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The Daily Star BUSINESS

DHAKA, WEDNESDAY, MARCH 15, 2000

Workshop on orchid export held

A day-long workshop on "Potential of Commercial Production of Orchid for Export" organised by Hortex Foundation was held at BARC conference room in the city yesterday, says a press release.

Hortex Foundation (Horticultural Export Development Foundation) is a project of the Ministry of Agriculture for the development, promotion and marketing of exportable horticultural products.

The workshop was presided over by Abul Quasem, Managing Director of the Foundation. The members of the Bangladesh Orchid Society, Bangladesh Flower Growers and Exporters Association, researchers, extensionists, officials of NGOs and private entrepreneurs attended the workshop.

Four technical papers were presented in the workshop by M Ahsanullah, National Production Specialist, Hortex Foundation, Major (Retd) Iqbal Ali, Member, Orchid Society, M Sanaunder Mollah, Principal Scientific Officer, BARI, Joydebpur, Gazipur and Krsi Weening, International Marketing Specialist, Hortex Foundation.

All the speakers spoke on high potentials of export of Dendrobium Orchid as cut-flowers from Bangladesh.

Dr Quasem said this organisation is providing technical assistance for the growers and exporters of horticultural crops to capture foreign markets. "We have already established demand of our products including French bean, okra, green chilli and baby pineapple in the international markets to some extent," he said.

During July-October 1999, more than one metric ton of tube rose cut flower were exported under the technical assistance.

GP ad campaign takes to air in Sylhet

GrameenPhone Limited air-dropped leaflets in Sylhet recently as part of its "Hello Sylhet" advertising campaign, says a press release.

Earlier on February 24, Speaker Humayun Rashid Chowdhury formally launched the GrameenPhone service in Sylhet by calling Khalid Shams, Chairman of the Board of GrameenPhone, in Dhaka at a simple ceremony at the Circuit House.

On March 9, an Air Parabat aircraft dropped the leaflets over Sylhet town in the afternoon. This is perhaps for the first time that advertising materials were dropped from an aircraft in the country.

The GP ad campaign created a lot of curiosity among the people of Sylhet and it was the talk of the town. Earlier during the launching of GP's service in Sylhet, a huge outdoor advertising campaign was also taken up in the divisional headquarters. Posters, bunting, banners and billboards were used in the ad campaign to provide the launch a festive atmosphere.

Meanwhile, the GP-GP product, mobile-to-mobile service, has received good response in Sylhet. It has been able to meet the telecommunication needs of the people of the divisional headquarters. It has allowed them to communicate with people within and outside Sylhet.

Partex Beverage manufactures PET bottles

Partex Beverage is manufacturing PET bottles and packaging carbonated beverage in PET non-returnable bottles, says a press release.

This will be done by using the latest PET Blow Molding Machinery imported from Germany.

PET has proven to be the safest, hygienic, convenient and unbreakable medium for packaging food and beverage.

Partex Beverage Ltd, sole agent of RC Cola International (USA), began with a mission to provide its customers with more and more value in the safest medium possible.

RC is getting closer to making this mission a reality, by introducing our present line of getting closer to making this mission a reality, by introducing our present line of products (Cola, Royal Orange, Cludy Lemon & Upper Ten) in 1 ltr and 1.5 ltr PET non-returnable bottles. In addition to this, the company also plans to add some more relishing flavours.

RC Cola International was the first company in the world to introduce Diet Cola for health conscious people. Partex Beverage is going to add one of the flavours to its line which is called Diet RC. It is the only zero Calorie Cola in the world.

Bank holiday

Bangladesh Bank and all scheduled banks will remain closed on March 16, 17 and 18 on the occasion of Eid-ul-Azha and birth anniversary of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, reports UNB.

Early rain brightens tea prospects

20 per cent rise in production likely

From Iqbal Siddique

SYLHET. Mar 14: The country's tea production, which started much ahead of the season this year because of early rain, may witness a 20 per cent increase thanks to the favourable weather, industry sources said.

An official of the Bangladesh Tea Research Institute said after a prolonged dry spell during the beginning of the season, the much awaited rain has brought hopes for a better yield.

Normally, the tea season starts from the end of March when rain starts pouring and tea garden labourers get busy plucking leaves.

Over the last few years, production suffered due to unprecedented dry spells. The plucking could not start even in April last year due to inclement weather and absence of rain.

The dry spells during 1980 to 1996 badly hit the new plantations on about 5,000 hectares of land.

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IRRI sees bright rice production prospect in Bangladesh

Bangladesh has a bright prospect of increased rice production, said Ronald P Cantrell, Director General of Manila-based International Rice Research Institute (IRRI), reports UNB.

"The country has good scientists, research institutes and political commitment, but it needs more money for research," he told newsmen at IRRI's Dhaka office yesterday before leaving for Manila ending a six-day visit to Bangladesh.

Cantrell, who arrived here Thursday to get acquainted with the rice growing condition in Bangladesh, exchanged views with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and officials concerned.

The IRRI Director General said Bangladesh is a unique country for wide variety of rice. The country needs technology for each variety of rice.

He said Bangladesh's research system is inadequate and BRRI doesn't have the necessary funds for carrying out research.

Cantrell, however, lauded the research work done by local scientists and said they should be provided with more resources.

He said the country had been successful in the past and it now requires more attention to meet the growing demand. He suggested that Bangladesh go for selected variety of rice.

ITS workshop on PSI held

A workshop on "Pre-shipment Inspection Procedure" (PSI) was held at a city hotel on Monday, says a press release.

Organised by Intertek Testing Services (ITS), the workshop was attended by some 100 officials from various commercial banks and other financial institutions.

The purpose of the workshop was to familiarise the concerned officials with the procedural aspects of the PSI programme.

ITS, the world's largest product and commodities certification and testing services, has been appointed by the NBR to issue CRF for imports from 45 countries including China and European states falling in Zone "A".

Speaking on the occasion, Abul Quasem, Member (Customs) of the National Board of Revenue, said that the success of the newly-introduced mandatory PSI programme would depend on efficient handling of import and other relevant documents by the commercial banks.

Expedited and quick clearance of imports is one of the major objectives behind introduction of the PSI system, he added.

Quasem sought cooperation of all concerned to check evasion of tax through under invoicing and "technical smuggling" and thereby help raise the government's revenue earnings.

He said the NBR officials would be available for giving any clarification on procedural aspects and gave the assurance that lacunas in this regard would be removed in consultation with all concerned.

APTECH COMPUTER EDUCATION We change lives Career Seminar for Software Engineers of the 21st Century



(From right to left) M Zulfiqar Hussain, Manager, HR and Corporate Affairs, Nestle Bangladesh Ltd, Ramakanta Bhattacharjee, Business Head, Aptech Bangladesh, Zeeshan Rahman Khan, Vice President of Architecture, ESchoolnet.com, Rezwan Bin Farouq, Executive Director of Axiom Technologies Ltd, TIM Nurul Kabir, Managing Director, TechnoVista Ltd, and Abdullah H Kafi, President, Bangladesh Computer Samity, are seen at Career Seminar for the Software Engineers of the 21st Century organised by Aptech Computer Division at BIAM in the city on Sunday.

— Aptech photo

Specialised banks make good progress in farm loan recovery

tural rehabilitation programme.

Agricultural loans have been channelled through the two specialised agriculture banks, four NCBs, Bangladesh Samabaya Bank Ltd and Bangladesh Rural Development Board.

Private banks, however, refrained from lending to farmers despite repeated calls from the government for contributing to agricultural recovery and rural economy.

A meeting of the committee for monitoring and evaluation of agriculture loan at national level, chaired by Finance Minister Shah A M S Alibhai, Monday evaluated this year's farm

loan recovery.

The two specialised agricultural banks — Bangladesh Krishi Bank (BKB) and Rajshahi Krishi Unnayan Bank (RAKUB) that shared the bulk of the targeted loan disbursement and recovery, performed better compared to four nationalised commercial banks.

BKB disbursed Tk 937 crore and RAKUB Tk 226 crore till February, both achieving 65 per cent of their respective targets of Tk 1450 crore and Tk 350 crore. Disbursement rate of Sonali, Janata, Agrani and Rupali banks averaged only a paltry 35 per cent.

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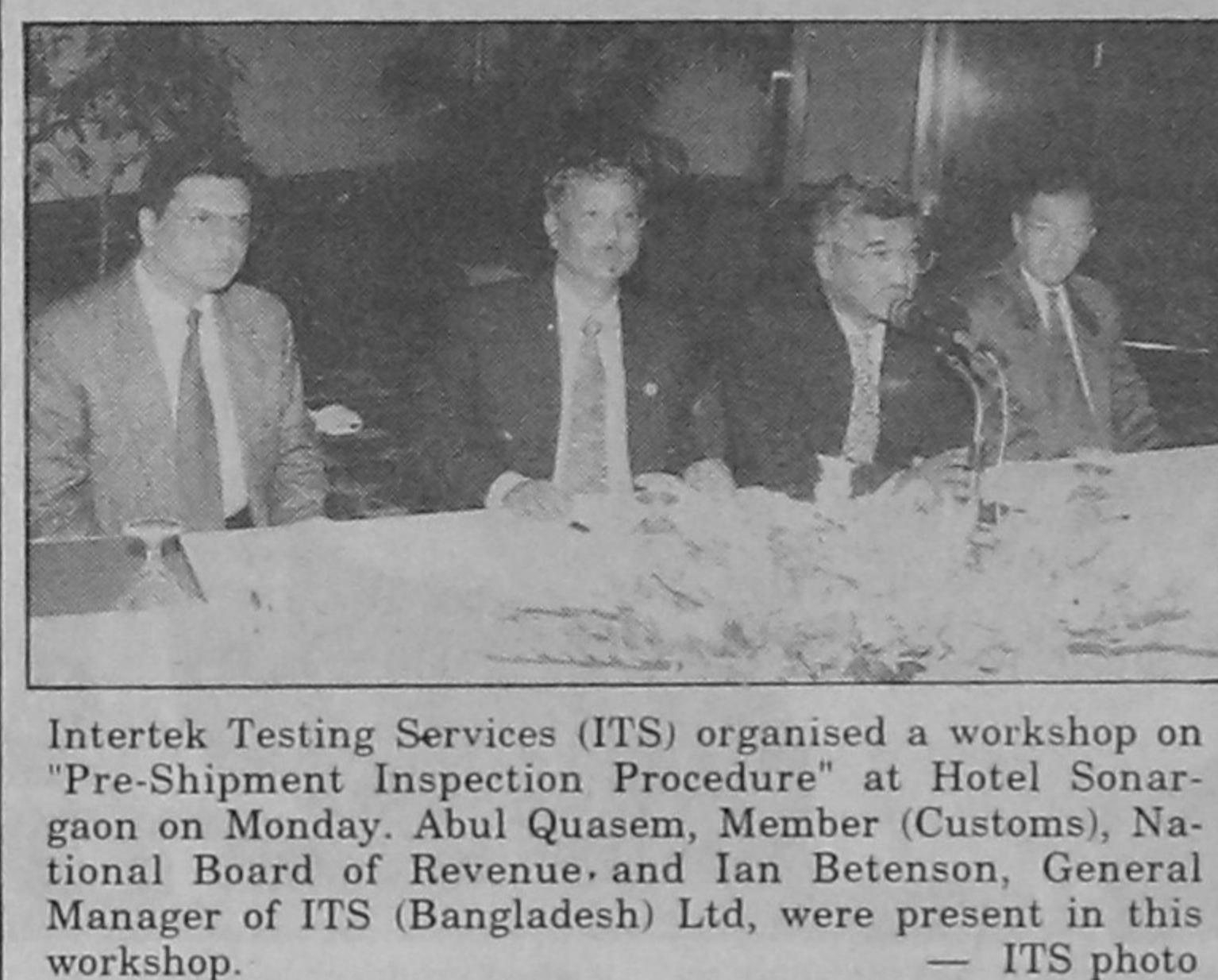
First Bangladeshi portal web site launched

Star Business Report

People all over the world will be able to buy products made by remote indigent people of the country through the first Bangladeshi portal web site, Bangla2000.com, which was formally launched yesterday.

"With the introduction of on-line services, Bangla2000.com will change the shape of trading for Bangladeshi goods," said Salimullah Rawnak, President and Chief Technical Officer of the web site.

Bangla2000.com will provide a one-point access to the vast resources of the internet.



Intertek Testing Services (ITS) organised a workshop on "Pre-shipment Inspection Procedure" at Hotel Sonargaon on Monday. Abul Quasem, Member (Customs), National Board of Revenue, and Ian Betenson, General Manager of ITS (Bangladesh) Ltd, were present in this workshop.

— ITS photo

whole bunch of web sites to get to the desired location. The site is customised to meet the need of Bangladeshi people.

Commerce Minister Abdul Jalil, who attended the function as the chief guest, said the use of Internet and e-commerce is increasing day by day for its wide and enriched features.

Describing the importance of e-commerce, the minister said the contribution of Internet to trade and commerce is enormous.

He said the volume of e-commerce trading through e-commerce came to some US \$4 billion alone.

Describing various steps taken by the government for the development of e-commerce, the minister said: "The government has made a courageous decision to deregulate V-SAT business."

This will help the internet service providers of the country to choose their own VSATs at competitive rates, he said.

The decision will reduce our Internet cost drastically and will let the people get integrated with the world economy."

Dr. Ronald Hicks, Resident Representative of International Monetary Fund (IMF), Dr. Chowdhury Mofizur Rahman, Head of Department of Computer Science and Engineering of BUET and Mehedi M Hassan, Chief Executive Officer of Bangla2000.com also attended the function.

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Enquiry and Inspection are integral parts of Tax Proceedings. Examination of quick assets and inventory, fluctuations of assets and liabilities, abnormal treatment of transactions, fluctuations of non-business properties, damaged invoices, discrepancies in the contents of the invoices issued and those returned etc. are subjected to scrutiny and special investigations by the Inspecting Authorities of the Taxes Department over the ages in very many countries of the world.

And Bangladesh being a civilised and democratic country, cannot be an exception. It cannot demolish the Inspection power of the Tax Authorities. Like other countries of the Sub-continent, Bangladesh also shall have to maintain the Directorate of Inspection in its full scale and vigour. Instead of causing impoverishment to it and creating impediments on its march, efforts should be directed to strengthen the Directorate in line with similar organisations available in other civilised nations particularly, in the neighbouring countries.

We should conclude, therefore, that there exists no basis for confusion on the issue. The on-going tussle between the authority and the BCS (Taxation) Association must end for greater good of the country. Tunnel vision must vanish. Let wisdom prevail and law of reason survive.

The writer is retired Member (Taxes) of National Board of Revenue and now partner, Adil & Associates — a law firm.

his functions being assigned to him by the Board. He has the same powers that an Income Tax Officer has in the matter of making an enquiry under the Income Tax Act, 1961.

Director of Inspection there,

has some powers also under the provisions of Section 132 and 135 of the Income Tax Act, 1961.

Pakistan, Directorate of Inspection (Direct Taxes) is a step higher than that of the Directorate of Inspection in Bangladesh. The Directorate is autonomous of the Central Board of Revenue and unlike Bangladesh, is headed by a very senior member of the Central Board of Revenue. The Directorate has jurisdiction all over the country and performs and exercises functions and powers as clearly stipulated in the Law Book.

In addition, the Directorate is under obligation to furnish an Annual Report about the working of the Income Tax Offices to the Central Board of Revenue by the thirty-first day of December, following the end of the financial year to which it relates.

Directorate General of Inspection (Direct Taxes), Pakistan has separate policy directives for Inspection and Audit.

Policy Directive No. 3 of 1993 contains elaborate instructions for internal audit of Income Tax and Wealth Tax Circles.

Policy Directive No. 4 of 1993 incorporates detailed directions for inspection of Income Tax and Wealth Tax Offices. These directives have provided for "Performance Evaluation

Proforma" in detail and made specific arrangement for maintaining innumerable registers required for audit and inspections.

Follow-up action to settle objections or comments made in each serialised note of the Inspection Report and to retrieve the loss if revenue if any, is taken by Director General. In case of non-compliance within the stipulated period, report is made to the appropriate authority suggesting inter alia:

(a) disciplinary action against the defaulting officers.

(b) suitable measures for retrieval of revenue lost, and

(c) necessary steps to secure proper compliance with policy directives.

Directorate General of Inspection (Direct Taxes) submits an Annual Report to the CBR. The objective of the Directorate is two-fold i.e. to retrieve the loss of revenue wherever possible and to guide the direct tax functionaries to