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The Daily Star BUSINESS

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BFFEA concerned over trafficking of heroin in consignments

The Leaders of Bangladesh Frozen Foods Exporters Association (BFFEA) yesterday expressed grave concern over the news of heroin trafficking in the consignments of frozen foods, says BFFEA.

Salahuddin Ahmed and Mohammad Aminullah, acting president and secretary general of BFFEA, in a joint statement alleged that vested quarters are hatching conspiracy to destroy the frozen food export sector using a range of tricks.

The conspiracies are being employed at a time when the sector has been going through hard times for a couple of years, they added.

BFFEA leaders stressed that a name that surfaced in a section of the press with the trafficking is not related with the association.

The BFFEA demanding exemplary punishment to the guilty.

Lever Bros wins court order against Mohanagar Soap

Star Business Report

The sixth Additional District Judge's Court of Dhaka recently issued a decree against Mohanagar Soap and Chemical Factory for its alleged involvement in manufacturing soaps under the name 'LIFEJOY'.

Multinational Lever Brothers Bangladesh Limited suit filed with the court said that Mohanagar Soap Factory was engaged in producing fake caribolic soaps using the brand name 'LIFEJOY' which was similar to its popular brand 'LIFEBOUY'.

In its judgement, the court declared the absolute ownership of the brand name 'LIFEBOUY' in favour of Lever Brothers.

The court also passed mandatory injunction against Mohanagar Soap Factory and ordered it to deliver all the spurious items, infringing labels, tickets, carton boxes, dices, stamps, blocks, invoices, advertisement materials, which it had in its possession. BTV was also a defendant of the suit.

ACI brings in Bayer Diagnostics Autopak Reagents

Star Business Report

ACI Ltd has launched Bayer Diagnostics Autopak reagents. The launching was held at a conference in the city yesterday, says a press release.

ACI Ltd is distributor of Bayer Diagnostics India Ltd.

Autopak Reagent Kits, based on modern methodologies, offer a wide choice in chemistry and pack sizes that will cater to the needs of most of the Diagnostics Laboratories of Bangladesh.

P R Chitkara, Exports Manager of Bayer Diagnostics and Azmal Hossain, Executive Director of Trade of ACI Ltd, have expressed their commitment of making regular availability of Autopak Reagents soon to the reach of countryside diagnostics labs through their well established distribution network at reasonable price.

Lankan food festival begins at Sheraton tomorrow

Star Business Report

A week-long Sri Lankan food festival will begin at Dhaka Sheraton Hotel on Monday.

The festival is being jointly sponsored by Sri Lankan Airlines, Bengal Airlift Limited and Sheraton Hotel, says a press release.

The inauguration ceremony will be held at the 'Winter Garden' of the hotel in the evening.

State Minister for Civil Aviation, Tourism and Works will be the chief guest.

The festival will continue till October 3.

Non-profit professional body formed

Star Business Report

A non-profit professional organisation has been formed under the name of Bangladesh Project Management Professionals Forum.

The organisation was launched at a meeting of the sponsors in the city recently, says a press release.

Management professionals, teachers and bankers participated in the meeting.

A convening committee has been formed with Dr A K M Saiful Majid, Professor of the Institute of Business Administration of Dhaka University, as chairman.

The committee comprises, among others, Sk Abdus Dayan, Managing Director of Gramine Kalyan, A M M Farhad, Senior Vice President of NCC Bank Ltd, Mahbubuz Zaman, Assistant Vice President of National Bank Limited, Shaifuddin Ahmed, Company Secretary and Chief Accountant of Miro Ceramic Group.

The forum shall advise the relevant authorities on on-going public projects on the lapses and errors in the appraisal.

Suspension from trading over fake share pumping charges Broker threatens DSE CEO

Star Business Report

A Dhaka Stock Exchange (DSE) broker yesterday allegedly threatened the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the bourse, GQ Chowdhury, for suspending him from trading.

Sources said that at around 11 pm yesterday, DSE broker T Mashfu entered the office of GQ Chowdhury and threatened him.

The DSE Council on last Thursday suspended T Mashfu along with two other members on charges of pumping fake shares into the market. The

Council had also issued show-cause notices on the three to explain as to why they would not be expelled from the bourse for their offensive activities.

Chowdhury has already brought the matter to the notice of the DSE Council and the Securities and Exchange Commission and is also expected to lodge a general diary with the police today.

T Mashfu however denied the charges.

Meanwhile, the DSE management yesterday issued a circular inviting all its member firms to come up with suggestions for dealing with the fake share menace.

The members have been asked to submit their recommendations by 5 pm today. The DSE Council will then sit tomorrow to formulate a strategy for doing away with the problem.

It also suggested that the brokerage houses ensure the shares they transact are either in the client's name or have been procured through a member firm.

The DSE management advised its members not to accept any sale order for shares purchased from any other member unless these are verified by the same firm. The brokers should also check the documentary evidences of such share purchases, it said.

The management also said clients who want to sell their shares must revalidate the authenticity of the same with official seals and signatures from the companies concerned.

IMF ill-equipped to deal with poverty: Critics

WASHINGTON, Sept 25: The International Monetary Fund is ill-equipped to deal with world poverty and should be cut down to size to end its stranglehold on poor nations, critics of the lending body said yesterday, reports Reuters.

The criticisms by charities and recipient countries came ahead of next week's annual meetings of the IMF and World Bank.

Aid agency Oxfam said the IMF has worsened poverty problems in Africa and that its 'one-size-fits-all policies' employed after the recent financial crisis in Asia plunged millions more into desperate poverty.

African finance ministers called for more input into their own development policies and said they would like to see radical reform of the fund's much maligned low-interest loan programme — the Enhanced Structural Adjustment Facility.

Critics have long maintained that the IMF uses ESAF to foist overly restrictive economic policies on poor countries at the expense of social spending such as education and health. They also say ESAF puts the IMF in the business of development economics, an area where it does not belong.

In preparatory meetings this week, the IMF went to great lengths to show a softer, more caring approach to economics with more focus on poverty and a revamp of ESAF.

Managing Director Michel Camdessus defended ESAF earlier this week saying, "It will be much more and better centred on social issues, better linked to debt reduction, and, we believe, more efficient in promoting high-quality growth."

On the agenda of the annual meetings are exactly how to pay for the heavily indebted Poor Countries Initiative which will cut the debts of the world's poorest nations and is the cornerstone of the fund's poverty reduction plans.

The \$27.4 billion scheme was agreed by the Group of Seven industrial nation in Cologne, Germany earlier this year. Critics have said the debts of the poorest nations should be wiped out — which would double the cost of the scheme.

Oxfam's Kevin Watkins kicked off the charity's news conference in a church across the street from the IMF by holding up a box of "IMF pills."



Azmal Hossain, Executive Director-Trade, ACI Ltd, and P R Chitkara, Export Manager of Bayer Diagnostics India Ltd, are seen along with the other ACI diagnostics members at the launching ceremony of Autopak Biochemistry Reagent Kits. — ACI photo

World Bank says Asian financial crisis causes damage to environment

WASHINGTON, Sept 25: The Asian financial crisis has resulted in damage to the environment in the region which cannot be reversed now even though recovery is under way, World Bank officials said here yesterday, reports AFP.

"East Asia had developed very much on the model of 'grow now, clean up later,' but the financial crisis hit just as many countries were entering the clean-up phase, said Kristalina Georgieva, the World Bank East Asia/Pacific director for the environment and social development.

In Indonesia, for example, there was a 'big-scale' increased in illegal logging and a greater movement towards cutting down forest to provide agricultural land.

At the same time, the crisis 'diverted attention which is badly needed' from ways to tackle the country's polluting forest fires, Georgieva told a news conference.

Asia has lost 30 per cent of its forest cover in the past 30 years, she said, but the Indonesian province of Sumatra has lost 30 per cent in just 10 years.

Apart from problems such as increased risk of flooding, something China has suffered this year, such deforestation destroys animal life by destroying its habitat, she said.

Air pollution in parts of China is so bad, she said, that in one study cited by a Chinese newspaper, 70 per cent of schoolchildren asked what colour the sky was replied 'grey.'

"Environmental damage most hurts the poor," World Bank environment department director Robert Watson said.

"The last 10 years have been the warmest 10 years in the past 10,000 years" and characterised by weather disasters such as floods and droughts which always hit the poor the hardest, he said.

Commodity: Weekly Roundup

Sugar surges on optimism, continued drought in Brazil

LONDON, Sept 25: Sugar prices gained from the general optimism on commodity markets and from continued drought in growing regions of Brazil, reports AFP.

In London, March contracts rose to 197.1 dollars a tonne from 193.6 dollars.

In New York, a pound of white sugar for March delivery rose to 7.20 cents from 7.07 cents.

Dealers said that plantations in growing regions of Brazil could be seriously damaged if drought there continues.

Further north, tropical storm Harvey did not destroy plantations in southern US states.

Vegetable oils: Slip. Soy prices fell as weather conditions in the US Midwest continued to be favourable.

On the Chicago Board of Trade (CBOT), a bushel of soy lost 10 cents to 4.78 dollars (for November delivery).

In Rotterdam, key vegetable oil prices lost ground. The price of a tonne of palm oil fell by 40.5 dollars to 362.5 dollars.

Rapeseed oil lost 12 euros to 378 euros per tonne.

Grains: Rise. US wheat prices gained from increased demand on the export market, in spite of forecasts of favourable weather conditions for the current harvest.

In Chicago, a bushel of wheat (27.2 kg, for December) gained 10 cents to 273 cents.

Maize followed the upward march. A bushel (of 25.4 kg, for December) rose by eight cents to 208 cents.

In London, wheat prices rose by a modest 65 pence to 70.65

pounds per tonne (for September delivery).

The Russian vice agriculture minister Rafgat Altynbayev predicted that the country's grain harvest would be about 60 million tonnes this year.

Analysts said that although this was well above the 50 million tonnes seen last year, it would not be enough to meet demand that was predicted to rise as high as 77 million tonnes.

Cotton: Flat. Cotton prices were flat as dealers awaited precise information on the damage to US plantations caused by Hurricane Floyd.

Analysts estimated that plantations in North Carolina, which took the brunt of the storm, may have lost up to 500,000 bales of cotton.

The US agriculture department said that the losses might be worth a total 97 million dollars.

While the storm itself did not cause the damage previously feared, deluvial downpours unleashed in the wake of the winds hit plantations as the bushes came to flower, a stage of development when dry weather is needed for high quality fibre.

October contracts in New York lost 1.21 cents to 50.09 cents a pound.

Cash prices covered by the Cotton Outlook Index slipped to 49.00 cents from 49.80 cents.

Wool: Mixed. In Australia, the Eastern index lost one cent to 5.61 Australian dollars a kilo, while in Britain, the Wootton index rose by three pence to 282 pence a kilo.

Rubber: Soft. Rubber prices retreated this week in a market

paralysed by the upcoming meeting of the International Natural Rubber Organisation (INRO).

Thailand and Malaysia have threatened to quit INRO, criticising its impotence in supporting prices. INRO members are to gather next week for a four-day conference.

The London rubber index fell to 417.50 pounds per tonne (for October delivery) from 427.50 last week and 422.50 dollars (for November) from 432.50.

In Kuala Lumpur, the RSS1 index fell to 2.27 ringgits per kilo from 2.28 ringgits.

The SMR 20 index, which covers rubber used in tyre manufacture, rose to 2.33 ringgits per kilo from 2.32 ringgits.

Cocoa: Warm. Cocoa prices perked up this week, primarily due to stronger commodities

prices across the board, and questions over the liberalisation of the sector in Cote d'Ivoire.

Coffee: Strong. Coffee prices drifted serenely higher this week in a calm market, though the arrival of rains over Brazilian plantations did not augur well for future price direction.

Tea: Cosy. Demand remained buoyant strong in the Mombasa auction houses, the London Tea Brokers Association said.

All high quality BPI (Broken Pekoe) leaves met strong buying interest, with clearer lots rising by up to 12 cents per kilo, while lesser specimens were fetching 20-40 cents more than last week.

PF1 (Pekoe Fannings) sharedeared leaves gained between 30 and 48 cents a kilo.



President of Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA) speaks at a workshop on Understanding ISO-9000 organised by the Association at a city hotel yesterday. — BGMEA photo

Speakers say at BGMEA seminar in city ISO-9000 can help garments face global challenge

Speakers at a seminar in city yesterday underlined the need for implementing international quality guidelines 'ISO-9000' to influence the garments buyers and face challenges of the competitive global market, reports BSS.

"ISO-9000, based on examinations, can introduce a quality control system in companies and thereby ensure production of quality goods to sustain in the tough competitive market," said Industries Secretary KM Izajul Haq.

Speaking as the chief guest at a seminar on "Understanding ISO-9000" at a city hotel, the Industries Secretary said ISO-9000 could also be implemented in government offices and hospitals to upgrade the services of the respective institutions.

"Mere ISO-9000 certificate will not increase the quality of an institution without proper application of quality guidelines," Haq said and urged the entrepreneurs, especially the garments exporters to implement the quality parameters accurately.

Organised by Bangladesh Garments Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA), the seminar was presided over by the association president Anisur Rahman Sinha.

It was also addressed, among others by BGMEA office bearers Benzir Ahmed and Feroz M Hasan while the Management System Consultant of UAE Dr. SM Tahir presented a keynote paper.

Anisur Rahman Sinha said BGMEA is working relentlessly

to create awareness among the manufacturers about the quality measures of ISO-9000 to attract buyers in the international market.

International buyers are now interested to buy from those who have ISO-9000 certificates. Bangladeshi garments manufacturers must comply with the certificate, Sinha added.

Dr. SM Tahir said a total of 2,71,966 establishments of 143 countries received the ISO certificates till December last year.

Understanding the importance of certificate, the Pakistan government has taken up a package programme for its exporters, he said and urged the Bangladeshi garments manufacturers and exporters to implement the ISO guidelines immediately.

'It's too soon to cheer Euro zone recovery'

MADRID, Sept 25: The euro-zone economies are showing signs of growth but it is too early the "ring the bells" about a possible full recovery, a member of the European Central Bank's (ECB) board said yesterday, reports Reuters.

Inflation might also rise because of higher oil prices and "other factors," but there was no risk that the euro-wide inflation rate would break through the ECB's limit of two per cent in coming months, Eugenio Domingo Solans told Reuters.

Domingo, Spain's representative at the ECB, also said the bank's low interest rates had benefited the euro zone as a whole, despite concerns among some economists of overheating in smaller economies like

Spain and Ireland.

"There are signs of higher economic activity but as I see it it's still premature to draw definitive conclusions... we can't ring the bells," Domingo said in an interview.

Signs of improvement in core economies were stronger and had come earlier than the ECB had expected but "we need more data, more facts to confirm that the outlook for growth has improved considerably," Domingo said before addressing a seminar in Madrid organised by magazine Nuevo Lunes.

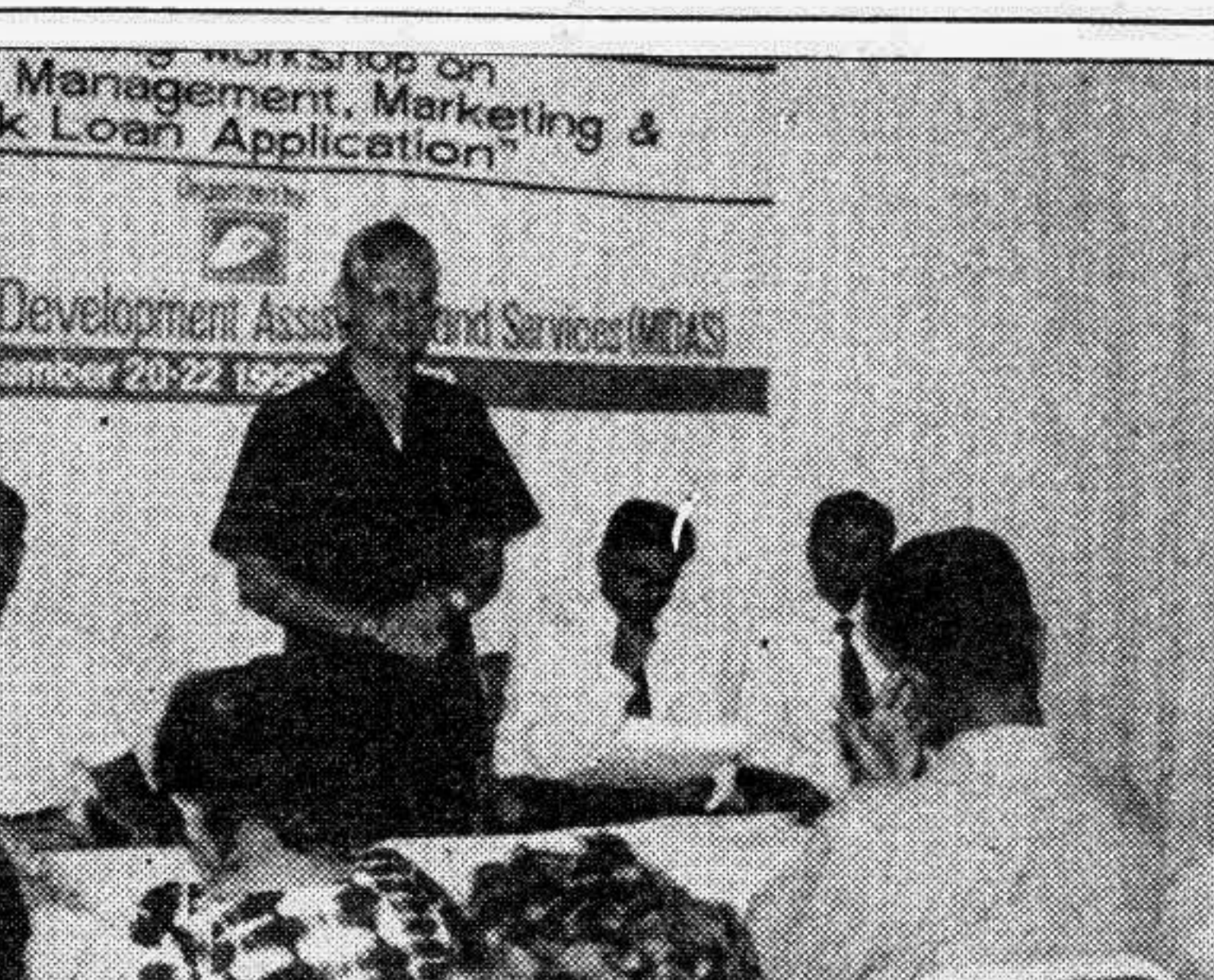
However, the ECB had not changed its view on the euro-zone economy since a speech by Wim Duisenberg earlier this month when the ECB president

said a bias towards tighter monetary policy was creeping into the bank's thinking at "a snail's pace."

The European Union said this week that harmonised consumer price inflation rose to 1.2 per cent in August, up from 1.1 per cent in July. Domingo said the index might continue to rise but was still "a long way" from the ECB's two-per cent ceiling.

"It is admissible that CPI could increase in the coming months but with no risk that, in the euro area as a whole, it will reach the limit of two per cent. Therefore there is no risk to stability," he said.

Asked about concerns that the faster growing economies of the euro area were at risk from overheating — Spanish inflation has risen to 2.4 per cent — Domingo said there was no excess in demand. "We cannot talk about overheating nor can we say that demand in the euro area is rising above potential for growth."



Abdul Karim, Managing Director of MIDAS, speaks at the closing session of the training workshop on "Business Management, Marketing and Bank Loan Application". Md Golam Sarwar Bhuiyan, Chief Programme Coordinator, M Khairul Bashar, Chief Programme Officer of MIDAS, Syed Latif Hossain, Communication and Training Manager, and Aniruddha Hom Roy, Bank Loan Facilitation Manager of JOBS Programme, are also seen in the picture. — MIDAS photo

Spain not at risk

Domingo said Spain, one of the fastest-growing euro area economies, still had room to grow before hitting danger levels.

But the government could do more to boost competition as a means of keeping inflation in check.

"The government is on the right path but... I would like them to make more progress in this direction," said Spain's representative on the ECB board.

3-day MIDAS workshop ends

A 3-day training workshop on "Business Management, Marketing and Bank Loan Application" concluded in the city on Wednesday, says a press release.

The workshop was organised and conducted by MIDAS under the sponsorship of JOBS Programme of USAID for the owners of small and medium enterprises (SMEs).

Seventeen entrepreneurs including six women participated in the workshop.

The workshop was conducted by CEFE-GTZ licenced trainers. It provided the participants with basic knowledge and skills of managing enterprises and marketing their products/services effectively. The participants also acquired skills on filling up bank loan application forms and learnt about the formalities of availing bank loans.

At the closing ceremony, Abdul Karim, Managing Director, Md Golam Sarwar Bhuiyan, Chief Programme Coordinator and M Khairul Bashar, Chief Programme Officer (Training) of MIDAS and Syed Latif Hossain, Communication and Training Manager of JOBS Programme, were present and spoke on the occasion. At the end, certificates were awarded to the participants.

Another workshop on the same topic will be held by MIDAS in Dhaka on September 27-29.