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Alternative to Benapole
BGMEA gets NBR
nod to use Hili
land port's
customs station

The National Board of Revenue has given permission to BGMEA to use the customs station at Hili land port as alternative to Benapole Customs, which is now closed due to flooding, says UNB.

Garment owners will be able to receive raw materials and equipment imported through back-to-back LC at Hili land port until resumption of traffic on the flood-hit Benapole-Jessore road.

BGMEA has requested the garment owners to use Hili land port on temporary basis, said a press release.

Canada in need
of 2 lakh extra
workers per yr

CHITTAGONG, Oct 13: Canada needs more than two lakh new working people every year and the country's demand for extra manpower is being met through providing immigration facilities to people of other countries, says BSS.

Shah Zahir Ahmed, immigration lawyer of South East International, told this at a press conference here on Thursday.

Canadian immigration lawyer Yan Auong also spoke on the occasion.

Canada provided immigration facilities to 180,000 people in 1999 of whom 2500 were Bangladeshis.

Shah Zahir said, Canadian government provides immigration facilities to the 1880 different professional categories.

Bangladeshis who have graduation degree with several years experience in different professions such as engineering, accounting, library science, pharmacy, home economics and journalism can apply for immigration to Canada, he added.

Shah Zahir said, his company is processing immigration application forms for professionals and necessary immigration processing fee is realized when the applicants get Canadian visa.

BSRS workshop
on boosting
recovery drive
concludes

A two-day workshop on strengthening recovery drive and bringing dynamism in Bangladesh Shilpa Rin Sangstha (BSRS) was held at its head office in the city on Thursday, says a press release.

Dr AHM Habibur Rahman, Professor of the Finance and Banking Department of Dhaka University and Chairman of the Board of Directors of BSRS, inaugurated the workshop as chief guest.

Arranged by the Sangstha, the workshop was presided over by its Managing Director, Younus Ali Howlader.

The workshop aimed at adopting a comprehensive business plan with a view to bringing dynamism in the Sangstha through diversification of its activities and strengthening its recovery drive.

In his inaugural speech, the chief guest hoped that through this workshop, important recommendations would come up to help this management to formulate an effective business plan.

Thirty officers including general managers, deputy general managers and assistant general managers and departmental heads participated in the open discussion and offered valuable suggestions.

US House clears
bankruptcy
overhaul

WASHINGTON, Oct 13: The House of Representatives yesterday passed long-stalled final legislation to overhaul the US bankruptcy system and make it harder for individuals to wipe out their debts, reports Reuters.

But the White House said President Bill Clinton would veto the measure because it failed to strike an appropriate balance between preventing abuses of the system and ensuring that truly needy debtors could still get a fresh start.

The House passed the legislation on a voice vote. It must still pass the Senate, where opponents have promised a far rougher ride in the waning days of the congressional session.

Bankruptcy bills initially cleared both the House in May last year, and Senate, in February this year, by wide margins. But the effort then bogged down in partisan disagreements and a procedural tangle.

In an unusual move, Republican leaders drafted a final version and late on Wednesday substituted it for an unrelated State Department funding measure in order to bring the legislation to a vote.

The Daily Star BUSINESS

DHAKA, SATURDAY, OCTOBER 14, 2000

Bangladesh calls for increased investment from France

French Trade Show 2000 begins in city

Star Business Report

Bangladesh Jean-Guy de Wargny and France-Bangladesh Chamber President Francis Dubus.

Bangladesh, which offers good returns on funds, is an ideal venue for investment and the prevailing trade relation between France and Bangladesh is excellent," the minister said while inaugurating the two-day "French Trade Show 2000" at the Winter Garden of Dhaka Sheraton Hotel.

The show, organised by France-Bangladesh Chamber of Commerce and Industry, was addressed, among others, by French Charge d'Affaires in

Commerce Minister Abdul Jalil yesterday called upon the French entrepreneurs to come to investment-hungry Bangladesh in a bigger way.

The minister said that the trade show would further boost the excellent trade ties between Bangladesh and France.

He said Bangladesh enjoys a favourable trade balance with France as exports amounted to US\$ 400 million in 1999-2000 (July-June) while imports stood at US\$ 75 million.

A total of 20 stalls have been set up in the trade fair presenting French products and services including construction, engineering, cosmetics, power-generation, telecommunications

and information technology (IT).

Thanking the European Union for its decision to allow duty- and quota-free market access to products from the Least Developed Countries (LDCs), the commerce minister said, "This will help Bangladesh and other countries of the group increase their exports to the EU countries."

He said the high-quality French finished and unfinished goods are very much required for the development of our industries.

In his speech, French Charge d'Affaires Jean-Guy de Wargny said the show will make it easier for the French entre-

preneurs and their representatives in Bangladesh to introduce their products and services, which would benefit them in future.

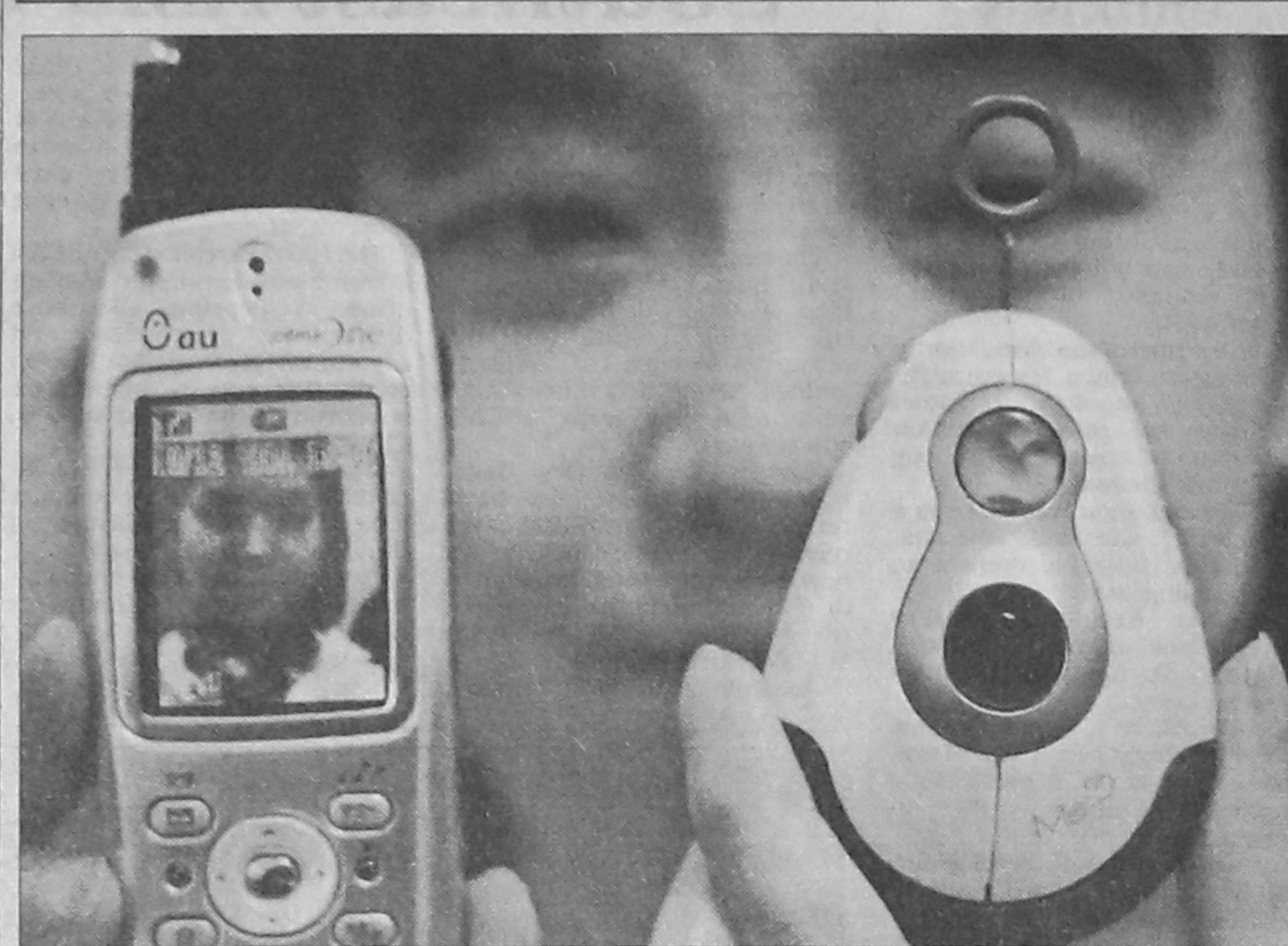
France-Bangladesh Chamber President Francis Dubus thanked the minister and participants for their encouraging role in organising the fair.

Lafarge, Wartsila, Credit Agricole Indosuez, Bureau Veritas, Alcatel, L'oreal, Rhone-Poulenc Rorer, MGE, Adex, Fraunhofer, Alstom, SDMO, Legrand, Moulinex and Eurest Caps are the leading French companies which are showcasing their technology, products and services at the show.



A visitor inquiring about a microwave oven at Moulinex home appliance stall at the two-day French Trade Show 2000 which was inaugurated by Commerce Minister Abdul Jalil at a local hotel yesterday.

- Star photo



Japanese toy maker Tomy employee Rumi Masuda shows off the egg-shaped digital still camera "Me:3" which enables to connect to mobile phone and transmit its image via e-mail at the company's showroom in Tokyo yesterday. Tomy will put it on the domestic market next February with a price of 37 USD.

- AFP photo

Pak oil import bill depletes forex reserves

KARACHI, Oct 13: Pakistan's oil import bill rose by 84 per cent in the first three months of the current fiscal year to September 30 compared to the same period last year, straining the country's weak forex reserves, analysts said today, reports AFP.

The country has spent 997 million dollars on importing oil in the first quarter of the fiscal year, up from 542 million dollars for the same period last year, the federal bureau of statistics said.

Pakistan's forex reserves currently stand at around one billion dollars while the country is negotiating a loan package from the International Monetary Fund.

"Pakistan has no option but to get oil on deferred payment from Saudi Arabia and Kuwait," said Arshad Arif, head of research at First Capital Securities.

The current military government has increased domestic petroleum prices by 31 per cent since the coup a year ago because of the oil price hikes on the international market.

"We are way behind target," the Senegalese official said, when asked whether the world was on track to achieve a goal set at the 1996 World Food Summit in Rome to halve the

number of chronically undernourished to 400 million by 2015.

We need to remobilise public opinion. We need to remobilise the leaders at the highest level (to fight hunger)," he added.

If you look at the level of national budgets going to agriculture in relation to populations in the rural sector, you will see that there is no consistency," he added, speaking a few days before the UN's World Food Day on October 16.

Diouf highlighted the drought-hit Horn of Africa, North Korea and Iraq among the states hardest hit by food shortages.

Diouf said in an interview that international institutions and governments were not investing enough in farming, while conflict and increasingly extreme drought and floods, were obstructing the battle against hunger and poverty.

"We are way behind target," the Senegalese official said, when asked whether the world was on track to achieve a goal set at the 1996 World Food Summit in Rome to halve the

"Only one per cent of the arable land in the Horn of Africa has water control (irrigation)," Diouf said.

Compare it to the figures for Asia - 38 per cent, China 50 per cent. How can you have a serious development of agriculture in an area where 99 per cent of the land has no water control and is entirely dependent on the vagaries of the climate?

As for North Korea, Diouf said food aid was still needed as drought was hampering grain production, but he saw no likelihood of famine.

Diouf said he was concerned over the impact of two consecutive years of drought on farming in Iraq, where there was a serious shortage of inputs such as fertilisers.

"In some areas 75 per cent of the cropped area has been damaged," he said.

The only bright spot is the improvement of the poultry sector, helped by heavy investment by the government using the oil-for-food mechanism.

Cost-effective transportation for sustaining competition stressed

Kibria advocates marine transport to cut costs

Maritime Day 2000.

Presided over by Secretary of the Ministry Sohel Ahmed, the function was also addressed by State Minister for Shipping Mofazzal Hossain Chowdhury Maya, Director General of the Department of Shipping Abdul Malik, and Chief Nautical Surveyor of the Department Captain A K M Ahsanul Azim.

The finance minister said economy would be more expensive if only road transport is used for carrying goods. "We

have to take the natural advantage," he added.

Kibria said scientific innovations and associated technological advancements of the last century have paved the way for phenomenal development of shipping trade. Bangladesh is lagging behind in this respect, he said, adding the country's flag carriers are "about to disappear from shipping trade."

The number of ships owned by Bangladeshi Shipping Corporation (BSC) has come down

to 13 from the number it had in the seventies, he pointed out.

"We must change the scenario by developing our own fleet of merchant ships, comprising modern containers, tankers, bulk cargo as well as product carriers," Kibria said.

Stressing the need for initiative to increase investment in this sector, Kibria said the Shipping Ministry should start an investigation into the causes that hindered the sector's flourishing.

New global talks must include farm trade

Cairns Group says after annual session

CANBERRA, Oct 13: The Cairns Group will insist agriculture be on the agenda of a new round of global trade talks even if separate negotiations are progressing well in Geneva, Australian Trade Minister Mark Vaile said today, reports Reuters.

"Look, unless agriculture is included in a new round, there won't be a new round," Vaile said in a telephone interview with Reuters from Banff, Canada, where the Australia-led farm exporting group wrapped up its annual strategy session.

Some back a comprehensive agenda including agriculture, service, industrial goods, in-

vestment rules, environment and labour issues. Others want a narrower agenda.

Farm trade reform remains the most intractable issue, with Australia leading the charge for reform through the 13-member Cairns Group of agricultural free traders, the United States denouncing export subsidies while using other methods to support its farm sector, and Europe and Japan reluctant to see a WTO agricultural round.

Despite the Seattle failure, countries began separate farm talks this year in Geneva, under a stipulation of the 1994 Uruguay Round agreement which required farm talks resume by 2000.

Countries have begun submitting their proposals for talks, with negotiations expected to begin by April 2001.

Vaile said the 18-member Cairns group, which includes mid-level producing countries such as Australia, Canada, South Africa, and Brazil, along with developing nations like Bolivia, Malaysia and Indonesia, will submit its proposal to and what it calls trade-distorting supports and barriers by year's end.

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Myers joined leading US cancer, lung and heart specialists in urging the United States to take the lead in pushing for a tough global convention.

It is no more acceptable to allow Philip Morris and the other tobacco companies to

addict children and spread disease and death in Asia, Africa, Latin America that it is in the United States," the American health groups said in a joint statement.

This was echoed by delegations from developing countries.

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