister Shah AMS Kibria here on yesterday.

**Leather goods fair ends**

The Four-day 2nd Dhaka Leather Goods Fair-97, organised by the Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry (DCCI) in cooperation with German Technical Cooperation (GTZ), concluded yesterday, says a press release.

Twenty reputed leather and leather goods manufacturers participated in the fair. The first two days of the event were reserved for business meetings between buyers and sellers and the rest days were open to the public.

At the end of the fair, certificates were awarded to the participants by A S M Quasem, President, DCCI on behalf of the organisers.

**New Chairman of MPA**

From Staff Correspondent  
KHULNA, Dec 11: Commodore AMA Alam Tuesday joined the Mongla Port Authority (MPA) as Chairman on deputisation.

The post remained vacant after the transfer of Rezaul Huq, MPA Member (E&D), Sharif Atiqur Rahman, worked as acting chairman of Authority.

**Exchange Rates**

The following are the Janata Bank's dealing rates (BD Tk for one unit of Foreign Currency) to public as on 11/12/97.

Buying			
Name of Currency	TT Clean	OD Sight Export Bills	OD Transfer
US Dir	45.2850	45.0991	44.9884
GB Pound	74.4391	74.1249	73.9430
D.Mark	35.2522	25.1456	25.0839
FR Franc	7.5452	7.5134	7.4949
JP Yen	0.3488	0.3473	0.3464
C.Dir	31.5679	31.4346	31.3575
S.Franc	31.1618	31.0303	30.9541
Selling			
Name of Currency	T.T. & O.D.	B.C.	
US Dollar	45.6615	45.7010	
GB Pound	75.6413	75.7074	
D.Mark	25.7149	25.7374	
Fr. France	7.6830	7.6897	
JP Yen	0.3574	0.3577	
C.Dollar	32.1396	32.1676	
S. Franc	31.7590	31.7867	
Janata Bank's selling and buying rates in cash currency for public:			
	Selling	Buying	
US DLR	46.1500	45.6500	
GBP	74.6400	72.6400	
S Riyal	12.3500	12.000	

**BOC plant foundation stone laying**

**President invites transnationals to invest in Bangladesh**

By Govinda Shil, back from Rugganj, Narayanganj

Executives of the BOC Bangladesh Ltd are happy that the head of the state came and laid the foundation stone of one of its new plants.

"I feel very much proud of the stature of BOC, were testifying to Bangladesh's prospects, potentials and, above all, the business climate."

"It makes a statement of confidence in the congenial investment atmosphere that now exists in Bangladesh," the President said. "I hope more multinational companies will follow the example."

David John, Chairman of the BOC Group (UK), and Khan,

ing plant here is now producing 30 tonnes liquefied gas a day.

In his speech, President Shahabuddin Ahmed said the foreign investors, who were already in the country, especially of the stature of BOC, were testifying to Bangladesh's prospects, potentials and, above all, the business climate.

"The investment that this company is making in the economy of Bangladesh is highly appreciable," the President said.

BOC Group UK has been operating here in the subcontinent for last 60 years and its total investment so far reached Tk 175 crore. In 1973, it was registered in Bangladesh as Bangladesh Oxygen Limited.

the MD of the Bangladesh subsidiary, also spoke. M Saiduzzaman, the chairman BOC Bangladesh Ltd, and British High Commissioner in Bangladesh David Walker were also present.

"We have been here for last 60 years and want to remain here for another 60 years," he said.

BOC's turnover was Tk 80 crore last financial year.



President Shahabuddin Ahmed lays the foundation stone of a new air separation plant of the BOC Bangladesh Ltd at Rugganj yesterday. David John, the BOC Group Chairman, was also present. —PID Photo

**Jamuna multi-purpose bridge**

**Northern Bangladesh readies for a big boost to business**

NATORE, Dec 11: The prospect of setting up small, medium and large scale industries is bright in the comparatively less developed northern district including Natore, as the construction of the Jamuna Multi-purpose Bridge is nearing completion, reports UNB.

The industrialisation in the northern region lagged behind for a long time because of absence of gas supply, problems of transportation and communication, shortage and high price of fuels, erratic electric supply, lack of entrepreneurship, barriers of industrial loan sanction and the bureaucratic red-tapism.

The multi-million-dollar JMB certainly not meant not only for facilitating crossing the river Jamuna by human but for enabling smooth movement of goods as well.

Presently, all goods and most of the passengers are carried via shutter ferries, launches and boats. Rapid industrialisation and setting up of a free trade zone along with the Indian border in Rajshahi might be some of the ways in which the utility as well as economic viability of the Jamuna Bridge could be enhanced.

According to local entrepreneurs, one of the most serious bottlenecks of industrialisation in the northern region is the absence of natural gas supply. It is hoped for the sake of development and to check the deforestation, natural gas will be supplied on priority basis in the region.

Due to lack of natural gas supply, the use of firewood in

brickfields, cottage industries and house-holds has been increased alarmingly. Many entrepreneurs of the country are reluctant to set up industries in this region because of the lack of gas and transportation facilities.

But the prospect of setting up agro-based industries exists also in the region of the country. A number of export processing zones (EPZs) could be established in this region if agro-based industries flourish.

In greater Rajshahi district, there is an ample scope for a number of agro-based industries. Rajshahi, Natore, Naogaon and Chapainawabganj districts are famous for mango, lichi, sugarcane, watermelon, sweet potato, potato, turmeric, catechu, shellac (sealing wax), fish and many other non-conventional agro-products like vegetable, fine rice, palm, seed cotton, sunflower, raw leather and meat.

**Global Anti-Counterfeiting Group formed**

Star Business Report

Anti-counterfeiting organizations from leading industrial countries have decided to work together in responding to the increased involvement of organized crime in making and selling fake goods.

The International Chamber of Commerce (ICC) and its own Counterfeiting Intelligence Bureau, announced the alliance after a meeting of anti-counterfeiting groups based in France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Sweden, the United Kingdom and the United States.

The new body, Global Anti-Counterfeiting Group (GACG), will present a united front to governments and exchange information and expertise, according to an ICC statement issued yesterday from Paris.

Peter Lowe, Assistant Director of the ICC Counterfeiting Intelligence Bureau, said: "The initiative will improve negotiating positions with countries in which counterfeiting is rampant, and increase the effectiveness of law enforcement measures."

Lower, who is interim chairman of the new body, said: "Counterfeiting rings are often financed by organized crime and terrorist groups. They threaten the health and safety of consumers, rob governments of taxes and steal the creativity of manufacturers throughout the world."

Formation of the alliance would help industry to mount an effective response to product counterfeiting, said John Bliss, President of the US-based International Anti-Counterfeiting Coalition. "Counterfeiters have become very sophisticated and they are organized on an international scale. In contrast, anti-counterfeiting bodies have been fragmented. So it has become essential that we build a well-coordinated international front."

**Three-day computer show opens**  
**It's more than just business promotion, says Kibria**

Finance Minister Shah A M S Kibria yesterday asked all concerned not to treat the computer industry as 'trade promotion' but to turn it into a movement based on science to help the nation face the challenge of the twenty-first century, reports BSS.

The entire society, he said, must be involved with the computer sector to make it a forward-looking industry.

Describing the computer industry as an important weapon in the nation's forward march, Kibria said this sector should be the vanguard of our national progress.

The sector, the minister said, should be developed to make computer a part of the people's thinking.

Kibria expressed the hope that the computer would bring about revolution in our national life, making qualitative change in all sectors, including education and agriculture.

The minister also asked all

involved with the computer sector to find ways for exports boost.

He said of all items, computer deserves utmost consideration.

**Dolphin discount at BCS show**  
Star Business Report

Dolphin Computers Ltd, distributor of Acer products in Bangladesh, has announced discounts on its sales during the three-day exhibition that began at Sheraton Hotel yesterday, a company statement said.



A three-day show of computers and related products sponsored by the Bangladesh Computer Samity began at Sheraton Hotel yesterday. Finance Minister S A M S Kibria opened the display dubbed the biggest ever in Bangladesh. —Star Photo

**Scandinavian donors likely to provide Tk 757cr as grant**

The Scandinavian donors are likely to provide Taka 757 crore as grants against various projects of the Bangladesh government during the current fiscal year (1997-98), reports BSS.

The projects to be financed under the Norwegian grants are female secondary education stipend project, phase-2 under the Ministry of Education, area coverage rural electrification project-five in Bhola under the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources, non-formal education project-2 under the primary and mass education. They have agreed to provide Taka 141.0 crore against these three projects.

Denmark has agreed to finance Taka 90 crore in the rehabilitation of Dhaka-Aricha highway project. This grant will be utilised to meet the additional cost for the project,

which is being implemented by Roads and Railway Division of the Ministry of Communication. Earlier, Taka 115.0 crore was provided by the Danish government for the project under an agreement signed in April, 1995.

**Energised lines to cross 105,000 km by 2000: REB**

The energised lines under the ongoing Rural Electrification (RE) programme will exceed 105,000 kilometres by the year 2000, a Rural Electrification Board source said here yesterday, reports BSS.

It said the sales of electricity will exceed 24 billion kilowatts per hour per year by the turn of the century.

So far 82,804 lines have been energised, to give 1.71 million connections in 20,520 villages.

The rural electrical programme in Bangladesh experienced an average 16.31 per cent loss compared to 30 per cent or more of the government electric utilities, the source said adding that the RE programme's overall goal is to bring down the system loss to 10 per cent. In fiscal year 1996, electric sales increased over 23 per cent over the previous year.

Since the inception of the RE programme in 1978, the donor agencies and countries have provided 880.80 million US dollars for setting up 62 PBS,

distribution lines and expansion work among other activities across the country.

**Gold prices hit 11-yr low in India**

BOMBAY, Dec 11: Gold price in India, the world's largest consumer of the metal, plunged in line with falling global prices, traders said, reports AFP.

Gold trader Makhmal Damani, President of the Bombay Bullion Association, said the metal opened at 314 dollars to an ounce, down 0.63 per cent from Tuesday's close of 316 dollars.

"Today's price is the lowest in 11 years," he said. "Domestic gold price is now totally dependent on international price."

Damani, a spokesman for the Bombay bullion association said traders were happy at the falling prices.



Mr M A Yussouf Khan, President and Managing Director of United Commercial Bank Ltd inaugurates the new premises of Pabna branch of the bank. K C Rezaul Huq, Additional Managing Director, is also seen in the picture.

**STUDY IN AUSTRALIA**

**At University of Wollongong & Wollongong International College**

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APPLY NOW FOR FEBRUARY 1998 ENROLMENT

A University of Wollongong Representative will be conducting interviews and accepting applications at: Dhaka Sheraton Hotel, Dhaka from 1pm-6pm on 16th December 1997.

(Appointment not required)

Further information:  
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**Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh**

Ministry of Education  
Bangladesh National Commission for UNESCO  
1, Asian Highway, Plassey, Nilkhet  
Dhaka-1205

**Notice**

Project proposals on holding workshop, seminar, symposium & purchase of equipment in the field of education, culture, science & technology, literacy, youth development & women education development, are invited from govt, semi-govt, autonomous & Non-Government Organisations (NGOs) for 1998-1999 under UNESCO Participation Programme.

- Terms & conditions for submitting project proposal:**
- UNESCO's prescribed proforma (PP) for the project proposals can be collected from this commission during office hours. For each project, 6 (six) copies should be filled in & reached to the Bangladesh National Commission for UNESCO Ministry of Education, 1, Asian Highway, Plassey, Nilkhet, Dhaka-1205 during office hours by 17 December '97.
  - Such NGOs as have 3 (three) years working experience in the field of education, culture, science & technology, literacy, youth development & women's development at national & international level and are registered by the Ministry of Social Welfare & Bureau of NGO Affairs and have experience of programme implementation to the tune of minimum Tk 10 (ten) lakh including Govt project implementation can only submit the proposal.
  - Govt & autonomous organisations should send their project proposals through respective authorities.
  - In the project proposals, the budget in case of holding workshop, seminar, symposium on national level should be kept within 20,000 (twenty thousand) US dollars, and in case of international, regional, sub-regional level, it should be within 25,000 (twenty five thousand) US dollars.
  - Project proposals should be sent in bound form. Incomplete & unbound project proposal will not be accepted by the commission.
  - No organisation can submit more than 3 (three) project proposals.
  - The tenure of the project will be 1 (one) year.
  - No project proposal will be received after the prescribed date.
  - "Current Account No. 810-7, Secretary, Bangladesh National Commission for UNESCO, Agrani Bank, National Press Club branch" must be written in column-C of para-13 of the project proforma where bank account number is indicated.
  - The authority reserves the right to accept or reject any proposal without assigning any reason.

Secretary  
Bangladesh National Commission for UNESCO  
Dhaka  
DFP-27634/412  
G-3072