

World airline industry sees smooth New Year flying

MONTREAL, Canada, Dec 28: After investing some \$3 billion to squash the Y2K bug, the global airline industry believes passengers can be assured of smooth flying into the New Year, says Reuters.

"We expect it to be rather a big yawn," said William Gaillard, a spokesman for the International Air Transport Association (IATA), the world airline industry group.

Over the last 18 months, Montreal-based IATA has invested some \$30 million to monitor what Y2K preparations have been made by 265 airlines, 2,000 airports and more than 180 air traffic control services around the world. Another global organisation, Airports Council International, has had its 1,350 member airports run through a Y2K checklist for their systems.

"We are satisfied with the progress we've seen. Everyone at both airports and air traffic control systems has taken the subject very seriously, made the right investments, made the right efforts," Gaillard said. "We

don't anticipate anything extraordinary happening."

The airline industry will get a reprieve of sorts from the Y2K bug because New Year's Eve passenger traffic will be only a fraction of normal holiday travel volumes. Most major airlines have drastically cut flights over the period for lack of passengers.

The normal 31st of December night is pretty light. I would say between a fifth and a quarter of normal traffic," said Brian Bowers, a consultant on the ICAO's plan.

IATA has worked closely over the past two years on its Y2K preparedness programme with the Montreal-based International Civil Aviation Association (ICAO), the specialised United Nations agency created in 1944 to promote and set international standards for civil aviation.

To date, 170 of ICAO's 185 contracting states have supplied detailed information on the steps they have taken to protect their airports, airlines and air traffic control systems

against the Y2K bug.

"The ones we don't have information on are generally small islands in the Pacific, in areas where there is probably no concern about either traffic or Y2K issues," said Brian Bowers, a consultant on the ICAO's plan.

ICAO said states representing 99.5 per cent of international air traffic reported that their air traffic systems are Y2K-ready or will be before December 31. After analysing the data received from the world's top 25 airports and 50 top airlines, which account for roughly 85 per cent of international passenger traffic, officials are also convinced of their readiness.

Each reporting state has also set up a contingency plan designed to mitigate the impact of unforeseen events. The plans mesh with those of the ICAO's region's around the globe.

"It is the first time there has ever been a global development of contingency plans that all interface together," Bowers said.

During the whole Y2K rollover, the ICAO will liaise with the US Federal Aviation Administration, which will act as one of the regional centres. There is a regional coordination unit in Miami that will cover Central America, Mexico and the Caribbean.

The other ICAO regional centres are in Lima for South America, Brussels for Europe and the North Atlantic, Cairo for the Middle East, Bangkok for the Asia-Pacific and Dakar for Africa.

With all that preparation, ICAO officials are not expecting major civil aviation mishaps, but smaller events such as local power or equipment outages for radar, navigation and communications.

"What we will see, I think from all the regions, is outages," Bowers said. "Some of those may be normal outages, but that evening, we expect that it will be difficult to determine whether it was a Y2K failure or just a normal failure."

Officials said that aside from the Coordinated Universal Time (UTC) or GMT rollover, which most aviation systems use, the February 28 date could be an issue later on. Some systems may wrongly interpret 2000 as a leap year because it is divisible by four.

"We found that some systems that were tested did have problems with the February 28-29 time period and in some cases didn't have any problem with the December 31-January 1 time period," Bowers said.

— AFP photo



A boy walks past a poster of the new Chinese movie "Crash Landing," produced by the Shanghai film company, in Shanghai on Tuesday. Senior Chinese airline executives said that they would pilot airliners on December 31 and January 1 to reassure passengers they have nothing to fear from the millennium computer bug.

— AFP photo

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Department of Films & Publications
112, Circuit House Road, Dhaka-1000

No 7-284-85(F)/

International Re-Tender No 1

Department of Films and Publications (DFP) invites sealed International Re-Tender for the supply and commissioning of equipment from manufacturer through their appointed local agent in Bangladesh for supply of the following equipment specified in the tender schedule.

Description of the equipment:

No	Item	Quantity
1	Beta Sp camcorder (camera) including lens, viewfinder and other accessories	1 no.
2	Long life battery for camcorder	4 nos.
3	Battery charger (capable of charging 3 batteries at a time) with normal and quick charging facilities	2 nos.
4	Light weight tripod with fluid head and spreader etc	2 nos.
5	Video cassette (Beta Sp) oxide coated (1) 20 nos. 20 min (3) 60 min.	20 nos.
6	Beta Sp player/with DT (for slow motion)	1 no.
7	Beta Sp player Equivalent	1 no.
8	Digital Multi Effect system with 2D, Slide, Squeeze, Expansion, Split zoom etc. 3D is rotation, perspective dim etc noninear, Page turn. Page roll, Cylinder, Sphere etc Modifiers, border width, softness drop shadow, lighting, trail etc 4 inputs, 1 little key input, 1 DSK 1/p	1 no.
9	Beta Sp Recorder/Player	1 no.
10	Computer Graphics	1 no.
11	Caption Camera	1 no.
12	Edit Controller	1 no.
13	Cassette Recorder-cum-Player	1 no.
14	CD Player	1 no.
15	14" Colour Monitor	2 nos.
16	Wave-form and Vector-scope monitor	1 no.
17	Video and Audio patch panel	1 no.

Tender document (tender schedule) with detailed specification and scope is obtainable from the office of DFP, 112, Circuit House Road, Dhaka-1000 on payment of Tk 750/- per set during office hours up to 19-1-2000.

Tender will be received in two envelope system (one for technical-cum-commercial offer and one for financial offer). This will be received in two separate tender boxes kept in the office of DFP up to 1200 hours on 20-1-2000. Technical-cum-commercial offer of the tender will be opened at 1215 hours on 20-1-2000 in presence of the bidders (or their local representatives), if any. Financial offer of the bidder, whose technical offer found responsive, will be opened later after notifying the bidders. This will be opened in presence of qualified bidders, if any.

DFP reserves all rights to accept or reject any or all the tender without assigning any reason whatsoever.

BM Salauddin
Director (Films)

and

Project Director

DFP-28829-23/12

G-2183

Video-Cassette Recording Facilities Project.

Government of Bangladesh

Office of the Executive Engineer, RHD

Munshigonj Road Division

Munshigonj

RHD Notice Inviting Tender

1. Tender Notice No : 26/Rd. Munshigonj of 1999-2000.
2. Name of work : Tender for brick pavement work at 2nd KM (P) & 3rd KM (P) of Kacharighat-Laxmiprasad-Sikderbari Road under Munshigonj Road Divn. during 1999-2000.
3. Estimated cost : Tk 15,06,062/-
4. Earnest money : Tk. 30,121.00 in BD/TC/NDS certificate in favour of Executive Engineer, RHD, Munshigonj Road Division from any scheduled bank.
5. Time allowed for completion of work : 40 (Forty) days from the date of issue of work order.
6. Eligibility of contractor : A to E general category of RHD contractor.
7. Last date of selling the tender documents : 9.01.2000 during office hours.
8. Last date & time for receiving the tender documents : 10.01.2000 up to 12.30 PM.
9. Date & time for opening the tender documents : 10.01.2000 at 12.45 PM (Except this office).
10. Date & time for centrally open the tender documents : 12.01.2000 at 12.45 PM.
11. Name of office where tender documents will be sold : Divisional Commissioner, Dhaka Division, Segun Bagicha, Dhaka/Executive Engineer, RHD, Road Division, Dhaka/Narayanganj/Munshigonj/Manikgonj/Gazipur/Narsingdi/Planning & Design Division, Dhaka/Bridge Design Divn (Eastern), Sarak Bhaban, Ramna, Dhaka/Sub-Divisional Engineer, RHD, Road Sub-Division, Munshigonj/Sreenagar/Keranigonj/1st Line Workshop Sub-Division, Munshigonj.
12. Name of office where tender document will be received : Divisional Commissioner, Dhaka Division, Segun Bagicha, Dhaka/Superintendent Engineer, RHD, Dhaka Road Circle, Dhaka/Monitoring & Evaluation, Circle, Dhaka/Planning, Monitoring & Evl. Circle, Dhaka Zone, Dhaka/Executive Engineer, RHD, Munshigonj Road Division, Munshigonj/Sub-Divisional Engineer, RHD, Road Sub-Division, Munshigonj/Sreenagar/Keranigonj/1st Line Workshop Sub-Division, Munshigonj.
13. Date & time of lottery (If necessary) : 13.01.2000 at 2.00 PM.
14. Chargeable Head : 266 CACW.
15. Sealed tenders in BD Form No 2911 are hereby invited from the RHD enlisted contractors according to their financial limit for the mentioned works under Munshigonj Road Division. The tenders will be received/opened at fixed time & date of abovementioned offices.
16. Md. Abul Quasem Bhuiyan
Executive Engineer, RHD
Munshigonj Road Division
Munshigonj.

DFP-28763-23/12

G-2180

Oil prices surge

NEW YORK, Dec 28: Crude oil prices rose strongly yesterday after a senior official from Iran, a major exporter, said the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) would agree to maintain oil supply curbs, says Reuters.

In other commodity markets, soybean prices sawed on shifting weather reports for the bellwether Brazilian crop and ended sharply lower on forecasts for rains this week.

Platinum prices eased only slightly after Russia said it expected long-delayed shipments to resume in January.

At the New York Mercantile Exchange, oil markets roared, ahead after Iran's oil minister, Bijan Zanganeh, told reporters in Tehran that OPEC oil producers were likely to extend a year-old scheme of supply restraints for another six months when the group meets in March.

"OPEC members will probably agree in March to meet to extend the cuts for another three to six months," Zanganeh said.

Mexican Energy Minister Luis Tellez last week said non-OPEC Mexico and other major oil producers were ready to extend output cuts through next year, depending on market conditions.

The growing confidence that crude oil supplies will tighten

due to exporter discipline and revived Asian economies pushed NYMEX prices up. Crude oil closed 46 cents higher at \$26.33 a barrel.

Refined oil products rose in tandem. January heating oil closed 1.24 cents a gallon higher at 69.75 cents and January gasoline closed 1.20 cents a gallon higher at 71.56 cents.

Heating oil futures also saw underlying support from a cold snap gripping the US Northeast, the world's largest distillates market. According to forecasts, below normal temperatures were expected until mid-week in the region.

At the Chicago Board of Trade, weather was the main story — and it changed significantly during the day.

With markets reopening after a 3-day break for the Christmas holidays, traders were keeping a sharp eye on the dry conditions that returned to the soybean growing regions of Brazil last week. Brazil, the number two exporter after the United States, has just planted its big new crop.

With indications of scorching temperatures and little rain seen in Brazil's fields over the long weekend, CBOT soybean futures shot up for 6.7 cents per bushel gains in electronic screen trading on Sunday night.

Chinese bank starts e-commerce payment business

BEIJING, Dec 28: China Construction Bank has opened its online payment business for some e-commerce firms in Beijing as an experiment, the official Beijing Economic Daily reported today, says Reuters.

The state-owned bank signed online payment agreements with nine companies involved in e-commerce on Monday and the maximum amount of each payment was set at 100,000 yuan (\$12,000), the newspaper said.

But the online payment business was launched only in Beijing as an experiment and would be extended to the southern city of Guangzhou next month, it said.

The bank would open the business in more major domestic cities gradually, the newspaper said.

It said the payment system was fast and secure and would push the development of China's e-commerce industry.

Analysts say after-sale delivery, online payments and the paucity of credit cards are the biggest obstacle to the growth of

e-commerce in China.

E-commerce in China is still in its infancy, but is set for take-off.

Internet users in China are expected to reach seven million in China by the end of this year and the number could reach 20 million by the end of 2003. Some private estimates put the total at 30 million by then.

Other Chinese banks, including the Bank of China, the Industrial and Commercial Bank of China and the China Merchants Bank have started online payment services.

The official Financial News reported on Tuesday China Merchants planned to launch a nationwide internet banking service and that would help to resolve the payment problem which is creating a bottleneck in the growth of China's e-commerce.

The bank had provided online payment software to portals such as Sohu.com and NetEase.com and personal computer maker Legend Group to foster e-commerce in China.

Chen said.

Exchange Rates

Following are yesterday's Standard Chartered Bank rates of major foreign currencies against Taka:

Central Bank USD/BDT rate: Buying-BDT 50.85/Selling-BDT 51.15

Selling	Currency	Buying			
TT/OD	BC	TT Clean	OD Sight	OD Doc	Transfer
51.2300	51.2700	USD 50.8200	50.8516	50.5631	
0.5206	0.5210	JPY 0.4863	0.4847	0.4839	
32.6514	32.6769	CHF 31.7625	31.6572	31.5428	
31.5068	31.5314	SGD 29.7715	29.6229	29.6210	
35.7128	35.7407	CAD 33.5335	33.4224	33.2981	
6.0634	6.0682	SEK 5.9550	5.9353	5.9228	
34.0526	34.0792	AUD 31.2136	31.1102	30.9042	
13.6268	13.6375	MYR 13.2327	13.1888	13.1555	
6.6462	6.6514	HKD 6.4911	6.4696	6.4558	
13.7708	13.7815	SAR 13.4420	13.3974	13.3634	
14.0634	14.0743	AED 13.7210	13.6756	13.6406	
0.0					