

Booming economy in need of skilled labour US lawmakers mulling over immigration criteria changes

WASHINGTON, Mar 27: The booming US economy and labour shortages have left the United States so in need of skilled immigrants that some lawmakers are thinking of changing immigration criteria, reports AFP.

There is an obvious mismatch between the preponderance of the current immigration flow and the direction of the American economy," according to James Edwards, author of the Congressional Policy of Immigration Reform.

"The immigration system must change," he told a House of Representatives Subcommittee on Immigration this week.

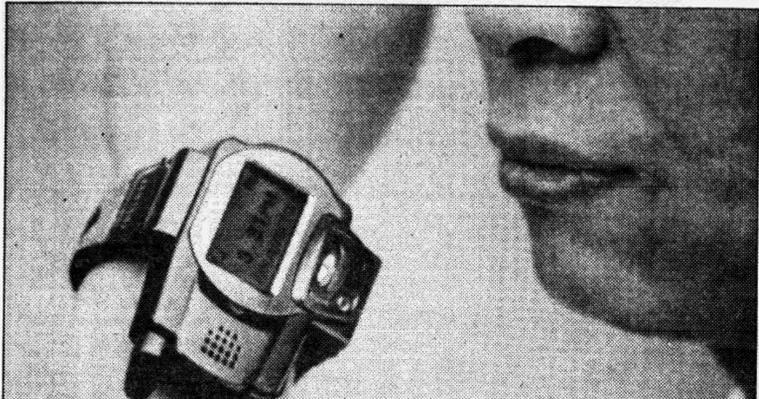
Industries in some of the fastest growing sectors of the world economy — computers, telecommunications, and health-care — are struggling to find qualified workers, he said.

Appearing before the same committee, William Archey, President of the Electronics Association, warned that the "future growth of the US high-technology industry, the most prosperous industry in the world, is threatened by a limited supply of skilled workers."

He cited a February 1998 study that found that American students in their final year of secondary school placed 19th in mathematics in a survey of 21 countries and 16th in science.

Archey said many of those hired out of US universities by high-tech firms were non-Americans.

In 1996, thirty-eight per cent of Master of Science degrees in computer science awarded by US universities went to foreign students. Forty-six per cent of PhD degrees in the discipline went to non-US citizens who later encounter difficulties obtaining visas to work in the United States.



Watch phone : This handout picture dated 25 March shows what South Korea's Samsung Electronics claims is the world's first-ever CDMA-type "Watch Phone," which will be available starting in April at a yet unspecified price. Samsung said the "Watch Phone" weighs 39 grams (50 gms including the battery) and is 67mm x 58mm x 20 mm in size, while the battery can last for 60 hours with the "Watch Phone" be used for conversations up to 90 minutes. Samsung says the "Watch Phone" has 30 different special functions, including voice dial and a phone book.

At the same time, according to congressional statistics, the skill level of immigrants relative to US citizens has been declining for years.

"Some 300,000 legal immigrants without high school education arrive each year," said representative Lamar Smith, at a time "nine out of ten new jobs will require more than a high school education."

University of Illinois Economics Researcher Barry Chiswick told the committee "the large surplus of low skill immigrants depresses wages and increases inequality and poverty."

He called for "a more market-oriented approach" to immigration.

"We should reduce emphasis on who you are related to and put more emphasis on what use the individual can be to the US economy."

Chevron refinery blast Oil prices surge to 12-month high

NEW YORK, Mar 27: Crude oil prices surged to their highest level in almost a year here as market fears of tight gasoline supplies encouraged buying, traders said, reports Reuters.

On the New York Mercantile Exchange (NYMEX), crude oil for May delivery leaped to 16.17 US dollars a barrel, a gain of 50 cents on the day, and the highest settlement price since March 30, 1998, when it closed at 16.21 US dollars.

A massive explosion on Thursday in the gasoline-making unit at one of Chevron Corp's major California refineries caused traders to bid up gasoline futures on Friday, and that lifted crude and heating oil futures.

NYMEX April gasoline surged a whopping 2.22 cents to settle at 50.63 cents a gallon, the highest since May 15, 1998, and NYMEX April heating oil ended Friday's session at 42.74 cents a gallon, up 1.29 cents.

The explosion and fire at Chevron's refinery in Richmond, Calif, shut down the hydrocracker unit, which turns heavy oil into high-octane gasoline and jet fuel.

The refinery, located near San Francisco, has a capacity of 240,000 barrels per day (BPD) and the hydrocracker is rated at 45,000 BPD.

The blast was the latest in a series of refinery troubles that have swamped the west coast.

This incident came as gasoline and heating oil inventories have been on a steep decline in the past two weeks and it now looks like we'll see more of the same in the coming weeks," said Tim Evans, senior analyst at Thomson Global Markets.

Ken Miller, analyst at Houston-based Purvin and Gertz Inc, said Gulf coast gasoline prices were also edging up as blending components are being moved to the west coast.

"The west coast is taking material out of the Gulf coast, and that's driving prices up."

"We had expected this (price) uptrend after OPEC approved the latest production cuts on Tuesday, but have a feeling we probably won't go to much higher than this for a some time," Miller said.

"The market will tend to be sceptical at how effective OPEC members will be in abiding by their commitments," he said.

Ten OPEC members agreed to cut output by 1.7 million BPD, beginning Thursday, April 1, under an agreement ratified on Tuesday in Vienna.

Mexico, Norway, Oman and Russia, all non-OPEC producers, promised to withdraw another 388,000 BPD, bringing total output cuts to 2.1 million BPD.

The improving oil price outlook pushed up the Standard and Poor's international oil index. Spoil, which tracks market performance of major oil companies.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Office of the Executive Engineer (RHD)
Ferry Division, Topkhana Sylhet

Tender Notice

1. Tender Notice No.	: 47 (98-99), Dt. 11-3-99.
2. Name of work	: Supplying spare parts of 210 HPDAF Engine (Model-110) under Ferry Division, Sylhet during the year-1998-99.
3. Estimated cost	: Tk. 2,96,000/- (Tk. Two lac ninety six thousand) only.
4. Earnest money	: Tk. 5,920/- (Tk. Five thousand nine hundred twenty) only.
5. Time allowed for work	: 15 (Fifteen) days from the date of work order.
6. Tender Form	: Bangladesh Form No. 2908.
7. Nature of contractor	: 1. A to C General Category of (RHD). 2. D General of Dhaka Ferry Circle. 3. E General of Ferry Division, Sylhet. 4. Executive Engineer (RHD), Ferry Division, Sylhet.
8. Name of offices where tender documents will be available	: 1. Executive Engineer (RHD), Ferry Construction Division, Dhaka. 2. Executive Engineer (RHD), Ferry Maintenance Division, Dhaka. 3. Sub-Divisional Engineer (RHD), Ferry Sub-Division, Sylhet.
9. Name of offices to receive tender	: 1. Superintending Engineer (RHD), Ferry Circle, Dhaka. 2. Executive Engineer (RHD), Ferry Division, Sylhet. 3. Executive Engineer (RHD), Ferry Construction Division, Dhaka. 4. Executive Engineer (RHD), Ferry Maintenance Division, Dhaka.
10. Last date of selling tender documents	: 6-4-99 up to office hours.
11. Date and time of receiving tender	: 7-4-99 up to 12:00 Noon.
12. Date and time of opening tender	: 11-4-99 at 12:30 PM.
13. If lowest tender is more than one then date and time of lottery	: To be announced later.

Naseem Ahmed
Executive Engineer (Mech.) (C.C)
(RHD), Ferry Division
Topkhana, Sylhet

DFP-5884-22/3
G-528

Rouble edges up on eve of new IMF loan talks

MOSCOW, Mar 27: The embattled Russian currency interrupted its nosedive Friday, edging up a bit on the eve of crucial talks on new loans between the Russian Cabinet and the chief of the International Monetary Fund, reports AP.

The rouble rose to 26.6 to the dollar in trading among banks Friday, up from 27.4 the previous day — an all-time low.

Traders attributed the rise to market excitement ahead of the IMF talks, but warned that the currency would resume its plunge if the negotiations fail.

IMF Managing Director Michel Camdessus, who is expected to arrive in Moscow today for three days of talks, will meet Prime Minister Yevgeny Primakov and other government officials. A meeting with president Boris Yeltsin on Monday is also a possibility, the ITAR-Tass news agency said.

Russia badly needs the IMF loan to avoid a default on its massive foreign debt, including over \$ 4.5 billion it owes to the fund itself this year. The IMF suspended its assistance to Russia after the government defaulted on some debts in August, and talks on new loans have stalled.

The IMF has criticised the Russian government for failing to put together sound economic policy and specifically urged it to drastically cut spending and reverse the decision to cut some taxes.

Both sides have managed to sort out some of their differences in recent talks, and Primakov left for Washington to meet with Camdessus on Tuesday — only to turn his plane around over the Atlantic Ocean when he learned that NATO raids on Yugoslavia were imminent. Russia fiercely opposes the bombings.

In a bid to save the collapsing talks, Camdessus agreed to visit Moscow. Meanwhile, Primakov assured Russians that Moscow's denunciation of the NATO airstrikes wouldn't affect the loan negotiations.

First Deputy Prime Minister Yuri Maslyukov also expressed hope Friday that "politics will not affect economics, and we will manage to reach an agreement with Michael Camdessus," the ITAR-Tass news agency reported.

Renault to buy \$ 5.4b stake in ailing Nissan Motor

TOKYO, Mar 27: France's Renault SA will take a 643 billion yen (\$ 4.4 billion dollars) stake in Japan's troubled Nissan Motor Co. to create the world's fourth carmaker, officials said here, reports AFP.

Renault will hold 36.8 per cent of the loss-making Japanese firm, giving it minority control and access to the lucrative US market.

The deal gives Nissan a desperately-needed cash injection and the hope of wiping out its mountain of debts.

Renault will make its acquisition by the end of May and together the firms will have annual production of 4.8 million vehicles.

The two companies have been in contact for eight months, but clear signs of an agreement only emerged in early March after Nissan's negotiations with Daimler Chrysler AG broke down.

Nissan's heavy debts, which stood at a staggering 2,500 billion yen as of March last year, and its reluctance to cede management control eventually scared off the newly-merged German-US auto giant.

Those debts will be main hurdle for the incoming French executives. Renault's executive Vice President, Carlos Ghosn, will become the number two at Nissan.

Renault's Louis Schweitzer said the French government, which owns 44.2 per cent of Renault, would not be involved in clearing Nissan's debts.



Ong Chin Tuan, Mohammed Noor Ali, and Mohammed Faruk Hossain exchange documents of the signed agreement establishing a vocational training institute in city Sunday.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Local Government Engineering Department
Office of the Executive Engineer
Dist: Pabna

Memo No LGED/XEN/PAB-99/689 Dated: 14.3.99

Tender Notice

No: 20 98-99

Sealed tenders are hereby invited from pre-qualified contractors of all RD Project (As per financial power) under LGED in Bangladesh Form No 2911 for execution of following work under STIDP-02 during F/Y 1998-99 as per percentage rate (Above/Less/At per) overall estimated cost against 95 Nos Schemes under 41 (forty-one) package.

- Place of purchasing : A. Office of the Project Director, STIDP-02, LGED, LGED Bhaban, Agargaon, Dhaka-1207.
B. Office of the Divisional Commissioner, Rajshahi.
C. Office of the Executive Engineer, LGED, Pabna, Sirajgonj.
D. Office of the Thana Engineer, Pabna Sadar, LGED under Pabna.
E. Deputy Commissioner, Pabna.
F. Office of the Chairman, Pabna Pourashava.
- Last date of selling of Tender documents : 04.04.99 up to office hour. No tender document will be sold on the date of submission & the day before tender is received.
- Date of submission of tender documents : 05.04.99 up to 2.00 PM (tender will be received by mail with in fixed time).
- Date of opening of tender documents : 05.04.99 at 3.00 PM. All tender schedule will be opened at above mentioned office.
- Description of work : If the submitted tender more than 5% (five) less than tender will be summarily rejected. If the lowest tender is more than one then decision will be taken by lot on 11.04.99 at 10.00 AM in presence of tenderers (if present).
- Contents of tender : The tender document comprises of (i) Tender Notice (ii) Form No 2911 (iii) Additional Terms & Conditions (iv) Schedule of items of works (v) Technical specifications (vi) Drawing bound separately (vii) tender document under STIDP-02.
- The authority is not bound to accept the lowest tender & reserves the right to reject any or all tenders or to accept any or all the tenders in part or the full without assigning any reason whatsoever.

S A Motiur Rahman
Executive Engineer
LGED, Pabna

DFP-5722-22/3
G-526

Government of Bangladesh
Office of the Executive Engineer (RHD)
Road Division, Dinajpur

Notice Inviting Tenders

(RHD) Road Division, Dinajpur

- Tender Notice No : 16E/DRD/1998-99.
- Name of works : Const of flexible pavement at 2nd (p) & 21st KM of Putkia-Dadul-Deshma-Chintaman Road under Dinajpur Road Division during the year 1998-99.
- Estimated cost : As per tender schedule.
- Earnest money : As per tender schedule.
- Time allowed for completion of work : As per tender schedule.
- Eligibility of contractor : 1) Divisional Commissioner, Rajshahi.
2) Executive Engineer (RHD), Road Divn, Rangpur/Dinajpur/Thakurgaon/Panchagarh/Nilphaman.
- Name of offices where tender documents will be sold : 1) Addl Chief Engineer (RHD), Rangpur Zone, Rangpur.
2) Divisional Commissioner, Rajshahi.
3) Superintending Engineer (RHD), Monitoring and Evaluation Circle, Sarak Bhaban, Ramna, Dhaka.
4) Superintending Engineer (RHD), Road Circle, Dinajpur.
5) Executive Engineer (RHD), Road Division, Dinajpur/Thakurgaon/Panchagarh/Nilphamari.
- Name of offices where the tender bids will be received : 1) Addl Chief Engineer (RHD), Rangpur Zone, Rangpur.
2) Divisional Commissioner, Rajshahi.
3) Superintending Engineer (RHD), Monitoring and Evaluation Circle, Sarak Bhaban, Ramna, Dhaka.
4) Superintending Engineer (RHD), Road Circle, Dinajpur.
5) Executive Engineer (RHD), Road Division, Dinajpur/Thakurgaon/Panchagarh/Nilphamari.
- Last date of selling tender documents during office hours : Up to 31-3-99.
- Last date and time for receiving tender bids : Up to 12:30 PM on 1-4-99.
- Date and time of opening tender box : At 12:45 PM on 1-4-99.
- Date and time of opening tender bids (At the office of the undersigned) : At 11:00 AM on 4-4-99.
- Date of lottery (if necy) : At 11:00 AM on 7-4-99.
- Chargeable head : 266-Road.

Md Abdul Halim Miah
Executive Engineer (RHD)
Road Division, Dinajpur

DFP-5375-16/3
G-487

MOU to establish vocational training institute signed

Guan Cheon Construction Private Ltd of Singapore and its local counterparts, Unique Group and Singapore Bangladesh Technical Cooperation Ltd, signed a memorandum of understanding in a bid to develop efficient workers in the country and to meet the growing labour demand of the domestic and international markets, says a press release.

The agreement signed Sunday aims at establishing a vocational training institute.

Ong Chin Tuan, Mohammed Noor Ali, and Mohammed Faruk Hossain signed the agreement on behalf of their respective companies. Among others, Hassan Ahmed Chowdhury Kiron, Director, Vincent Ong, J W Kim, Mahbul Alam, General Manager, were present at the signing ceremony.

It may be mentioned here that due to unskilled workers, Bangladesh is gradually losing international labour markets. The vocational training institute is expected to play a vital role in producing effective workforce.

City Bank to remain open today

All the branches and head office of the City Bank Limited will remain open today for the convenience of its valued customers on the eve of Holy Eid-ul-Azha.

The branches will only accept cash receipts and make payments.

Notice of RHD Inviting Tender

- Tender Notice No : 32/JRD of 1998-99.
- Name of work : Const of different work as per group list below under Jhalakati Road Division during 1998-99. Divided in 9(nine) groups.
- Estimated amount : Earnest money and time allowed for completion of work are mentioned in group list.
- Eligibility of contractor : 'A' to 'C' class enlisted contractor under general category of Road & Highways Department, 'D' class enlisted contractor under Barisal Road Circle & 'E' Class enlisted contractors of Jhalakati Road Division.
- Name of office where tender documents will be available : Executive Engineer, RHD, Road Division, Jhalakati/Barisal/Patuakhali/Bhola/Perojpur/Borguna/Sub-Divisional Engineer, RHD, Road Sub-Division, Jhalakati.
- Name of office where tender will be received in sealed cover : Office of the Superintending Engineer, RHD, Road Circle, Barisal/Executive Engineer, RHD, Road Division, Jhalakati/Barisal/Perojpur.
- Last date & time of selling of tender : Up to 5:00 PM on 7-4-99 Eng.
- Last date & time of receiving tender bids in sealed cover : Up to 12:30 PM on 8-4-99 Eng.
- Date & time of recording tender bids in sealed cover : At 12:45 PM on 8-4-99 Eng.
- Opening date of tender : At 12:00 Noon on 12-4-99 Eng.
- Lottery date & time : At 12:00 Noon on 15-4-99 Eng.

Item No	Name of work and location	Estimated cost	Earnest money	Time allowed for completion of work.
1.	Const of RCC pipe culvert at 16th km of Rajapur-Katalia-Amua-Bamna-Patarghata Road	Tk 80,624/-	Tk 1612/-	10 days.
2.	Const of RCC pipe culvert at 23rd km of -do- -do- Road	Tk 70,998/-	Tk 1420/-	10 days.
3.	Repairing of road embankment of 10th (p) km of -do- -do- Road	Tk 1,13,736/-	Tk 2275/-	15 days.
4.	Repairing of road embankment of 11th (p) km of -do- -do- Road.	Tk 1,35,188/-	Tk 2704/-	15 days.
5.	Const of single brick flat soiling at Amua ferry ghat of -do- -do- Road	Tk 42,664/-	Tk 853/-	7 days.
6.	Supplying best quality 1st class brick bats & local sand for M/C work at Jhalakati Road Division	Tk 1,06,975/-	Tk 2140/-	10 days.
7.	Const of repair with seal coat at 7th (p) & 8(p) km of Rajapur-Katalia-Amua-Bamna-Patarghata Road	Tk 3,60,949/-	Tk 7219/-	20 days.
8.	Supplying best quality stone chips, peagravels & sylhet sand for M/C work of Jhalakati Road Division.	Tk 4,91,665/-	Tk 9,833/-	15 days.
9.	Earnat work at 6th(p) km or Rajapur-Uttampur-Nizamia-Neamat Road	Tk 4,95,000/-	Tk 9,900/-	35 days.

Md Jafar Ullah
Executive Engineer, RHD (CC)
Jhalakati Road Division.

DFP-6095-24/3
G-517