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New CEO of Apollo Hospitals Dhaka

Dr Edwin Lee Hansen with his 33 years of management experience has joined Apollo Hospitals Dhaka as chief executive officer, says a press release.

Hansen, a US national, completed his PhD in Management (Organisational Development) from California Coast University, US-CA-Santa Ana, and MA in Human Resources Management (Organisational Development) from Pepperdine University, US-CA-Malibu.

In 2005, he won the Pennsylvania Business Council-Top One Hundred People Award. He also received the International Athena Award for Central Pennsylvania for promoting human resources development in business environment.

France to ask G7 for action on disorderly forex movements

AFP, Paris

France will seek ways of reducing "disorderly foreign exchange movements which affect economic growth" at the upcoming G7 meeting of finance ministers, French finance minister Christine Lagarde said on Tuesday.

"This is a concern of France but also of states in the CFA franc zone," Lagarde told a news conference.

The CFA franc is a monetary unit used by 14 countries in west Africa.

The G7 group of finance ministers from Britain, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan and the United States meets Friday in Washington.

IMF concerned by impact of biofuels on food prices

AFP, Washington

The IMF warned Wednesday that an increasing global reliance on grain as a source of fuel could drive up food prices in poor countries.

"The use of food as a source of fuel may have serious implications for the demand for food if the expansion of biofuels continues," the International Monetary Fund said in its twice-yearly report on the world economy.

It called for greater international coordination to ensure that policies promoting biofuels take account of their impact on consumer prices.

"One country's policy to promote biofuels while protecting its farmers could increase another (likely poorer) country's import bills for food and pose additional risks to inflation or growth," the report said.

It argued that such an effect on food prices could be eased if the United States and the European Union reduced barriers to biofuel imports from developing countries such as Brazil, "where production is cheaper, more efficient and environmentally less damaging."

Bata launches European brand shoes

Bata Shoe Company (Bangladesh) Ltd has recently launched a range of executive fashion shoes for men of European fashion brand 'ReDiamond', says a press release.

The shoes in black and tan are now available at selective Bata stores at a price of Tk 3000.

JD Hearn, managing director of the company, Kym Bradley, manager (Manufacturing & Logistic), and MA Quader, marketing manager, were present at the launching ceremony.

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Floods to cause higher budget deficit, fears BB

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

The central bank fears a higher budget deficit this time due to recent floods that induced net additional expenditure.

However the impact on domestic financing of deficit is likely to be limited, in case the additional expenditure is financed by incremental foreign aid, Bangladesh Bank (BB) said in its latest quarterly.

It said since two spells of floods have apparently left a relatively small effect on export activities, external trade and balance of payments are likely to experience a minimal impact.

The quarterly said a number of downside risks remain in the 2007-08 fiscal, which includes adverse

impact of hike in oil and commodity prices in the international market.

The quarterly remarked that in light of the floods, the near-term economic outlook in FY08 can be characterised as cautiously optimistic.

While focusing on a substantial human distress, infrastructure damage and immediate economic dislocation because of the floods, the central bank has found that the economy has developed and the authorities' capacity to manage and deal with natural calamities improved.

Thus, the overall macroeconomic impact is likely to be limited given the adequate and timely public and private sectors' response in particular to restore

public services (health, sanitation and water) and rehabilitate damaged infrastructure, supported by additional international assistance, the BB pointed out.

The government's macroeconomic policy is thus geared towards targeted increase in public expenditure for rehabilitation of infrastructure and public services facilitated by reallocation of existing ADP (annual development programme) and additional quick disbursing international assistance, the quarterly added.

In the short run, Bangladesh Bank has already put some directives in place so that allocation of credit to agriculture sector remains smooth to the demand of that sector.

Oil prices slip after striking record \$89

AFP, London

World oil prices slid Thursday, one day after hitting a record high 89 dollars per barrel, as traders absorbed rising US energy reserves and geopolitical tensions in the crude-rich Middle East.

New York's main futures contract, light sweet crude for delivery in November, shed 15 cents to 87.25 dollars a barrel, after hitting an historic 89.00 dollars exactly on Wednesday.

Elsewhere Thursday, London's Brent North Sea crude for December delivery recouped 22 cents to 82.91 dollars. The November contract had expired Tuesday after striking an all-time high of 84.49 dollars per barrel.

This week, prices blazed a record-breaking trail towards 90 dollars in New York as traders seized on simmering tensions along the Turkey-Iraq border.

But crude futures finished lower Wednesday on profit-taking after a stronger-than-expected US energy stockpiles report offset geopolitical worries surrounding oil exporters Iraq and Iran.

The price of Brent oil has leapt by more than 10 percent in the last eight trading days, while New York crude has rocketed by 12.5 percent in value.

In Iraq, Kurdish administration called Thursday for direct negotiations with Ankara as thousands of fearful Iraqi Kurds took to the streets to protest against the Turkish military threat.

"Despite the green light for possible military action, it is not certain when or whether the Turks will go in, and there is frantic diplomacy going on in order to dissuade them from doing so," said MIF Global analyst Edward Meir.

The Turkish parliament has adopted a resolution authorising its military to cross into Iraq to crack down on rebels from the Kurdish Workers' Party in the region.

Singapore Airlines (SIA) said Thursday it will raise fuel surcharges from next week to partially offset an increase in jet fuel prices.

It is the fourth increase in fuel surcharges this year.

The latest increase, to be levied on tickets issued from October 24, will also be applied to SilkAir, the carrier's regional wing.

SIA said it will charge 24 US dollars for flights between Singapore and Southeast Asian destinations, up from 22 dollars.

For flights between the city-state and North America the surcharge will be 104 dollars, up from 98 dollars.

On other flights the levy rises by four dollars to 67 dollars, it said.

"The price of jet fuel has been steadily climbing in recent weeks, and is now over 95 US dollars per barrel," SIA said in a statement.

It said the higher surcharges will offer "only partial relief" to the airline.

In the financial year to March, fuel accounted for 37.3 percent of the airline's expenses, up 2.3 percent from a year earlier.

ICE Tech to automate Bombay Sweets

ICE Technologies & Services Ltd will help automate the entire value chain of Bombay Sweets & Company Ltd by implementing applications of IFS, a global enterprise applications company.

A memorandum of understanding (MoU) to this effect was signed recently between ICE Technologies and the snack manufacturing company, says a press release.

Kamaluddin Abdul Aziz, managing director of Bombay Sweets, and Rubaiyat Jamil, chief executive officer of ICE Technologies, signed the MoU, while Mahbub Jamil, chairman of ICE Technologies, was present among others.

IFS offers solutions to organisations for supply chain management, enterprise asset management, sales and marketing, finance, maintenance and manufacturing to respond quickly to market changes, allowing resources to be used in a more active way to achieve better business performance.

Manpower export hits all time high

425,000 workers depart so far this year

UNB, Dhaka

Manpower export hit an all time high this year with 425,000 workers so far departing the country for abroad.

"Many more are expected to leave over the remaining months of the year," Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment Ministry said in a statement yesterday. "This is an all time record."

The ministry said the number of departed workers was 384,000 in 2006.

It said the ministry found problems in Malaysia, but the government has initiated a series of mea-

sures, including cancellation of licenses and supervision of responsible recruiting agencies, to resolve the problems.

Other measures included appointment of lawyers to protect the rights of Bangladeshi labourers and enhancing the capacity of the High Commission by increasing personnel and making changes.

About Korean labour market, the statement said Bangladesh and South Korea are expected to sign an implementation agreement soon for administration of Korean language tests. With regard to Canada, a process of recruiting 1,133 work-

ers is underway.

The ministry said the government is looking for new labour markets in other countries like Rumania, Poland, Nigeria, Angola and the Russian Federation.

"The ministry will soon initiate an integrated policy whereby we will prepare for filling the gaps in Europe and America made by their aging population."

It said improvement in workers' skills in English and European languages would be necessary to tap the market and stressed the need for endeavours of the public and private sectors.

Spending on computer tech in 2007 to top a trillion dollars

AFP, San Francisco

Spending on computer technology will top a trillion dollars this year as the industry grows increasingly vital to national economies worldwide, according to a study by the technology market intelligence firm IDC released Thursday.

An analysis of 82 countries and regions found that information technology (IT) businesses -- computer hardware, software and services -- are major generators of jobs, companies and tax revenues.

"Growth of the IT sector is critical to the world economy and each of the countries we study," the International Data Corporation report concludes.

Global IT spending this year will equal 2.5 percent of the world's gross domestic product and that figure will rise to 2.75 percent by 2011, according to the IDC study, which was commissioned by US software giant Microsoft.

IT spending provides revenues for more than a million companies.

Those companies, in turn, employ 35.2 million people. Those employees and companies they work for will pay more than a trillion dollars in taxes in 2007.

Japan, Canada, Britain, France, Germany, and Italy and the United States account for two-thirds of IT

spending worldwide and three-quarters of spending on packaged software.

Spending on computer hardware, software and services ranged from 3.6 percent of GDP in Singapore, Sweden and Denmark to less than half a percent in Pakistan and Nigeria.

The number of computer industry related jobs will climb by 7.1 million in the coming four years, according to the IDC study.

China is expected to add the most new jobs, with the second highest growth being in the United States.

Overall, job growth in IT will be triple that of the average worldwide increase in employment, the study concludes.

More than a quarter of the new jobs created by the computer industry will be in developing countries, according to the study.

"These jobs will be driven by an evolving highly skilled labor force, an opportunity which is extremely important in developing a competitive economy," IDC concludes.

Of the 4.6 million new software-related jobs expected to be created by 2011, 1.2 million will be in Brazil, Russia, India, China and Mexico and another million in emerging economies elsewhere, according to IDC.

Nokia posts 85pc rise in Q3 earnings

AFP, Helsinki

Nokia announced Thursday an 85 percent rise in third quarter net profit to 1.56 billion euros (2.22 billion dollars) as it solidified its position as the leading mobile phone maker with 39 percent of the market.

While mobile phone sales were only up by three percent, overall sales climbed by 28 percent to 12.9 billion euros, up from 10.1 billion a year earlier but slightly below analysts' forecasts of 13.1 billion euros.

The healthy earnings were primarily due to a strong quarter for the Mobile Phones division, which saw its operating profit surge by 78 percent to 1.3 billion euros.

Its operating margin rose to 22.6 percent from 13.1 percent a year ago.

Nokia said it had been able to reduce production costs amid growing competition among its subcontractors.

"The quality and depth of our device portfolio continues to give us a good competitive edge," Nokia's chief executive Olli-Pekka Kallasvuo said.

The Nokia share price was up by 4.8 percent at 26.80 euros on the Helsinki stock exchange in early afternoon trade.

Stocks recover losses

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

and 16 remained unchanged.

Meanwhile, the share price in Rupali Bank on the premier bourse rose by 4.22 percent to Tk 2897.

After the share price in Rupali Bank soared by Tk 1137.75, or 57.26 percent, the DSE authorities on Tuesday halted the trading of the bank's shares to examine whether there is any malpractice behind the abnormal price hike. The trading resumed on Wednesday.

According to newspaper reports, the state-run bank's future owner Saudi Prince Bandar Bin Mohammad Bin Abdul Rahman Al-Saud has planned finalisation of a

sale and purchase agreement with the government next month.

Like DSE, price indices on Chittagong Stock Exchange (CSE) also rose with the gainers outnumbers the losers.

The CSE Selective Categories Index increased by 89.47 points, or 1.94 percent, finishing at 4685.11 points, while the CSE All Share Price Index rose by 137.54 points, or 1.89 percent, closing at 7392.97 points.

A total of 17,649,853 shares worth Tk 241.35 crore changed hands on the DSE. Of the issues traded, 151 advanced, 41 declined

Kazi Wahidul Alam, editor of The Bangladesh Monitor, a travel journal, and Ali Reza Iftekhar, managing director of Eastern Bank Ltd, pose for photographs at a memorandum of understanding (MoU) signing ceremony yesterday in Dhaka. Under the deal, the bank has become a premium partner of 'Monitor-AKTEL Airline of the Year-2007', an award giving programme for the airlines operating in Bangladesh on the basis of their quality of services.

India, S Africa, Brazil vow to fight poverty

AFP, Pretoria

themselves to vigorously pursue the deepening of South-South cooperation for sustainable development."

"They reaffirmed their shared commitment to the eradication of poverty, to sustain an inclusive economic growth," the statement added.

They also made a veiled pitch for membership of the security council, saying its reform was much needed.

The leaders emphasised that the reform of the Security Council is central to ... ensure that the UN system reflects contemporary realities.

"This expressed their full support for a genuine reform and expansion of the Security Council in permanent and non-permanent categories of membership, with greater representation for developing countries in both."

Singh said the three countries were all committed to forging "the closest possible cooperation so we can together ensure a more equitable international political and economic order."