



DHAKA, SATURDAY, OCTOBER 16, 1999

Train services over Jamuna bridge likely from 2001

Direct train services between the capital Dhaka and north and south-western divisional headquarters of Rajshahi and Khulna over the Bangabandhu bridge are expected to be launched in 2001, a Railway press release said here yesterday, reports BSS.

It said works were in progress to develop a 99-kilometre mixed-gauge railway tracks from Joydebpur to the bridge site under the Bangabandhu Bridge Railway Link Project being financed by the ADB, France, Spain, OPEC, Canadian EDC and Bangladesh government.

Director General of Railway MA Rahim yesterday inspected the progress of the railway link project since along with general manager of the project Iqbal Uddin Chowdhury and other concerned officials.

Bank of Canada getting ready for Y2K glitch

OTTAWA, Oct 15: The Bank of Canada said yesterday that while it is confident the central bank will not be disrupted by the year 2000 computer issue, it has quadrupled its cash reserves and set up a command bunker to ensure smooth operations over year end, reports Reuters.

The central bank said it routinely keeps about C\$6 billion of bank notes on hand to deal with public demand in peak periods — like the Christmas shopping season — and in case of extraordinary circumstances.

But those reserves will be boosted to C\$23 billion to meet an expected surge in demand by Canadians who fear the nation's chartered banks may be paralysed by a computer glitch as the clock turns to 2000 — despite bank sector reassurances that a disruption is extremely unlikely.

"Because we are expecting business as usual in the financial sector, the substantial increase in bank note supplies that we are planning should be more than enough for any increase in demand that might arise," the Bank said in a release on the Y2K concern, adding that the extra inventory will come by saving notes that we to be destroyed, not by special printing of cash.

Workshop on ways to promote fisheries export held in city

A day-long training workshop on the Export Promotion Programme on Fisheries Products was held at DCCI auditorium yesterday, says a press release.

Organised by Centre for the Promotion of Import from Developing Countries (CBI) in co-operation with the Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry (DCCI), Chittagong Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCCC), Bangladesh Frozen Foods Exporters Association (BFFEA) and Bangladesh Marine Fisheries Association (BMFA), the workshop was inaugurated by DCCI President MH Rahman.

In his inaugural speech, Rahman said that export of fish plays an important role in our national economy, adding that there is enormous opportunity to expand its export, specially to the EU countries.

He also said that CBI's main objective was to contribute to the development of export from the developing countries to Western Europe. In order to achieve this objective, CBI has developed a package of services and export promotion programme available to trade promotion organisations and exporters in those countries. he said.

Syed Mahmudul Huq, former president of Bangladesh Frozen Food Exporters Association, underscored the need for necessary policy support and infrastructure for promoting export to EU countries, considering the contribution of this sector to the national economy.

A K Shamsuddin Khan, Chairman of Bangladesh Marine Fisheries Association (BMFA), said that shrimp price had fallen by about 22 per cent this year.

GM hooks up with Suzuki

TOKYO, Oct 15: American auto giant General Motors Corp. announced Friday it will produce a small passenger vehicle co-developed with Suzuki Motor Corp. in Asia starting in 2001, says AP.

The new model, called the YGM-1, is based on Suzuki's new small car platform and GM's design engineering. The car will be produced for the Asian market.

Both GM and Suzuki, which is 10 per cent owned by the US automaker, said they haven't decided where the YGM will be manufactured yet and refused to say how many vehicles they expect to produce a year.

"We are still studying locations," said Rudolph A. Schlaes Jr., president of GM Asia Pacific.

Bureau of Statistics surveys show Poverty on decline in Bangladesh

of various development programmes throughout the country since 1996.

The recent BBS surveys said the percentage of poor in rural areas declined from 47.9 per cent in April, 1996 to 47.6 per cent in April, 1998 and in urban areas from 44.4 per cent to 44.3 per cent during the same period.

The per capita calorie intake has also increased in recent years with 1,885 kilo calorie in December, 1995 to 1,953 kilo calorie in April, 1998 in rural areas and 1,895 kilo calorie in 1,958 kilo calorie in urban areas during the same period.

It was observed in the document that about half of the population were still under poverty line in Bangladesh but the marked improvement was that the percentage of poor has been declining after implementation

primary education, health and family welfare, rural electrification and local government, among other sectors, made direct and indirect contributions towards poverty alleviation throughout the country by now.

After coming to power in 1996, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's government attached maximum emphasis to the alleviation of sorrows and sufferings of the country's distressed and disadvantaged people.

The poverty alleviation programmes of the present government were prioritised through providing credit and imparting training to the unemployed youth and women for self-employment under the purview of the Fifth Five-Year Plan to be completed in the year 2002.

According to "Three Years Progress", a document containing the achievements of the current government till June this year, poverty alleviation has been given top priority after restoration of democratic and voting rights of the people.

The document, quoting surveys conducted by Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS) said that about half of the population were still under poverty line in Bangladesh but the marked improvement was that the percentage of poor has been declining after implementation

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