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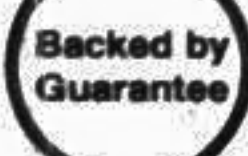
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PHILIPS



WB on population programmes Govt has failed to resolve all audit observations

By Naimul Haq

The government has not been able to "resolve all the audit observations from the third and fourth health and population programmes (HAPP-3, HAPP-4)," the World Bank has said.

In a letter to Health Secretary Mohammad Ali recently, it said the Bank "must bring to your notice a long-standing issue of serious concern to the Bank and its co-financiers. The progress in resolving the pending audit observations has been extremely slow. The Bank attaches greatest importance to effective and timely follow-up action on the audit of the operations it finances."

The WB said the government has failed to resolve, as agreed with the last review mission, all outstanding observations relating to third project by December 1997 and those relating to first four years of fourth project by March 1998.

The World Bank review mission sought and obtained assurances from the government to resolve the issue by December 1998. Seven audit observations

relating to the third project (HAPP-3) and forty-five relating to first four years of just concluded fourth population and health project (FHP) still remain unresolved. It is very distressing to know that audit observations relating to third project still remain outstanding, the letter said.

To prevent jeopardising a smooth flow of funds from the Bank and co-financiers to the current US dollar 2.9 billion five-year health and population programme, started on July 1, 1998, it will be necessary to fulfil the deadline, the letter added.

According to sources in the Health Ministry, since the August 1997 mission, the government has resolved 10 audit observations relating to HAPP-3, leaving seven outstanding. It also resolved 29 observations relating to FHP for 1992-93 to 1995-96, leaving 45 unresolved.

Betar cancels

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not to allow any private company to start transmission of its programme from Betar's transmitter without prior permission of the government.

But the DG in a letter to the company on June 25 requesting it to postpone transmission of its programme on July 1 however showed other reasons.

The letter had said, "You are requested to postpone transmission of the programme because of mechanical faults in the transmitter and various technical reasons."

The DG avoided a direct reply when asked whether he had cancelled the permission as regards safe of time slot to any private company. "We are working out a mechanism to make the terms and conditions of such an agreement more favourable to the government," he said.

"The company will definitely be allowed to start its programme," he said.

When contacted, the information secretary told The Daily Star that no such permission was given to any company from the ministry.

"If allocating a slot of Betar time is within the administrative purview of the DG, then this award should be transparent and competitive as well," he said.

Some other officials of the ministry of information said the BBC is now operating an FM station under a time slot agreement with the ministry and not with the Bangladesh Betar.



A Daily Star Roundtable on 'How to make our ports function better' was held in the city yesterday. —Star photo

SAARC help

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West turned almost a blind eye to India.

The western community had only insisted that Pakistan stand on high moral ground while it decided to look the other way so far as India's nuclear preparations were concerned, he said.

And after India conducted the nuclear tests, the US, instead of responding stringently on India's belligerence, not only stepped up its monitoring on us, but offered us some chocolates.

They said if we do not carry out any nuclear tests, they will release to us the 28 F-16s at the rate of two each month.

"We have already paid for the F-16s. They were trying to bribe us with our own money," he said.

Zaki said that people of Pakistan could not sleep for two weeks after the Indian tests, fearing a nuclear holocaust.

On the night of May 27-28 we received reports that India was mounting missiles at us in a pre-emptive strike. We kept the Pakistan Air Force in the skies on vigil throughout the night and the following day we conducted our own tests.

He explained that Pakistan had to respond with its own nuclear tests to restore the psychological and strategic imbalance which India created and "with which India wanted to blackmail us into submission."

Zaki said Indian explosions triggered a chain reaction and shattered the climate of confidence in the entire region and "now it is upto us to repair it for our survival and the survival of posterity."

Abul Hasan, former foreign secretary presided over the session while Brigadier Shahedul Anam, Director General of BISS delivered the keynote address.

11 more frozen food plants get EU clearance

By Govinda Shil

The European Union authorities have allowed 11 more standardised frozen food processing plants to export frozen food to 15 European countries, sources in the Bangladesh Frozen Food Exporters Association said yesterday.

A EU Standing Committee in a meeting on July 7 okayed the plants and took the decision, the sources said.

The EU had banned import of Bangladeshi frozen food on July 30, last year on grounds that the processing plants and government owned food testing laboratories were not following EU health regulations.

Following the ban, the government took special measures to upgrade the food processing plants to the EU standard. The Bangladesh Bank had also urged all commercial banks to create special funds for the frozen food processors to help them buy modern machinery and equipment.

The government had sent a short list of six processing plants to the EU headquarters in Brussels late last year seeking approval. The six plants received approval in early February this year after inspection by EU officials.

The government sent another list of 11 upgraded plants to Brussels in early April.

Talking to The Daily Star last night BFFEA president Golem Mostafa said that he was happy over the decision. His company, Coastal Sea Foods, has got approval this time.

Mostafa said 20 more plants are now able to follow the EU regulations and the government should take steps so that these

can export frozen food to the EU countries.

The EU approved plants are: Fish Preservers Ltd, Mahi Fish Processing Ltd, Coastal Sea Foods Limited, Zalalabad Sea Foods Ltd, Fresh Foods Ltd, International Shrimp Exporters Ltd, Chhabi Fish Process Industries Ltd, Prince Sea Food Private Limited, Bionic Sea Foods Exports Ltd, Kuliarchar Cold Storage Limited, and Penguin Ice and Fish Processing Ltd.

2 Indian nationals killed in road accident

JHENIDAH, July 11: Two Indian nationals were killed and two others injured, one of them seriously, in a road accident on Dhaka-Benapole highway Thursday, reports BSS.

According to police and eyewitnesses, the driver of a Benapole-bound night coach from Dhaka lost control of the vehicle and the coach rammed in to a wayside truck. One person, who was identified as Swapan Saha 35, of village Berate under Nema thana of West Bengal died on the spot. His wife Champa and sons Roni and Sujoy were critically injured and rushed to Jhenidah Sadar Hospital. Sujoy, 3, later succumbed to his injuries.

The victims were on their way back to Calcutta after visiting their relatives in Narayan-ganj.

Police seized the coach. A case was filed with Jhenidah thana.

Roundtable

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Sikder also gave vent to exporters' anger about being forced to pay surcharge for congestion at Chittagong port. "Let the Port Authority of the government pay it. Do not penalise us," he said.

He also pleaded that some inland container depots be allowed in the private sector.

Shipping Secretary A H Mozaffar Karim admitted that "the (Chittagong) port is not fully geared to handle the containers," and that there were shortages of equipment. "Container handling began in real sense only 10-12 years ago," he said.

He said the ports were too much labour-oriented and that the government was banking on ADB assistance to procure high-tech equipment.

The location of Chittagong Port was also a problem, the shipping secretary said. "It's not located at deep sea. Mother vessels cannot come to the port and feeder vessels do the job, which makes travel time higher."

The focus fell more on Chittagong Port, which handles some 80 per cent of total imports and 60 per cent of exports.

The volume of external trade is increasing fast, putting pressure on the under-capacity port facility. With cargo handling rising at an annual rate of 19-20 per cent, Chittagong Port would be required to handle some half a million containers by 2000.

Flood situation

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BSS from Rangpur reports, at least one thousand dwelling houses along with vast tract of standing crop field went under flood water following rise of water level in the river Teesta at Gangachara, Kaunia and Pir-gacha thana areas.

District relief officer told the news agency that flood waters in Teesta showed slight recession on Thursday.

Khaleda: Jamuna Bridge

From Page 1

venue but none was allowed to cross the police barricade behind the podium to go towards the bridge.

Large contingents of armed police were deployed at the meeting venue. The regular security arrangements within three-kilometers at both ends of the bridge were reinforced and visitors were not allowed on the bridge.

BNP alleged that the government obstructed people from coming to the meeting venue at different points.

Begum Zia led a convoy of more than one hundred buses, micro buses, jeeps and cars from the capital to attend the meeting. More vehicles joined the convoy at different points on the way. People gathered on both sides of the road at different points to greet the opposition leader. Big arches were also erected at many points welcoming the BNP chairperson.

Referring to the reported circulation of a leaflet alleging that her party was conspiring to destroy the Jamuna bridge, the BNP chief said, "The party which has made the bridge can never damage it. The Jamuna bridge is a monument of the development works by BNP."

Claiming that the present government was planning to develop only the northern region of the country with the opening of the Jamuna bridge, the former prime minister pledged that if returned to power her party would ensure development of both the regions connected by the bridge.

Refuting AL government's claim of making the Jamuna bridge, she asked, "How a large bridge like this can be made in two years?"

In her 4-minute speech, Begum Zia also charged the government with attempting to foil her public rally and reiterated her demand for mid-term election. She also blamed the gov-

ernment for what she called failing to maintain law and order and resolve the power crisis, ruining the national economy, jeopardising the country's sovereignty, and making the parliament ineffective. "The government was pushing the country towards a 72-75 like situation," she said.

"This government has failed in each and every sector and it will have to go quit power voluntarily or the people will throw you out of power," the opposition leader said.

She also alleged large-scale repression on her partymen and asked the police and civil servants to act neutrally. She said her party will continue agitations "till the people are freed from the misrule of AL." She asked the people to observe the July 16 country wide hartal, called by her party.

The public meeting was also addressed by among other former finance minister M Saifur Rahman MP, former communications minister Oli Ahmed MP, Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan MP, Dr Khandakar Mosharraf Hossain MP, Abud Salam Talukdar, Moudud Ahmed, and K M Obaidur Rahman MP.

TUs warn

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workers and employees will be exposed to hardship, Rahman added.

On the other hand, Chittagong Port also will suffer a loss of revenue amounting to about Tk 100 crore annually if the private port is allowed to function, Rahman said.

Criticising the deal, Rahman, who is also president of pro-Awami League CBA of Chittagong Port, said it would create a scandal like 'Bofors' of India in future if the permission was issued without a competitive bidding process.



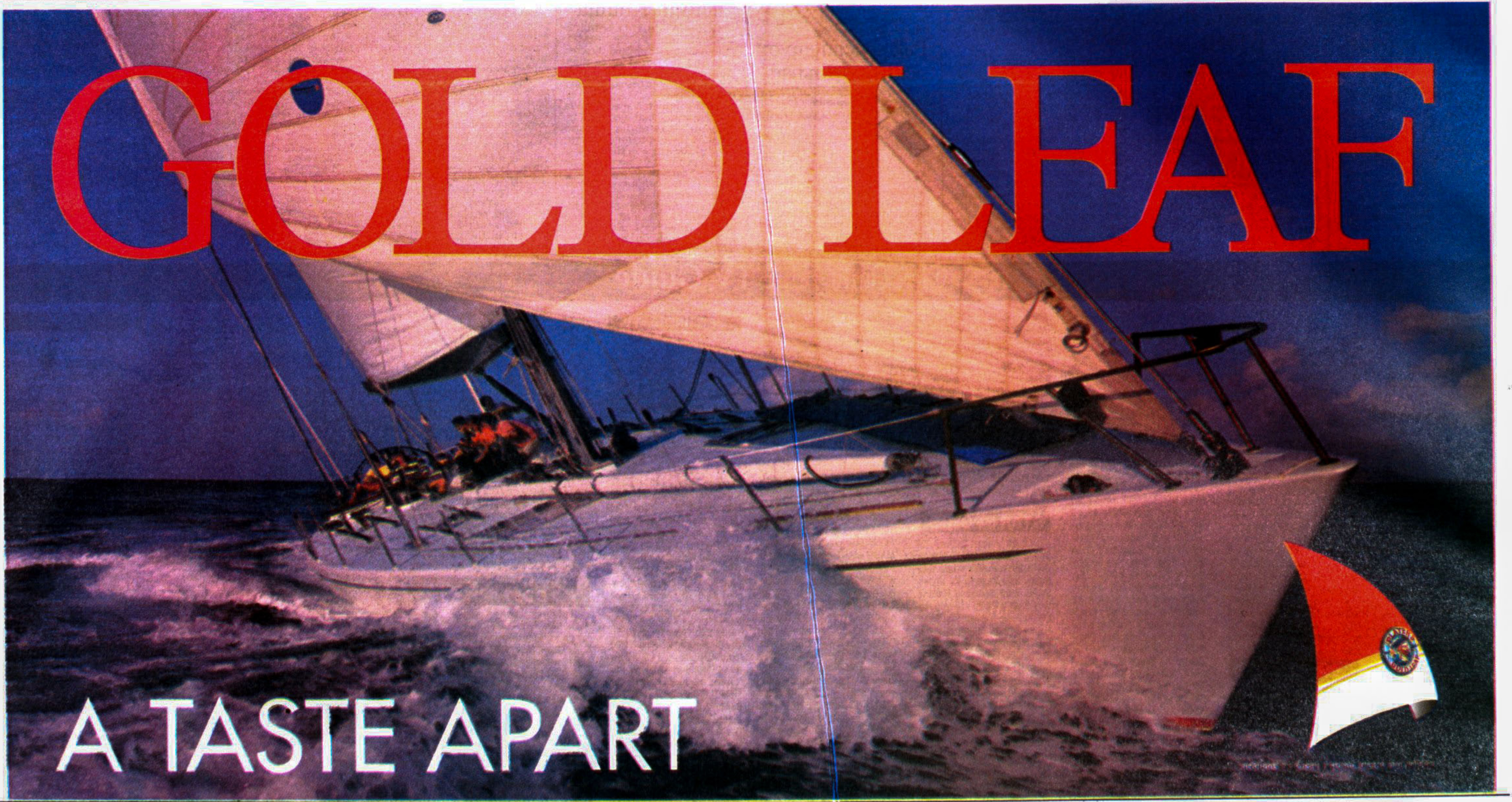
বাংলাদেশ পোশাক প্রস্তুতকারক ও রঙনিকারক সমিতি
বিটিএমসি ভবন, ৭-৯, কাওরান বাজার, ঢাকা।

বিজিএমইএ'র সম্মানিত সকল সদস্যের দৃষ্টি আকর্ষণ করছি

সম্মানিত সকল সদস্যের অবগতির জন্য জানানো যাচ্ছে যে, আজ ১২ই জুলাই '৯৮ ও আগামীকাল ১৩ই জুলাই '৯৮ তারিখে বিজিএমইএ এর পক্ষ থেকে সকল বেসরকারী ব্যাংক এ ১% Acceptance Charge রহিতকরণসহ বিভিন্ন দাবী সম্বলিত স্মারকলিপি প্রদান করা হবে।

এই উদ্দেশ্যে বিজিএমইএ'র সম্মানিত সদস্যগণকে আগামী ১২ জুলাই '৯৮ তারিখে সকাল ৯ ঘটিকায় বিজিএমইএ অফিসে উপস্থিত থাকার জন্য বিশেষভাবে অনুরোধ করা যাচ্ছে।

ভারপ্রাপ্ত সচিব



Editor: Mahfuz Anam