

## Medical transcription offers better economy

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Information Technology is a blessing for the world but in respect of employment generation in a country like Bangladesh the greatest blessing of IT lies in Medical Transcription (MT) which can offer millions of jobs and earn billions of dollars if the country develop skilled Medical Transcription Officers (MTOs).

Medical transcription is an art of turning physicians' dictated notes into accurate and readable records or documents under specific rules and guidelines. In the US, the UK, Canada and some other countries, doctors are so busy that they find it better to record their prescriptions and, by e-mail, send it to MTOs and get back the voice data converted into text files.

The MT business is a thriving one in India where around 300 companies transform voice data into six lakh lines (65 characters make a line) a day. A line earns six US cents (Tk six).

In the face of growing order from the US, Indian firms started offering some orders to a number of Bangladeshi

IT companies on sub-contract basis a few years back.

But lack of skilled manpower and limited investment keep the new industry on the hold. Absence of clear knowledge and lack of publicity have left the industry confined to only few companies so far.

There are about 15 companies doing the business in the country, which are still disorganised with little co-ordination. They are yet to form an association to promote their business.

Cyber Quest, Technosoft, Hamim, Rebound and BIMT are few of the companies, which pioneered the business in Bangladesh five years ago. But the development of expertise and skilled manpower took their first few years.

A medical transcriber needs to have a six-month coaching on medical terminology, TOEFL, laboratory works and quality control task. It costs Tk 15,000 per person. The MT companies offer job guarantee to successful trainees who have to have a minimum academic qualification of HSC to get admitted to the course.

An MTO can earn Tk 5,000 to Tk 15,000 a month

according to his/ her speed and accuracy of works in addition to scholarship, job security, opportunities for promotion as senior MTO, proof reader, quality controller and Certified Medical Transcriber(CMT) and subsequent immigration to the USA.

Managing Director of Cyber Quest FRM Ruhul Amin, who ventured the business two years ago with a little experience and direction, said there is perhaps only one sector in the country which offers 100 per cent job guarantee to a person who completes a six-month training.

"Bangladesh can secure a lion's share of the billion-dollar US MT market -- 67 billion lines a year -- provided it groom skilled manpower in the sector," he said. "The MT sector is so potential that it could cross the RMG earnings within ten years."

Asked about requirement of manpower, he said there are about a few hundred of MTOs in the country at present and the sector immediately needs 20,000 people and the demand is likely to increase to one lakh MTOs within the next two years.

"We still have to depend on Indian companies to get

orders as we are yet to have own Quality Controller with certification from the US MT Association," he said.

Dwelling on country's advantage in the business, Ruhul Amin said Bangladesh possesses a strategic geographical location, which enables local companies to transcribe and send text data before sun rises in the US next day. "Cheap labour is also an advantage for the country."

Referring to the government's latest move to increase tariff on Internet Service Providers (ISPs) and introduce multi-metering system for BTTB calls, he said it is likely to hurt the promising sector. "Internet is the backbone of MT business and increased charges will certainly hinder growth of the industry."

Though medical transcription is a new concept in Bangladesh, it holds out great prospects of employment generation for all age-group people and huge government revenue.

## India voices concern over growth, vows reforms

AFP, New Delhi

The Indian government voiced concerns Monday over economic growth and said reforms had to be accelerated to realise annual growth of eight per cent, and to double per capita income and halve poverty levels in the next decade.

Reading out the government's policy statement on the opening day of the parliament's budget session, President K.R. Narayanan said the 5.4 per cent growth forecast for the fiscal year ending March 31 was "neither sufficient nor satisfactory."

"We need to accelerate a host of reforms to enable our economy to reach a trajectory of growth of eight per cent and above," Narayanan said.

"This alone can ensure success in our objective of doubling per capita income in the next 10 years and reducing the number of people living below the poverty line by half."

Finance Minister Yashwant Sinha is due to unveil his annual budget on Thursday, but his future commitment to tough reforms has

questioned after the rout of the ruling BJP party in recent state polls.

The electoral drubbing that saw the BJP and its allies lose control of three states, including the all important Uttar Pradesh, caused some analysts to suggest that the BJP-led coalition government might put some of the necessary but more unpopular reforms on the back-burner.

However, Narayanan's speech made it clear that the government would push ahead with its privatisation programme.

"It is evident that disinvestment in public sector enterprises is no longer a matter of choice but an imperative," the president said. "The prolonged fiscal haemorrhage from the majority of these enterprises cannot be sustained any longer."

Earlier, this month the government announced the sale of a 25-per cent government stake in VSNL, India's sole international telephony operator, and a 33.6-per cent stake in fuel retailer IBP Co.

## BAPA welcomes move to import refined sugar

Bangladesh Agro-Processors' Association (BAPA) welcomes government decision to import refined sugar for agro-industries, says a press release.

The association said this timely decision of the government will enable the agro-industries not only to manufacture quality food products for local and international markets but also help earn foreign exchange.

At the same time the growth of agriculture and agro-industries, a thrust sector, will be accelerated, as Bangladeshi products will become more competitive in prices, it added.

## India's forex reserves cross \$50b mark

AFP, Bombay

India's foreign exchange reserves crossed the psychologically-important 50 billion dollar mark this month, an official of the central Reserve Bank of India said Sunday.



PHOTO: ESQUIRE

Sharp was adjudged top in the electronics company and foreign pavilion category at the Dhaka International Trade Fair-2002. Picture shows Mofazzal Hossain, Chairman and Managing Director of Esquire Electronics Ltd, sole distributor of Sharp products in Bangladesh, shaking hands with LGRD Minister Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan, Commerce Minister Amir Khasru Mahmud Chowdhury and State Minister for Commerce Barkat Ullah Bulu after receiving trophy at the concluding ceremony of the fair recently.

## SHIPPING

### Chittagong port

Berth position and performance of vessels as on 25-2-2002.

Berth No.	Name of Vessels	Cargo	L Port Call	Local Agent	Date of Arrival	Leaving
J/1	Estrella Eterna (Roro/24)	Vehi	Sing	Everbest	24/2	25/2
J/3	Banglar Doot	GI (St SC)	Busa	BSC	23/1	2/3
J/4	Banglar Mamata	Wheat(P)	Viza	BSC	13/2	2/3
J/5	Voc Regal	GI(HRC)	Huan	Oil	22/2	28/2
J/6	Paragon Pescadores	GI(STC)	Sing	Everett	21/2	25/2
J/7	Yong Jiang	GI	Sing	BdShip	17/2	25/2
J/8	Sungrisan-9	Urea(BC/C)	Bond	Uniship	18/2	2/3
J/10	Bower Capt Cook	Cont	P Kel	PSSL	22/2	27/2
J/11	Jaami	Cont	Col	Everbest	22/2	26/2
J/12	Kota Naga	Cont	Sing	Pil(BD)	21/2	25/2
J/13	Achiever	Cont	Sing	RSL	22/2	27/2
CCT/2	QC Dignity	Cont	P Kel	QC SL	20/2	25/2
CCT/3	Sinhai	Cont	Sing	BSC	24/2	26/2
CCJ	Togo Charm	C Clink	Lang	SSA	20/2	3/2
TSP	Eurobulker-II	Idle	tuti	PSL	9/2	25/2
RM/6	Duke	HSD	Ruwa	ECSL	18/2	25/2
DOJ	Banglar Shourabh	C.oil	K.Dia	BSC	R/A	-
DD	Banglar Moni	Repair	Mong	BSC	17/1	27/2
DDJ/1	Sonali	Repair	Mong	Angelic	31/10	28/2
RM/9	Banglar Maya	Ballast	BHBN	BSC	2/2	26/2
RM/10	Banglar Jyoti	Idle	K.Dia	BSC	R/A	27/2
Kafco(A)	Oscar Viking	Ammonia	Viza	MBL	24/2	25/2

### Vessels due at outer anchorage

Name of Vessels	Date of Arvl	L Port Call	Local Agent	Cargo	Loading Port
Kibi Manu	25/2	-	BBA	-	-
Iran Motahari	26/2	Kohsi	BSL	C.Clink	-
Weddell Sea	25/2	-	PSAL	C.Clink	-
Banglar Shikha (Cont)72	27/2	Sing	BSC	Cont	Sing
Kota Berlaya (Cont)16/2	25/2	Sing	Pil (BD)	Cont	Sing
Ieon Jin	25/2	Tanu	OLM	C.Clink	-
Valverde	25/2	Sing	OTBL	-	-
Kaghan	25/2	-	Atlantic	Urea	-
Pinya	3/3	Yang	BNSSHI	GI(Log-Maize)	-
Triumph Chittagong (18/4/2)	2/3	Yang	RML	GI(P.Equip)	-
Artemis (Cont)26/1	28/2	P Kel	PSSL	Cont	Sing
Kuo Hsiung (Cont)16/2	25/2	P Kel	QC SL	Cont	Sing
San-1	27/2	-	PSAL	C.Clink	-
Triumph Mumba	12/2	Yang	RML	GI(P.Equip)	-
Mardios (Cont)12/2	27/2	Sing	RSL	Cont	Sing
QC Pintail (Cont)12/2	28/2	P.Kel	QC SL	Cont	Sing
Hinda (Liner)	26/2	Sing	Prog	GI	-
Banga Barta (Cont)18/2	1/3	-	Baridhi	Cont	Col
Banga Biraj(Cont)18/2	27/2	-	BdShip	Cont	Sing
Pindos	27/2	-	BSL	C.Clink	-
Kota Singa (Cont)18/2	3/3	-	Everbest	Cont	Col
Xpress Resolve (Cont)20/2	3/3	-	Everbest	Cont	Col
AA Vetur	1/3	Col	Cia	GI	-
Par East Express (24)20/2	1/3	-	H&S	Hr.Coil	-
Orient Freedom (Cont)19/2	1/3	Sing	PSSL	Cont	Sing
Perak (Cont)18/2	2/3	Sing	Pil(BD)	Cont	Sing
QC Lark (Cont)20/2	2/3	PiKel	QC SL	Cont	P.K

### Tanker due

Melodia	25/2	Juba	ECSL	HSD/DOJ
Crystal	25/2	Sing	ECSL	HSP/DOJ

The following is the shipping position and performance of vessels at Chittagong port as per berthing sheet of CPA by HRC Group, Dhaka.