

Iran allocates \$117m to help create jobs

Iran has allocated 350 billion rials (116.6 million dollars) in an effort to create jobs for the country's growing ranks of unemployed youth, state television said yesterday, reports Reuters.

"We hope to create 800,000 job opportunities for young people next year," the Director of Iran's Supreme Council for the Youth was quoted as saying on the afternoon news.

"With the cooperation of our youth... the government will do its utmost to make this a reality," said the official, who was identified only by his family name Mir-Bagheri. He did not say over what period the money would be spent.

Nearly a third of Iran's population of more than 60 million is aged between 11 and 24 and 800,000 job seekers enter the market each year, Iranian officials have said previously.

Other economists say the number of jobs that must be created is closer to one million a year.

Iranian President Mohammad Khatami, in a much-anticipated economic address to the nation on Sunday night, said the country would need to create 15 million jobs over the next 20 years to accommodate the youthful population.

Officially, unemployment hovers around nine per cent, but independent analysts say it is closer to 20 per cent.

Khatami, who was elected last year on a mandate for social and political reform, has found his time increasingly occupied with economic concerns as low oil prices, inflation and high unemployment batter the economy.

Iran's youth overwhelmingly supported Khatami in last year's election.

Asian crisis hits Shanghai tourism

SHANGHAI, Aug 4: The Asian financial crisis and the Japanese yen's devaluation have hit Shanghai's tourism industry sending arrivals down by 6.85 per cent in the first half-year. Xinhua news agency reported yesterday, says AFP.

The report said 729,200 overseas tourists visited Shanghai in the January to June period, with visitors from Hong Kong, Macau and Taiwan showing an increase while arrivals from Thailand, South Korea, Japan and Indonesia plunged.

Arrivals from Hong Kong and Macau rose 8.52 per cent to 81,560 while visitors from Taiwan rose 1.14 per cent to 66,076. The number of tourists from Thailand, South Korea and Indonesia plunged by 60 per cent while the number of Japanese visitors fell 14 per cent.

The report said the decline was expected to slow down in the later half of the year with the decrease in Southwest Asian tourists settling at 30 per cent for the year while the rate of decline from Japan would be 10 per cent.

The report said more tourists visited Shanghai from North America and Europe but did not give any number.

Shanghai is expected to receive 1.64 million tourists this year, which would be close to last year's level.

The agency reported separately that locally-based Shanghai airlines had obtained approval from the civil aviation administration of China to fly from Shanghai to Macau.

It is the second overseas route for Shanghai airlines, which already flies to Macau from Nanjing, capital of eastern Jiangsu province.

Course on export documentation held

A training course on Export Documentation was organised by Human Resources Development Programme of the DCCI in cooperation with its Business Advisory Service (BAS) Project recently.

The course was inaugurated by Coordinating Director of HRT Standing Committee of the DCCI M H Rahman, DCCI Director A M Mubashar, Project Coordinator of the BAS Project Michael K Nathan, BAS Project Manager Md. Emdadul Haque were present, says a press release.

Convener of Human Resources & Training Standing Committee of the DCCI Mamunur Rahman and Project Coordinator of the Business Advisory Service (BAS) Project Michael K Nathan jointly distributed certificates among the participants at the end of the course.

Topics of the course included introduction to export documentation, export registration certificate, export contact, letter of credit, commercial documents, draft or bill of exchange, commercial invoice, consular invoice, bill of lading, airway bill, marine insurance policy, specimens of completed substantive documents, auxiliary documents based on export letter of credit, packing list, weight note, certificate of origin, inspection certificate, quality control certificate, photo/sanitary certificate, GSP certificate, negotiation of documents, specimens of auxiliary documents, uniform customs & practices of documentary credit (UCPDC) and check list of documenting shipments.

A total 35 participants from different organisations took part in the course.

Renewable energy policy soon'

Star Business Report

Commerce and Industries Minister Tofail Ahmed Monday said that the government was soon going to declare a renewable energy policy for commercially promoting the use of solar, wind, bio-mass, geothermal, wave and tidal energy in the country.

"Private investment for the generation of renewable energy will be reflected in the policy," he said while speaking at a function organised by Rahimafrooz, the country's leading voltaic and photovoltaic cell trading house.

The company was celebrating its decade-long solar power business and collaboration with India's Tata-BP Ltd in photovoltaic cell manufacturing and sales activities.

The minister said that the

government had a plan to increase power generation by 1000 mw by the year 2000, which will eventually increase the per capita generation in the country. At present Bangladesh's average of per capita power generation is only 96 kw while the global average is 2200 kw and the Asian average is 600 kw, according to the minister.

Tofail said the government would offer the renewable energy project investors an attractive package of incentives.

He told the audience that the government had recently floated a tender to implement a waste-energy project in Dhaka to be run on a "build-operate-own" basis.

The minister said that the

government had a plan to set up a nuclear reactor with a capacity of 300 to 600 mw at Rooppur in Rajshahi. But he did not give a detailed account of the project plan that has been kept shelved for more than 30 years.

Niaz Rahim, Director of Rahimafrooz, elaborated on the use of solar power in the country's remote and cyclone-torn areas. He said, solar power can be used for preserving life-saving drugs and vaccines in the remote areas and islands where the national power grid is yet to reach.

State minister for LGRD Mofazzal Hossain Chowdhury Maya, MP, also spoke at the function.

Later, while talking to The Daily Star, Niaz Rahim said that the use of solar cell was

cost-effective though its initial cost was high. He said, a set of solar lantern with solar panels costs Tk 9,000.

The price of a three-bulb set (with a 120 watt capacity) is Tk 28,000. The solar cell would be enough to watch a 12-volt black and white TV and to move a fan.

Sajed Kamal, a renewable energy scientist, told The Daily Star that the technology could not yet be popularised in the country due to lack of political will and awareness-building initiatives.

He said the technology was cost-effective for the rural people who use kerosene in their homes. Kerosene costs seven to 10 times more than solar cells," he said, adding there was a huge market for it in the country.

Laid-off Thai workers seek help from PM

BANGKOK, Aug 4: Waving Thai flags and banging empty water bottles, more than a thousand laid-off textile workers protested in front of government office buildings Tuesday demanding Prime Minister Chuan Leekpai come to their aid, reports AP.

The protesters were some of the 5,000 workers who lost their jobs last month when Thai Melon Textile company, one of the largest textile manufacturers in Thailand, closed down its factory because it could no longer obtain credit to buy raw materials.

Thailand is dealing with its economic crisis with its modern times. Banks are on shaky financial ground and are reluctant to lend money even to healthy companies. More than two million Thais are now unemployed.

The protesting workers said they were not satisfied with the amount of severance the company is willing to pay. At least a thousand of the workers are 20-year veterans of the company and are entitled to 6.5 months severance pay.

Thai Melon has said, however, it may not have the money to meet the law's requirements.



Commerce and Industries Minister Tofail Ahmed switches on a solar street light at its launching programme organised jointly by Rahimafrooz (BD) Ltd and Tata BP Solar India Ltd in the city on Monday. — Rahimafrooz photo

Warner-Lambert, Glaxo dissolve joint venture

TRENTON, New Jersey, Aug 4: Drug makers Warner-Lambert Co and Glaxo Wellcome PLC have agreed to dissolve their joint venture, which included marketing the nonprescription version of popular heartburn medication Zantac, says AP.

Warner-Lambert, the Morris Plains-based maker of Listerine, Sudafed and Roloids, said Monday that the breakup will give it exclusive rights to sell nonprescription Zantac in the United States and Canada. London-based Glaxo Wellcome, which originally developed Zantac and sells the prescription version, will receive rights to sell Zantac over the counter in all other countries.

"Our joint venture with Glaxo Wellcome proved to be a valuable contributor to our OTC business," said S. Morgan Morton, president of Warner-Lambert Consumer Healthcare Sector. "The unwinding of the joint venture will provide both parties greater flexibility to continue the growth of their respective businesses."

Spokesman Stephen Mook said Warner-Lambert, known for its strength in marketing nonprescription drugs and other consumer products such as Lubriderm lotion, Certs mints and Dentyne gum, originally had separate joint ventures to market OTC versions of prescription drugs made by Glaxo Holdings PLC and Wellcome PLC, splitting the profits with them. Those deals were signed in 1993.

In 1996, after the two British companies merged, Warner-Lambert restructured the arrangements, limiting the joint venture to Zantac and two lesser-known Glaxo drugs. At that time, Warner-Lambert bought all rights to the Wellcome products it had been marketing: antibiotic ointment Neosporin, cold medications Sudafed and Actifed, lice-killer Nix and several smaller brands, according to Mook.

The reasons for entering into the joint venture, as far as Warner-Lambert is concerned, have pretty much been accomplished," he said. "We're a much bigger consumer health care company than we were (five years ago), and we have a bigger presence in key categories."

The transaction should be completed at year's end, Warner-Lambert said.

Govt think-tank warns

China will be forced to devalue yuan if export growth shrinks

HONG KONG, Aug 4: China will be forced to devalue the yuan if its export growth flattens or turns negative as a result of the Japanese yen's weakness, a Chinese government think-tank has warned, reports AFP.

The warning came in an article prepared by the State Development Planning Commission Economic Research Centre and published in the Asian-Pacific Economic Times, according to AFP-affiliated financial news agency AFX-Asia.

The Asian-Pacific Economic Times is a mainland publication jointly controlled by the Guangdong Social Science Academy, China Social Science Academy and the State Structural Reform Commission.

The article explained the effects on China of a weak yen exchange rate against the US dollar, saying a greatly depreciated yen would put strong pressure on China's trade balance.

"Firstly, it will become more difficult to export to Japan.

Secondly, Japanese products will have increased competitive power and this will put pressure on state-owned (Chinese) enterprises," it said.

Japan is an important trading partner of China, the article said, noting that 18 per cent of China's exports go to Japan, whilst Japanese products accounts for 20 per cent of China's total imports.

"China's exports to Japan in March and April of this year experienced negative growth," it noted.

Although there is no competitive overlap between products exported by Japan and China — most of Japan's exports are high-tech and capital.

While China exports to Japan are mostly labour-intensive products — the mainland's trade with third countries would be affected by a weak yen, the article said.

"The yen's devaluation will certainly affect those Asian countries which have a competitive relationship with Japan,

and cause those countries' currencies to continue to devalue.

"Chinese products' export structure and market have characteristics in common with those third countries."

The article said exports were not the most important contributor to China's economic growth, noting that estimates indicate 51 per cent of China's GNP comes from consumption, 30 per cent from fixed-asset investment and only 19 per cent comes from exports.

"If we are able to enlarge domestic demand and develop the export of products which are not affected by the exchange rate, this will minimise the effects of yen devaluation."

"In such conditions, the positive impact of maintaining renminbi stability will be greater than the negative because, on the one hand, it benefits Hong Kong's stability and on the other, it is good for the absorption of foreign capital."



FETTERED BY FLOOD: Most of the roads and markets at city's Madartek are still under flood water, which is hampering normal life and making smooth traffic in the area difficult. — Star photo by Sk Enamul Haq

Famine relief in slow advance along aid corridors

By Peter Moszynski

One reason for Khartoums agreement to the ceasefire would appear to be because its own "Peace from Within" strategy of trying to win over southern warlords and rebel movements appears to be in tatters following heavy fighting between various pro-government factions in early July.

One former SPLA commander who defected to the government, Riak Machar, wrote to Bashir recently, complaining that Khartoum did not "appear to be serious about peace."

Machar's stronghold of Western Upper Nile is particularly significant as it contains the country's oilfields. Thousands of Chinese pipeline construction workers recently moved to the area.

An internal memo to Bashir from Machar, currently chairman of the South Sudan Coordinating Council, details numerous government transgressions of the internal peace accords. The document warns the President of severe consequences if confidence is not immediately restored.

A state of emergency has been declared in Western Upper Nile following faction fighting and widespread destruction. The pattern is reminiscent of the chaos created by the defection of a warlord from the government side to the SPLA in January. This was largely responsible for the humanitarian catastrophe in neighbouring Bahar el Ghazal.

The current crisis in Upper Nile prompted a mass evacua-

tion. Aid workers are only now returning to assess the damage.

In his memo, Machar lists the destruction as including 420 deaths, 92 villages burnt, four hospitals and numerous schools destroyed — all in an area which had survived the war relatively unscathed. As a direct consequence, several southern units have defected back to the SPLA, including a group of 300 soldiers from the besieged town of Torit.

Meanwhile, the British Foreign and Commonwealth Office said its humanitarian initiative had the backing of the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD), a seven-nation regional grouping that is working with the Khartoum government and the SPLA for a negotiated settlement.

The SPLA has long fought pro-Islamic forces in the North and has previously backed the creation of a single secular state, although peace moves have focused increasingly on a separation of the South. A big dispute now is where the boundary would be drawn.

IGAD-sponsored Sudanese peace talks, due to take place in Addis Ababa in August, may have to be relocated due to fighting between two principal players in the process, Ethiopia and Eritrea.

— Gemini News

The writer is a British freelance journalist who travels extensively in Africa.

Shipping Intelligence

CHITTAGONG PORT
Berth position and performance of vessels as on 4-8-98

Berth No	Name of vessels	Cargo	L Port call	Local agent	Date of arrival	Leaving
J/1	Ma Cho	CI	Sing	Litmond	19/7	16/8
J/2	Golden Yi	CI	Kaus	Prog	16/7	8/8
J/3	George	Sugar(G)	Sing	Seacom	20/6	5/8
J/4	Bel Air	Rice(G)	CI	ANCL	19/7	7/8
J/5	Eastern Mars	CI	Bass	Prog	26/7	6/8
J/6	Seofoi Wing	Rice(G)	Kaki	USTC	21/7	10/8
J/7	Winnor	Wheat(P)	Odes	AASS	7/7	10/8
J/8	Rong Jiang	Rice(G)	Kaki	OWSL	14/5	15/8
J/9	Sing Lin	CI	Tian	Bdship	21/7	12/8
J/10	Elang-II	Cement	Tanj	PSAL	9/7	8/8
J/11	Banglar Doot	Cont	Sing	BSC	2/8	6/8
J/12	QC Teal	Cont	Sing	QC SL	29/7	5/8
J/13	Kota Berjaya	Cont	Sing	PHI(BD)	28/7	5/8
CCT/1	Prosrich	Cont	Sing	QC SL	1/8	7/8
CCT/2	Mild Lin	Cont	Sing	NOL	29/7	4/8
CCT/3	Xpress Nilgiri	Cont	Sing	RSL	30/7	7/8
RM/14	Ryomyong	Cement	Sing	Delmure	21/5	8/8
CCJ	Helikon	C Clink	Sing	Seacom	2/8	13/8
GSJ	Adhiguna					
TSP	Nugraha-1	Cement	Tanj	Jaycee	8/7	6/8
	Sukarawan					
	Naree	R Phos	Hama	Seacom	1/8	6/8
RM/4	Lestari					
	Utama-II	Cement	Tanj	PSAL	18/7	14/8
RM/5	Port Albert	HSD/JP-1	Sing	MSTPL	2/8	7/8
DDJ/1	Tanary Star	IDLE	Para	PSAL	-	-
DDJ/2	Laut Ride			B Bay	R/A	-
RM/8	Josie	IDLE	Kaki	USTC	28/4	10/8
RM/9	Banglar					
	Kakoli	Repair		BSC	R/A	10/8
CUFLJ	Zi Jin	Urea	Mong	USTC	28/7	6/8
Kafout(U)	Yong Jiang	Urea			R/A	6/8

Vessels due at outer anchorage:

Name of vessels	Date of arrival	L Port call	Local agent	Cargo	Loading port
Xpress Resol Ve (Cont) 27/07	4/8	Sing	RSL	Cont	Sing
Karia Sentosa	4/8	-	USTC	Rice(G)	-
Ocean-1	6/8	Yang	SMASL	-	-
Thong Chuan	5/8	P Suda	Bdship	-	-
Derbt North	4/8	Huan	OTL	-	-
Good Faith	6/8	-	Litmond	Sugar(G)	-
Kota Cahaya (Cont) 26/7	6/8	Sing	PHI(BD)	Cont	Sing
Banglar Robi (Cont) 27/7	6/8	Sing	BSC	Cont	Sing
Silverlake	6/8	-	Prog	CI	-
Da Fa (Cont) 27/7	7/8	Sing	RSL	Cont	Sing
Diligence (Cont) 30/7	7/8	Cont	QC SL	Cont	Sing
Hyundai no 206					
(Roro) 2426/7	7/8	-	OL	Vehi	-
Bonanza (48/29/7)	8/8	-	MBL	CI	-
Banglar Moni (Cont) 27/7	9/8	Sing	BSC	Cont	Sing
Shinzan (48) 2/8	9/8	-	SSL	GI(St Coll)	-
Salango (48) 2/8	10/8	-	Everett	GI(RL Coach)	-
Makassar Express (Cont) 2/8	10/8	Sing	Baridhi	Cont	Sing
Banglar Shikha (Cont) 30/7	10/8	Sing	BSC	Cont	Sing
Jun Shan Hai	10/8	-	Litmond	GTSP	-
Pacific Mattsu	11/8	-	Everett	Urea	-
Manaslu (Cont) 23/6	12/4	Mong	Baridhi	Cont	Col
QC Pintail (Cont) 3/8	12/8	Sing	QC SL	Cont	Sing
Bunga Mas Enam					
(Cont) 2/8	13/8	-	EOSL	Cont	Sing
Nopporn Naree	13/8	-	Seaglory	R Seed	-
Asian Prosperity (Roro) 242/8	19/8	-	JF	Vehi	-
Kota Naga (Cont) 2/8	21/8	Sing	PHI(BD)	Cont	Sing

Vessels registered

Trono	CI	Sing	Everett	3/8
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Vessels at Kutubdulia

Name of vessels	Cargo	Last prot call	Local agent	Date of arrival
Seabulk Command	-	-	IBS	R/A(2/8)
Aspiros	C Oil	Rast	BSL	22/7
Banglar Jyoti	C Oil	-	BSC	R/A(3/8)
Banglar Shourabh	C Oil	-	BSC	R/A(3/8)

Vessels at outer anchorage:

Ready on:

Name of vessels	Cargo	L Port call	Local agent	Date of arrival
Fukang Shan	Sugar(G)	Cape	Litmond	24/7
Banglar Kiron	CI	S Hai	Bdship	24/7
Yayasan Tiga	CI	Yang	CLA	29/7
Tin Mu	CI	Wald	Seagory	29/7
Ryong Nam Sam	Rice(G)	Kaki	USTC	24/7
Arktis Carrier	GI(Copra)	Sing	Litmond	30/7
Donglong-1	GI(Copra)	Sing	Seacom	30/7
Bonsoun-2	R Phos	Nan	Seacom	31/7
Xpress Padma(Cont)	Cont	Sing	RSL	31/7
M Regina (Cont)	Cont	Sing	PHI(BD)	31/7
Asean Premier	CI	Sing	Prog	1/8
Hermes	Sugar(G)	Santo	USTC	29/7
Pan Noble	CI	Mad	Oil	4/8

Vessels awaiting instruction:

Banglar Asha	-	-	BSC	R/A(5/8)
Banglar Kiron	-	-	BSC	R/A(19/8)
Banglar Kallol	-	-	BSC	R/A(29/7)
Banglar Mamata	-	-	BSC	R/A(23/8)
Adhiguna Jaya-1	-	-	USTC	R/A(26/7)
Tempest	Cement	-	HSL	R/A(26/5)
Tut De Ping	-	Col	-	3/7
Izmail	Repair	Col	ARL	3/7
Lestari Indah	Repair	Vesa	OLM	17/7
Delta Star	-	-	RSA	R/A(7/7)
Pride of the south	-	-	RSA	R/A(20/7)
Elang-VII	-	-	USTC	R/A(3/8)
Banga Biraj	-	-	Bdship	R/A(4/8)

Vessels not entering

Kuzbas	-	Jebe	DSL	12/7
Alligator Miracle	Scraping	P Kel		