

WB debars five companies for corruption

WASHINGTON, Oct 29: The World Bank yesterday said it had declared five Japanese and US consulting firms ineligible for bank contracts for having engaged in corrupt practices, reports AFP.

Two Japanese firms, All Nippon Engineering Corporation and Penmacs, are barred indefinitely from doing business with the World Bank.

Three other companies, Niko Research Center Limited of Japan and Niko Research Center and International Access Corporation of the United States were ruled ineligible for five years.

A bank statement said Niko Research Center, which was liquidated earlier this year, was a wholly owned subsidiary of Niko Research Center Limited of Japan.

World Bank president James Wolfensohn approved the measures on the recommendation of the bank's sanctions committee, "which found that the five firms had engaged in corrupt practices as defined by the bank's consultants' guidelines," according to the statement.

Malaysia's 1999 growth seen at 4.3pc

KUALA LUMPUR, Oct 29: Malaysia's economy will expand by 4.3 per cent this year, a sharp improvement from the government's earlier prediction of 1 per cent, the Finance Ministry said in its annual economic report released Friday, reports AP.

The sharp upward revision of the real gross domestic product for this year is supported by a recovery in domestic demand, a stable exchange rate and progress in restructuring banks.

During the regional economic crisis, Malaysia's economy endured its worst recession ever, contracting for five straight quarters. In 1998, the economy shrank 7.5 per cent and finally snapped out of recession in the second quarter this year.

Malaysia imposed controversial capital controls in September 1998 in an effort to stem the flow of money in and out of the country.

Sony to start digital data broadcasting in 2000

TOKYO, Oct 29: Sony Corp plans to start digital data broadcasting via satellite when Japan launches the service in 2000, a spokesman said today, reports AFP.

"We plan to enter the business as soon as the digital data broadcasting service starts late next year," the spokesman said. "We plan to do it by ourselves, but if we can find suitable partners, a tie-up is still an option," he added.

Sony would apply to the posts and telecommunications ministry for a license to set up a subsidiary for the service late Friday, the spokesman said.

"I hope we can receive the ministry's approval as early as December," he said.

The company planned to set up a fully-owned subsidiary, Data Broadcasting, with a capital of 500 million yen (4.8 million dollars) to launch services to supply games, music, as well as movies and other entertainment to subscribers at home.

Regulations on foreign ownership of broadcasting firms prevent Sony from entering the sector itself.

Washington declines to budge a single inch

Deadlock on WTO's Seattle talks still holds firm

GENEVA, Oct 29: The upcoming World Trade Organisation (WTO) conference in Seattle and the future of multilateral trade talks remain unclear, despite attempts by cabinet ministers from 25 countries, who met in Switzerland, to get things moving, reports IPS.

The ministerial gathering in Lausanne, Switzerland concluded with almost unanimous expressions of goodwill. But the parties locking horns over the meeting to be held Nov 30 to Dec 3 in the US City of Seattle, Washington did not budge a single inch.

The final declaration, read by the Economy Minister of Switzerland Pascal Couchepin, urged the missions accredited before the WTO in Geneva to seek an understanding prior to the conference.

The delegates will have to work hard in the next few days just to identify the essential points on which a consensus is to be reached in Seattle. Once

that aim is achieved, the guidelines will have to be defined for negotiating each point on the agenda, states the document.

The declaration adds that the ministers confirmed their determination to overcome the persistent discrepancies, and to adopt in Seattle a balanced programme for talks that responds to the interests of the 134 members of the WTO.

Discussions on the text of the final declaration to be approved in Seattle have been going on at least since July, even though the first formal draft of the document was released just three weeks ago.

A revised draft, distributed on Oct 19, presents the contrasting positions of the two blocs caught in a stalemate over the possibility of a new round of trade talks being launched.

One of the possible outcomes of the Seattle conference, which industrialised nations are pushing for, is the start of a new round of negotiations as a fol-

low-up to the process of liberalisation of trade stressed in the Uruguay Round (1986-94).

Developing countries, however, want the commitments assumed during the Uruguay Round to be fully applied and enforced before a new round of talks is launched.

In Lausanne, US Trade Representative Charlene Barshefsky backed the demands for the total implementation of the commitments undertaken. But she did not agree that existing agreements should be renegotiated, as developing countries are also insisting.

The European Union (EU), meanwhile, expressed its willingness to address developing for the total implementation and enforcement of existing accords, as long as they agreed that the Seattle conference should approve a broad agenda.

A trade negotiator who wished to remain anonymous pointed out that with a multi-point agenda for the talks,

Europeans would have a wide range of cards to play when it came to the issue of agriculture, their most pressing concern.

It once more became patent at the gathering in Lausanne that the question of farm products was the main bone of contention, he added.

EU continues to subsidise agricultural production and farm exports, a practice staunchly opposed by efficient producers, linked in the Cairns Group.

EU Trade Commissioner Pascal Lamy said in Lausanne that his bloc was not evading discussions on the agreement on agriculture, but believed that the conditions for talks on farm products did not necessarily have to be agreed in Seattle.

The Cairns group, on the other hand, supported by the United States and developing countries, wants the groundwork for the talks on farm products to be established at the WTO conference.

Preparatory move to ride out Y2K glitch

Japan warns people to hoard essentials for three days

TOKYO, Oct 29: Japan's government today warned people to stock up to three days worth of water, food, fuel and medicine to ride out the millennium computer bug, says AP.

One of the most dramatic New Year alerts by an advanced nation, it is to be broadcast on television and printed in newspapers from Saturday, an official said.

Preparations for the year 2000, or Y2K, computer glitch were "considerable," Tokyo's advanced information and telecommunications society promotion headquarters said.

The government-appointed centre said it expected "no serious impact on every day life as a result of damage to the social infrastructure and consequent loss of service."

The government statement warned people to:

Stock food and water. No major problems were expected with the supply of food, electricity, gas and water, said the statement.

"Most households already keep on hand enough non-perishable food and water for two-to-three days as well as a first aid kit, torch, radio and batteries for use in the event of an earthquake or storm damage, so please double-check you have all these items within easy reach."

Fill up fuel supplies. Japan has oil reserves for 166 days, the statement said, and petroleum companies were taking all precautions but people should make sure they have enough kerosene and gasoline for the holiday period.

Medicine. People should check they have all the medicine they need. "Investigations conducted so far indicate that there will be no problems with life-sustaining medical equipment such as heart pace-makers."

Telephone

No big problems are expected, the agency said. But people should avoid picking up the phone just to check it works, and jamming up the lines.

Travel

Travellers should "build flexibility" into their plans and check the latest information before leaving.

Keep bank records

While all financial institutions and post offices would back up their financial data, "to be on the safe side we recommend that you retain any receipts etc. you receive up to the New Year period."

People should "prepare as

usual" for when cash machines are out of service over the New Year holiday but should also watch out for theft.

People were urged to check home appliances, and to watch out for fraud related to the computer bug, and for any computer viruses disguised as anti-Y2K programmes. Small businesses were asked to draw up contingency plans.

Many people in Japan already have food and water supplies for three days to get them through earthquakes.

Prime Minister Keizo Obuchi told a meeting of millennium bug experts to accelerate preparations for key lagging areas and "create a crisis management system during the New Year period."

China world's top bribe payer

NEW YORK, Oct 29: Transparency International (TI), a Berlin-based organisation, has placed China at the top of a list of countries whose companies pay bribe abroad to gain contracts, a press report here has said, reports BSS.

The New York Times in an article published Wednesday quoted TI as announcing on Tuesday that "no country's corporations were regarded as innocent of bribe paying."

When it came to countries whose companies pay bribes abroad, China was perceived to be the worst offenders, followed by South Korea, Taiwan, Italy and Malaysia, the report said.

Barbara Crossette, the UN Bureau Chief of the New York Times and a veteran journalist, in her article mentioned that the TI once again found that officials in Northern European

countries were perceived to have the cleanest hands, while the highest levels of bribe-taking officials appeared to be in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the former Soviet block.

TI traces corruption among government officials around the world and had in its latest finding added a new index to rank nations.

The bribe paying index, the new parameter on corruption practices by countries, was based on a survey conducted for TI in 14 leading emerging market countries. The countries are Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Morocco, Nigeria, the Philippines, Poland, Russia, South Korea, South Africa and Thailand.

In her article Barbara Crossette also mentioned that no country scored a perfect 10 on the Bribe Payers Scale.

US appeals WTO ruling on export system

WASHINGTON, Oct 29: The United States said yesterday it appealed a World Trade Organisation (WTO) ruling against a US tax scheme that supports billions of dollars in exports a year, reports Reuters.

A WTO dispute panel ruled in September that the US Foreign Sales Corporation, or FSC, scheme violated the world trade watchdog's subsidies code and agricultural agreement.

The European Union, which launched the WTO dispute, alleged that the FSC programme amounted to a \$2.5 billion a year export subsidy to US firms, with Boeing Co B.A.N. and Microsoft Corp MSFT.O. among major beneficiaries.

US Trade Representative Charlene Barshefsky said the WTO panel erred.

"We believe that the panel committed multiple legal errors on both substantive and procedural issues, and we will present those errors to the appellate body," Barshefsky said in a statement.

A WTO appeals panel is expected to issue its ruling in late January or early February of 2000, Barshefsky's office said.

FSCs are usually subsidiaries of US corporations located in tax havens such as the Virgin Islands, Barbados or Guam. US firms exporting through them qualify for income tax relief on condition a large part of their product is manufactured in the United States.

Dividends paid by FSCs to parent companies are not subject to US tax, according to the EU.

First batch of TULEC Computer Education gets certificates

TULEC Computer Education, Dhaka, recently celebrated its first certificate Awarding Ceremony.

Sudhir Deoras, Managing Director of TATA International Ltd, distributed the certificates among the students of TULEC's first executive batch, says a press release.

A number of prominent figures belonging to the top organisations and industries of Bangladesh made the function a milestone for the country's IT industry.

MD Ali Akbar Khan, Managing Director of TULEC, Dhaka, delivered the welcome speech, while Nurul Islam Mollah, General Manager of Janata Bank, expressed his bank's plans in the area of information technology.

Dr Syed Alauddin Ahmad, Chief Scientific Officer of Bangladesh Jute Research Institute, one of the recipient of the certificate, also spoke on the occasion.

TULEC Computer Education is a division of TATA Infotech Ltd, one of the leading figures in the global IT industry.

Since its inauguration on May 8, 1999, TULEC Dhaka has been contributing a significantly to Bangladesh's IT education. And with their high potential they are quite confident to be the best IT education provider in Bangladesh.

The tone of official announcements was in marked contrast to the screaming headlines of the British press which has been whipping up public opinion against the French ban since it was revealed French cattle were given sewage in their feed.



The students of the first executive batch of TULEC Computer Education received their certificates recently. Picture shows Sudhir Deoras (middle), MD of TATA International Ltd, Ali Hossain Khan (on his left), Chairman, and MD Ali Akbar Khan (on his right), MD of TULEC Computer Education, Dhaka, along with the certificate recipients. — TULEC photo

UK, France signal to avoid trade war over beef

BRUSSELS, Oct 29: France and Britain toned down the rhetoric in their war of words yesterday as European Commission scientists said they would need at least another day to decide if a French ban on British beef was justified, reports Reuters.

Both governments signalled that they wanted to avoid sliding into a damaging trade war over beef which France says is still unsafe despite Britain's assurances that it has eradicated mad cow disease.

In London, Prime Minister Tony Blair's administration said it wanted to settle the row without a lengthy court battle but added that it was not clear

whether Paris was offering any concessions.

British Agriculture Minister Nick Brown said he was confident the European Union's Scientific Steering Committee, which met in Brussels on Thursday, would stick by its earlier decision that British beef was safe.

"I expect the Steering Committee to reject the French evidence," he told the House of Commons.

Paris sees more controls as solution

In Toulouse, French Agriculture Minister Jean Glavany said France would maintain its unilateral ban until its own sci-

entists gave the all-clear. But he said the crisis could be resolved if tougher controls and better labelling were introduced.

"We can imagine putting in place sensible solutions very quickly, among them — without being too precise — we could see tougher controls, a more systematic labelling system or the slaughtering of herds," Glavany told reporters.

The tone of official announcements was in marked contrast to the screaming headlines of the British press which has been whipping up public opinion against the French ban since it was revealed French cattle were given sewage in their feed.



A model wears a single-strand jadeite bead necklace, a 16.46 carat single diamond ring by Cartier and a pair of pear-shaped diamond earrings by Van Cleef & Arpels at a preview of Hong Kong's largest ever jewellery auction on Friday. The necklace is estimated to fetch between USD2.57 million and USD3.85 million at the auction to be held from October 31 to November 3. —AFP photo



Office of the Executive Engineer

Faridpur O&M Division
BWDB, Faridpur

Corrigendum Notice for IFB

No 09/1999-2000 Dated: 07.10.99

It is notified for information and necessary action to all concern that Notice for IFB No 09/1999-2000 dated 07.10.99 as circulated vide this office Memo No T-1/2511(50) dated 07.10.99 published in The Daily Star of October 9, 1999 is replaced by the new IFB as follows:

IFB No-09/1999-2000

Dated: 24.10.99

IDA Credit No-2791-BD IDA Credit Name: River Bank Protection Project (1998 Flood Rehabilitation Works).

- The People's Republic of Bangladesh has received a Credit from the International Development Association (IDA) towards the cost for River Bank Protection Project (1998 Flood Rehabilitation Work) and intends to apply part of the funds to cover eligible payment under the contract for construction of Halencha Regulator (2-1.50x1.80) in connection with Alfadanga-Boalmari system ID No 299. Bidding is open to "A" & "B" class contractors/firms of BWDB enlisted for 1999-2000 and from eligible source countries as defined in the Guidelines procurement under IBRD loans and IDA Credits.
- The Executive Engineer, Faridpur O&M Division, BWDB, Faridpur invites sealed Bids from eligible bidders for construction of Halencha Regulator (2-1.50x1.80) in connection with Alfadanga-Boalmari system ID No 299, contract package No 299/W-2. Time allowed for completion of work is 120 days.
- Bidding documents (and additional copies) may be purchased from:
 - The Manager, Sonali Bank, Goalchamat Branch, Faridpur.
 - The Manager, Sonali Bank, Rajbari Branch, Rajbari.
 - The Manager, Sonali Bank, Gopalganj Branch, Gopalganj.
 - The Manager, Sonali Bank, Madaripur Branch, Madaripur.

on payment of non-refundable fee of Taka 750/- (Taka seven hundred fifty) only for each set. Interested bidders may obtain further information from the office of the undersigned.

- The provisions in the Instruction to Bidders and in the conditions of contract are the provisions of the Standard Bidding Documents (SBD) procurement of works National Competitive Bidding (NCB). Trial Edition-January/1998 Revised February/1999 issued by the World Bank, Dhaka office.
- Bids shall be valid for a period of 91 days after Bid opening and must be accompanied by Bid Security of 2.5% of the total quoted amount in favour of Deputy Director, Regional Accounting Centre (RAC), BWDB, Faridpur and shall be delivered to the Executive Engineer, Faridpur O&M Division, BWDB, Faridpur up to 07.12.99 (12.00 hours).
- Bidders may deliver their Bids by any means including courier service Registered Mail with acknowledgment due etc which must reach the above office before the deadline for submission of Bids. Bids received after the deadline will not be accepted.
- Bids shall be opened in the presence of the Bidders representatives who choose to attend at 12.30 hours on 07.12.99 in the office of the undersigned.
- A pre-bid conference will be held on 30.11.99 in the office of the undersigned at 10.00 hours. All Bidders are requested to attend the conference in time.
- The minimum amount of liquid assets and/or credit facilities, net of other contract commitments for the successful bidders, in clause No (4.5) (C) in Section-IB of Bidding Data shall be Taka 20.00 lacs instead of Taka 10.00 lacs.

Md Shamsuddin

Executive Engineer
Faridpur O&M Division,
BWDB, Faridpur

PANI-151/1999-2000
GD- 985

Special Branch, Bangladesh Police Rajbargh, Dhaka Tender Notice No: 9/1999-2000

Sealed tenders are hereby invited from bonafide manufacturers' authorised agents/suppliers for purchase of 4 Explosives Detectors, 10 Archway Metal Detectors, 90 Hand Held Metal Detectors, 10 Ground Search Metal Detectors, 3 Plastic Bomb Detectors and 2 Vehicle Search Mirrors for use at the Special Branch, Bangladesh Police, Rajbargh, Dhaka office. The said tenders should be dropped in the tender box kept at the Ground Floor of Special Branch, Dhaka office within 12:00 Noon of 29-11-99 and will be opened on the same day at 12:30 PM in presence of the tenderers (if any). 2% (two per cent) of the total price quoted in the tender should be submitted as earnest money (refundable) with the tender through Demand Draft/Pay Order from any commercial bank in favour of the undersigned. Otherwise tender will be treated as cancelled. Each tender schedule consisting specification with terms & conditions can be collected at Tk 750/- (seven hundred fifty) only (non-refundable) from the staff section of the SB Office at Malibagh during office hours upto 28-11-99. No tender schedule will be sold on the date of opening tender.

The undersigned reserves the right to accept or reject any tender without assigning any reason.

Kazi Jainul Abedin, Beer Prateek
Special Superintendent of Police (VR)

For/Additional IG, Special Branch

Bangladesh Police, Dhaka
Phone: 9333294

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