

S'pore seeks strong IT ties with India

NEW DELHI, Jan 18: Singapore Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong said Tuesday at the start of an official visit to India that he wanted to boost bilateral cooperation especially in information technology, reports AFP.

Goh, who arrived in New Delhi late Monday, was accorded a ceremonial welcome at the presidential palace here. The ceremony was attended by President K.R. Narayanan and Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee.

"I want India to look towards South East Asia, Asean and Singapore. I know India places importance to relations with US and Europe," Goh told reporters at the palace.

"Our relations are very good but unfortunately because of the recent economic crisis in Asia, our contacts were slowed down and I am, therefore, here to strengthen our ties," he said.

The Singapore leader praised his Indian counterpart. "Prime Minister Vajpayee is embarking on a second wave of reforms and I am here to encourage him," he said.

Goh appealed to Indian information technology experts to consider relocating to Singapore.

"India is losing some people to Silicon Valley (in California) and I hope you would lose some to Singapore," he said.

The prime minister is accompanied by Foreign Minister Shanmugam Jayakumar, minister of state for trade and industry and communications and Information Technology Lim Swee Say, other senior government officials and a business delegation.

Goh is due Wednesday to deliver a keynote address at a conference organised by the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII). On Thursday, he is to open an International Tech Park in the southern city of Bangalore.

The CII and two other Indian groups -- Manufacturing Association of Information Technology and the National Association of Software and Service Companies -- will make a joint presentation to Goh on cooperation between Singapore and India in information technology.

Aussie firms launch class action against Mobil

Dispute over fuel contamination crisis which has grounded two-third of the light aviation industry

SYDNEY, Jan 18: Aircraft operators have launched a class action against Mobil Oil Australia Ltd. over a fuel contamination crisis which has grounded two-third of the country's light aviation industry, reports AFP.

The action was initiated by lawyers for two aircraft operators -- with many more expected to join -- after the Australian government this week ordered the world's biggest oil company to prepare a compensation plan for the businesses affected.

Their aircraft are among 5,000 piston-driven planes grounded by a Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA) directive issued on January 1 because of contaminated Mobil avgas which blocks their fuel systems.

Search and rescue aircraft, firefighting support services, flying doctors, regional charter services, flying schools, freight

companies and crop dusting companies have all been affected. Even some RAAF transport aircraft were grounded.

Amid growing anger in the industry and in regional Australia over Mobil's perceived failure to respond, acting Prime Minister John Anderson gave it until close of business on Tuesday to indicate how it will assist businesses.

"I have indicated clearly to Mobil that I think they need to

address not just the cost of rectifying the problem, but clearly the economic cost to individual businesses," Anderson said on Monday.

The aviation industry puts the mounting bill for the worst ever fuel crisis at more than 50 million dollars (33 million US) a month.

Mobil has refused to say how it will respond to demands by the government or industry, but said compensation for aviation

companies affected by the crisis may take years to resolve.

But it has agreed to deploy engineers to test grounded aircraft once CASA approves a test currently under review by an independent chemist.

Mobil corporate affairs manager Alan Bailey said while the company was seriously considering the claims for compensation it was a very complex issue which could drag on for years.

"It's going to take some time to resolve and there may well be questions of the commercial impacts on various stakeholders in the aviation industry that will take a long time to sort out in entirety," he said.

Lawyer Simon Liddy of Ebsworth and Ebsworth partners, which initiated the class action in the Federal Court, said the case would allow a number of similar claims to be resolved simultaneously.

Global players form microchip development alliance

SEOUL, Jan 18: The world's six leading semiconductor firms Monday announced a revolutionary alliance in technology development aimed at setting a global standard for next-generation microchips, reports AFP.

The firms which agreed to the landmark tie-up included US-based Micron Technology Inc. and Intel Corp., Infineon Technologies of Germany, Japan's NEC Corp., and South Korea's Samsung Electronics Co. and Hyundai Electronics Industries Co.

The agreement was the first involving the world's biggest semiconductor firms, who between them control some 80 percent of the global market.

The companies said in a joint statement they would "cooperatively develop a high-performance advanced DRAM (dynamic random access memory) technology targeted for potential applications in 2003 and beyond."

"Under the terms of the agreement, the developers will work together and with industry participants to develop the architecture, electrical and physical design, and related infrastructure for this advanced DRAM technology."

"This cooperative development effort between developers and participants will help ensure that the DRAM roadmap is consistent with microprocessor and system architecture evolution in a variety of future systems."

The six companies welcomed participation by other firms, saying any interested participants could join the project.

"This advanced DRAM technology will be industry developed. Interested companies can access design information and will be able to provide input in the development process by entering into a participant's agreement during the development process."

Specifications will be provided to participants for review and feedback, they said.

Already Monday fears were expressed that the six firms could corner the global market with the project.

But analysts in Seoul and Tokyo welcomed the alliance as enabling a healthy reduction in global research and development costs and allowing the creation of new standards for one-gigabit and four-gigabit chips.

They said the alliance would also be beneficial to the world's saturated microchip market, which has been in the painful process of restructuring.

"What these major producers are trying to do is create a world standard for next generation chips so that overall research and development, as well as production costs, can be reduced," said Chang Hwa-Jong of KEB Salomon Smith Barney.

He said the move was not aimed at forming a cartel against smaller producers. Different standards have increased prices for both producers and personal computer vendors, he noted. "So this will be a good move overall for the global industry," Chang said.

Another report says: Asian analysts on Monday welcomed an unprecedented alliance between the world's major semiconductor makers to jointly produce a new generation of microchips as helping to reduce costs and set new industry-wide production standards.

"Simply put, domestic DRAM makers are more focused on reducing the business risk (in DRAM production) than making money," said Hideo Yamasaki, an electronics industry analyst at Fuji Research Institute in Tokyo.

"By coming together in a group of major manufacturers including someone like Micron Technology, makers can reduce business risks if the group's technology becomes a de-facto standard."

On the day that deal was announced, Fairfax shares rose around five percent while rival Rupert Murdoch's News Corp. saw its shares soar 28 percent.

In a statement to the stock exchange Tuesday, Fairfax said it had held, and would continue to hold, discussions with a number of parties, including Telstra.

But it added: "None of these discussions has reached a stage where there is anything to disclose at this time."

Renault seeks to buy Daewoo truck unit

SEOUL, Jan 18: French auto giant Renault SA is interested in taking over the commercial vehicle unit of Daewoo Motor Co., a creditor bank of the troubled automaker confirmed Tuesday, reports AFP.

The development came as a Renault team visited South Korea to carry out a detailed inspection of another ailing auto firm, Samsung Motors Inc., with a view to also buying that troubled firm to expand its Asian presence.

Through an unofficial channel, Renault has conveyed its wish to acquire (Daewoo Motor's commercial vehicle unit), a spokesman for Korea Development Bank (KDB) told AFP.

He declined to give further details, including when and for what price Renault was seeking to buy the truck and bus manufacturer.

But Seoul's Yonhap News Agency quoted business sources and creditors as saying that Renault had proposed a purchase price of some 800 billion won (711 million dollars) and Daewoo creditors were reacting positively to the offer.

Daewoo Motor Co.'s asset value Tuesday stood at 11.83 trillion won (10.53 billion dollars) against liabilities of 17.91 trillion won (15.95 billion dollars).

A Daewoo Motor official declined to comment on the report, but said Renault officials visited Daewoo Motor last year.

A Renault spokesman in Paris said Monday: "We never comment on this type of rumour, which is rife in the automobile industry."

The president of RVI, Renault's industrial vehicle unit, Patrick Faure, said in a newspaper interview recently that RVI had held talks with both Samsung and Daewoo and talked about the possibility of cooperation.

Fairfax, Telstra hold talks on Internet alliance

SYDNEY, Jan 18: Australian media group John Fairfax Holdings said Tuesday it was negotiating with Telstra Corp. over a deal that could give the communications giant a major stake in the newspaper publisher, reports AFP.

A statement by Fairfax followed a report in one of its papers, The Australian Financial Review, that the two companies were discussing the sale of Telstra's Yellow Pages and White Pages telephone directories for more than 400 million dollars (266 million US).

The paper said the deal could see Telstra emerge with a major strategic stake in Fairfax and result in an Internet-related partnership between the two, involving Fairfax's Internet arm P2.

Speculation has been intense on possible alliances between Internet portals and content providers in Australia since the announcement in the United States earlier this month of the

merger between AmericaOnline and Time Warner.

On the day that deal was announced, Fairfax shares rose around five percent while rival Rupert Murdoch's News Corp. saw its shares soar 28 percent.

In a statement to the stock exchange Tuesday, Fairfax said it had held, and would continue to hold, discussions with a number of parties, including Telstra.

But it added: "None of these discussions has reached a stage where there is anything to disclose at this time."

According to the Financial Review, Fairfax is negotiating the acquisition of Pacific Access, a Telstra subsidiary that owns the Yellow Pages and White Pages and their online related ventures.

It suggested that these directories would provide a launchpad for a joint Telstra/Fairfax Internet portal to challenge ninemsn, Australia's most popular website set.

**Bangladesh Power Development Board
BPDB's Local Tender Notice**

Local Sealed Tenders are invited by the Bangladesh Power Development Board from reputed suppliers/local agent of overseas Manufacturers for supply of Micro Computers, Lesser Printers, Desktop Printer, UPS, AVR, Scanner & Computer table.

Sl No	Tender Enquiry No	Description of Materials	Qty	Cost of Document (non-refundable)	Tender receiving & opening
1	Pur-272/99 at 20.12.99	1 Server 2 Micro Computer 3 Lesser Printer 4 Desktop Printer 5 UPS 6 AVR 7 Scanner 8 Fax/Modem 9 Computer table 10. All Network Operating Software	2 Nos 16 Nos 7 Nos 9 Nos 16 Nos 16 Nos 4 Nos 7 Nos 16 Nos	Tk 2,000/-	922000

2. A complete set of tender document may be purchased by interested bidders on submission of written application upon payment of Non-refundable fee of Taka 2,000/- in the shape of Bank Draft/Pay Order in favour of Director, Purchase, BPDB, Dhaka.

3. Bidding Documents will be available for sale from the office of the undersigned during office hours up to 8.2.2000.

4. Offer must be accompanied by a Bid Security of 2.5% (two & half per cent) of total bid amount and must be delivered to the above office on or before 11.00 AM Bangladesh standard time (BST) on 9.2.2000. The validity of Bid Bond shall be 150 days.

5. Tender will be received up to 11.00 AM of 9.2.2000 and will be opened at 11.30 AM on the same day in presence of the intending bidder or their representatives if any at the office of Director, Purchase, BPDB, WAPDA Building (9th floor), Motiheel C/A, Dhaka-1000.

6. Bid submitted by post/Fax or Telex will be rejected. Bids submitted beyond scheduled time will neither be received nor accepted.

7. The expenditure will be booked against Ghorashal Power Station Budget 1999-2000.

Biddut/Jan-1130 (5)/99-2000
Director of Purchase
BPDB, Dhaka

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Office of the Executive Engineer
Public Works Division, Shariatpur

Tender Invitation Notice

No. 10/1999-2000


Tenders in Bangladesh Form No. 2911 under sealed cover are hereby invited from only Public Works Directorate's approved special first/class (combined)/first class, Public Works Zone, Khulna enlisted 2nd class & Public Works Circle, Barisal enlisted 3rd class building contractors/contractors' firms for the undermentioned work. Tender can be submitted at all offices shown in serial No. 5 up to 12-00 noon of 27-1-2000. Tenders will be opened on the date of submitting tender at 12-15 min. in presence of interested tenderers. Name of work, name & address of contractors' firms and the address to whom the tender is to be submitted should be mentioned on the envelope.

Sl No	Name of work	Estimated cost	Earnest money	Time for completion of work	Eligibility of contractor
1	Reconstruction of RCC Road in front of Bhedargon Thana Health Complex Hospital Building	4,99,609/=	10,000/=	30 (thirty) days	Public Works Directorate approved special first class/first class (combined)/first class, Public Works Zone, Khulna enlisted 2nd class & Public Works Circle, Barisal enlisted 3rd class building contractors.
2	Earth filling at different low areas in Bhedargon Thana Health Complex Hospital premise (remaining portion)	1,74,983/=	3,500/=	30 (thirty) days	-Do-Do-

NB: Separate tender schedule with separate earnest money should be submitted for each group of work.

Md. Salah Uddin
Executive Engineer
Public Works Division
Shariatpur.

New chairman of Cold Storage Association



Ata Uddin Khan has again been elected unopposed as chairman of Bangladesh Cold Storage Association for the year 2000-2001.

Khan is a former minister, renowned Chartered Accountant and Managing Director of Allied Cold Storages Limited, says a press release issued in the city yesterday.

Two others have also been elected vice-chairmen of the association. They are Sheikh Nurul Alam and Kamal Chowdhury.

Alam is the president of Fent chamber, director of FBCCI and managing director of Modern Cold Storage Limited.

Chowdhury is the life governor of Apex Club of Bangladesh and executive director of Arco Cold Storage Limited.

Other members elected of the 18-member Executive Committee are: M A Wahab, Alhaj Giasuddin Ahmed, Tofazzal Hossain Tara, Mohammad Yunus, Kazi Abul Hashem, Mohiuddin Ahmed, S M Zahurul Huj, Major (Retd) Jasimuddin, Begum Nazneen Ali, Nazrul Islam Babu, Mir Nazmul Hossain, Mohammad Khalil Sikder, Moqadd Ahmed Chowdhury and Mohammed Iqbal Hossain.

Group No	Name of work with Location	Estimated cost in Tk	Earnest money in Tk	Time allowed for completion of work	Eligibility of contractor
01. (One)	Hard shoulder repairing work at 71st KM of Rangpur-Bogra Road under Gaibandha Road Division during the year 1999-2000.	Tk. 5,68,392/-	Tk. 11,368/-	25 (Twenty five) days	A to E class contractor under general category
02. (Two)	Providing premixed bituminous seal coat work at part of 3rd & 4th KM of Gaibandha-Balashighat Road under Gaibandha Road Divn during the year of 1999-2000.	Tk. 3,68,654/-	Tk. 7,374/-	15 (Fifteen) days	'A' to 'E' class contractor under general category of RHD.
03. (Three)	Providing premixed bituminous seal coat work at part of 5th 6th & 7th KM of Gaibandha Balashighat Road under Gaibandha Road Division during the year of 1999-2000.	Tk. 3,05,371/-	Tk. 6,108/-	15 (Fifteen) days	-Do-
04. (Four)	Providing premixed bituminous seal coat work at 3rd KM & 4th KM of Gaibandha-Sadullapur Road under Gaibandha Road Division, during the year 1999-2000.	Tk 4,92,665/-	Tk 9,853/-	15 (Fifteen) days	-Do-
05. (Five)	Providing premixed bituminous seal coat work at 5th & 6th KM of Gaibandha-Sadullapur Road under Road Division, Gaibandha during the year of 1999-2000.	Tk 4,94,706/-	Tk 9,894/-	15 (Fifteen) days	-Do-
06. (Six)	Providing premixed bituminous seal coat work at 7th & 8th KM of Gaibandha-Sadullapur Road under Gaibandha Road Division during the year of 1999-2000.	Tk 4,46,298/-	Tk 8,926/-	15 (Fifteen) days	-Do-
07. (Seven)	Providing premixed bituminous seal coat work at 10th KM of Gaibandha-Sadullapur Road under Gaibandha Road Division, Gaibandha the year of 1999-2000.	Tk 2,40,005/-	Tk. 4,800/-	15 (Fifteen) days	-Do-
08. (Eight)	Providing premixed bituminous seal coat work at 11th KM of Gaibandha-Sadullapur Road under Gaibandha Road Division, Gaibandha during the year of 1999-2000.	Tk 4,94,754/-	Tk 9,895/-	15 (Fifteen) days	-Do-
09. (Nine)	Earth work in road shoulder at part of 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th, 7th, 8th & 10th KM of Gaibandha-Sadullapur Road under Gaibandha Road Division during the year 1999-2000.	Tk. 1,15,200/-	Tk 2,304/-	10 (Ten) days	-Do-
10. (Ten)	Earth work in road shoulder at 6th (P) KM of Rangpur-Bogra CT Road to Talukkanapur-Nakainhat Road under Gaibandha Road Division during year of 1999-2000.	Tk. 3,67,452/-	Tk 7,349/-	20 (Twenty) days	-Do-
11. (Eleven)	Earth work in road embankment at 8th (P) & 9th (P) KM of Rangpur-Bogra CT Road to Talukkanapur-Nakainhat Road under Gaibandha Road Division during the year 1999-2000.	Tk. 3,39,893/-	Tk. 6,798/-	20 (Twenty) days	-Do-
12. (Twelve)	Protection work at 6th KM on Katakhal Bridge approaches (Rangpur end) of Rangpur-Bogra Road under Road Division, Gaibandha during the year 1999-2000.	Tk 8,51,598/-	Tk 17,032/-	25 (Twenty five) days	'A' to 'D' class contractor under general category of RHD.
13. (Thirteen)	Protective work by providing palisading & earth work at 1/1 bridge approaches of Gaibandha-Gobindagon-Ghoraghat Road under Road Division Gaibandha during the year 1999-2000.	Tk 85,724/-	Tk 1,714/-	10 (Ten) days	'A' to 'E' class contractor under general category of RHD.
14. (Fourteen)	Protective work by providing palisading & earth work at 2/1 bridge approaches of Gaibandha-Gobindagon-Ghoraghat Road under Road Division Gaibandha during the year of 1999-2000.	Tk 1,06,546/-	Tk 2,131/-	15 (Fifteen) days	-Do-
15. (Fifteen)	Protective work by providing palisading and earth work at 2/2 Bridge approaches of Gaibandha-Gobindagon-Ghoraghat Road under Gaibandha Road Division during the year 1999-2000.	Tk 1,91,601/-	Tk 3,832/-	15 (Fifteen) days	'A' to 'E' class contractor under General Category of RHD.

NB: 02 (Two) to 11 (Eleven) & 13 (thirteen) to 15 (fifteen) will not be received in the office of the Addl. Chief Engineer (RHD), Rangpur Zone, Rangpur/Monitoring & Evaluation Circle, Sarak Bhaban, Ramna, Dhaka, Group No. 2 (Two) to 11 (Eleven) & 13 (thirteen) to 15 (fifteen) will not be sold in the office of the Executive Engineer (RHD), Planning Division (P&D) Sarak Bhaban, Ramna, Dhaka.

Executive Engineer RHD
Road Division, Gaibandha.