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The Daily Star BUSINESS

DHAKA, THURSDAY, JUNE 1, 2000

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Call for informing people rightly about WTO activities

Incident Bangladesh, a non-governmental organisation working on issues of trade liberalisation, on Tuesday demanded that the people should be rightly informed about the activities of the World Trade Organisation (WTO), reports UNB.

"The people of Bangladesh along with other WTO member countries should be kept informed about the developments in WTO," Ratan Sarkar, Executive Director of Incident Bangladesh, told a press conference at Dhaka Reporters' Unity.

Criticising WTO's role, especially in the developing countries, Sarkar said that their objective was to prevent WTO measures, which are adversely affecting farmers and workers as well as rights and security of children, woman, and environment.

Incident Bangladesh, financed by Oxfam, is engaged in creating WTO awareness among the people under a programme "Campaign for Post's Rights in Liberalisation." It will arrange roundtable discussions in different parts of the country, he said.

Saudi non-oil exports down 8pc in '99

RIYADH, May 31: Saudi Arabia's non-oil exports totalled 19.9 billion riyals (\$5.3 billion) in 1999, down eight per cent on the previous year mostly due to higher tariffs in some foreign markets, a report published yesterday said, reports Reuters.

The report by the Saudi Export Development Centre, an offshoot of the Council of Saudi Chambers of Commerce, said 1998 non-oil exports stood at 21.7 billion riyals.

The report, published in Saudi newspapers, said chemical products were at the top of the non-oil exports list at 9.18 billion riyals, followed by plastics, electronic goods and livestock.

Gulf Arab states were the largest importers from Saudi Arabia, followed by the United States and India.

DBBL training programme concludes

The first Foundation Training course of Dutch-Bangla Bank Limited ended recently, says a press release.

The fourteen-day course, held at the bank's training centre at city's Dilkusha, was conducted by its Human Resource and Training Division and attended by fourteen newly-recruited officers of the bank. Senior executives of the bank were the trainers. Md. Shawkat Ali, Managing Director of the Bank, distributed the certificates among the trainees.

Speaking on this occasion, Md. Shawkat Ali urged the participants of the training course to discharge their duties and responsibilities diligently and honestly for setting a unique standard of service in the banking arena of Bangladesh. The Deputy Managing Director and other senior executives of the bank were also present.

EC-Dhaka co-op deal to okay free access of local goods

Jalil tells newsmen in city

The recently-signed EC-Bangladesh Cooperation agreement will provide duty-free access of all Bangladesh exportable to EC market, reports UNB.

Commerce Minister Abdul Jalil said this while briefing newsmen at his office yesterday afternoon.

"We have already asked the Bangladesh mission in Brussels to look after the implementation process of the agreement," the commerce minister said, adding that the agreement has been made effective from the day it was signed.

He said the new agreement may not necessarily increase the volume of EC aid to Bangladesh, but will widen the scope of cooperation between Bangladesh and the European Union.

"It may also enable a meaningful financial support of the European Commission for future development programmes in the Chittagong Hill Tracts area," said the commerce minister.

He said that the principal

objectives of the new agreement are to support sustainable economic and social development of Bangladesh.

Women and the poorest sections of society in particular would be benefited because of the EU support ensured by the agreement, he added.

He said that EU would now assist Bangladesh to diversify its potential to promote two way trade.

"The agreement also aims at promoting investment and economic, technical and cultural links between Bangladesh and the EU," said Jalil.

In the field of development cooperation, the European Commission will continue to extend support to Bangladesh within the context of a cooperation strategy and dialogue based on agreed priorities, he said.

"Cooperation in the fields of drug control and AIDS is also included in the agreement."

In the fields of trade and commercial cooperation, Bangladesh and EU are committed to conduct trade in accordance with the agreement.

said Jalil.

Referring to cooperation in the environmental field, the minister said that EU would support in ensuring environmental protection for achieving sustainable growth in Bangladesh.

"In the field of economic cooperation, transfer of technology to Bangladesh would be made for private investment from Europe by channeling capital and technology," said Jalil.

The agreement will promote scientific and technological cooperation in areas of common interest. "Both Bangladesh and the EU would cooperate in order to prevent diversion of drug precursor chemicals and check money laundering."

The minister said that the EU would provide similar cooperation in the fields of telecommunication, information technology and multimedia applications.

Termining the deal as the third generation agreement, the minister hoped that the new agreement would not only increase the volume of

Bangladeshi exports, but also promote introduction of new export items in the EU market.

During the first ten years of the current fiscal year, Bangladesh exported goods worth US \$4593.73 million dollars to the European market compared to US \$4298.05 million during the same period in 1998-99. "This volume will definitely increase because of the agreement."

However, the minister underscored the need for improving the quality of Bangladeshi products to keep competitive edge in the world market.

"I have urged the business community on different occasions to look into the matter and improve the quality of Bangladesh exportables."

Replying to a question on whether the US government's decision to provide duty-free access of Caribbean products into its market would affect Bangladesh exports there, he said he had written a letter to the US Commerce Secretary explaining the problem.

Subscribers protest new billing system Sheba raises its minimum call unit to 30 seconds

Star Business Report

Sheba Telecom has changed its minimum call unit time to 30 seconds from the earlier 15 seconds with effect from today.

Prior to this, the company used to charge Tk 1 for a 15-second unit outgoing call and Tk 0.50 per unit for an incoming call.

But now Tk 2 will be charged for an unit of 30-second outgoing call and Tk 1 per unit for an incoming call.

When contacted, an official of Sheba Telecom yesterday said the company introduced

the new billing system as its previous billing method was facing troubles.

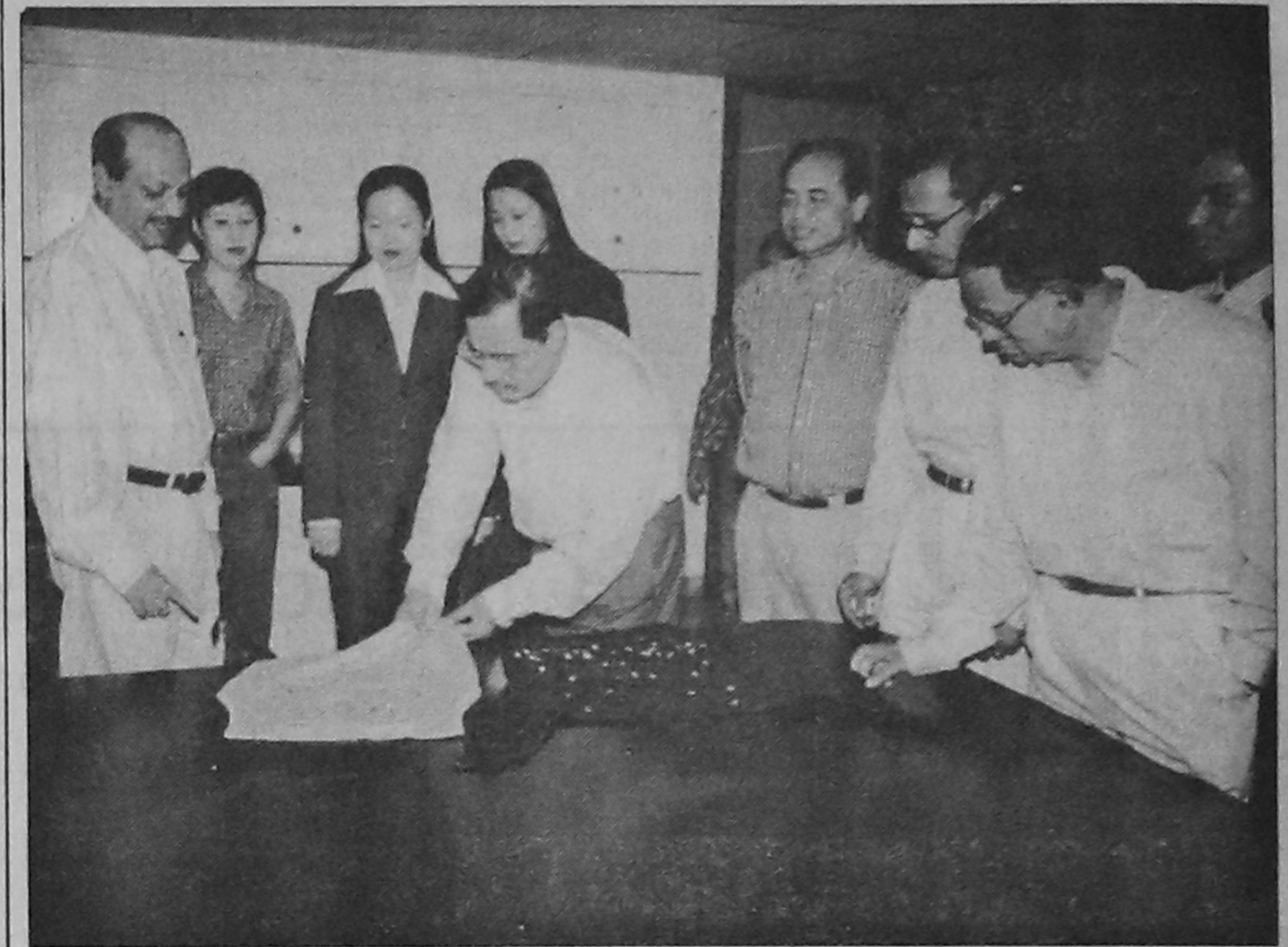
"Under the new system, the unit has been fixed at 30 seconds instead of the previous 15 seconds. The rates of outgoing and incoming calls will, however, remain the same," she said.

Meanwhile, leaders of the Sheba Mobilephone Subscribers' Forum (SMSF) have protested the company's new billing system, as they feel that it will shoot the sub-

scribers' bills to a considerable extent.

"Sheba did not show any reasonable ground for changing its billing system. The company roped in customers by offering Tk 1 for an unit of 15 second outgoing call and Tk 0.50 for per unit incoming calls which no other company offered," said a subscriber.

No other phone company operating in Bangladesh has so far changed its billing system like Sheba, he said.



Managing Director of Janata Bank S A Chowdhury recently exchanged views with representatives of the bank-financed garment industries. General Manager and other executives of the bank were present on the occasion.

Indian ISPs in blistering price war

NEW DELHI, May 31: India's Internet service providers have heated up a blistering price-war, slashing access rates in the past few months to tap a rich vein of potential domestic subscribers, reports AFP.

Internet service providers (ISPs) such as Zeenext, Dishnet, and Satyam Infoway have created ripples with deals offering unlimited web access to Internet-starved customers in place of packages offering limited hours.

"The competition is building up thick and fast in the Indian market, but ultimately, this is a game which can be played only

by companies which have strong business models and are capable of investing in infrastructure," said Satyam Infoway Ltd general manager David Appasamy.

More than 60 private Internet providers have entered the fray since the monopoly of state-owned Videsh Sanchar Nigam Ltd (VSN) was lifted in December 1998.

At least another 200 have secured licences from the government.

"It was inevitable the prices would come down, as they were at too high a level. With competition, it was bound to change,"

said Amitabh Singhal, the secretary of the Internet Service Providers Association.

India's base of Internet subscribers has risen four-fold to 1.1 million from about 250,000 in 1998, according to Singhal.

The rapid pace of growth and the vast number of potential subscribers more than justifies the number of Internet service providers in the market, he added.

VSN has lost some of its market, but still retains a 60-per cent share.

Private providers are running hard with aggressive pricing schemes in an effort to

make inroads into the existing market as well as widen the subscriber base.

Packages for net surfing, which used to cost up to 15,000 rupees (350 US dollars) for 500 hours, have fallen to about 1,500 rupees for 100 hours, and even VSN has cut prices several times to retain its market leadership.

Private ISPs, such as Satyam Infoway and Dishnet, are now trying to tighten their grip by lower pricing combined with offers such as unlimited access for a limited period. Some have simply slashed prices.

Proshika to receive Tk 235cr EC grant

Non-government Organisation Proshika receives Tk 235 crore in grants from European Commission to finance poverty-alleviation programme and rehabilitation of 1998 flood victims, reports UNB.

According to an agreement signed here yesterday, the EC will provide funding of 40 million euro equivalent to Tk 200 crore for poverty programme titled "Toward a Poverty Free Society" of the NGO in next four years.

EC Ambassador in Dhaka Antonio de Souza Menezes and Proshika president Dr Quazi Faruque Ahmed signed the accord for the respective sides.

"The European Community will continue to help Bangladesh in its efforts to improve the living standards of the poorest through government and NGO channels," Menezes told the signing ceremony.

Proshika, through its five-year programme, aims to make a substantial contribution to poverty eradication by assisting 1.5 million very poor households in the country to move above the poverty line.

Its programme entails a large number of interventions ranging from micro-finance operations to non-formal education, vocational training, advocacy and human rights.

The activities are undertaken through a system of group federations.

In the previous phase (1994-1999), Proshika received funding of 28 million euro (approximately Tk 145 crore) from the EC.

Proshika will receive another grant assistance of 7 million euro or about Tk 35 crore from the EC for micro-credit rehabilitation.

Weekly Ctg Tea Sale Market witnesses better demand

CHITTAGONG, May 31: The weekly tea sale held here yesterday witnessed improved demand for all categories of teas, especially the clean better liquoring types, market sources said, reports BSS.

Pakistan operated more actively at the sale along with limited interest from the internal market. Withdrawal was much less this time.

CTC Broken: Clean well-made broken with improved liquoring faced more competition and generally sold at firm to dearer levels, advancing by Tk 1 to Tk 3 per kg with a few lines appreciating even further.

All others were irregularly lower following quality. The large and bold broken met with improved enquiry, selling between Tk 48 and Tk 52 per kg.

CTC Fannings: Clean good-liquoring types were a strong market at dearer levels, advancing up to Tk 3 per kg, but the mediums were about steady while the plainer varieties were irregularly lower.

CTC Dust: 731 chests and 1,625 and 62 gunny sacks of old season on offer met with stronger demand. The better-liquoring types were again dearer by Tk 5 to Tk 8, following competition.

Others sold around last levels with the plainer types once against being discounted. Blenders and loose tea buyers lent strong support, particularly for the liquoring types. There were 8,520 chests and 6,027 gunny sacks on offer.



Md. Shawkat Ali, Managing Director of Dutch-Bangla Bank Limited, distributes certificates among the trainees of the first Foundation Course of the bank at its training centre recently.

Nepal increases development spending by 50pc in budget

KATHMANDU, May 31: Nepal's budget for the 2000/2001 fiscal year will total 91.62 billion rupees (1.32 billion dollars) and includes a more than 50 per cent increase in development spending, Finance Minister Mahesh Acharya told parliament yesterday, reports AFP.

The budget received a mixed reaction with some analysts praising the administration's move to boost agriculture and industry and curb corruption, while others questioned its achievability.

Acharya allocated 48.1 billion rupees for development projects for the year starting July, a 52 per cent increase over the previous fiscal year.

The development package will mostly target areas wracked by the country's bloody Maoist insurgency to help generate employment and develop utility services, he said.

"The new budget will be helpful to develop industrial and agriculture sectors as it (will) extend to educational facilities, medical facilities for the remote districts of the kingdom," said economist Raghav Pant.

Among other new measures is a requirement for government ministers and officials to declare their assets every year.

If there are significant differences from their incomes, their assets could be confiscated, Acharya said.

Analysts said that if implemented the measure would be the Nepali Congress government's boldest step yet to curbing corruption, which many observers say is endemic in the country.

Vice President of the Federation of Nepalese Chambers and Commerce and Industry, Rabi Bhakta Shrestha praised the budget, saying it would "help industrial growth and attract foreign capital investment in Nepal."

However, D.R. Khanal, a Nepal Communist Party-United Marxist and Leninist MP, described the budget as "hypothetical," and said the government would find it difficult to realise its revenue collection targets.

Acharya announced he planned to raise 52.98 billion rupees from implementing customs excise duties, tourism and mountaineering royalties and a Value Added Tax. He has also proposed raising 5.05 billion rupees from other new tax proposals.

"The target of raising 52.98 billion rupees seemed to be highly inflated and ambitious," Khanal said.

Economist Prakash Chandra Mahat said also that the budget, although undoubtedly populist, would be difficult to implement.

Acharya also announced incremental salary increases of between 24 and 48 per cent for government employees, including the police, the army, the

judiciary and teachers.

Excise duties were also raised on alcohol and tobacco.

6pc GDP growth

KATHMANDU, May 31: Nepal's economic growth during the year to July 2000 is expected to reach six per cent because of strong agricultural production, the finance ministry said yesterday, reports AFP.

The ministry's economic survey sees agricultural output growing five per cent in the year to July while the non-agriculture sector is expected to grow by 6.7 per cent.

Finance Minister Mahesh Acharya told the Parliament that the six per cent economic growth rate would be the highest in the past five years.

Gross domestic product (GDP) grew 4.0 per cent in the previous financial year with agriculture rising 2.7 per cent and non agricultural production by 4.8 per cent, Acharya said.

In the two years to July last year, economic growth failed to meet targets because agricultural production fell short of expectations because of disruptive weather conditions, the economic survey said.

GDP is estimated to reach 94.11 billion rupees (1.36 billion dollars) this year in constant 1984-85 terms and at 376.43 billion rupees (5.45 billion dollars) in current terms.



DESA Local Tender Notice

নিয়মিত বিদ্যুৎ বিল পরিশোধ করুন
সন্ধ্যা বেলায় বিদ্যুৎ ব্যবহার হ্রাস করুন

Memo No PS-1/Pro-2/2059

Dated: 18-5-2000

Dhaka Electric Supply Authority invites bids for different electrical materials against the following tender. Reputed manufacturers/their representatives are eligible to participate in this tender.

Sl No	Tender enquiry number	Materials	Last date for buying tender document	Tender submission/opening date	Cost of tender document
1	2059/O&M/XLPE Aluminium Cable	11KV Underground XLPE Aluminium Cable	9/7/2000	11/7/2000	Tk 5000/-

Tender documents will be available for inspection and purchase (through application) during normal office hours in any of the following offices:

- | | |
|---|---|
| a) Divisional Commissioner, Dhaka Division, 1st 12-storied Govt Building, Segunbagicha, Dhaka. | b) General Manager, Consumer's Services (North), Dhaka Electric Supply Authority, House No 73, Road No 5/A, Dhanmondi, Dhaka. |
| c) General Manager, Consumer's Services (South), Dhaka Electric Supply Authority, 12/1/A, Motijheel C/A, Dhaka. | d) Project Director, Greater Dhaka Power Distribution Project, House No 47, Road No 135, Gulshan, Dhaka. |
| e) Director, Procurement & Store Management Dte, Dhaka Electric Supply Authority, 1, Abdul Gani Road, Dhaka-1000. | f) Secretary, Dhaka Electric Supply Authority, 1, Abdul Gani Road, Dhaka. |

The cost of tender documents (non-refundable) shall be paid through Pay Order/Demand Draft issued by any scheduled local bank favouring Director, Finance & Accounts, DESA. Tender document shall be obtained personally and DESA will not take any responsibility for sending tender documents to any body.

Tenders shall be received in the abovementioned offices on the specified date up to 11:30 hrs (BST) and tenders will be opened publicly on the same day at 2:30 hrs (BST) in the office of the undersigned. Late tenders, if any, shall summarily be rejected.

DESA reserves the right to accept or reject any or all bids at any stage without assigning any reason thereof.
DDP-13157-28/5
G-1043

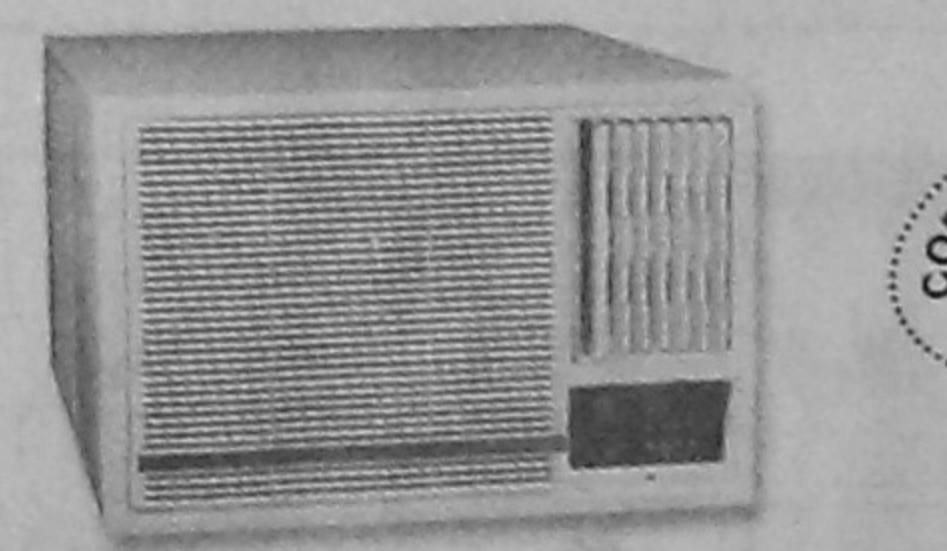
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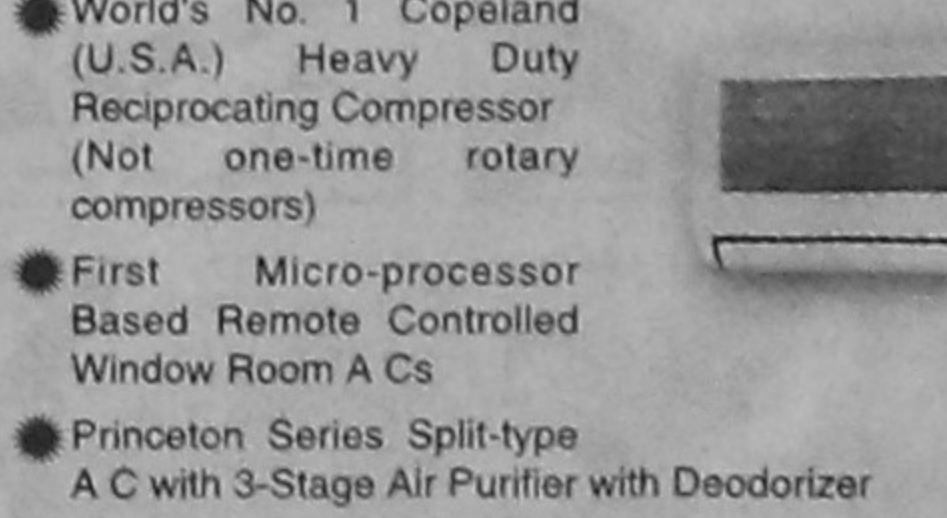
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Special prices offered for other capacities & models also



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Special prices offered for other capacities & models also



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