

Due Daily Star DUSINESS

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Development in Democracy workshop told

Cut in import duty a pre-condition to salvaging edible oil industry

High import duty on crude edible oil and oil seed discourages local production giving rise to informal cross-border trade, says a study, reports

The study, prepared by a Dhaka University teacher, suggested removal of disparity of import duty on crude oil and oil seed between Bangladesh and India to stop smuggling and re-vitalise the frustrating edible oil industry.

Dr Shakil Huda, Assistant Prof of the Institute of Business Administration (IBA), Dhaka University, presented the study report at a workshop at Hotel Purbani yesterday.

A rate of 45 per cent duty, including 15 per cent VAT, are imposed on import of crude Soyabean and Palm oil while it is only 12.5 per cent in India including 2.5 per cent sales tax. the study compared.

Minister calls for

plans to boost

jute sector

Star Business Report

Faezul Huq has urged the busi-

with effective plans and strate-

gies to ensure fair price of jute

and promote export of jute and

jute goods, says a press release

with Laders of Bangladesh Jute

Association in the city yester-

Faezul underscored the need

for strengthening the jute sector

among others, by Sharif Khas-

ruzzaman MP, secretary of the

Ministry of Jute Mahfuzul Is-

lam, Chairman BJA, Alhaj Ab-

dur Razzak Akhand and its se-

nior Vice-Chairman Md. Rezaul

Chittagong Stock Prices

90.75

25.15

173.00

198.15

237.25

433.50

1120.00

157.04

914.75

111.00

78.86

139.00

433.72

105.00

128.24

85.00

55.00

223.50

112.00

95.00

63.03

193.10

245.00

150.50

282.33

36.00

62.50

99.18

8.10

62.47

188.00

24.13

17.29

64.50

96.50

95.78

40.02

63.75

100.14

164.72

60.00

86.48

133.24

105.00

286.53

722.47

222.69

167.00

288.41

265.00

430.00

57.25

72.06

22.65

124.00

111.78

230.00

334.00

752.20

8.02

105.00

Monday's trading performance

Avg RatePrv Rate Change

105.20

25.05

171.50

198.50

235.72

87.00

59.67

432.00

68.00

155.46

914.17

112.83

78.60

139.30

431.63

104.17

128.52

84.13

54.60

226.00

111.50

95.00

61.18

192.38

244.17

150.31

280.00

36.33

8.01

64.00

98.75

62.50

188.00

23.92

17.01

68.00

93.00

95.75

762.62

39.96

63.31

40.22

100.33

165.00

60.00

85.98

132.70

104.50

285.76

720.08

222.29

166.10

287.33

262.00

56.79

70.68

22.73

122.75

110.00

228.00

330.00

425.00

1107.00

79.76 0.75

93.50 -2.75

-0.20

0.10

1.50

-0.35

1.53

1.17

1.43

1.50

-1.00

13.00

1.58

0.58

-1.83

0.36

0.70

2.09

0.83

0.87

0.50

-1.50

-0.50

00

1.85

0.72

0.83

0.19

2.33

0.01

-0.33

-1.50

0.43

-0.01

-0.03

0.00

0.21

0.28

-3.50

3.50

0.00

0.06

0.44

-0.21

-0.19

-0.28

0.00

0.50

0.54

0.50

2.39

0.90

1.08

3.00

0.46

5.00

1.38

-0.05

1.25

1.75

2.00

4.00

-10.42

-0.28

Karim.

Company Name

National Bank

IFIC Bank Ltd

Aftab Auto

BD Zipper

BD Auto Cars

BD Lamps Ltd

Apex Food

Raspit Food

Bengal Biscuit

AMCL (PRAN)

Ctg Vegetable

Padma Oil

BOC (BD) Ltd

Prime Textile

Apex Weaving

Padma Textile

Sajib Knitwear

Sreepur Textiles

Dynamic Textile

Monno Fabrics

Chic Tex Ltd

Eagles Star

Alltex Ind

BD Dyeing

Ashraf Tex

Mita Textiles

Anlima Yarn

Square Pharma

Beximco Pharma

Ambee Pharma

Maq Enterprises

Eastern Housing

Samorita Hospital

Meghna Cement

Apex Tannery

Apex Footwear

Usmania Glass

RH Ball Pen Ltd

Janata Insurance

Central Insurance

Listed Debentures

Beximco

BGIC

Excelsior Shoes

Confidence Cement

Niloy Cement Indus

Fu-Wang Ceramic Ind

CSE All Securities Price Index

Imam Button

Shine Pukur

Ctg Cement

HR Textiles

ACI Ltd

BCIL Ltd

Quasem Drycells

Anwar Galvanizing

Olympic Industries

Wonderland Toys

Eastern Cables Ltd

Beximco Fisheries

Tripti Industries

Gulf Foods Limited

Gachihata Aquacult

Beximco Synthetics

Beximco Denims

Beximco Knitting

BD Thai Alluminium

The meeting was addressed,

He made the call at a meeting

issued in Dhaka yesterday.

cess committy to

State Minister for Jute AK

Duty on import of oil seeds is 15 per cent, including license fee and development surcharge. Development in Democracy,

an Asia Foundation programme, arranged the work-shop on "industrial case stud-The report said the average import of crude oil is estimated

to have been reduced by 50 per cent from 425,913 metric tons in 1997 due to high import duty. The import of oil seeds, estimated at about 0.45 million metric tons a year, is also feared to fall sharply this year.

The fall in import of oil seeds and crude oil will hardly hit local oil industry and broaden the scope for informal trade of edible oil from India, the study revealed.

There are 72 registered oil refineries with a capacity of 6.5 million tons in the country. But

MANILA, July 27: Fresh

about 60 of them have been closed due to shortage of raw materials, the study said.

Asia Foundation Resident Representative Dr Karen L Casper and president of the American Chamber of Commerce (AMCHAM) in Bangladesh Forrest E Cookson were

also present. High rates for certifying and testing, charged by government institutions like Bangladesh Standard and Testing Institution (BSTI) and Atomic Energy Commission, are also impeding the growth of the country's oil

industry, the study disclosed. The charge for radiation and other tests on raw materials range between Tk 5,000 and Tk 100,000 plus, which is another big burden for importers and re-

Proper incentives are not offered to encourage agricultural scientists to produce quality and improved varieties of oil seeds, it pointed out.

Discussants, who com-mented on the study report laid emphasis on government policy framework for crop diversification to encourage cultivation of soyabean and sunflower. which, they said, have bright prospect here.

The economic rate of return of soyabean is more than that of mustard seeds, one of the discussants argued.

Dr Karen stressed the need for policy changes of the government to promote crop diversification and improve the situation prevailing in the edible oil sector.

World Bank Consultant Dr CAF Dowlah and BRAC University Project Head Dr Riaz Rahman Khan were among the discussants.

Obuchi promises help to Asia

from victory at home, Japan's incoming prime minister has Sunday's meeting Obuchi "laid promised anxious neighbours out a fairly comprehensive and the United States that his agenda and said he was going to ton priorities are lifting Japan move on it very quickly," a seout of recession and "making a nior administration official contribution to Asia. said, briefing reporters on con-Keizo Obuchi told US Secredition of anonymity. "In a sense, it wasn't really necessary

tary of State Madeleine Albright that he will overcome his reputation for indecisiveness by following through on a campaign pledge and have enacted a package of a 43 billion dollar tax cut and 71 billion dollars in government spending, US officials said Sunday.

Asia's financial crisis tops the agenda for Monday's meeting of the states of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations with the United States and other countries. Another critical area of concern: last May's nuclear explosions by In-

Shares

Traded

34950

100

130

140

280

100

1700

230

4420

850

9500

150

850

18100

100

1000

1000

350

9100

2040

1400

520

200

500

100

38000

276.20

207.50 62400

Monday.

dia and Pakistan. Although Albright has been pressuring Japan to do more, in

for her to give him a long laundry list. Obuchi, currently Japan's foreign minister, was elected Friday to head the Liberal Democratic Party, all but assuring his succession to the Prime

Minister's position next week.

He spent much of Sunday touch-

ing base in Manila with leaders

gathered for the annual meeting

of an ASEAN regional forum. Foreign ministers of the ASEAN nations - Philippines. Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia,

Brunei, Singapore, Vietnam Laos and Myanmar, formerly Burma — held a festive dinner Sunday night with their outside colleagues.

Albright, who also met Sunday with the Philippine foreign minister. Domingo Siazon. planned one-on-one meetings Monday with the foreign ministers of China, Russia, Korea and India.

Obuchi's words on his economic plans were followed closely because Southeast Asian nations look toward Japan, which has the world's second-largest economy, to pull the region out of its year long

US officials fear worsening of Japan's economic situation could aggravate the Asian crisis dramatically and increase its impact on the US economy as TEUMNOLOGY AND ELECTRONIC BANK

BJMB brightens tourism prospect in N dists

The Bangabandhu Jamuna Multipurpose Bridge, connect-ing the eastern and western parts of the Bangladesh, has opened up new opportunities of expanding tourism in northern districts, reports UNB.

The northern districts, especially Bogra, Rangpur, Dinajpur and Rajshahi are rich in archeological resources. Proper demonstration of the resources and communication system would attract huge number of tourists in these districts.

In view of the fact, authorities are examining the prospects of tourism in these districts. To boost tourism in the region, the existing tourist centres and complexes will be developed and modernised as well as facilities will also be expanded.

As part of the government plan, Civil Aviation and Tourism Minister Engineer Mosharraf Hassain himself is visiting the area. He left here yesterday for Syedpur to have an extensive visit to the northern districts, said a press re-

During the three-day tour, he will visit tourism centres in Dinajpur, Rangpur, Bogra and Rajshahi and observe the existing facilities and their further development.

operation here.

reports AP.

MANILA, July 27: China

warned Monday that as East

Asia's financial crisis contin-

ues, new problems could emerge

to threaten regional stability.

Tang Jiaxuan, addressing a se-

curity forum hosted by the As-

sociation of Southeast Asian

Nations, stressed that economic

growth is the "material basis"

for regional — and global — se-

he told the ASEAN Regional Fo-

rum, fully indicates that eco-

nomic security has increas-

part of national and regional

ingly become an inseparable

East Asia's financial crisis,

Chinese Foreign Minister

The minister will exchange views with local politicians and senior government officials to identify the ways for flourishing of tourism sector in the region.

Before returning to the capital on July 29, he will also visit the possible spots where tourist spots could be developed to attract higher number of tourists both from home and abroad.

New CSE Board director

Prof Jamilur Reza Chowdhury of Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET) has been nominated Director of the Board of Directors of Chittagong Stock Exchange, reports UNB.

The Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) gave the nomination under the terms of Articles 19 (a) of the Articles of Association of the CSE Ltd. said a press release in Dhaka

Workshop on IT & electronic banking begins

A four-day workshop on information technology (IT) and electronic banking began here yesterday under the auspices of Bangladesh Institute of Bank Management (BIBM), reports

Governor of Bangladesh Bank, Lutfar Rahman Sarkar, inaugurated the workshop as the chief guest in the auditorium of BIBM yesterday. Dr Ananya Raihan, faculty

member of BIBM, presented a key-note paper on the topic while Director General, BIBM. Dr Muinul Islam, and Director (Training) Dr Sujit Saha, spoke on the occasion.

Speaking the occasion, the Governor said electronic banking service is very important for ensuring quick service to the clients and survival of all financial organisations in the era of modern technology.

He laid emphasis on introducing a modern tele-communication and radio communication network for banking and all financial sectors.

New MD of ILFSL

Masizuddin Sarker has taken over as Managing Director of International Leasing and Financial Services Limited (ILFSL), a joint venture lease financing company. It was floated in collaboration with Singer, MCB and Rupali Insurance Company, says a press release.

Sarker held different senior management positions in BSRS and IDLC prior to this position. He was the General Manager of IDLC.

Eastland Insurance declares 18 pc dividend

Star Business Report

Eastland Insurance Co Ltd declared 18 per cent dividend for its shareholders at its 11th annual general meeting (AGM) held at the BIAM auditorium yesterday.

The company has earned a premium income of Tk 14.58 crores during 1997 through its 32 branches all over the country, says a press release. During the year, the com-

pany invested an amount of Tk 20.61 crores and settled 338 claims for a total amount of Tk 3.50 crores.

The total assets of the company in December stood at Tk 36.14 crores and its contribution to the national exchequer as income tax and VAT was Tk 2.12 crores.

The meeting which was presided over by the Chairman cations Inc., and just last week Mahbubur Rahman was atclosed a 11.3 billion dollars 'tended by the shareholders of takeover of Teleport Communithe company.

For China, he said, economic

ANZ Banking Group Chief Executive Officer John McFarlane (left) responds to Mahfuz

Anam while Group Chairman Charles Goode (middle) listens. The two, on a short trip to

Dhaka, told the Star Editor yesterday that Bangladesh was a good place for foreign

businesses and that they were planning to put in huge sums to expand the bank's

China sees renewed threat to

Asian economic stability

ciously... no less than that of a

security meant safeguarding the economic sovereignty of the Tang, however, called for

countries in the region to promote deeper economic cooperation and, in particular, to take "strict precautions" against excessive currency speculation. It was the devaluation of the

Thai baht in July 1997 that unleashed speculative attacks against several currencies in the region and started East Asia's now year-old financial

"Economic security is mutual, and it is inadvisable to try to shift one's troubles onto others," Tang said. Fang's address made no

mention of the yuan or the country's oft-stated commitment not to devalue the Chinese currency.

- Star photo

Australian Foreign Minister Alexander Downer, however, said he believes the economic crisis so far has had little effect on regional security.

On the positive side, he said, many countries have had to reduce their defense expenditures because of the currency crisis. But that has been offset by the fact that they also have had to reduce joint military exercises, which are an important confidence-building element, he



Chittagong Stock Exchange President Amir Khashru Mahmud Chowdhury addressing a seminar on 'Capital market development in Bangladesh' sponsored by Paramount Securities Ltd yesterday. - Paramount photo

Malaysia remains lucrative investment destination

Lutfar Rahman Sarkar, Governor of Bangladesh Bank,

speaking at the inaugural session of a four-day workshop

on Information Technology and Electronic Banking on

INAUGURATION BY THE CHIEF GUEST

CUN SERNOR, BANGLADESH BANK

ORGANIZED BY

FAR HAHMAN SARKAR

KUALA LUMPUR, July 27: Despite a massive slowdown, the business environment in Malaysia has become attractive for foreign investors, a Hong Kong-based research company said in a report released Monday, reports AP.

"Significantly lower staff turnover has led to higher productivity and important savings in training budgets," said the Political and Economic Risk Consultancy.

"Companies producing ex-ports denominated in US dollars are enjoying higher mar-gins as a result of the depreciation of the ringgit," it said. But the consulting firm

warned Malaysia would not allow foreigners to buy domestic companies at fire-sale prices and tensions within the governing United Malays National Organization raised concerns about political stability.

The report pointed to Prime

pressing ahead with policies that his deputy, Finance Minister Anwar Ibrahim, was op-

- BIBM photo

posed to. These included a softer monetary policy, easier credit lower interest rates and risking the economy further by government-funded bail-out of debt-ridden companies, the report said.

The report came hours after the respected international rating agency, Standard and Poor's, announced it was lowering Malaysia's long-term bond ratings. Another reputable rating company, Moody's, did the same Friday.

The flurry of gloomy forecasts come at a time when Malaysia has launched an ambitious recovery programme to pump funds into ailing banks. The theory is that the banks will lend more and increase spending on infrastructure and construction works to generate Minister Mahathir Mohamad jobs and downstream projects.



Mahbubur Rahman, Chairman of Eastland Insurance Company Limited, addressing the company's 11th annual general meeting at BIAM Auditorium on Monday. Managing Director M Azmal Hoque (L) and Secretary, Hafez Ahmed (R) are also seen. - Eastland Ins photo

BT, AT & T merging int'l operations

LONDON, July 27: In the latest move to expand its reach, AT and T is forming a joint venture with British Telecommunications that will combine their international operations and develop a new Internet-type of network, reports AP.

The tie-up, announced at a news conference Sunday, follows the failure to an earlier plan by BT to acquire MCI Communications Corp., the No. 2 US carrier behind AT and T. BT was outbid by rival World-

The merging of our international assets to form this global venture will enable BT and AT and T do deliver in a unique and powerful way the seamless global services our multinational customers need and want," AT and T's president, John D. Zeglis, told reporters. The new company, which

has yet to be named, is expected to have revenues of 10 billion dollars a year and employ some 5,000 people. It will be based in the eastern United States and will be run by executives from both BT and AT and T. The BT chairman, Sir Iain Vallance, will be its first chairman.

After losing its deal with MCI, BT went straight to the top of the US market in cutting a Armstrong took over last year.

deal with AT and T, which has been expanding aggressively since chairman C. Michael AT and T agreed in June to a 32 billion dollars merger with US cable giant Tele-Communications Group.

In order to join forces with BT. AT and T will leave two other international deals: The AT and T-Unisource alliance that has Dutch, Swedish and Swiss partners, and its World-Partners arrangement, a loose alliance with other international long-distance companies.

We've got the two greatest brands standing shoulder to shoulder and we think we're going to transform the global telecommunications industry. the BT chief executive, Sir Peter Bonfield, told reporters.

The companies predicted 15 per cent annual growth for the new company after the first year of operations. Their goal they said, is to create jobs rather than eliminate them, although they acknowledged a few overlapping jobs may be in trouble as the deal comes together.

The companies will use their combined international networks to become a "carrier's carrier" for long-distance services offered by telephone companies operating in numerous markets. BT and AT and T said that 90 per cent of the global telephone market will soon be open to significant competition, and they want to woo business from startup phone companies in numerous mar-

kets. They will not hold stock in one another, however, and have no plans to bring other companies in as partners in the joint venture.

HK Telecom lays off 270 managers

HONG KONG, July 27: Hong Kong Telecommunications, one of the territory's largest employers, on Monday laid off 270 managers, adding to Hong Kong's growing jobless toll, says

A company statement said the layoffs were "part of an overall programme to reshape business and enhance produc-

They were necessary in an "increasingly competitive market environment and ahead of further liberalisation in the telecommunications market next year," it said.

Earlier this year, the company surrendered its monopoly on international phone calls in exchange for a government payment of 858 million US dol-

Union officials were quoted Sunday as saying that the company planned to cut its work force by 1,000 throughout early retirement or by leaving volun-

Ip Kwok-fun, chairman of one of the unions, was quoted by state-run radio as saying that the 270 managers had agreed to leave in exchange for buyouts. The company statement said it paid the workers 100 million Hong Kong dollars

(12.8 million US dollars) Hong Kong's Labour Department has set up a hotline for the workers.

Analysts said the news isn't entirely unexpected as the company faces a slowdown in traffic due to the Asian economic

There is still a lot of concern about the slowdown in IDD (international direct-dialing) traffic for the company," said Marvin Lo an analyst at Amsteel Securities Ltd.

Turnover in Value(Taka) Turnover in Volume Total Issued Capital (Taka) Total Market Capital(Taka) Total Market Capital (US\$) **Total Number of Contracts** Total Issues Traded Issues Gained Issues Declined Issues Unchanged **Total Listed Securities** Listed Companies

Day's Change in Points Day's Change in Percent(5) 0.1923 23,639,670,590.00 48,206,862,435.09 Listed Mutual Funds

CSE at a glance

11,767,955.00 215,640

1,036,706,719.03