

More Leisure, More Fun for the Chinese

IT was only a decade ago that most Chinese regarded going to a restaurant as a treat and owning a stereo a luxury, shops were closed at 8:00 am., cassette tapes were popular and the computer was still a new concept. Memories of those days are still clear, but the Chinese people are faced with more variety of choices when they have time heavy on their hand.

With an average gross domestic product (GDP) growth of over 8 per cent for the past five years, the living standard for Chinese people has been greatly improved. Last year the GDP hit 1,000 billion US dollars, with the per capita GDP reaching 800 dollars.

Now that people have more money for disposal, personal savings for the average Chinese had risen to 5,082 yuan (US\$612) by the end of 2000. In the same year, expenses for food and clothing accounted for 49.2 and 54.9 per cent of all house-

hold spending for urban dwellers and rural residents respectively.

In 2000, every 100 urban households had 116.6 color TV sets, 90.5 washing machines and 80.1 refrigerators. Air conditioners, personal computers, mobile phones and automobiles were new entrants. Every 100 rural families owned 101.71 TV sets, 122.62 electric fans and 28.58 washing machines. These apparatus have helped improve people's lives greatly.

A survey conducted in June by AC Nielsen, the world's leading market research firm, shows that cable TV network has witnessed rapid growth in China's mainland during the past decade. In 2000, the average coverage of cable network in ten major ad markets was over 90 per cent, with Shanghai, Guangzhou and Hangzhou exceeding 95 per cent.

With the expansion of cable

TV network, Chinese viewers will have bigger room for choices, but time spent on individual channel will be rather limited," said Philip Rich, executive board director for AC Nielsen's media research section on China.

Currently, most Chinese household own one TV set, thus program viewing in most parts of the country is still a family activity. But the number of families with more than one TV sets are gaining momentum. In cities such as Shanghai, Hangzhou, Nanjing and Fuzhou, more than 40 per cent of households now own at least two sets, and the average number of channels they are able to tune to are around 35.

The survey concluded that due to the growth in the number of TV channels and family-owned TV sets, the viewing pattern will become more multiple and individualized.

Shanghai, China's commercial and financial center, is taking the lead in setting a comfortable living standard.

627.8 yuan (US\$75.6) and 186.7 yuan (US\$22.5) respectively, about 12.6 and 11.2 per cent of their total spending.

On weekends, those who have cars now one-tenth of Beijingers leave town with family and friends for fresher air and bluer skies. Others visit the capital's countless museums, galleries and aquariums, with their kids in tow.

For the more energetic and fearless souls, the city offers various health clubs and centers popular for extreme sports such as bungee jumping and rock climbing.

Other people can go to cozy bookbars or large bookstores to leaf through the latest books to the accompaniment of light music, or sit in Internet Cafes surfing online.

China's three week-long national holidays, which fall on the Spring Festival, or China's Lunar New Year in January or February, May Day and National Day at the beginning of October, are a time for out-of-town travel.

Unlike in years past when

er it the most wonderful festival they ever had."

A total of 44.96 million Chinese traveled around the country during the Spring Festival holiday from Jan. 24 to 30. Some opted for the icy whiteness of north China; while others enjoyed the beautiful sunshine of southern coastal areas.

According to CNTA, the tourism industry raked in 19.8 billion yuan (about US\$2.4 billion) in that period, a sizable jump over the 55 million yuan recorded from the last National Day holiday in October.

Moreover, an increasing number of the Chinese are sending holiday greetings by e-mail instead of phone calls and home visits. Beijing, the capital, is home to more than four million Internet users, the highest number in the country and about 10 per cent of China's total.

Computer retailers seized the seasonal opportunity to jumpstart the consumer market. In Chongqing, southwest China, children who visited McDonald's restaurants during



Splashing water on each other is a traditional custom of the Dai people; this custom celebrates a bumper harvest and expresses best wishes to each other.



Respecting the old and caring for the young is a fine tradition of the Chinese nation. It has been a vogue in today's society to respect, care for, love and help the elderly. Photo shows two girls who came to grandma Feng Meifen's home spending the Lantern Festival on enjoying sweet dumplings with Feng who lives alone in Jing'an District, Shanghai.

25 to Feb. 1 was around 90,000 yuan (about US\$10,800).

Improved living conditions and a higher educational level on average has also brought changes to the Spring Festival in rural areas. The rural people around Beijing have been less inclined to gather and play mah-jongg or gamble this year, instead, they participated in folk dances or singing Peking Opera.

During the May Day holiday, more than 73.76 million people traveled to places with famed scenic or cultural sites, spending 28.8 billion yuan (US\$3.5 billion) And the fatter wallets in China also made it possible for some to travel overseas.

Many tourism-related items such as knapsacks, sportswear, sleeping bags, waterproof trousers and rock climbing gear were among the top sellers before and during the holiday. Sales of video cameras and digital cameras also went up along with the tourism boom in large cities. In the Beijing Department Store, for example, more than 300 cameras were sold every day during the holiday from May 1-7.

An owner of a popular sporting goods store in Guangzhou, capital of south China's Guangdong Province, said his customers were more concerned with the quality of the gear than the price.

But not all people joined the travel craze.

Chen Wei, a Tianjin citizen, chose to cycle to a nearby village with his wife. "We really like this way of relaxing without worrying about the hustle and bustle of tourist groups," he said.

Still some others took part in various indoor activities. Deng Lin, a government employee, said his satisfaction came from the quiet time spent in the Beijing Library and two concerts he attended.

Like Deng, many people found new ways to spend their holidays, such as working out in gyms, attending computer and MBA courses or taking drivers' license tests.

Even at non-holiday season, life in the city is punctuated with various performances and concerts, some of which are world class.

In June this year, Beijing's Forbidden City was the venue for a gala concert by Luciano Pavarotti, Jose Carrears and Placido Domingo, the world's three opera giants. Despite the eyebrow-raising ticket prices, which ranged from US\$60 to US\$2,000, some 30,000 music lovers attended the concert, which was aired live on China Central Television for viewers at home.

The famed "Three Tenors" told reporters that it was China's marvelous reform and opening and people's enthusiasm for high arts that made them decide to sing together for China's prosperity.

"The concert not only adds a beautiful musical moment to the old city, but also symbolizes that China has become an important force promoting international culture," said Ying Ruo Cheng, a leading performing artist in China.

In the days following the enormously successful concert, Beijing had the luck of a week-long performance of Tchaikovsky's ballet. To ballet fans' delightful surprise, the repertoire was categorized so viewers could choose according to their tastes and purse sizes.

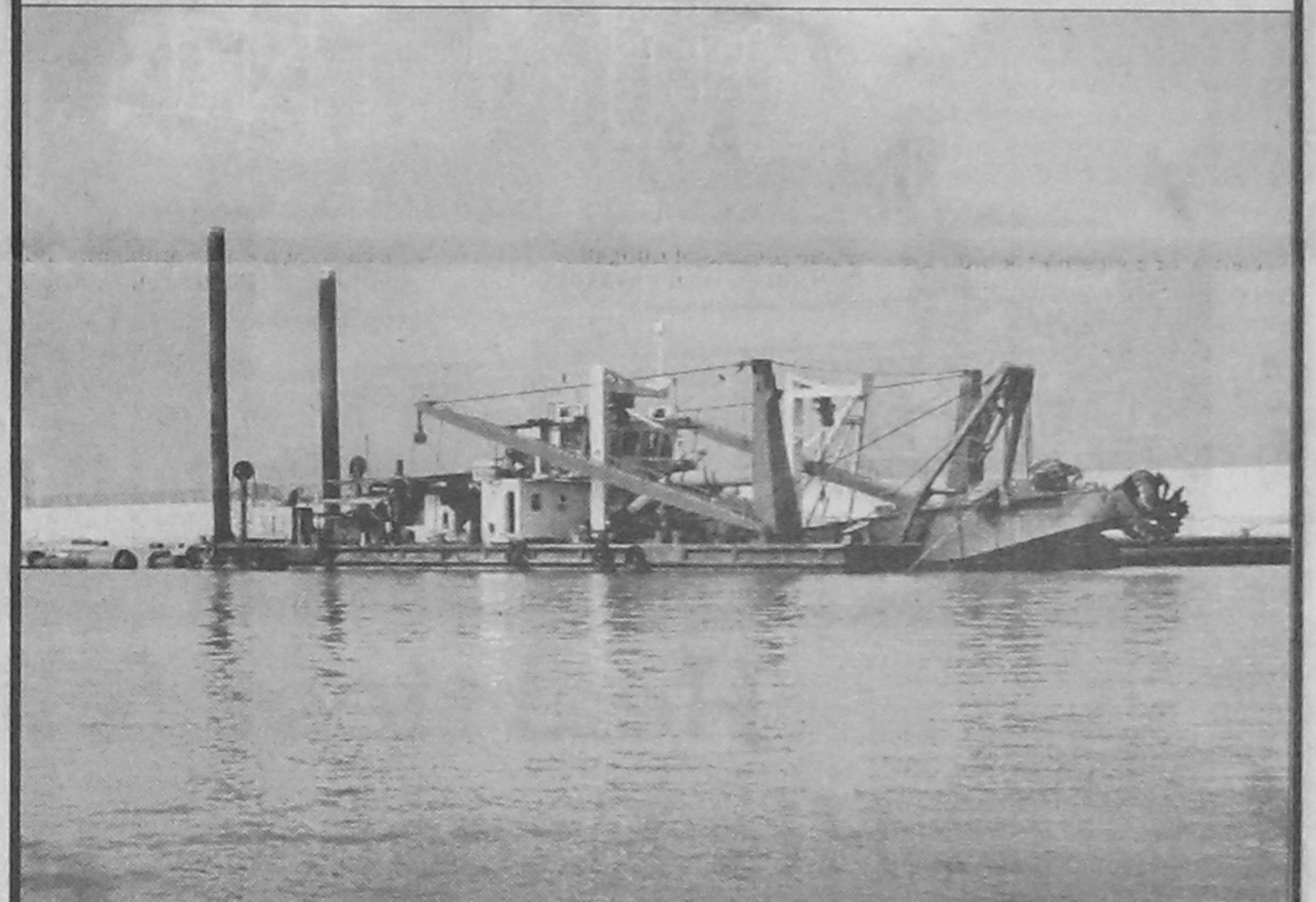
Completed in the coming five to ten years. Meanwhile, museums across the country will have a facelift, changing their more conventional displays to lively and appealing presentations meant to draw more visitors.

The State Administration of Cultural Heritage has announced the plan for a national museum to be completed in the coming five to ten years. Meanwhile, museums across the country will have a facelift, changing their more conventional displays to lively and appealing presentations meant to draw more visitors.

"We should make museums the second classroom for students and life school for adults," said Zhang Wenbin, director-general of the administration.

With more money to spend and more time to spend it, Chinese are enjoying an improved quality of life, and an entire industry is ready to see that they do.

*Our Warmest Welcome to H.E. Zhu Rongji
Premier of the People's Republic of China
on his visit to Bangladesh*



100 ha. Meghnaghat Site Preparation Project in Bangladesh inclusive of dredging and reclamation (6,600,000 cum), foundation treatment, embankment protection, fencing and access road (approx. 1km) etc

中国水利水电工程总公司
CHINA NATIONAL WATER RESOURCES AND HYDROPOWER ENGINEERING CORPORATION

Dhaka office: Add. House No 454, Road No 8
DOHS, Baridhara, Dhaka-1212
Tel: 00880-2-8815332, Fax: 00880-2-8813755
E-mail: cwhec@dhaka.net

Statistics show that urbanites enjoy an annual disposable income of 11,700 yuan (about US\$1,410), while farmers have 5,500 yuan (US\$663), therefore expenses for education, culture, healthcare and travel have witnessed significant growth.

Over the past five years, a total of 78 million square meters of new living space has been constructed, raising the per capita living area to over 11 square meters.

Meanwhile, a social security system has taken shape. Over 98 per cent of residents have registered for unemployment, medical and retirement insurance.

With basic needs secured and the onset of the two-day weekend, Chinese are having more time and money for leisure and fun.

The State Statistical Bureau reported that in 2000, per capita expenses on entertainment, and education and cultural activities for urban and rural dwellers was

Chinese across the country headed to their parents' home for family reunions during the traditional Spring Festival, people now are looking for new, more adventuresome ways to celebrate this special occasion.

With more disposable income, Chinese are favoring tourism venues for their holiday merrymaking: organized excursions and long hotel stays are gaining popularity.

Statistics from China National Tourism Administration (CNTA) indicate that more than ten million Chinese people stayed in hotels for this year's Spring Festival, which started Jan. 24.

"I reserved one room for my parents in the Sheraton Hotel on the eve of Spring Festival," said Mr. Liu, who works for a public relations firm. "They had a good time after taking part in the special entertainment programme there. They consid-

er the Spring Festival could register to win palm computers.

"It is a time to renew traditional city life," said Han Yue, a government official in Beijing. "Twenty years ago, we just bought food as a New Year's gift; 10 years ago, we bought color TV sets; today, we buy computers. Only by using the Internet, can you really know you are in the 21st century," he said.

People in China also have demonstrated a special liking for fresh flowers, fruit and even books, which are seen as popular gifts during the festival, instead of the long-standing gifts of food and wine.

Jin Xiaoxia, general manager of a Xinhua Bookstore in An'shan, northeast China's Liaoning Province, said that unlike previous years, he and his staff were busy the whole day on Jan 25, the day after the lunar Chinese new year began. The store's sales, volume from Jan.

hold spending for urban dwellers and rural residents respectively.

In 2000, every 100 urban households had 116.6 color TV sets, 90.5 washing machines and 80.1 refrigerators. Air conditioners, personal computers, mobile phones and automobiles were new entrants. Every 100 rural families owned 101.71 TV sets, 122.62 electric fans and 28.58 washing machines. These apparatus have helped improve people's lives greatly.

A survey conducted in June by AC Nielsen, the world's leading market research firm, shows that cable TV network has witnessed rapid growth in China's mainland during the past decade. In 2000, the average coverage of cable network in ten major ad markets was over 90 per cent, with Shanghai, Guangzhou and Hangzhou exceeding 95 per cent.

With the expansion of cable

Statistics show that urbanites enjoy an annual disposable income of 11,700 yuan (about US\$1,410), while farmers have 5,500 yuan (US\$663), therefore expenses for education, culture, healthcare and travel have witnessed significant growth.

Over the past five years, a total of 78 million square meters of new living space has been constructed, raising the per capita living area to over 11 square meters.

Meanwhile, a social security system has taken shape. Over 98 per cent of residents have registered for unemployment, medical and retirement insurance.

With basic needs secured and the onset of the two-day weekend, Chinese are having more time and money for leisure and fun.

The State Statistical Bureau reported that in 2000, per capita expenses on entertainment, and education and cultural activities for urban and rural dwellers was

WARMEST FELICITATIONS FROM HOSAF & CMC TO HIS EXCELLENCY MR. ZHU RONGJI THE PRIME MINISTER OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA ON HIS VISIT TO BANGLADESH.

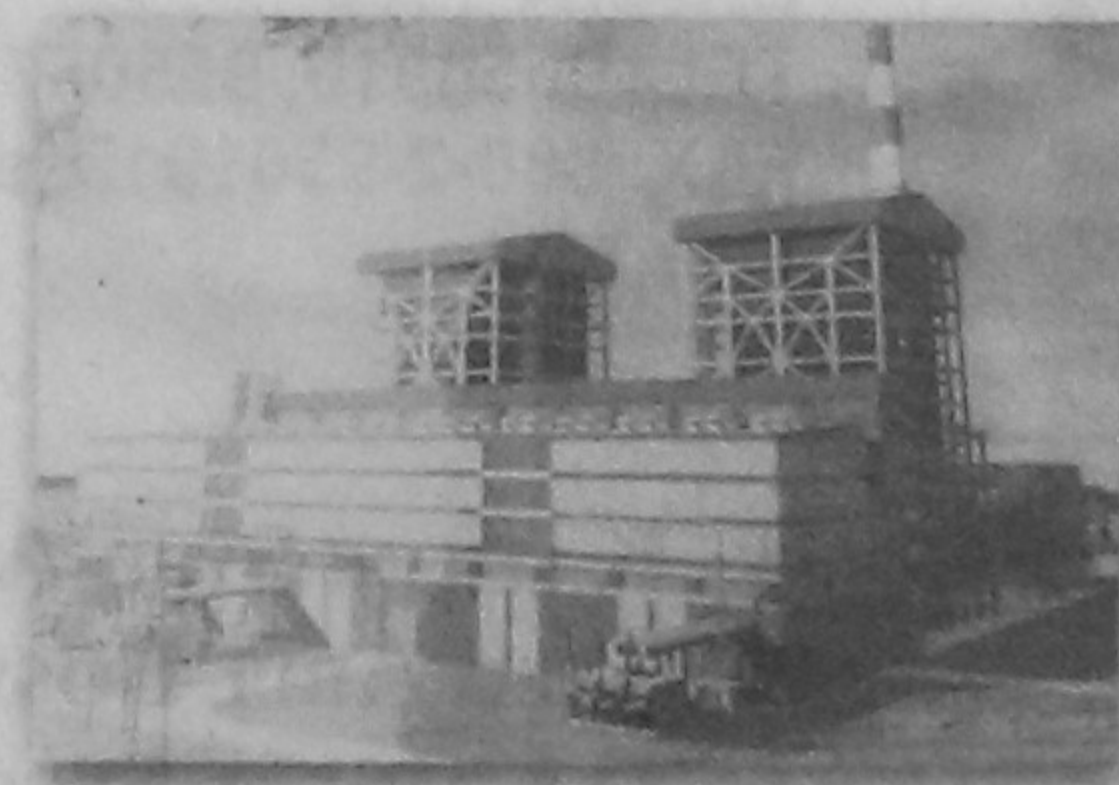


Hosaf is a symbol of reliability & mass popularity in the countryside...

We believe in the best & quality - service for all times.



Type DD-174



Conceptual Plan for 2X125MW Coal Based Power Plant



Barapukuria Coal Mine Project

HOSAF GROUP OF COMPANIES
9 MOHAKHALI C/A, DHAKA-1212, PHONE: 9883067, 8813838, 606938, 605384
FAX: 8823129, E-mail: hosaf@vasdigital.com

CHINA NATIONAL MACHINERY IMP.&EXP. CORP.
House #SW(D)-6, Road # 8 Gulshan-1, Dhaka, Tel: 00880-17-528455
Fax: 00880-28829240, E-mail: cmcbcmp@citechco.net