

SANYO Instant Facility Available
FAMILY SIZE MICROWAVE OVEN
 35.9 & 27.1 LITRE OVEN CAPACITY
 Free Recipe Book
Transfin Trading Ltd.
 Tel: 815307-10, Fax: 813062

National Housing Finance & Investments Ltd.
 Home Mortgage Loans available for:
 Construction of houses
 Purchase of houses or apartments
 Renovation or extensions to existing properties
 Purchase of housing plots in approved land developments
 Telephone inquiries are welcome
 Chamber Building (6th Fl), 122-124 Motijheel, Dhaka-1000
 Telephone 955 9311-2, 955 3387, 955 3254 Fax 956 8987

Benapole port activities hinge on crane death

BENAPOLE, Jan 7: Loading and unloading at Benapole land port are being hampered as most of its cranes remain out of order for long, reports UNB.
 Official sources said five out of six cranes remained inoperative due to technical problems and those could not be repaired for lack of spare parts.
 When contacted a senior port official said that they had procured necessary spare parts to repair the cranes.

Vietnam receives \$1.1b overseas remittance in 1999

HANOI, Jan 7: Overseas Vietnamese sent an estimated \$1.1 billion to Vietnam last year, \$150 million more than in 1998, an official from Hanoi's Central Overseas Vietnamese Committee said Friday.
 The increase was due to new government policies that encourage overseas Vietnamese to invest in the country by allowing some — generally those who still hold Vietnamese passports — to buy property and travel visa-free, the official told Dow Jones Newswires.
 There are an estimated 2.5 million Viet kieu, or Vietnamese living overseas, the majority of whom left after the Vietnam War ended in 1975. Of those who left, some still hold Vietnamese passports but many hold foreign passports and are subject to the same higher pricing system and complex visa and investment rules as other foreigners who visit in Vietnam.
 In recent years, the government has tried to liberalise the rules that govern investment and tourism and has seen an increase in hard currency remittances as a result.
 In response to slowly growing investment from Viet kieu, Hanoi late last year allowed the establishment in Ho Chi Minh City of an independent Viet Kieu Chamber of Commerce.
 According to the official, around 60 per cent of all remittances made last year were sent to bank accounts in Ho Chi Minh City. He added that 60 per cent of the total was sent from Viet kieu in the US and Canada.

Taiwanese forex reserves hit another record

TAIPEI, Jan 7: Taiwan's foreign exchange reserves at the end of December hit another record high of 106.2 billion US dollars, their fourth consecutive monthly record, the central bank said today, reports AFP.
 The reserves, which rose 2.66 billion dollars over the previous month, are the world's fourth largest after those of the 11-member euro area, Japan and China.
 The increase came primarily from higher trade surplus, stronger foreign remittance for stock investment and the central bank's purchase of US dollars to slow down the Taiwan dollar's surge.
 About 70 per cent of Taiwan's reserves are denominated in US dollars, 20 per cent in the euro and 10 per cent in the yen and other currencies.

New MD of Janata Bank

Sirajuddin Ahmed Chowdhury joined Janata Bank as Managing Director on Thursday, says press release.
 Before joining Janata Bank, he worked as the Managing Director of Investment Corporation of Bangladesh (ICB), Bangladesh Krishi Bank (BKB) and Bangladesh Shilpa Rin Sangstha (BSRS).
 A senior banker, having more than 30 years of service experience in different banks and financial institutions, he worked as DMD of Agrani Bank, General Manager of Bangladesh Krishi Bank (BKB) and other banking institutions.
 He worked as the first Chairman of the South Asian Development Fund (SADF) created under the Umbrella of SAARC. He represented ICB in the boards of different national and multinational companies, DFIS including BOC, BATEC, Glaxo, NTC, BSRS, and others. He worked as the Chairman of Armit Group of Companies.
 Chowdhury, a freedom fighter, has been associated with human resources development and training activities of different national institutions including BJBM, BIM, PATC, IBA and other banking training institutions.

Institute of Int'l Finance report says Emerging world still suffering from Asian financial crisis

WASHINGTON, Jan 7: Investment in emerging market economies is still suffering as a result of the Asian financial crisis and the International Monetary Fund has made matters worse, according to a new report released yesterday, reports Reuters.
 But transparency in emerging economies, such as Argentina and Mexico, has improved in the past two years, something that could help give investors warnings before a new crisis took hold, the Institute of International Finance said.
 "There is still a good bit of lingering damage to the robustness of emerging markets' financials as a result of the crisis in Asia," said Charles Dallara, managing director of the IIF, who's members include hundreds of commercial banks

around the world.
 The Asian financial crisis started in Thailand in July 1997 before spreading through the region and beyond.
 The crisis resulted in billions of dollars of capital flooding out of emerging economies, making many investors wary of further investment and leading to calls for greater transparency and more stringent reporting of economic data.
 Dallara noted that the level of investment in emerging economies through bank loans and investment in bond offerings, remains well below the \$200 billion record set in 1996 and placed some of the blame at the door of the IMF.
 The group will release its latest estimates of capital flows to emerging economies later this month.
 Dallara said that investment in emerging economies was being stifled, in part, "as a result of official policies over the last year which have raised important questions... regarding IMF interference of bond contracts."
 He was referring to IMF recommendations that emerging economies adopt British-style bond contracts that make it harder for individual creditors to sue a foreign borrower — something critics claim make investors less likely to make fresh capital available.
 Dallara noted that current investment levels in emerging economies were below what would be required for such countries to sustain growth rates of between 3 and 4 per cent.
 The group's report, which focused on assessing the data release practice of emerging economies, showed some positive signs. The report tracked how 27 countries reported economic data, from economic output to external debt, and found that many countries had made significant improvements.
 Argentina, Hong Kong, Malaysia, the Philippines, Poland and Thailand were singled out in the report for making the best advances in transparency. The report noted that much improvement had been made in Asian countries.
 Other countries, such as China, Egypt, Kuwait, Morocco, Saudi Arabia, and Tunisia, recorded poor records in meeting the desired standards in reporting economic data. But even among those which fared badly in the report, such as China, improvements were seen since the group's 1997 survey.



Rubi Rahman, who heads Rubi's Ad, the organiser of the 15-day Millennium Fair at Dhaka Sheraton Hotel, gives away the Best Stall and Sales Award to Sonargaon Jambani House.

World stocks take heart from Wall Street rally

New York, Jan 7: World stocks took heart yesterday day from a blue-chip rally on Wall Street but the high tech Nasdaq composite index took another battering, says AFP.
 The tech-heavy index plunged nearly four per cent for its second worst single-day points drop ending just shy of a 10 per cent correction over the past three sessions.
 After a heavy points plunge Tuesday, the Dow Jones Industrial Average staged a modest rally, up 130.61 points (1.17 per cent) to 11,253.26 points while the Standard and Poor's 500 was up 1.34 points (0.10 per cent) to 1,403.45.
 The Nasdaq is still far above of where it was a year ago after gaining 85 per cent in 1999 and analysts see the tumble as a normal correction.
 On the bond market, yield on the benchmark 30-year Treasury bond stood at 6.572 per cent against 6.631 at Wednesday's close.
 European share prices lurched lower after another grim session in Asia, which has taken its cue from a bad week on Wall Street.
 In London, the FT-SE 100 index of leading shares closed down 88.7 points, 1.4 per cent, at 6,447.2 points. In Paris, the CAC 40 index lost another 29.59 points, 0.5 per cent, to 5,450.11 points. The Frankfurt market followed the trend with the DAX index falling 0.4 per cent to 6,474.92 points.

Dealers said the fear of higher interest rates on both sides of the Atlantic was still spooking investors, but added that the selling was also a healthy correction from exuberant gains racked up late last year.
 "We have lost 500 points on the market since last Thursday but that is a healthy correction and certainly not a panic," said London dealer David Butler of the Theather and Greenwood Brokerage.
 Britain is expected to kick off a round of interest rate hikes next week, particularly as the latest property market snapshot showed that house prices soared by almost 14 per cent last year.
 Economists expect the US Federal Reserve to tighten monetary policy next month, and some are predicting that equity markets will continue to flounder until the US economy shows signs of cooling down.
 US traders are awaiting Friday's December unemployment figures for clues about the size of an anticipated interest rate hike.
 The consensus forecast of analysts was for unemployment of around 4.1 per cent, said Merrill Lynch economist Stan Shipler.
 A lower figure would send bond yields and stock prices down because it would suggest a more active intervention of Fed policymakers at their February 2 meeting.
 Volume was high on the New York Stock Exchange with 1.082 billion issues changing hands with gainers outnumbering losers 1,963 to 1,132 with 429 unchanged. Near record volume of 1.596 billion trades was recorded on the Nasdaq.
 After Wednesday's reverses for Gateway computer makers, Thursday saw Lucent Technologies under the hammer.
 The firm announced after the markets closed that its first quarter results of 2000 would fall below expectations.
 Preliminary estimates put the per-share earnings at 36 to 39 cents, against analysts expectations of 48 cents.

Chinese official to visit EU states to talk WTO bid

BEIJING, Jan 7: Chinese Vice Premier Wu Bangguo will discuss China's bid to enter the World Trade Organization when he visits Britain, Belgium and Switzerland this month, a government spokesman said Friday, reports AP.
 Wu's trip Jan 18-31 will include a visit to the European Commission headquarters and the annual meeting of the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, said Foreign Ministry spokesman Zhu Bangzao.

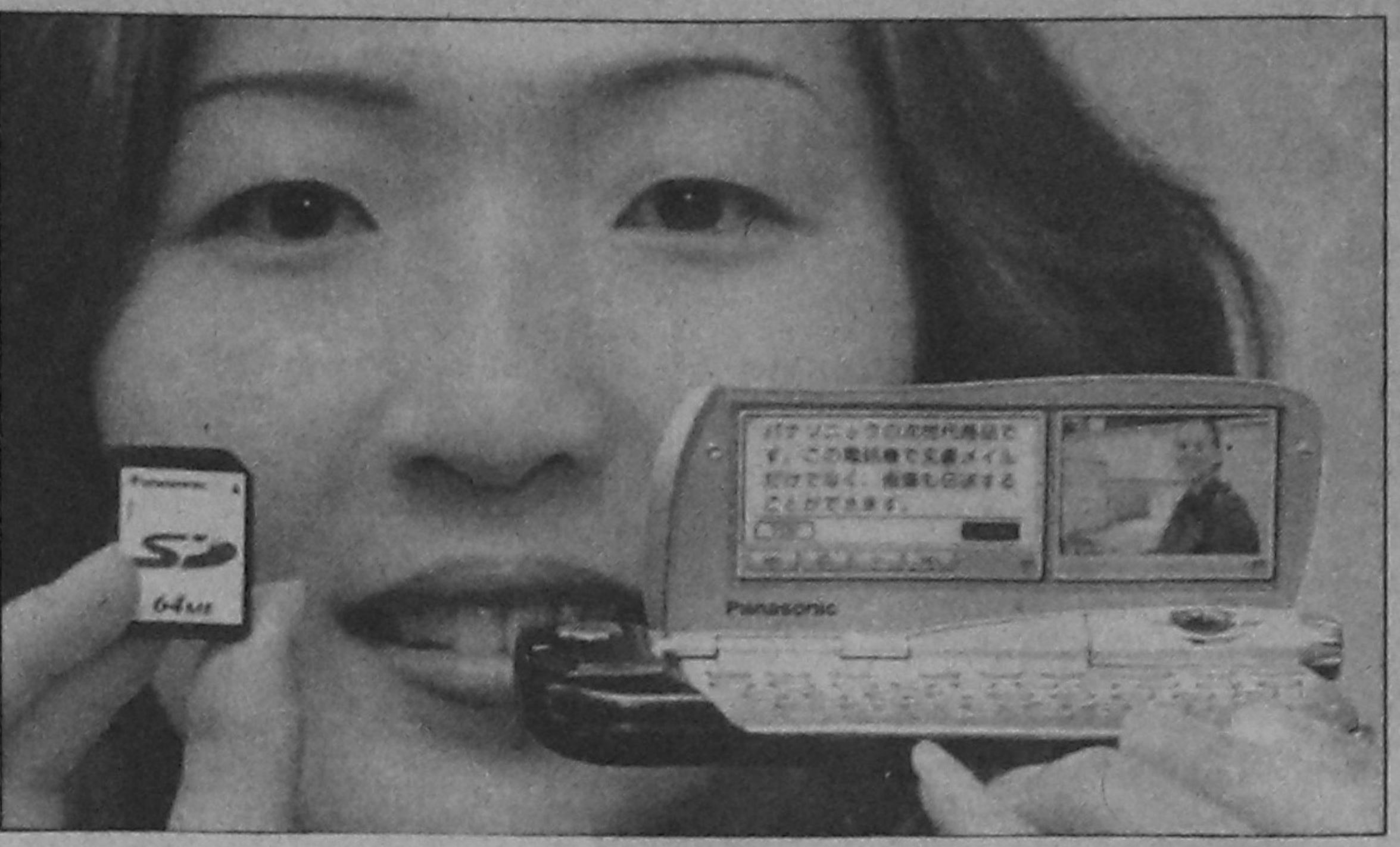
Chinese official to visit EU states to talk WTO bid

BEIJING, Jan 7: Chinese Vice Premier Wu Bangguo will discuss China's bid to enter the World Trade Organization when he visits Britain, Belgium and Switzerland this month, a government spokesman said Friday, reports AP.
 Wu's trip Jan 18-31 will include a visit to the European Commission headquarters and the annual meeting of the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, said Foreign Ministry spokesman Zhu Bangzao.

US auto industry sales hit record 16.9m in 1999

DETROIT, Jan 7: American consumers flush with the rewards of a high-revving economy set a new record for auto sales in 1999, buying 16.9 million new passenger cars, pickups, minivans and sport utility vehicles, reports AP.
 Every major automakers, from giant General Motors Corp to South Korea's Daewoo Motor Co, sold more vehicles this year in the United States than they did in 1998, as industry sales went up 9 per cent. The year also ended on a high note, with overall sales for December up 4 per cent, helped by a stronger demand for trucks.
 However, some automakers had reasons to be concerned. GM ended the year with about 29 per cent of the market — the first time it has ended a year free of strikes with less than 30 per cent market share since the

1920s. Ford Motor Co saw its sales up 4 per cent for the year though its slice of the market shrank more than any other manufacturer.
 And while GM, Ford and the Chrysler division of DaimlerChrysler AG still sold more than two-thirds of all the new vehicles in the United States in 1999, European and Asian Automakers added buyers at a fast clip.
 For December, GM's sales were up 6 per cent, with a surprising 21 per cent jump in light truck sales — pickups, vans, minivans and SUVs — more than compensating for a 7 per cent decline in car sales. GM's results do not include the Saab brand, of which it owns 50 per cent.
 "Our recovery in December (from a week November) was because we had the correct product, sufficient inventory and the right value," said Paul Ballew, GM's director of industry analysis.
 But Rod Lache, an analyst with Deutsche Bank Alex. Brown, suspected that incentives played a large role in GM's sales increases.
 "In October and November, you saw GM's market share sliding down. They became alarmed and piled incentives back on," Lache said. "What's unclear is what is the cost and whether it's sustainable."
 Ballew acknowledged that special incentives for company employees that expired at the end of the month did help sales, many of GM's truck and SUV models that had blockbuster months had also been the target of several incentives.
 "Our efforts were to address some areas of the market where

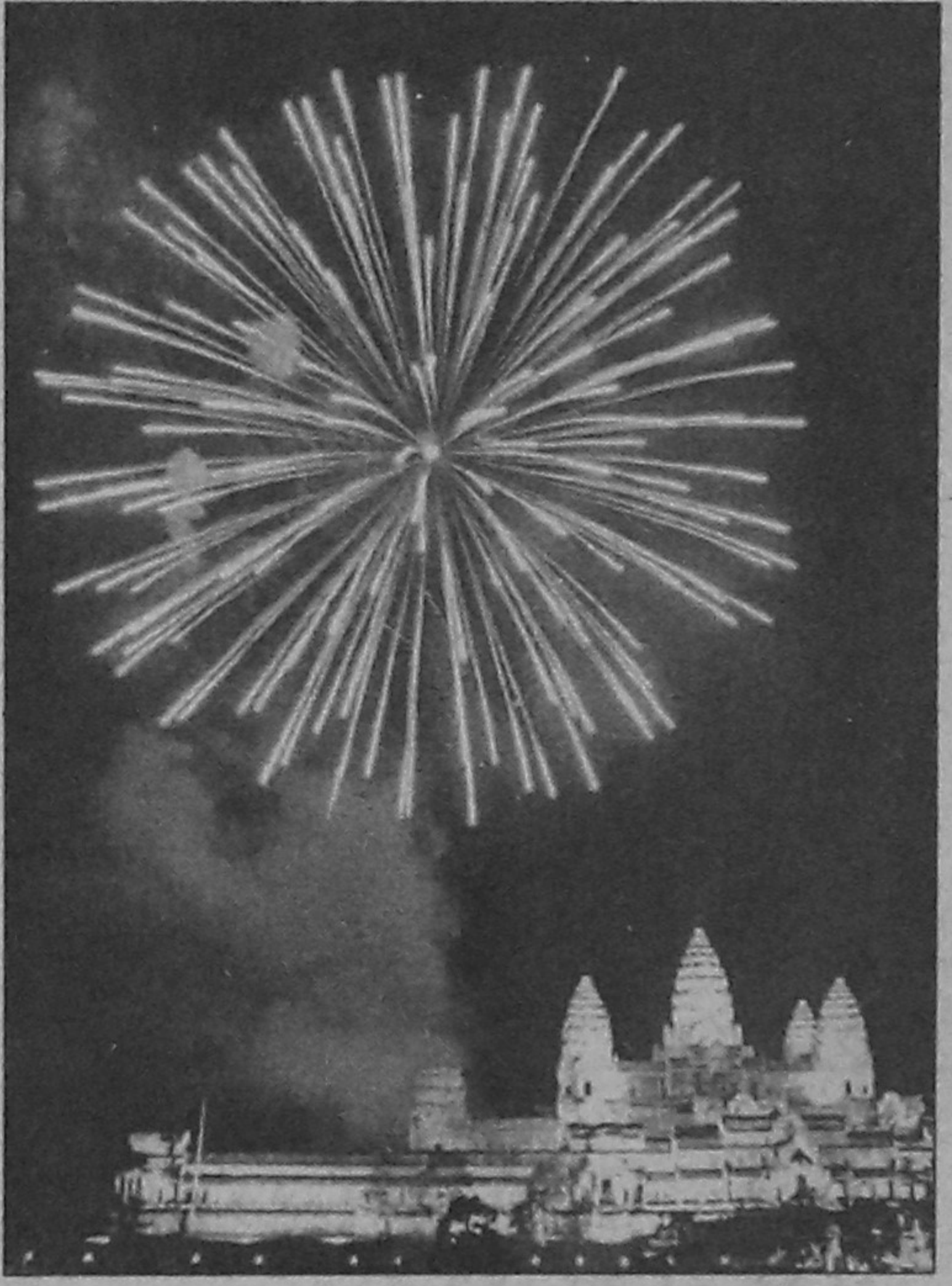


Employee Kazumi Tamamoto of Japan's electronics giant Matsushita Electric displays a prototype model of a next generation personal digital assistance (PDA) gadget with digital video camera which enables to record dates and images on the 64-MB Secure Digital (SD) memory card at the company's head office in Tokyo on Friday. Matsushita, Toshiba and SanDisk announced a new industry-wide association, named SDA, to set industry standards for SD memory card and promote its wide acceptance in digital applications. Initial SDA membership is expected to include some 100 companies in the world.

IMF critical of planned Russian currency rules

WASHINGTON, Jan 7: The International Monetary Fund complained about Russia's planned currency rules yesterday in an early sign that ties with the new Russian government might make an inauspicious start, says Reuters.
 IMF First Deputy Managing Director Stanley Fischer told a news conference that new proposals to make exporters swap 100 per cent of their export earnings were not in line with IMF thinking, and he admitted that the lending institution had only reluctantly acceded to earlier rules for a 75 per cent swap.
 He said IMF members had expressed "distaste" about Russia's war in breakaway Chechnya, although Moscow's inability to meet structural promises behind an IMF loan meant Chechnya had not been a factor in IMF assessments on whether or not to lend.
 "We have to recognise that capital flight is a huge issue for Russia, and we have supported a

variety of measures to deal with it," Fischer told a news conference. "But the 100 per cent surrender (of export earnings) is not one of them."
 New Russian acting President Vladimir Putin, catapulted into office when Boris Yeltsin stepped down on New Year's Eve, was quoted on Thursday as saying he backed the central bank's new currency plan. A final decision is due in mid-January.
 A compulsory swap would force exporters to trade all their hard currency earnings for roubles on official exchanges. The extra revenues would boost Russian reserves and give the cash strapped country additional funds to pay its debts.
 The IMF has loaned Russia more than \$20 billion in the last 8 years, despite a dismal Russian track record in meeting the terms of successive IMF loans.
 Payments from the most recent loan, a \$4.5 billion credit



Fireworks explode over the northwestern Cambodian temples of Angkor Wat, Siem Reap, January 1, 2000, the scene of the country's flagship millennium celebrations aimed at luring more tourists to Cambodia. Direct international flights are set to increase to the area in the coming months with the government hoping to capitalise on the Angkor Wat temples as the main attraction to package tourists.

Wheat farming in Kushtia may exceed target

KUSHTIA, Jan 7: Wheat cultivation may exceed the target in six thanas of the district in the current rabi season, says BSS.
 The target was 40 thousand hectares but it may exceed up to 50 thousand hectares, sources said.
 It was reported that wheat cultivation increased this year because of high price of onion seeds.

Tk 7.41 cr BKB loan for Bandarban farmers

BANDARBAN, Jan 7: Bangladesh Krishi Bank's (BKB) Bandarban regional office has taken up a programme to disburse Tk 7.41 crore as agricultural loan among the farmers of seven thanas by nine BKB branches of the district in the current fiscal, reports BSS.
 BKB Bandarban Regional Manager Md Ali Hossain told the news agency that the bank would give the loan as per the decision of the government. It will also distribute agricultural implements among the farmers, he said.
 A total of Tk 3.86 crore has already been disbursed among the farmers of the seven thanas during July to December last year, while Tk 2.43 crore outstanding loans have been realised from them during the period.

China not ready to convert its currency for at least a decade

TOKYO, Jan 7: China will not be ready to launch a totally convertible currency for at least a decade, a leading American economist said at a Tokyo economic conference, says AFP.
 "China has a very long way to go — the check list of the conditions will give us at least a decade before China can liberalize fully," said Paul Krugman, economics professor at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology at the conference on emerging currencies.
 The conference was jointly organised by the Asian Development Bank Institute (ADBI), the CEPPI (French Institute for International Economics) and KIEP (Korean Institute for International Economic Policy).
 China has experimented with a partially convertible yuan under the current account but has maintained strict controls on the movement of the currency related to capital account.

- AFP photo

- AFP photo