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13,681.56 MT of
frozen shrimp
exported in
10 months

KHULNA, May 17: A total of 13,681.56 metric tons of frozen shrimp worth Tk 799.10 crore were exported to different countries including America through the Mongla port here during the last ten months of the current fiscal 1999-2000, according to official sources, reports BSS.

The shrimps were exported to America, United Kingdom, China, Japan, Canada, Germany, Thailand, Netherlands and Belgium.

Twenty-four frozen fish units are exporting frozen shrimp to different countries through Mongla port.

The sources said that 13,529.90 metric tons of frozen shrimp worth Tk 804.32 crore were also exported via this port during the last fiscal.

Intel, Mitsubishi to jointly develop cell phone chips

TOKYO, May 17: Intel Corp and Japan's Mitsubishi Electric said they will jointly develop cellular chipsets for next-generation mobile phones that will give users access to the Internet, reports AP.

The companies said the chipsets, which include flash memory chips and microprocessors, offer high-speed data transmission without large increases in electricity consumption.

Mitsubishi phones incorporating the new chipset will go on sale in Japan in 2002 and eventually spread to Europe and other regions, said Michio Nakanishi, president of Mitsubishi Electric's communications systems group.

As part of the agreement, Intel will provide Mitsubishi Electric with semiconductor technology, while the Japanese company gives Intel access to its wireless communications know-how, the companies said.

Intel, the world's biggest semiconductor maker, is expanding into wireless communications technologies because of the fast-spreading use of mobile phones offering access to the Internet.

"Intel is committed to being a leading-edge wireless building block supplier," said Ron Smith, vice president and general manager of Intel's Wireless Communications and Computing Group.

Mitsubishi Electric expects to sell 25 million cellular phones worldwide in 2000 and over 60 million units in 2003, Nakanishi said.

The global cell phone market is expected to grow to 800 million to 900 million units in 2003 from an estimated 400 million in 2000, he added.

NTT DoCoMo, Japan's biggest mobile phone company, was the first company to begin offering Internet access via mobile phones. It has signed up more than 6 million subscribers since it began offering the service through its i-mode mobile phones in February.

The phones feature oversized liquid crystal screens to allow subscribers to play video games and view everything from movie listings to news headlines.

\$400m IMF money

Indonesia to sign reform pledges

JAKARTA, May 17: Indonesia said today it was set to sign a delayed letter of intent on reform pledges agreed with the International Monetary Fund, paving the way for the release of a \$400 million loan, reports Reuters.

The signing comes earlier than expected — one minister had said the signing would be in June — in what analysts said was almost certainly a co-ordinated effort by Indonesia and the IMF to help the beleaguered rupiah. The currency's recent weakness has threatened to unravel Indonesia's economic progress.

"I don't think there is any doubt about what's happened here. The IMF and Indonesia are trying to shore up confidence," said a Singapore-based currency analyst.

The move succeeded in giving the ailing currency a boost.

The IMF has said its board would meet by early June to approve disbursing the stalled loan in time for a June 5 deadline set by the Paris Club of government creditors.

A Paris Club deal last month to reschedule \$5.8 billion of Indonesia's debt is only valid if the IMF approves disbursing the delayed tranche by that date.

Indonesia had been due to get the loan in early April, but it was put on hold because of IMF dissatisfaction about the pace of reform.

Market concerns about the government's cohesiveness and economic competence sent the rupiah and stocks sliding and President Abdurrahman Wahid's sacking of two economic ministers last month only worsened investor worries.

The Daily Star BUSINESS

DHAKA, THURSDAY MAY 18, 2000

Silk industry opts for duty reduction on yarn

Cheap smuggled goods marching on local fabrics

Star Business Report

cent.

The sanity said that the existing high import duty on raw materials and easily available smuggled silk products have made it pretty difficult for the local entrepreneurs to remain in the competition with their products which are expensive if compared with the contraband goods.

BRSM also suggested that the locally-produced silk yarn

should get tax benefits and there should not be any tax at sales level to make the domestic silk industry competitive.

The government-identified silk silk industries need to be immediately rehabilitated through BMRE and they should get necessary working capital and tax holiday benefits, the association said, adding that adequate funds should be allo-

cated for this purpose in the next budget.

The association also called for interest waiver of the private sector silk mills.

It also suggested adequate allocation in the next budget for the proposed Silk Estate at Rajshahi. It also advocated an increase in the budget allocation for the Silk Board to boost its activities.

Local IT experts able enough to take on global jobs

'Country needs intermediary cos to develop links'

By Monjur Mahmud



Mohammad Anwarul Haque

to get an immediate job, he added.

"Bangladeshi community in the US is quite big but the number of internationally-recognised or certified IT professionals

als is very few," the expert stated.

Haque conducted a survey on "Why the number of Bangladeshi IT professionals in the US is very few." He also interviewed the employers to find the answer and the factors behind such poor figures.

The survey found that the Bangladeshi IT professionals in the United States do not have a good idea about H-1B visa, nor do have the IT experts in Bangladesh proper links with the US employers.

Citing examples, he said, there are many Indian firms in the US which work as media between the IT professionals in India and employers in the US.

These firms play the role of a third party. They provide services to the employers in USA and charge a fee for this job, added Haque, who is also a Microsoft Certified Systems Engi-

neer (MCSE), Certified Network Engineer (CNE) and Instructor Certification Programme (ICP) holder.

"The main job of these firms is to work out what type of professionals the US companies need. These companies collect professionals from India after the US employers' needs and make contacts with them."

There is no Bangladeshi firm doing this type of job, which is leading to a big gap between Bangladeshi IT professionals and the US employers.

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Bonn woos Indian IT experts

Visa relaxations, easy work permits offered

he told a round-table conference.

Germany has said it wants to give visas to 20,000 foreign experts to boost its computer industry.

Labour unions in Germany opposed the idea, fearing they would relinquish their jobs to immigrant Indians.

India is noted for its software experts but out of nearly 1,800 requests for the special visa, only 264 have come from India, according to the federal German labour office.

The government is finalising the green card initiative which will allow Indian IT experts to work in Germany, said Fischer, adding that they would now be granted work permits for a duration of five years. Currently, work visas are only issued for 18 months.

There is no resentment. The German opposition party raised the issue as an election ploy. We are living in a global era and a global economy. Indian engineers are welcome in Germany,"

India's National Association of Software and Service Companies (Nasscom) said Indian software exports to Germany shot up from four billion rupees (\$2 million dollars) in the fiscal year March 1999 to 6.5 billion rupees in fiscal 1999-2000.

The United States is the biggest export destination for Indian software followed by Britain, Japan, Germany and Canada.

Later Wednesday, Fischer was to meet India's software tycoon Azim Premji, who is the chief of India's richest hardware and software firm Wipro.

On a visit to Bangalore's information technology park Fischer told reporters he was trying to "combine political talks with Delhi with getting a first-hand experience of the IT revolution underway in Bangalore."

He added that India's nuclear tests in May 1998 would be brought up openly during his visit.

"We are seriously concerned about nuclear issues. I will talk about it in Delhi Thursday with my Indian counterparts," Fischer told AFP.

"India is playing an important role in the (South Asian) region, United Nations... and we see India in the 21st century as a very important power," he added.

Fischer will also discuss with his Indian counterparts New Delhi's relations with arch-nuclear rival Pakistan and their conflict over Kashmir. But he has stated clearly that Germany has no intention of being a mediator in the dispute.

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