

International Business News

US seeks \$300b from Gulf states

AFP, Kuwait City

The United States has asked four oil-rich Gulf states for close to 300 billion dollars to help it curb the global financial meltdown, Kuwait's daily Al-Seyassah reported Thursday.

Quoting "highly informed" sources, the daily said Washington has asked Saudi Arabia for 120 billion dollars, the United Arab Emirates for 70 billion dollars, Qatar for 60 billion dollars and was seeking 40 billion dollars from Kuwait.

Al-Seyassah said Washington sought the amount as "financial aid" to face the fallout of the financial crisis and help prevent its economy from sliding into a painful recession.

The daily said the United States plans to use the funds to help the ailing automobile industry, banks and other companies suffering from the global financial turmoil.

The four nations, all members of OPEC, produce together 14 million barrels of oil per day, around half of the cartel's production and about 17 percent of world supplies.

The four states are estimated to have amassed close to 1.5 trillion dollars in surplus in the past six years due to high oil prices that rocketed above 147 dollars in July before sliding to just above 50 dollars.

GM launches 'product offensive' in China

AFP, Shanghai

US automaker General Motors has begun unveiling an unprecedented number of new models in China, where it has gone on the offensive as it faces bankruptcy at home.

GM and its local partners are trying to keep an edge in China, the world's second largest market after the United States, as they exhibit 24 models at this week's Guangzhou International Auto Show.

"The vehicles on display are part of a product offensive that will see us roll out an unprecedented number of new and upgraded models over the coming two years," GM's China chief Kevin Hale said in a statement.

GM's new offerings for the Chinese market include the Buick Enclave SUV, Chevrolet Cruze sedan and Cadillac CTS-V.

Although growth is slowing in China, the market is crucial for GM, which sold more than 60 percent of its cars outside the US in the third quarter.

Between July and September, GM's worldwide sales fell 11.4 percent to 2.12 million vehicles.

More than a tenth of those were sold in China where sales grew 12 percent year-on-year to more than 240,350 units, according to company figures. In the first nine months the company said it sold 830,480 vehicles, up 10.2 percent from last year.



AFP

A Chinese hostess poses with a Ferrari at the Guangzhou International Auto Show in Guangzhou, in southern China's Guangdong province yesterday. China is expected to overtake the US as the largest auto market by 2015 and growth potential is huge with only 20 people for every 1,000 owning a car, compared to 700 per 1,000 in the US.

Governments scramble to protect jobs as losses mount

AFP, Paris

Governments scrambled to cushion the impact of the finance crisis Thursday with France launching a sovereign wealth fund and China unveiling a jobs protection plan as the car industry made huge new cuts.

With global markets suffering more heavy losses, the grim news piled up with Japanese exports falling at the fastest pace in seven years and US consumer prices recording their steepest one-month decline in over 60 years.

Iceland, virtually bankrupted by the recent turmoil, was handed billions of dollars in loans by the IMF and its neighbours.

The impact of the crisis on the auto industry was highlighted when France's PSA Peugeot Citroen announced plans to slash 3,550 jobs and Japan's Isuzu Motors said it would cut 1,400 jobs and domestic production by 10 percent.

The Peugeot job losses could affect assembly-line workers, managers and office staff in all plants under the plan that provides for voluntary departures, a company said in a statement.

GE in talks with sovereign wealth funds

AFP, Frankfurt

US industrial group General Electric (GE) is in talks with foreign sovereign wealth funds on a possible equity holding and joint operations, a senior executive said Thursday in a press report.

Ferdinando Beccalli-Falco, head of GE International, was quoted by the Financial Times Deutschland as saying that the group was speaking with the Singapore funds Temasek and GIC and with CIC and Safe of China.

GE's goal is to establish stable shareholders, since a large amount of its shares trade freely on financial markets, the newspaper said, while noting that the US group already has a strong cooperation with a state-owned fund from Abu Dhabi.

"We are discussing with them how each could contribute to investments in partner countries, in infrastructure for example," Beccalli-Falco was quoted as saying.

IT SPECIAL

Step toward digital Bangladesh

SAMIUL ISLAM RIKTH

She looked left and right in amazement. Her eyes were shining out of curiosity as she walked through the entrance. She was finally here. A place she always wished to come since the day she saw her abroad-living brother through a box saying, "Hi!"

You've guessed it right. She's is excited about coming to...

The BCS Computer Fair 2008, which is back with a bang. With the theme "Towards Digital Bangladesh" it exhibited its last day today. The fair comprised of 69 different companies who displayed what they believe is the route to an era of modernisation.

This year's exhibition was bigger and better. The entire fair was conducted over the largest and most spacious international standard convention center in Bangladesh, the Bangladesh China Friendship Centre at Sher-e-Bangla Nagar with canopy being set up to facilitate 23 pavilions, different zones and seminars while 76 stalls made the main building their home for the four-day exhibition.

On December 17, after the inaugural ceremony, several tech-addicts stormed in to see what their favourite brand and companies had in store for them this time around.

Computer desktops and accessories, printers, scanners and digital cameras, softwares, sound systems and packages of web hosting and development were all displayed at this year's fair. However, the main attraction was notebooks. Almost all the stalls had notebooks of your preference, taste and choice - so you would not be left disappointed.

Displaying their Aspire One notebook as their main attraction, Acer, one of the biggest sponsors and brands, took part this year. But BenQ and Microsoft, the two other major sponsors were not lagging behind. BenQ displayed their exclusive Joybook light and High Definition (HD) technology LCD monitors.

Other brands taking part this year included Apple, Intel, Toshiba, Hitachi, HP, Samsung, Canon, Asus and many more.

Apple, which runs under a completely new and different operating system, participated in this year's fair to enlighten people about "Apple". They were not dissatisfied as people crowded their stall and showed great interest towards their fresh and innovative desktops, laptops and even ipods.

Another stall owned by Intel, not far away, promoted their Intel Core 2 Extreme processor in a unique way. They set up a gaming zone within their stall, so that you could experience the essence of this hi-tech processor the best way possible - by playing a game of Need for Speed.

Wazed Upal, a student said, "It was brilliant. The sound and pic-

ture quality is simply amazing. Its like you're driving in a race car virtually."

Apart from this in-store gaming, there was also gaming zone organised by BCS.

Along with that, the show organisers have arranged an art competition; taking place today for the young children aged six-ten so that they can be enlightened about the world of computers and technology.

These steps out of several were taken by BCS to attract the younger crowd and the response they received was extremely overwhelming. Mustafa Jabbar, President of BCS said, "This year our main target audience was mainly the young children, students and youths. By building a relationship between our younger generation and technology and its advancements, we can achieve our motto of a digital Bangladesh by 2021"

A fresh and modern form of entertainment was also available this year for the first time. The Pexatech MagicSing Karaoke-World's First Bangla Karaoke. It is a system that you can connect to the television and sing away to about 250 bangla songs built in the system. The smiles on peoples' faces after they sung away expressed that it is a fun filling experience where you definitely can have a blast.

Just beside the karaoke zone was the free internet browsing zone that created wonders. However, the availability of Wi-Fi network throughout the fair created all the magic as it allowed you to browse the virtual world through internet, while browsing the fair at the same time.

Speaking of wonders and magic, Jago Bangladesh set up a zone which was quite out of the norm. It was aimed at all the visitors especially the ones who did not have access to the internet, so they could cast their vote and make Cox's Bazar or Sundarban a part of the seven natural wonders of the world. You simply register with them and they take care of the rest. It is really a fine practice as it gives you the opportunity to help your country get worldwide recognition.

The ticket price this year around was also very economical. At only Tk 20, you could take the pleasure in exploring the world of digital technology whereas students got to enjoy this entire exhibition free of cost bringing in a fair number of students from different levels with their friends or as a part of a school field trip.

Md. Asif Iqbal, Senior Sales Consultant of Acer, said all of them seemed extremely enthusiastic to learn about the latest developments in technology. He said, "Students are showing great interest in modern technology. It's their eagerness that will lead to a more digital country as well as a rise in our sales."



SYED ZAKIR HOSSAIN

A man takes a look at computer mainboards and display cards at an IT fair at Bangladesh China Friendship Conference Centre.

"Coming to this fair is always a lot of fun. This kind of exhibition makes us aware about the latest advancement in technology," said Rahul, a student visiting the fair with his friend.

Promotions were a talk of this year's exhibition. The visitors were amazed to see how the prices of a few of their favourites have gone down by a couple of thousand takas forcing them to get their wallets out even though they came here just to have a look around. Not only discounts, places like

Computer Source and even BenQ where giving out a free digital camera with the purchase of a laptop. Doesn't that just make you go, "WOW!" Computer and camera accessories, items of clothing were also being offered as freebies.

At around 5:30pm today, November 21, this eventful exhibition will bid you adieu. However, it is not going to say goodbye just like that. A line of programs has been scheduled starting with the distribution of crests.

The main purpose of this year's

fair was to make the people of Bangladesh aware of the latest technological developments and its importance. Enhancement in technology is necessary for Bangladesh, as a nation, to grow and be advanced and digital so that we are able to stand head to head with other hi-tech countries globally. However, how long it takes us to achieve this goal depends on our knowledge, understanding, alertness and our compatibility with the changing world of technology.

Forefront in Bangladesh

IMRUL KAYES CHOWDHURY

In line with its commitment to help people and businesses realise their full potential, Microsoft has unveiled Forefront, Microsoft's latest range of Antivirus and IT security solutions in a bid to assist businesses to have improved and secured IT infrastructure. Forefront with its unique technological advantages has taken the Antimalware and Spam protection in a new height.

Microsoft Bangladesh uncovered the product on November 19 at the Bangladesh-China Friendship Conference Centre (BCFCC) in the presence of Jacqueline Peterson-Jarvis, manager SMI, Microsoft Asia Pacific; Anith Anand, security lead specialist for APAC, Microsoft Asia Pacific and M Moshir Rahman, Solutions manager, Microsoft Bangladesh.

The Microsoft solutions offer brings leading antivirus engines like Kaspersky, Sophos, CA, AhnLab, Norman, Authentium, VirusBuster and Microsoft's own antivirus engine Forefront, into one single engine, making it a combination of eight antivirus engines.

The Forefront security includes security for Exchange Server, security for SharePoint and Client security.

Microsoft Forefront security for Exchange Server integrates multiple scan engines from industry leading security firms into a comprehensive, layered solution helping businesses protect their Microsoft Exchange Server messaging environment from



Jacqueline Peterson-Jarvis, manager SMI, Microsoft Asia Pacific, speaks at the launch of Forefront in Dhaka.

viruses, worms, spam and inappropriate contents.

The new Forefront Security for Exchange Server with SP1 (Service Pack1) provides support for Exchange Server 2007 SP1 and Windows Server 2008 as well as content filtering and manageability enhancements.

Forefront Security for SharePoint is designed especially to give advanced protection to Microsoft Office SharePoint Server 2007 and Windows SharePoint Services 3.0.

Microsoft SharePoint Products and Technologies help easy collaboration across an organisation, connecting people, processes and systems within

and beyond organisational boundaries.

Forefront Security for SharePoint uses combined power of multiple leading antivirus engines to protect from viruses, unwanted files and inappropriate contents.

Forefront Client Security integrates with existing infrastructure software - such as Microsoft active Directory - and complements other Microsoft security technologies for enhanced protection and greater control.

It gives protection from emerging threats like spyware and root kits as well as traditional threats like viruses, worms and Trojan horses.

Global brings Brother

STAR IT DESK

Brother, a world-renowned manufacturer of printing, communication and digital products, has started its journey in Bangladesh with GlobalBrand Pvt Ltd as its authorised distributor.

GlobalBrand Pvt Ltd unveiled a wide range of laser printers, mono-laser printers, colour printers and multi-functional centers of Brother at an event that took place on November 13.

The Mono Laser 7000 series is comprised of monochrome laser MFCs specifically designed for Small Office and Home Offices (SOHOs) and Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs), for high quality performance at cheaper price.

The 7000 series, which includes the DCP-7030, DCP-7040, MFC-7340, MFC-7450 and MFC-7840N models, delivers a wide array of critical office productivity functions.

With faster printing capacities, the printers also have the ability to scan, print, copy, fax, PC-fax and directly print through USB inputs.

Brother also offers HL-2170W monochrome laser printers, which have 10/100 Base-T LAN connectivity as well as wireless 802.11 b/g connectivity that allows the printer to operate anywhere in the room.

Brother also offers next generation colour laser MFCs, printers and digital copiers.

Its new horizontal 4-colour single pass tandem engine is designed to give higher print speeds for full colour prints and data security at lower purchase and operating costs for SMEs.

The MFCs and printers also possess a unique feature, the Lock Colour Usage. This restricts unauthorised colour printing via the use of a password.

The printers are now available in the market at prices ranging from Tk 8,500 to Tk 99,000, based on printer models.