

DHAKA FARIDAY APRIL 19, 2002

GP plans 1 lakh new subscribers from Ctg

GrameenPhone has a plan to include another one lakh subscribers from Chittagong region in near future, says a press release.

This was disclosed by the GrameenPhone Managing Director Ola Ree yesterday while on a two-day visit to Chittagong.

The GP management team also accompanied him.

He visited different GrameenPhone installations located in the city.

Later Ree exchanged views with GP Corporate customers, journalists, elites of the city and representatives of GP distribution partners.

Earlier, he handed over two-wheel chairs to Maa-O-Shishu Hospital of Chittagong. These were donated jointly by GrameenPhone, Rotary Club of Dhaka, North and Rotary International District-3280.

GrameenPhone started its services in Chittagong on June 28, 1998. GP has coverage in six districts including 20 upazila headquarters in Chittagong division. The GP Info Center is located in Agrabad while the technical department is situated in the Old Railway station building.

GrameenPhone has so far invested 35 million US dollars in the region out of a total investment of 170 million dollars. There are 42 base stations currently in operation and there are 37 points of sales and 185 scratch card distribution outlets around the region.

BKB realises Tk 31cr on Halkhata Day

Bangladesh Krishi Bank (BKB) has realised Tk 31 crore on the occasion of Halkhata, says a press release.

This was revealed at an evaluation meeting on celebration of Halkhata held at the boardroom of the bank on Monday.

The General Managers, Deputy General Managers and Assistant General Managers of Head Office, entrusted with the task of recovery of loan, attended the meeting.

AKM Sajedur Rahman, Managing Director of the bank, presided over the meeting.

The recovery is considered as a great achievement in view of the fact that harvesting has not yet begun.

Halkhata, organised on the occasion of Bangla New Year, was observed for the first time in all branches of the bank.

Lankan FM visits Ctg EPZ

UNB, Dhaka

The visiting Sri Lankan Foreign Minister Tyrone Fernando has expressed his satisfaction over the infrastructural facilities in the EPZs and incentives being provided to foreign investors in Bangladesh.

"The EPZs of Bangladesh are attractive to the foreign investors particularly because of peaceful environment prevailing in the zones," he said while visiting the Chittagong Export Processing Zone on Tuesday.

Lauding the role of BEPZA in the industrialisation and economic development of Bangladesh the Sri Lanka Minister said "I am very much impressed to see the pattern of work, operational procedure and activities in the EPZs."

He said Sri Lanka would do its best so that Bangladesh could get more foreign direct investment.

Earlier, Executive Chairman of Bangladesh Export Processing Zone Authority (BEPZA) Brig Gen (Retd) Mofizur Rahman briefed the Sri Lankan Minister about the activities of the EPZs in Bangladesh through a multimedia presentation.

The BEPZA chief said the rental rates for land, standard factory buildings and warehouse at Mongla, Ishwardi and Uttara EPZs have been reduced by 50 per cent than those of the EPZs in Chittagong, Dhaka and Comilla.

Later, the Sri Lankan Minister and his delegation members visited a number of industries in Chittagong EPZ, a BEPZA press release said.

LG turns profitable

AFP, Seoul

LG Electronics Inc. said Thursday its net profit surged 250 per cent to 219.8 billion won (166 million dollars) in the three months to March from a year ago.

LG Electronics said its first quarter operating profit rose to 366.9 billion won from 296.8 billion won a year ago, while sales increased to 4.69 trillion won from 4.03 trillion won.

New filling stations must have CNG facilities

State minister says at BP lubricant launch

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

New filling stations must have CNG filling facilities for getting permission from the government, said State Minister for Energy and Mineral Resources AKM Mosharraf Hossain.

He also said the government has intention to convert all the vehicles of the country into compressed natural gas (CNG)-run within the next two years.

According to him such a move will ensure maximum utilisation of natural gas.

The minister was speaking as the chief guest at the launching ceremony of British Petroleum (BP) Vistra 2T 200 lubricant at a city hotel Wednesday evening. Meghna Petroleum Ltd has been marketing the BP engine oil.

Among others, Secretary-in-Charge of Energy and Mineral Resources Division Khairuzzaman Chowdhury, Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation (BPC) Chairman Azharul Islam, Regional Technical Services Manager of BP Middle East-Dubai Karim W Ibrahim and General Manager of Meghna Petroleum Ltd Masudur Rahman spoke on the occasion.

The minister said the government has so far given approval to 313 CNG

filling stations and 35 CNG workshops in the private sector. He invited the petroleum sector to come forward for marketing of CNG through the filling stations.

He said the government in principle decided to phase out auto-rickshaws from Dhaka city. "But the vehicles would be allowed to ply in other cities," Mosharraf said.

He also disclosed the government does not want to continue marketing petroleum products, as private sector can deliver the service more efficiently.

Secretary-in-Charge of Energy Division Khairuzzaman Chowdhury urged the leaders of auto-rickshaw owners' association to ensure the auto-rickshaws in the street use lubricant that reduces pollution.

BP's Karim Ibrahim made a technical presentation on the newly launched engine oil during the launching ceremony.

Meghna Petroleum GM Masudur Rahman said they would market the engine oil through its 260 petrol pumps across the country. According to him, use of new lubricant would reduce ratio of smoke emission by 70 per cent.

He also said the existing two-wheelers and three-wheelers, besides the CNG-run vehicles would be able to use the engine oil.



AKM Sajedur Rahman, Managing Director of Bangladesh Krishi Bank, speaks as chief guest at the opening ceremony of month-long "Beginners Course on Computers for Executives" held at Computer Cell of the head office in the city on Monday. Muhammad Abdul Matin, General Manager-Planning & Operation, and KM Asaduzzaman, General Manager-Admin, are also seen in the picture.

EU renounces Oxfam 'protectionist' charge

AFP, Brussels

The European Commission rejected as flawed Wednesday a claim by charity Oxfam International that the 15-nation European Union is the most protectionist of the major trading entities.

In a statement, EU Trade Commissioner Pascal Lamy said he welcomed Oxfam's report as "a substantive and in general well-researched contribution to the debate between trade and development."

It also argued that the European Union is eliminating quotas on textiles and clothing -- as required under a 1984 international trade agreement -- at a faster pace than Oxfam suggested.

In its report, released last Thursday, Oxfam said the rules of global trade were rigged in favour of rich countries, allowing them to grab the lion's share of world export earnings.

Oxfam complained, in the report titled "Rigged Rules and Double Standards," that current trade rules prevent poverty reduction and

urged radical changes in the rules to make them fair for all.

For every 100 dollars generated by exports in the world, 97 dollars goes to high- and middle-income countries, while just three dollars ends up in poor countries, the Oxfam report said.

It specifically accused the European Union of "double standards," citing as an example the dumping of EU-made surplus powdered milk onto the market in Jamaica, ruining the Caribbean Island's dairy industry.

In its reaction Wednesday, the European Commission said the Oxfam report's "double standards index" -- topped by the EU, with the United States a close second -- was "an arbitrary gimmick" easily confused with UN league tables.

"There are, in our view, factual errors and methodological flaws," he said, adding that these would be refuted in detail on the European Commission's trade site on the Internet.

Broadly speaking, the commis-

sion said Oxfam's report did not take into account reforms started in 1992 to the Common Agricultural Policy, which lays out how subsidies are paid out to farmers.

The commission recalled that the EU farm budget has been frozen at 0.5 per cent of gross domestic product until 2006, compared to 0.7 per cent in the United States, and that the EU is "by far" the biggest importer of food from developing nations.

It also argued that the European Union is eliminating quotas on textiles and clothing -- as required under a 1984 international trade agreement -- at a faster pace than Oxfam suggested.

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