# ICT assocs laud |

Different ICT industry-related associations have welcomed the government decision for reinsisting duty free import of computer and its accessories.

Bangladesh Association of Software and Information Services (BASIS), Bangladesh Computer Samity (BCS) and Bangladesh Village Computer Association (BVCA) are among the associations to welcome the decision.

Expressing his gratitude to the government, President of BASIS Habibullah N Karim in a statement said, "We are also looking forward to the finance minister's guideline for effective utilisation of Tk 300 crore fund earmarked for software development.

President of BVCA Praddyut Kumar Sarkar, BVCA General Secretary Abu Sved and President of BCS Sabur Khan also urged the government to connect Bangladesh with the submarine cable as early as possible for the rapid growth of information communication technology.

# Emirates Skycargo's new ad campaign

The classic cargo box is the enduring symbol of air freight, inside and outside the industry. Now it has been given new life as the key component of Emirates SkyCargo's new, worldwide advertising campaign, says a press release.

The campaign, designed by Lowe Dubai, reinforces the association of a cargo carrier with its various destinations. The box has been combined with symbols representing different destinations and services. In an ad for Casablanca, boxes have been miniaturised and piled into a Moroccan serving dish; in another, for Khartoum, a single box has been covered with distinctive Sudanese weaving.

The central message is that Emirates SkyCargo is a provider of diverse services tailored to meet customer requirements for businesses all over the world.

Prakash Nair, Emirates cargo Marketing Manager, said: "Communication had to be simple, arresting and flexible enough to be used globally. We have used the cargo box as a visual icon to communicate erent messages in each ad, thus making our communication relevant

## ExxonMobil to take stake in Chinese gas pipeline project

AFP, Beijing

US-based energy giant ExxonMobil Corp. will join a Royal Dutch/Shell Group-led consortium chosen to build a 5.6 billion dollar natural gas pipeline across China, executives said Monday.

The company's participation in the construction of the 4,000kilometer (2.500-mile) line was agreed in a memorandum of understanding with Shell and Russia's OAO Gazprom over the weekend.

"The three international companies will have a combined percentage of the project equally spread," said Sarah Du, a spokeswoman for ExxonMobil China.

ExxonMobil has agreed to join China Light Power in taking a combined 15-percent stake in the pro ject, according to Shell China

Similarly, Shell and Hong Kong China Gas Co. will take a combined 15 percent stake, and OAO Gazprom and OAO Stroytransgaz will between them buy a 15 percent

This marks a split into three even portions of a 45-percent stake the Shell-led consortium agreed to take last December after negotiations

with local partner PetroChina Co. The pipeline, one of the largest projects of its kind ever in China, will bring natural gas from the Tarim Basin in the country's northwestern Xinjiang region to bustling and energy-hungry Shanghai in the

In addition to the investment in the gas pipeline itself, 3.1 billion dollars will be spent on gas extraction and up to 9.6 billion dollars on

the construction of a distribution network, according to PetroChina. Since the Shell-led consortium agreed to the 45-percent stake late last year. ExxonMobil has wanted to

take part in the deal and has been negotiating over the terms. Analysts said Shell was also keen to have ExxonMobil on board to spread the risk of the project, the viability of which has been questioned by some observers both

inside and outside China.

# ICT assocs laud govt for keeping computer duty-free Star Business Report Different ICT industry-related DIFFERENCE DIFFERENC

# Canadian, Swedish decisions likely by month-end

RAZIUR RAHMAN

In a welcome move, Norway has allowed duty and quota- free access of all products from LDCs including Bangladesh to its market with effect from yesterday.

Moreover, there have been indications from Canada and Sweden that both the countries will offer similar facility to Bangladesh and other LDCs by this month, according to sources in the commerce ministry.

The decision of the Norwegian government and the positive indications from the two other countries have been considered a push for the country's external sector against the backdrop of export slump

The country's exports fetched US\$ 4876.85 million during July-April period of FY2002, which is 18.38 per cent or \$1098.15 million

Japanese boardroom blues lifted

for the first time in six quarters as

rising exports sparked fresh activ-

**Tex** MART

Lucky Coupon

piece dinner set, was bagged by Dr. Zakiah (Coupon-1134).

Texmart, a chain store, organised the second lucky coupon draw on the

occasion of FIFA World Cup at its Uttara branch recently. Popular model

Shimul was present at the function. In the draw, first prize was won by Shine

Wai Yan (Coupon-218) who got a 21" colour TV set, the second prize, a 44-

piece dinner set, was won by Pritha (Coupon-1128) and the third prize, a 32-

was also down by 7.66 per cent or US\$404.58 million from the corresponding period of the previous fiscal, according to statistics of Export Promotion Bureau.

Even in the face of the worst-ever export performance, the government had to slash the export target for FY2002 by US\$ 1220 million. With the revision, the target was brought down to \$ 5950 million from \$7170 million

Although the Norwegian market is not a big one for Bangladesh, the country's policy planners think it could have a demonstrative effect on other developed countries to offer similar facilities to LDCs including Bangladesh.

"This is really a very good signal. At this moment, we are not concentrating on a single big market. We are giving all our efforts to pursue all the developed countries through

Business confidence in Japan

the economy, the central bank's

latest Tankan survey showed

But economists warned against

up for first time in 18 months

Monday.

diplomatic channels and in bilateral and multilateral discussions for providing us with duty-free access, Commerce Minister Amir Khosru Mahmood Chowdhury told The Daily Star yesterday

According to him, Bangladesh has been trying to increase the number of markets instead of concentrating on a few countries for the country's goods so that the total volume of export to the small markets fulfills the target even if there is no access to bigger markets.

The minister also said there are possibilities of getting market access to Russia, Oman, China, South Korea and some other countries. The government has been negotiating the issue with the countries, he said.

A seven-member Norwegian delegation during bilateral official consultations on June 12 in Dhaka

line figures, which were likely

prompted by sheer relief that

deteriorating further rather than

clear signs of a sustainable recov-

Markets only gave a modest

reaction to the news, underlining

the scepticism felt by investors in

Japan Inc.'s renewed optimism,

In the Bank of Japan's quarterly

survey for June, the index of large

non-manufacturers' confidence

jumped 20 points -- its highest ever

margin -- to minus 18 from minus

Business sentiment among

large non-manufacturers surged

to minus 16 from minus 22 in the

The indices measure the differ-

ence between firms saving eco-

nomic conditions are favourable

and those saying they are unfa-

vourable. A negative figure means

a majority of firms believes condi-

consensus, but economists said a

decision by large manufacturers to

factories and equipment was a

economy burst in 1990

The rise exceeded market

economists added.

previous Tankan

economic conditions had stopped

between foreign ministries of the two countries indicated that it would lift duty and quota on all imports from the LDCs, including Bangladesh from July 1

Officials of concerned ministries of the government confirmed that the quota and duty-free facility of

Norway took effect yesterday. According to sources in the commerce ministry, the policy makers have been treating this kind of duty free access to developed countries as a tool to pressurize bigger markets like USA to give such access to Bangladeshi products.

While talking with The Daily Star, Commerce Secretary Suhel Ahmed Chowdhury said, "If Bangladeshi products get similar access to Canadian market it will help us to convince the USA. We are hopeful that there will be something posi-

# One billion

AFP, San Francisco

so far

PCs sold

The one billionth computer was sold in April, the Gartner high-tech consultancy announced Sunday. According to the company, one billion PC have been sold since the

A quarter of those machines went to consumers, while the reset ended up in corporations. A vast majority, about 80 per

cent, were desktop computers, as opposed to portables and laptops. The consultancy except the

second billion PC landmark to come quickly -- as soon as 2007 or 2008 -- because of dropping prices of PCs and demand from developing countries.

"This demand exists because of the power of the PC to leverage intellectual capital, unlocking the capabilities of individuals to succeed and companies to profit," Gartner analyst Martin Reynolds

The US had received the bulk of those machines, -- 38.8 per cent, or

been shipped into Europe and 11.7 per cent were sent to Asia-Pacific countries

reduce planned investment in warning about the strength of the latest recovery -- the fourth cyclical said. Only two per cent were servrebound since Japan's bubble ers. machines dedicated to passing data on a network

mid-1970s.

stated in a report.

394 million, reported the consul-A quarter those billion have

Some 16 per cent of those machines were portables, Gartner

also firm as investors grew increasingly worried about prospects for the US economy, dealers said. The euro bought 0.9937 dollars Mizuho Corporate Bank. at 2:00 pm (0500 GMT), up from Parity could be reached this

Euro inches closer to

parity with dollar

0.9907-11 dollars in New York and 0.9927-30 dollars in Tokyo Friday afternoon. The ven was trading at 119.43 to

The euro inched closer to parity with

the dollar Monday and the ven was

the dollar against 119.57-61 yen in

authorities.Recent economic slash

New York and 119.20-23 yen in Tokyo late Friday. The euro will continue to be

stronger against the dollar because there remain a lot of dollar-negative factors.' said Tatsuro Karitani. a foreign exchange manager for

week said a foreign exchange trader at a local life insurance company "unless confidence in the US capital markets and economy recovers fully."

Cash incentive should be given

strictly upon export volume in for-

# **ROK** trade

South Korea's trade surplus shrank

33 percent month-on-month to

1.03 billion dollars in June due to

slow exports caused by weak

demand abroad and the won's

appreciation, officials said Monday.

tournament, which began on May

31 in South Korea and Japan, also

led to a relaxed production atmo-

sphere at factories, the Commerce,

Industry and Energy Ministry said

0.5 percent year-on-year to 13.001

billion dollars in June, compared to

14.224 billion dollars in in May, it

Customs-cleared exports grew

The one-month World Cup

surplus

shrinks

AFP, Seoul

Dr Peter E Albrich, managing director and CEO of Siemens Bangladesh Limited, hands over a crest to Dato' Ezanee Bin Ab Aziz, managing director of TM International (Bangladesh) Ltd, at a function organised in the city recently to celebrate Aktel's achievement of 1000,000 subscribers.

# Indian unions protest foreign investment in print media

AFP, Patna, India

AFP, Tokyo

Indian trade unions on Monday passed a resolution protesting the government's historic decision to allow foreign investment in print media, saying the decision smacked of a sellout to global trade lobbies.

Satya Narayan Thakur, secretary of the powerful All India Trade Union Congress (AITUC), said the organisation had called a meeting on July 15 in New Delhi to protest the government decision to allow foreign investment in print media and "antilabour" policies

"The nation's sovereignty has been mortgaged to the World Bank and World Trade Organisation. We

have called a labour assembly in Delhi on July 15 to chalk out plans to launch a wider protest against the federal government," Thakur said. Prime Minister Atal Behari

Vajpayee's cabinet on Tuesday authorised foreign investment of up to 26 percent in print media companies, breaking a decades-old ban stemming from concern over the impact on editorial policies.

India has since 1955 required that all newspapers and magazines printed in the country be wholly owned by Indian citizens. Moves to change the regulation have been fiercely opposed by much of the political class and the media in

New MD of **AB Bank** 

in a preliminary report.



Abu Haniff Khan was appointed president and managing director of Arab Bangladesh Bank Limited vesterday, says a press release.

Prior to his present position, he was the acting managing director of the bank

Khan, who hails from Manikgani district, has been in the profession

for over 36 years.

# prices surge 20pc in a year

Fish export earning should be creased from U\$5 to U\$35 million.

To increase fish/shrimp For conservation of marine

resources efforts must be made in the following ways Strict restriction of fry catching in

Increase the mangrove forest in

Culture of shrimp fry and other

the Bay for restocking. To take all other necessary

neasures Conclusion:

Thus we strongly believe that through the endeavour of the deepsea trawler companies and with active cooperation and support from the government, this marine fisheries industry which is facing a grave crisis at the moment, will not only survive but will also turn into one of the most vibrant growing industries of the country increasing foreign

The writer is managing director of Sea Resources

British house Income tax rebate should be given to the investors strictly upon Rules and regulations should be formulated to encourage the sector,

> British house prices surged by almost 20 percent in the year to June, the fastest annual increase for 13 years, a leading home-loan provider said Monday.

> Underscoring the recent boom in the British property market, the Nationwide Building Society said that house prices had risen by 3.3 percent in June to round off the fastest quarter of growth since

> The group estimates that the average British residential property is now worth 106,693 pounds (164,300 euros, 163,240 dollars) and expects house prices to spike up by 18 percent this year.

The house price boom poses a dilemma for the central bank's policymakers meeting this week to

discuss interest rates. Though underlying British inflation fell to 1.8 percent in May, matching the lowest level since records began in 1975, Bank of England governor Edward George warned recently that the rate of

"unsustainably strong. Nationwide economist Alex Bannister said however that the pace of growth should moderate because of modestly higher homeloan interest rates later this year and a slowdown in employment and earnings growth.

house price inflation was

He forecast that the Bank of England's main lending rate would rise to 5.0 percent over the next six months from 4.0 percent now.

# Export of marine fisheries sector on verge of closure

A ROUF CHOWDHURY

The Bay of Bengal has vast marine resources including shrimps and a variety of quality fish. We should harness these resources in optimum quantity with proper conservation policies.

It is estimated that the shrimp reserve in the Bay of Bengal is about 6000 tons of which 4000 tons can be harvested annually. At present about 2500 tons of finished products of headless shrimps which is equivalent to 4000 tons of head-on shrimps are caught by deep-sea trawlers every year.

It is also estimated that there are about 400,000 tons-500,000 tons of fish available in the Bay of Bengal, of which 200,000-300,000 tons can be harnessed annually. But deep sea trawlers (both shrimp & fish) catch about only 25,000 tons to 30,000 tons annually which is only 10 per cent of the harvestable quantity to meet growing demand for protein within the country.

How this export industry

President Ziaur Rahman took the first initiative for exploring this sector and issued permission to the private sector for fishing in the Bay of Bengal. Since then a new export sector has opened up earning considerable foreign exchange for the coun-

It should be mentioned that the government thereafter did not provide much logistic encouragenent for the growth of this sector.

Of late, this sector is facing serious difficulties and receiving little or no attention from the government to support this export sector which has huge potential. It has been a few years, specially during the last government, that this sector started getting neglected and reached the state of total negligence from the government. Even now,

though the government is encouraging export, there has been no focus on the export of frozen Marine Products of trawler origin

Present export:

The frozen marine products, e.g. marine fish including shrimps, harvested by the deep-sea trawlers in spite of many adverse situations, fetch over 150 crore in foreign exchange. Of this quantity, shrimp export fetches about Tk 120 crore and other varieties of marine fish fetch about Tk 30 crore.

But it should be noted that after the September 11 attacks on US. the price of shrimp and fish has fallen by 30 to 40 per cent decreasing the export earning from this sector considerably

Future possibility of increasing marine shrimp/fish export earning by three times:

It should be noted here that the average shrimp price of Bangladesh imported by Japan is the lowest compared with the shrimp prices from all other countries of the world. I have cited the shrimp prices of 10 countries imported into Japan in the vear 2000 in the following table for comparis

Cou

1. Hong

2. Aust

3. Taiw

4. Braz

son:			i.e. to Tk 450 crore every year from	
intry	Price/Kg		Country	Price/K
g Kong	US\$20.06	6.	Thailand	US\$ 14.38
tralia	US\$ 18.02	7.	Malaysia	US\$ 13.66
/an	US\$ 17.92	8.	Indonesia	US\$ 12.79
zil	US\$ 16.08	9.	India	US\$ 10.90
istan	US\$ 15.82	10.	Bangladesh	US\$7.74
ow price of Bangladesh		the present export of Tk 150 crore		

5. Paki This low shrimp may depend upon the country's image, quality, species, size and also value addition. So, we believe there is an ample opportunity of price increase of Bangladesh shrimp even by 100 per cent.

This price can be considerably increased by building up the country's image and also by making value added products out of shrimp. We believe that the total export companies and with the necessary cooperation from the govt. The total catch of different fish by deep-sea trawlers (both shrimp & fish trawlers) should be increased to about 200,000 tons annually. For

this purpose proper and extensive

earning of shrimp can be increased

by 100 per cent with the strong

endeavour of the deep-sea trawler

marine resources survey should be carried out immediately. The possibility of tuna fishing should also be ascertained by the survey. If tuna fishing becomes feasible, then a huge amount of foreign exchange can be earned from this sector, because tuna is an expensive fish which is very much liked by the Japanese who consume a large quantity of it as Sushi and

In order to increase foreign exchange if we export only 10 per cent of the total annual catch of 200,000 tons keeping 90 per cent for meeting protein requirement of our people, then we can fetch about US 30-35 million dollars annually Thus the annual export from this sector can be increased three times

i.e. to Tk 450 crore every year from					
Country	Price/Kg				
Thailand	US\$ 14.38				
Malaysia	US\$ 13.66				
Indonesia	US\$ 12.79				
India	US\$ 10.90				
Bangladesh	US\$7.74				
the present export of Tk 150 crore					

5. Employment generation:

It may be mentioned that this sector employs over 5,000 people directly. The ancillary support system, such as marine workshop, slipways & dockyards, manufacturers of specialised packing materials, etc employ about 50,000 people

If we consider that any earning member has to maintain 5-6 family

members, then about 3 lakh people depend for their livelihood on this marine fisheries sector. Thus this industry is not only earning foreign exchange, but also providing livelihood to a huge number of popula-

Marine fisheries sector, the industry of adversaries and risks: This export industry may sound very easy to operate. But it involves a lot of adversaries and risks:

The industry is afloat in deep-sea in good and bad weathers requiring trained skippers and crew for trawler operations Lack of certified skippers and processing crew, produced over a number of years without much

ment. They cannot be produced in any institute overnight or even in a short period of time. Total lack of skilled workers for new value-added products which can be introduced for the export

logistic support from the govern-

Lack of govt. patronization: The government is totally indifferent to the marine fisheries sector and provides minimum patronisation. The following factors explain how this sector is being deprived of the government incen-

paid by the trawling companies unlike other countries involved in fishing industries. No cash incentive is given. The scope of training skilled

The fuel has to be procured tax-

by regulations. Increased operational expenses & drastic fall of price of shrimps internationally:

labour in new product lines is limited

This export industry's earnings have been following an upward curve contributing to the country's economy. But recently the manifold adverse situation needs the attention and encouragement of the

all over the world brought down the shrimp price by 30-40 per cent giving a tremendous blow to the owners. The operational expenses have also increased manifold in the following manner: The price of HSD has increased from Tk. 6.71 to Tk 16.59 during last 12 years.

The wages and salaries have

increased by 100 per cent in the past 8 years due to inflation and also due to the long service of the trawler crew and other staff. The cost of services and materi-

increased by 100 per cent. Imminent crisis and probable consequences: Considering the present situation, the owners of the deep-sea

trawlers are about to close down

als required for the operation has

their operation. This will not only deprive the country of the valuable foreign exchange, but at the same time will also cause unemployment, closing down the ancillary industries which are in growing phase.

Closure of this sector will result in the loss of foreign market, because Bangladesh will be proved as unreliable and undependable source of Once the market is lost it may

take another decade or even more to come to this stage as it is now. It is also important to mention here that the people of this country will also be deprived of the protein, a

get out of the white fish sales by the trawlers, which are bye-catch. Govt. incentive to save and flourish the sector by setting up a target: Incentives.

The following incentives should be provided to boost the export of Fuel should be provided tax free.

**Group of Companies** 

Target: The government should fix-up some vital targets and the following targets should be achieved: (a) Shrimp export earning should be doubled from the present U\$20

not to harass the investor.

export earning.

to U\$40 million Fish catch by deep-sea trawlers should be increased from 40.000 tons to 200,000 tons per year.

reserve in the Bay of Bengal:

the coastal area.

the coastal area varieties of fish and release them in

major nutritional supply, that they exchange as well as creating more employment and meeting the protein requirement of the people.