

Emirates services normal

Emirates, Dubai-based international airline, is continuing to operate normally except for services to Kuwait which have been temporarily suspended, says a press release.

The airline urges passengers, as a precaution to check departure times with their travel agent or with one of the airline's call centres before leaving for the airport.

The carrier went live with additional website pages, set up to provide information, updated regularly, on any changes which may be made to its scheduled flights as a result of military activity in the region.

Maurice Flanagan, Emirates Group Managing Director, said "Safety remains a top priority. The airline is monitoring the situation in the region continuously to ensure the wellbeing of out flight and cabin crews and of our passengers in every way we can.

From Dubai, there are a number of different air routes eastwards and westwards which are long established and recognised by international authorities. An airline's use of alternative routes is not restricted to times of conflict. Sometimes a routing is varied to avoid poor weather conditions.

Flights to Europe, for example, can be routed north over Iran, Georgia and then west over the Black Sea or they can be routed over southern Saudi Arabia.

Epique Home Appliances markets Tefal cookwares

Epique Home Appliances Ltd, exclusive distributor of Moulinex, Brandt, Krups of France, has introduced another world famous brand "Tefal" of France, says a press release.

Tefal range includes non-stick cookwares and bakeware such as fry pan, dutch oven, saucepan, cake tin, utensils, pressure cookers etc.

Specialty of Tefal fry pan is thermo spot from which one can easily understand when the fry pan is ready to cook. The dutch oven and saucepan of Tefal has a unique Steam Vent Knob.

The main feature of Tefal cookware and bakeware is its non-stick coating. The non-stick coating used by Tefal is durable and its quality is approved by AFNOR of France, British standard of Great Britain, SIH of Switzerland, DIN of Germany.

Tefal has attractive pressure cookers -- Clipso and Clamp, which is very easy to use, cooks faster compared to other pressure cookers and preserves vitamins up to 75 per cent.

Bax Global opens office in Bangladesh

Bax Global, a top international freight forwarding agency with its head office in US, opened its Bangladesh office at Mohakhali commercial area in Dhaka on Saturday, says a press release.

Steve Dearnley, president of Bax Global in Asia Pacific, inaugurated the office.

Ashok Jaidkar, vice president of Bax Global in Asia Pacific, Mahbubul Anam, managing director of Bax Global Bangladesh, Hanif Yusoff, director of Bax Bangladesh, and other Bax Global officials attended the function.

Speaking at the function, Steve Dearnley said the company will provide world standard service to its customers.

Aussie farmers threaten to sue govt if Iraqi market lost

AFP, Sydney

An alliance of Australian farmers warned Friday that they will sue the government if the valuable Iraqi market is lost after the war.

The farmers, from South Australia and Western Australia, have called on the government to protect their arrangements with Iraq, long one of their biggest and most valued markets, claiming future trade with post war Iraq is under threat.

The South Western alliance was concerned in the light of a US statement indicating the United States would seek to control the wheat trade in Iraq after the war, WA Farmers Federation president Colin Nicholls said.

SA Farmers Federation president John Lush said the Iraqi wheat trade is worth 800 million dollars a year, and about 9,000 South Western alliance farmers supplied most of it.

Tap e-commerce potential, seminar urges govt

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Bangladesh should tap the opportunities of electronic commerce as it can foster economic growth, speakers at a seminar observed yesterday.

So, Bangladesh needs to develop its infrastructure, legal framework and skilled manpower to get ready for the e-commerce, they told the seminar titled 'E-Commerce: Problems and Prospects', organised by Rapport Bangladesh Limited.

M Lutfar Rahman, professor of School of Communication, Independent University of Bangladesh (IUB), in his keynote

speech, said a strong Internet support is needed for a successful operation of e-commerce.

He said Internet in Bangladesh largely depends on telephone connection. But, the country has a low telephone density, an obstacle to the growth of Internet and e-commerce, he said.

Rahman also said security is one of the main concerns in e-commerce. People can change names and place of orders in e-commerce that makes transaction through e-commerce quite risky, he added.

He also said Bangladesh lacks legal framework for e-commerce.

Rahman suggested polytechnic institutes start courses on e-commerce to create skilled manpower for e-commerce.

Abul Kashem Md Shirin, executive vice president of Dutch Bangla Bank Ltd, said inter-bank auto-clearing system and data communication system have to be developed for on-line banking to flourish. He also said the government should enact an electronic transaction act and provide high speed Internet connectivity for e-commerce govt.

Abdus Sobhan, vice chancellor of Prime University, said a coordinated approach from both the public and private sectors is

needed for e-commerce to develop. He also said the infrastructure facilities existing in Bangladesh are not being properly used.

Sajjatz Jumma, chairman of Shahajalal Bank, said increased awareness among people and a developed communication system are needed for facilitating e-commerce. He underscored the need for making rules and regulations for e-commerce operation.

M Sohrab Uddin, director general of Bangladesh Institute of Bank Management (BIBM), said it is high Bangladesh removed all barriers to e-commerce.

Largest airlines cut jobs, flights

REUTERS, Chicago

Several of the world's biggest airlines announced cuts in jobs and flight schedules on Thursday, beginning what is expected to be a wave of reductions because of a slump in travel made worse by the Iraq war.

Bankrupt United Airlines, the

world's No. 2 air carrier, told employees to expect unpaid leaves and capacity cuts. Air Canada said the war underscored a need to cut 3,600 of 40,000 workers this year.

AMR Corp.'s American Airlines, the world's largest airline, said it would cut international flights by 6 per cent in April as an initial step because of the war, trimming some

flights to Europe and Latin America.

"Even as we keep working, day in and day out, to keep this company afloat, we will have to trim some capacity as prices and supplies are impacted by the war," AMR Chief Executive Donald Carty told the airline's employees.

AMR is struggling to stay out of bankruptcy protection, a fate that

has already claimed two major US airlines -- UAL Corp's United Airlines and US Airways Group Inc.

The US-led war in Iraq could not have come at a worse time for global airlines, which have lost billions of dollars since the Sept. 11, 2001, hijack attacks on the United States.

The war has hit airline bookings, especially international travel, and has left some airports quiet as travelers opt to stay home.

"International has been soft for weeks," said Carol Jouzaitis, a spokeswoman for the online travel site Orbitz. "Since Monday it's dropped sharply. The international schedules are all being adjusted."

During the 1991 Gulf War, transatlantic bookings also suffered the most. But the industry is in worse shape now than it was then, with margins squeezed further as low-fare carriers grab market share.

Anticipating customer wariness, airlines recently announced relaxed cancellation policies, giving passengers one free change of plans without being penalized.

Analysts called the move a smart one, given the uncertainty afflicting an industry reeling as never before.

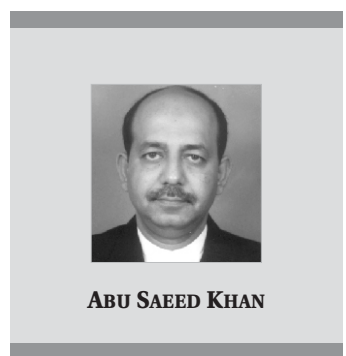
"We would expect demand trends to continue to worsen for the US carriers," said Jamie Baker, an analyst with JP Morgan.



PHOTO: BAF

Education Minister M Osman Farruk speaks as chief guest at the launching ceremony of a book titled "Financing Large Projects: Using Project Finance Techniques and Practices," co-authored by M Fouzul Kabir Khan and Robert J Parra, at CIRDAP auditorium in Dhaka on Thursday.

In search of leadership



ABU SAEED KHAN

Telecom Asia 2002 was held in Hong Kong last December. International Telecommunication Union (ITU), as the United Nations specialised agency for telecommunications, organised this biannual telecom event of Asia-Pacific region.

Ten years back this region represented little over 20 per cent of global telecom users. Today it has more than one third of world-wide subscribers. Asia is currently adding new connections at the rate of more than one new user every second of every day, a growth rate that has been sustained for more than ten years.

More than 200 leaders in the field of telecom made presentations in Telecom Asia 2002 on new technologies and their application. More than 600 delegates discussed cutting-edge theories focused on the relationship between policy and market structure. "ITU's mandate is to 'help the world communicate' and to promote the 'right to communicate' as fundamental to humanity," said Yoshio Utsumi, secretary-general of the ITU.

Abbas Suhail and Hakim Badir Ali of Iraq Telecommunications and Posts Company presented a paper titled "Telecommunication Development Country Report from Iraq." It unfolded the horrific story of systematic reduction of Iraqi telecom infrastructure in the name of UN sanctions for more than a decade.


Iraq had been the historical leader of telecommunication in the Middle East. In this region, it is the first country airing television

broadcasting in 1956, the first country to introduce digital telephone exchanges in 1980 and the first country to roll out multi-mode fibre-optic transmission network and backbone in 1981.

Iraq's ability of making history became historical after facing the UN sanctions. Its attempts to import equipment for a data communication backbone and Internet access have been repeatedly rejected since the mid 90's. Efforts

get killed?" is a latest antiwar lyric from the pop world. Title of the song is "In a World Gone Mad." Beastie Boys released it in last week. Although it was not commercially launched as a single, the song is available free at their website (www.beastieboys.com).

Carly Fiorina is the CEO of Hewlett Packard. This highly accomplished lady is widely respected as a visionary. Right after two weeks of 9/11 she addressed



PASSWORD

Iraq is allowed to import optical fibre, which is not more than six meters long! I repeat, six metres not kilometres. What on God's earth one can do with six-meter optical fibre cable? Probably building an information superhighway connecting the bathroom with bedroom for sending distress signals under various circumstances is possible.

to get the equipment under the terms of Oil for Food of Resolution 964 were consistently blocked by the UN-American members in the UN Security Council.

Here is an example of their mockery of global policing. Iraq is allowed to import optical fibre, which is not more than six meters long! I repeat, six metres not kilometres. What on God's earth one can do with six-meter optical fibre cable? Probably building an information superhighway connecting the bathroom with bedroom for sending distress signals under various circumstances is possible.

Saddam Hussein is certainly a tyrant and the world knows very well who created him. The attack in Iraq is not limited to oil. It is also an effective exposition of multi-billion dollars military hardware. Oliver Stone's character (played by Donald Sutherland) in JFK described how important Vietnam was for the American armament empire. Kennedy had to die because he challenged that empire.

"Now how many people must

the business executives in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Title of her lecture was "Technology, business and our way of life: What's next." Carly is an extra ordinary orator and her outstanding speech was concluded with the following:

There was once a civilization that was the greatest in the world. It was able to create a continental super-state that stretched from ocean to ocean, and from northern climes to tropics and deserts. Within its dominion lived hundreds of millions of people, of different creeds and ethnic origins.

One of its languages became the universal language of much of the world, the bridge between the peoples of a hundred lands. Its armies were made up of people of many nationalities, and its military protection allowed a degree of peace and prosperity that had never been known. The reach of this civilization's commerce extended from Latin America to China, and everywhere in between.

And this civilization was driven more than anything, by invention. Its architects designed buildings that defied gravity. Its mathematicians created the algebra and algorithms that would enable the building of computers, and the creation

of encryption. Its doctors examined the human body, and found new cures for disease. Its astronomers looked into the heavens, named the stars, and paved the way for space travel and exploration.

Its writers created thousands of stories. Stories of courage, romance and magic. Its poets wrote of love, and others before them were too steeped in fear to think of such things.

When other nations were afraid of ideas, this civilization thrived on them, and kept them alive. When censors threatened to wipe out knowledge from past civilizations, this civilization kept the knowledge alive, and passed it on to others.

While modern Western civilization shares many of these traits, the civilization I'm talking about was the Islamic world from the year 800 to 1600, which included the Ottoman Empire and the courts of Baghdad, Damascus and Cairo, and enlightened rulers like Suleiman the Magnificent.

Although we are often unaware of our indebtedness to this other civilization, its gifts are very much a part of our heritage. The technology industry would not exist without the contributions of Arab mathematicians. Sufi poet-philosophers like Rumi challenged our notions of self and truth. Leaders like Suleiman contributed to our notions of tolerance and civic leadership.

And perhaps we can learn a lesson from his example: It was leadership based on meritocracy, not inheritance. It was leadership that harnessed the full capabilities of a very diverse population that included Christianity, Islamic, and Jewish traditions.

This kind of enlightened leadership -- leadership that nurtured culture, sustainability, diversity and courage -- led to 800 years of invention and prosperity.

In dark and serious times like this, we must affirm our commitment to building societies and institutions that aspire to this kind of greatness. More than ever, we must focus on the importance of leadership bold acts of leadership and decidedly personal acts of leadership.

Neither Iraq nor its invaders, unarguably, have the leadership they deserve. Regime change seems to be a common agenda in both camps.

Abu Saeed Khan is a telecom analyst.

State of Mongla port-II

Ctg port congestion may ease if Mongla used in full

RAFIQ HASAN, back from Mongla

Congestion at Chittagong port can be eased to a large extent if the full capacity of Mongla port is used.

When the Chittagong port is often burdened with cargo handling, the second largest sea port of Bangladesh is rather facing dearth of vessels due to bad reputation it has earned internationally.

According to official sources, Mongla port has annual cargo handling capacity of 65 lakh metric tons, which is never used fully. Usually, 22 to 30 lakh metric tons of goods are handled at the port each year.

The port, however, lacks many features required to meet international standard. Most port activities are controlled from Khulna, some 50 kilometers off the harbour.

The Mongla Bandar Customs House is also located at Khulna. The clearing forwarding agents and port users are usually seen shuttling between Mongla and Khulna for getting documents and other works done.

The port does not have fueling facilities for the ocean going vessels. Ships usually get duty free fuel at every international sea port, which is not the case in Mongla. It does not also have a container yard.

The authority had invited private entrepreneurs to set up a container yard along the port, but it yielded no result.

The 130-kilometer long Pashur Channel also lacks proper navigability. The channel has narrowed down with 18 large vessels sinking at the estuary during liberation war. The ships are yet to be removed.

Port Chairman Commodore (rtd) M K Alam said an agreement was signed with a non-government organisation, Institute of Water Modeling (IWM), for conducting a study on the navigability of the Pashur river and detailing a plan on improvement of the situation.

He claimed the port authority has been regularly carrying out necessary dredging on the river for keeping the port operative. A

project is underway for dredging the Pashur, Alam said.

Importers are also often faced with problems as there is no quality testing laboratory even in Khulna, a divisional city.

The importers are forced to go to Dhaka or Rajshahi for getting their goods tested. "It takes few days causing further delay in getting delivery of goods," said an importer.

There is no separate police station or police check post for the port. Mongla theta is responsible for law and order situation in the port.

Mongla town has no civic amenities and entertainment facilities, much to the frustration of foreigners and seamen. Residents in the area often face shortage of drinking water as it is supplied from Rampal, some 30 kilometers from the town.

Even the telephone system in Mongla is limping. Many high

officials of the port stay in Khulna as Mongla lacks standard educational institutions for their children.

Even Mongla Port Authority Chairman Commodore (rtd) M K Alam stays in Khulna as the officials' quarters are located there. Alam, however, said he and other high officials are ready to shift to Mongla provided residential facilities are ensured there.

Alam feels lack of industrial units in the southern region is another cause of poor performance by the port.

All the major industries are located in Dhaka and Chittagong regions, but there is hardly any industry in Khulna and greater Barisal district, he said.

"We need strong industrial backup for survival because an international port cannot survive with only the activities of import of food grains or export of some agro-based products like frozen foods or rawjute."



PHOTO: BSFC

Abul Fazal Badruddoza, secretary of Bangladesh Sugar & Food Industries Corporation, and Vibul Panitvong, chairman of Ban Pong Intertrade Ltd, sign an agreement in Dhaka on Tuesday to conduct a techno-economic feasibility study on production of white sugar in Pabna Sugar Mills during off-season.

Deal signed to study feasibility of white sugar production

Bangladesh Sugar & Food Industries Corporation (BSFC) and Ban Pong Intertrade Ltd of Thailand have signed an agreement to conduct a techno-economic feasibility study on production of refined or white sugar in Pabna Sugar Mills during off-season.

Abul Fazal Badruddoza secretary of BSFC, and Vibul Panitvong, chairman of Ban Pong Intertrade Ltd, inked the deal on behalf of their organisations in Dhaka on Tuesday, says a press release.

Under the agreement, Ban Pong, the renowned sugar producing firm of Thailand, would submit the feasibility study report to BSFC after completing the study within two months.

On implementation of the project, Pabna Sugar Mills would be able to produce 30,000 metric tons of white sugar during off-season.

EU leaders for reforms to outstrip US competitiveness

AFP, Brussels

The European Union must start matching words with deeds if it is to achieve its ambition of becoming the world's most dynamic economy, EU leaders were to say Friday, according to a draft summit declaration.

The heads of government, at a summit overshadowed by the US-led war on Iraq, welcomed "considerable progress" towards their goal of outstripping US economic competitiveness by 2010, said the draft conclusions seen by AFP.

Advances have been made on freeing up energy markets, introducing a single air-traffic control zone, modernising competition policy, putting in place an integrated EU-wide financial market, and finally achieving an EU-wide patent after three decades of negotiations.

"Nonetheless, there is still a lot to do," the leaders said in the draft.

"It is time, in particular, for the Union and the member states to fulfil their commitments regarding economic reforms by translating words into action."



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Training and Trainers

"Let's have some training." A lot of training programmes begin in a similar fashion. There is no clear purpose of what has to be achieved. And of course you have 'tourists' - people in the office whose only purpose of existence is to attend training programmes! Management looks around and decides who are free, available and essentially unessential, and packs them off to a training programme when such a request comes.

I recall once such program where I was sent to learn financial management (not as a tourist) at a so called reputed training / consultancy firm. The only interest most participants had was for the afternoon snacks! One day, the boss of a group of participants turned up to take a session (otherwise how do you get him to send the participants?). Before he could talk on the topic, his people took the opportunity to talk about how poorly and unjustly they were paid, and the problems besetting the organisation. It seemed this was the first time they had a chance to talk to their boss!

One should not take training lightly. In a survey, it was found that two-thirds of employees consider that the best way of empowerment is through training and development. So if money is spent on training and development wisely, it will benefit the organisation greatly.

There has to be a purpose for training. What is it that the training will increase in terms of attitudes, skills and knowledge - the acronym ASK - that will benefit the organisation? This has to be clearly identified and synchronised with the overall strategic intent of the organization. Then the training has to be designed to impart this set of ASK. Continuous enhancement of ASK appropriate to the needs of the organisation will unleash the potential of the organisation's people, their morale will soar and you will get tremendous output.

In a recent survey of our company worldwide, our local company came out as an outstanding one in comparison to not only within the group but with similar internationally reputed companies as well as internationally reputed high performance companies. We led on almost all counts of leadership, teamwork, strategy, etc. This of course clearly reflects in the market leadership position we also have here.

As head of the company, I am accustomed to hear, "Oh, you must be a very busy person." Frankly this confuses and amuses me. I have ample time to do what I want because my colleagues have the right ASK and are trusted to decide and do what is expected of them without my peeping over their shoulders.

So training and development not only enriches the life of the employees but frees time for management to think beyond day to day operational work. It helps you to distance yourself to look at the big picture without getting into the nitty gritty details.

Along with a properly designed training course, you also need trained, motivated and skilled trainers. For instance, we take great pains to impart presentation skills to our in-house trainers. A training program's effectiveness is significantly enhanced if the trainers are skilled to deliver and have the right, positive attitude. Neglecting this will lead to a failure of fully achieving the training objectives.

So training is not just another cup of tea. It is a deliberate investment into the future of your organisation. Do you want to discuss this further over a cup of tea? Come over, I have time!