

# 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 Gaillard.

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.

That information will be shared with the ICAO's new global co-ordinating unit in Montreal, which is to be staffed around the clock from December 30 through to January 4.

With C\$100,000 (\$68,000) of funding from the Canadian government, the command centre installed back-up power, heat and telephone lines as well as satellite phones and an aeronautical fixed telecommunications network. A stand alone database will be used to track aviation events as they happen around the world.

The first Y2K rollover takes place in Fiji, located just over the international dateline 13 hours ahead of Greenwich Mean Time (GMT), and races around the globe until reaching western Samoa, just on the other side of the dateline.

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.

## 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 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 their March meeting to extend the cuts for another three to six months," Zanganeh said.

Mexican Energy Minister Luis Téllez 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 from February 2000 delivery 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.

## 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	Transfer
51.2300	51.2700	USD	50.8200	50.6516	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	29.6729	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
0.0455	0.0456	KRW	0.0447	0.0446	0.0445
83.1975	83.2625	GBP	80.9563	80.6880	80.3954
52.5261	52.5671	EUR	50.5303	50.3629	50.2749

### Usance Export Bills

TT Doc	30 Days	60 Days	90 Days	120 Days	180 Days
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50.7152	50.4023	49.9846	49.5042	48.9821	47.8126
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### Exchange rates of some Asian currencies against US dollar

Indian Rupee	Pak Rupee	Thai Baht	Mal. Ringgit	Indo. Rupiah	Sing. Dollar
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43.50/43.51	51.88/51.90	37.45/37.55	3.7995/05	7075/7085	1.6660/1.6670
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### Market Commentary

On Tuesday, demand for US dollar was low in the interbank market. In the call money market, call rate ranged between 5.5 and 6.5 per cent.

In the international markets the dollar pared much of its modest gains against the yen in quiet late Tuesday trade in the face of hedge selling interest among Japanese investors and exporters. There was little reaction to Bank of Japan's decision to leave a record 9.1 trillion yen fund surplus by refraining from its 0020 GMT money market operation on Tuesday. Traders viewed the increased fund surplus as a technical move aimed at quelling upward pressure on money market rates stemming from millennium bug concern and not as a move indicating any change in the monetary policy. The dollar gained a brief lift, rising to an intraday high of 102.73 yen due to dollar demand among Japanese importers and wariness of yen selling intervention by the Bank of Japan. But the Greenback gradually edged lower from the high in absence of actual BOJ intervention and persistent hedge selling by Japanese exporters and investors. The Tokyo foreign exchange market will be effectively closed from Thursday until trade resumes on January 4. Since Tuesday is the last trading date on which foreign exchange transactions will be settled within the year, dealers said trading volume was likely to be thinner on Wednesday. Dealers also commented that market will be wary about Bank of Japan intervention even on Wednesday and Thursday, despite the settlement risks involved, and even if trading volume declines. Meanwhile Vice Finance Minister for International Affairs said the yen's rise was still excessive and the Finance Ministry will take action if needed.

Tuesday's helping of Japanese economic data was again too mixed to provide direction to the market. The unemployment rate dipped rather unexpectedly to 4.5 per cent in November from 4.6 per cent. This prompted economic Planning agency head Taichi Sakaiya to say that concerns over the Japanese economy were receding. Also out was the Tokyo consumer price index which showed a steep 1.5 per cent fall year to year in December, the biggest drop since 1971.

At 1600 hours local time, USD traded at 1.0122/27 against EUR. 102.29/34 against yen and 1.6163/68 against GBP.

## 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.

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.



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 7-2/84-5(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 4 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 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 nonlinear, 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)

DFP-28829-23/12  
G-2183  
Project Director  
Video-Cassette Recording Facilities Project.

## Government of Bangladesh

Office of the Executive Engineer, RHD  
Munshigonj Road Division  
Munshigonj

### RHD Notice Inviting Tender

- Tender Notice No : 26/Rd. Munshigonj of 1999-2000.
- 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.
- Estimated cost : Tk. 30,121.00 in BD/TC/NDS certificate in favour of Executive Engineer, RHD, Munshigonj Road Division from any scheduled bank.
- Earnest money : 40 (Forty) days from the date of issue of work order.
- Time allowed for completion of work : A to E general category of RHD contractor.
- Eligibility of contractor : 9.01.2000 during office hours.
- Last date of selling the tender documents : 10.01.2000 up to 12.30 PM.
- Last date & time for receiving the tender documents : 10.01.2000 at 12.45 PM (Except this office).
- Date & time for opening the tender documents : 12.01.2000 at 12.45 PM.
- Date & time for centrally open the tender documents : Divisional Commissioner, Dhaka Division, Segun Bagicha, Dhaka/Executive Engineer, RHD, Road Division, Dhaka/Narayangonj/Munshigonj/Munshigonj/Gazipur/Narsingdi/Planning & Design Division, Dhaka/Bridge Design Divn (Eastern), Sarak Bhaban, Ramna, Dhaka/Sub-Divisional Engineer, RHD, Road Sub-Division, Munshigonj/Sreenagar/Keraniganj/1st Line Workshop Sub-Division, Munshigonj.
- Name of office where tender documents will be sold : Divisional Commissioner, Dhaka Division, Segun Bagicha, Dhaka/Superintending Engineer, RHD, Dhaka Road Circle, Dhaka/Monitoring & Evaluation, Circle, Dhaka/Planning, Monitoring & Eval. Circle, Dhaka Zone, Dhaka/Executive Engineer, RHD, Munshigonj Road Division, Munshigonj/Sub-Divisional Engineer, RHD, Road Sub-Division, Munshigonj/Sreenagar/Keraniganj/1st Line Workshop Sub-Division, Munshigonj.
- Name of office where tender document will be received : Divisional Commissioner, Dhaka Division, Segun Bagicha, Dhaka/Superintending Engineer, RHD, Dhaka Road Circle, Dhaka/Monitoring & Evaluation, Circle, Dhaka/Planning, Monitoring & Eval. Circle, Dhaka Zone, Dhaka/Executive Engineer, RHD, Munshigonj Road Division, Munshigonj.
- Date & time of : 266 CACW.
- Chargeable Head : 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.

Md. Abul Quasem Bhuiyan  
Executive Engineer, RHD  
Munshigonj Road Division  
Munshigonj.

DFP-28763-23/12  
G-2180



Noriko Sakurai displays Year 2000 designed necklace, bracelet and earring at the accessories counter of the Takashimaya department store in Tokyo Tuesday. The crystal glasses made accessories are priced at 11,000 yen (107 USD) for necklace, 7,800 yen (75 USD) for bracelet and 8,800 yen (85 USD) for a pair of earrings. — AFP photo

## Philippines sets up Y2K action centre

MANILA, Dec 28: The Philippine government on Tuesday set up its Y2K action centre to respond to potential problems connected to the millennium computer bug. Officials advised the public not to worry, says AP.

Alexander Aguirre, head of the National Y2K Contingency Task Force, said the centre, which will operate 24 hours daily from Dec 28 to Jan 3, is linked to provincial contingency groups and to the UN-sponsored International Y2K Cooperation Centre in the United States.

"We do not expect major problems... but we would like to see to it that everything is prepared and no stone is left unturned," Aguirre said.

"Just do your normal activities and be happy during the coming millennium."

The Y2K bug can cause computers programmed to read only the last two digits of the year to

malfunction when the calendar changes to 2000.

Aguirre said the government's main concern is the possibility of blackout followed by failure of computer-dependent telecommunications systems.

Jess Tamang of the Department of Energy said the state-run National Power Corp assures there will be no Y2K-related outages and that it can restore any power failure in one hour.

Tamang said the National Power Corp has a 2,000-megawatt reserve and has a total capacity of 12,400 megawatts to meet the normal year-end electricity demand of about 4,000 megawatts.

In addition, the NPC and the energy department will have ample staff on duty, including redundant personnel plus those on standby.

"We are also ready to go on full manual operations on any of the facilities under the energy sector," Tamang said.

## BCIC Tender Notice

বিসিআইসি'র পণ্য শিপিংয়ে দ্বিতীয় অংশটির প্রজ্ঞাপন

Managing Director, Urea Fertilizer Factory Ltd, Ghorasal, Narsingdi invites sealed quotation in two envelope system for supply of rubber conveyor belt against Tender No UFPL/LP-118/99-2000 from bonafide manufacturers/suppliers/stockists so as to reach this office on 18-1-2000 by 3:00 PM which shall be opened immediately there after in presence of tenderers (if any). Tender documents shall be available on cash payment of Tk 25/- each set (non-refundable) from (i) BCIC, 30-31, Dilkusha, Dhaka (ii) BCIC, 6, Agrabad, Chittagong & (iii) UFPL, Ghorasal, Narsingdi. No tender documents shall be sold on the opening date.

BCIC-1214-20/12/99  
DFP-28797-23/12  
G-2181

## Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Local Government Engineering Department  
Secondary Towns Infrastructure Development Project-II  
LGED Bhaban (Level-7, Agargaon)  
Sher-e-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka-1207.

Memo No: LGED/DP/ST-IUP-184/99/3011 Dated: 20/12/99

### Invitation of Bid

### Local Competitive Bidding

### Inviting Re-Tender for Supply of 20 (Twenty) Nos Concrete Mixing Machine

Under the ADB Loan No. 1376 BAN (SF) sealed tenders are hereby invited from the bonafide Firms/Manufacturers/Suppliers for supply of 20 (Twenty) nos. Concrete Mixing Machine for the "Secondary Towns Infrastructure Development Project-II" of Local Government Engineering Department. Tenders will be received in the office of the undersigned and in the office of the Executive Engineer, LGED, 68-Ka, Shamoli Pisciculture Housing Society, Shamoli, Dhaka up to 1.00 hrs. on 18th January 2000. No tenders will be considered for acceptance after expiry of the aforementioned time limit. Tender can also be sent by post but it must be reached in the offices mentioned above within the stipulated time. Tenders will be opened on the same day at 1:30 hrs. in presence of tenderers or their representatives, if any.

Tenders with detailed specifications, terms and conditions may be obtained from the office of the undersigned and from the office of the Executive Engineer, LGED, 68-Ka, Shamoli Pisciculture Housing Society, Shamoli, Dhaka on payment of Tk 500 (five hundred) only (non-refundable) in cash or in the form of Bank Draft/Pay Order issued in favour of the undersigned, on all working days during office hours up to the 17th January, 2000.

The authority reserves the right to accept or reject any or all tenders without assigning any reason thereof. Tenders not complying with stipulated conditions will be treated as non responsive and will be rejected.

DFP-28787-23/12  
G-2182

Md Abdul Gaffar  
Project Director