

REHAB fair kicks off Thursday in Ctg

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

The Real Estate and Housing Association of Bangladesh (REHAB) will organise a three-day fair in Chittagong from Thursday.

A total of 68 developers will participate in the third version of the show styled 'Rehab Fair Chittagong-2009' at Chittagong Club, REHAB members said at a press conference in Dhaka yesterday.

Shipping Minister Dr Afsarul Amin and Chairman of Chittagong Development Authority CDA Chairman Shah Muhammad

Akhteruddin are scheduled to be present at the function as chief guest and special guest respectively.

Pointing to the developers' important role for planned urban areas, Jewel Mollah, the REHAB general secretary, said, "The enactment of a law for the urbanisation in a planned way in the port city is needed keeping its green and hilly ambience untapped".

While reading out a written statement, he identified some obstacles to smooth business, which include high lending rates, high prices of lands and construction materials, and the slow pace in approving building designs by the authorities

concerned.

On the expected sales, REHAB President Tanveerul Haque Probal said, "We are hopeful that we will exceed the last year's sales volume of Tk 200-250 crore."

The stable condition of apartment prices because of the slump in real prices will also help increase sales, Probal hoped.

Organisers said the fair would be open for all from 10 am to 8 pm on the last two days, while people will be able to visit the fair on the first day from 2pm following the inaugural ceremony.

Tk 20 is the single entry fee and Tk 50 season entry fee.

GP launches in-flight roaming service

STAR BUSINESS DESK

Grameenphone (GP), the country's largest mobile operator, has recently launched in-flight GSM roaming services with AeroMobile, GP said in a statement yesterday.

Subscribers with international roaming facility can avail themselves of the roaming facility aboard the aircraft without additional subscription.

AeroMobile provides in-flight roaming facility as part of global coverage.

"It is a safe, cost effective solution allowing passengers to use their mobile phones and PDAs aboard a flight," GP said.

AeroMobile is currently available onboard a number of Emirates aircraft (B777s, A330s and A340s) as part of the roll-out programme which will see their existing fleet fitted with the service by the end of 2009 and is preparing to launch its services with Malaysian Airlines, Qantas, Turkish Airlines and Saudi Arabian Airlines.

Dollar up against euro

AFP, New York

The dollar ended higher Friday against the euro and the pound on negative economic news from Europe, but the greenback remained under pressure from the rising yen.

The euro slipped to 1.2969 dollars at 2200 GMT, down from 1.3001 dollars late Thursday in New York.

At one stage, the single European currency slumped to 1.2765 dollars, the lowest since December 8.

Concerns about the health of major banks in both France and Germany -- the two strongest Eurozone economies -- combined with an expected slowing of European growth pushed the euro lower, said Andy Douglass of PNC Bank.

But Terri Belkas, currency strategist with Forex capital Markets, said a "euro recovery seems increasingly possible."

Belkas said any eurozone weaker-than-expected inflation figures next week "could exacerbate the market's speculation that the central bank will cut rates again on February 5, and weigh on the euro."

"On the other hand, if CPI (consumer price index) does not fall further, the currency could gain as the markets assume the central bank will leave rates unchanged next month and wait until March to make monetary policy more accommodative," Belkas said.

Indian court turns down Vodafone plea

ANN/THE STATESMAN

In a major setback to Vodafone, the Indian Supreme Court on Friday refused relief to the telecom major in the tax claim case of about US\$2 billion, asking it to respond to the I-T authorities' showcase notice.

Vodafone, the Netherlands-based company, had bought a 67 per cent stake in Hutchison Essar from Hutchison Telecom International (HTIL) in February 2007 for \$11.2 billion.



Post and Telecommunications Minister Rajiuddin Ahmed Raju, 2nd-R, poses for photograph with the winners of the Chef of the Year 2009 contest, co-organised by Monitor and Malaysia Palm Oil at Dhaka Sheraton Hotel yesterday. General Moeen U Ahmed, the army chief, who attended the programme as special guest, is also seen.

Community-driven dev approach to quicken poverty cut efforts

Says WB economist

UNB, Dhaka

Bangladesh can make quick progress in its poverty alleviation efforts with Community Driven Development (CDD) approach, as the country's 'great human capital' still remains largely untapped, said a World Bank economist.

"This is something where Bangladesh can work on to make sure that the country's 150 million people are using their capacities, ideas and innovativeness for quicker development," World Bank Senior Economist and Task Team Leader of Social Investment Programme Project (SIPP) Dr Meena Munshi said in an interview with the news agency.

Meena is working with the World Bank for designing and implementing Rural Development and Poverty Reduction Programmes in India, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh using the CDD approach.

She said a pilot project styled 'Social Investment Programme Project' (SIPP) launched in Bangladesh's two most impoverished districts -- Gaibandha and Jamalpur -- has shown that the CDD approach is more effective.

Launched in 2003, the project has given the communities the control over planning, decision-making and investment resources. Its main objective is to develop effective financing and institutional arrangement at community level for improving their access to local basic services through community-driven small-scale infrastructure development and social assistance.

So far, nearly two million poor people in Gaibandha and Jamalpur have been benefited from the project. Under the programme, village organisations have been formed in 922 villages

through inclusion of women, youths, and the poorest. It has reached over 190,000 poor households, and mobilised them into 14,274 small livelihood groups (Jibikayan Groups) that make savings and inter-lending.

Social Development Foundation, an autonomous organisation established by the government in 2000, is implementing SIPP with support from the World Bank to address the country's acute poverty as outlined in the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP). The main strategy of SIPP is to put the poor at the centre of development by forming village institutions.

Meena, a former post-doctoral fellow at the Centre for South Asian Studies in the University of Virginia, said Bangladesh has started the CDD approach 3-4 years back and this approach in the first three years focused on community infrastructure development.

"For any poverty alleviation programme, you need 8-10 years' time. Building and sustaining community institutions and investing in sustainable livelihoods need longer-term vision and cannot be achieved in a shorter period of time," she said.

"If the people are given the opportunities, information and the resources actually needed for coming out of poverty, then this approach is very, very effective," she added.

About the same project in Andhra Pradesh, Tamilnadu and Madhya Pradesh of India and that in Sri Lanka, Meena said they have started walking on the same path and they are showing very good results.

"I see the same trend in Bangladesh although it is too early to say as the livelihood has just started," she said voicing a high hope that there will be a tangible

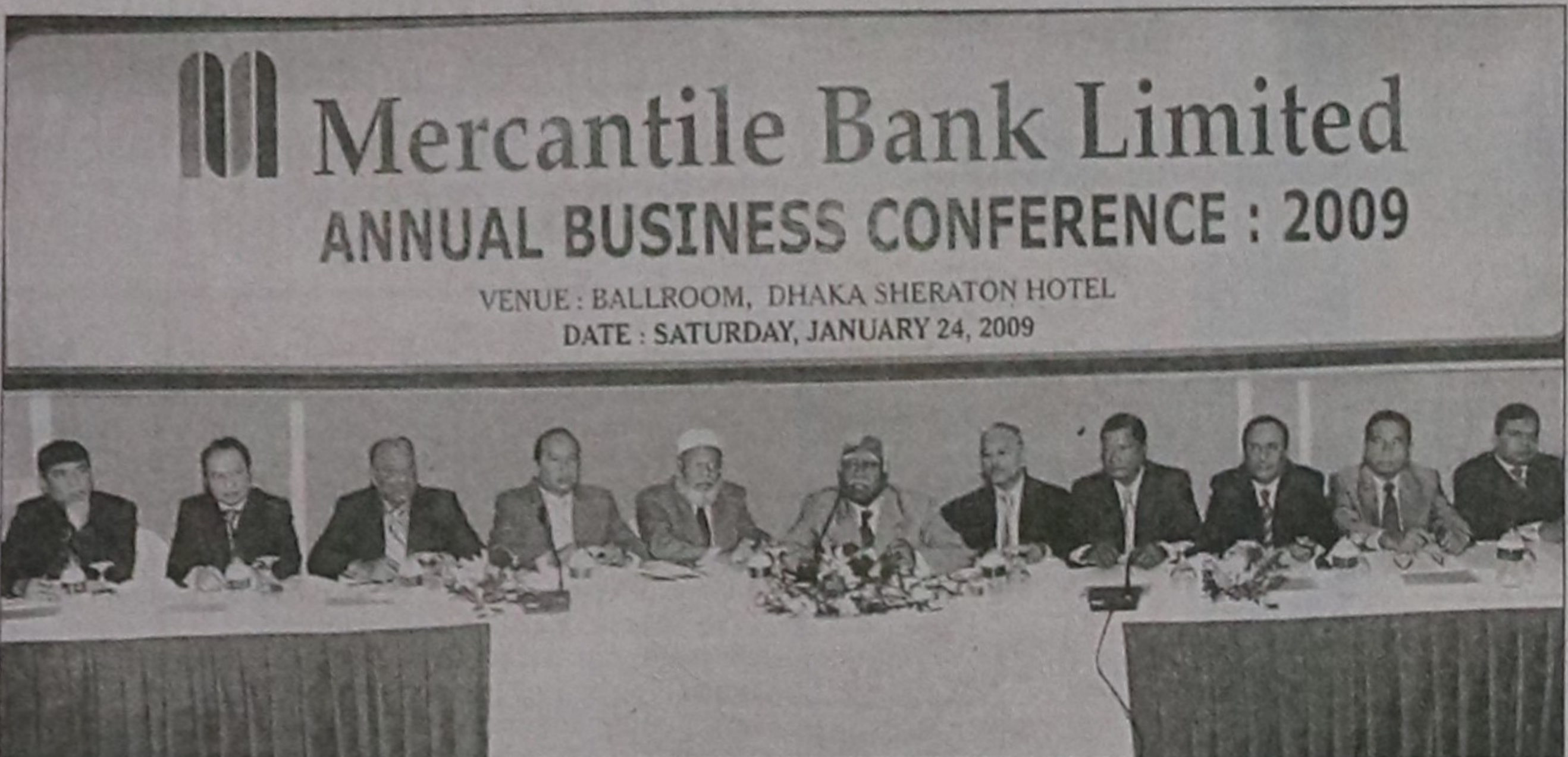
progress in Bangladesh in 10 years' time.

Asked about mechanisms to help the community members market their agricultural products and other products, the SIPP Task Team Leader said the programme is focusing on that part too. "Our focus is on how to aggregate products and cut the middle men to help these marginal farmers benefit from this agricultural growth. The focus of SIPP is on organising the producer groups and helping them get the necessary skills and generate employment in rural areas. And the producer groups can federate at certain cluster level or the district level, which will actually give them the negotiating power with the private sector. That is one of our strategies."

The second part of the strategies, she said, is getting the private sector directly involved with the farmers' groups and that will help both parties actually cut down the cost. "Thirdly, there will be efforts to improve the quality and the value addition -- how the farmers can get into the processing part apart from selling and looking at the whole value chain."

The programme, Meena said, will also help the community members set up small processing centres near their areas, as there is a lot of demand domestically for fruits and vegetables, dairy and meat and fish, and then there is the export market.

Asked whether SIPP would be expanded further in Bangladesh, Meena said: "We've already expanded the programme from Gaibandha and Jamalpur to cyclone-affected areas apart from expanding it to the flood-affected areas. Under the second phase of this programme (SIPP), we've planned to expand it to 10-12 districts of Rajshahi region."



Abdul Jalil MP, founder chairman and sponsor of Mercantile Bank Limited, speaks at the bank's "Annual Business Conference 2009" in Dhaka yesterday. Mosharraf Hossain, chairman, and Dewan Mujibur Rahman, chief executive officer, also spoke.

Seminar in March to make branding popular

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Bangladesh Brand Forum (BBF) is set to organise a two-day 'BBF Seminar 2009 on Surviving within Hyper Competition' from March 28 under the theme of connecting consumer emotion, said the founder of the organisation yesterday.

"In today's world branding is essential for all kinds of business that helps a company to move forward and succeed, but in Bangladesh the businessmen are yet to introduce properly the concept extensively," said Shariful Islam, founder of BBF.

"We are organising the seminar for the third consecutive year to develop expertise and educate our local entrepreneurs with this idea that would help them increase the growth of



Shariful Islam, founder of Bangladesh Brand Forum, speaks at a press conference at Dhaka Sheraton Hotel yesterday.

their business," he added. Islam was speaking at a press conference in Dhaka to announce the schedule of the upcoming seminar.

He said internationally renowned personalities, such as Sanjiv Mehta, chairman of Unilever (North

Africa and Middle East), and Tony Wright, chairman of Lowe Worldwide (represented in Bangladesh by Adcomm Ltd), would participate in the seminar.

Islam also said the seminar would help the participants gain expertise from

these internationally famous personalities.

The country's leading mobile phone operator Grameenphone Ltd is the platinum sponsor of the seminar, while Nokia, Rahimafrooz, Marico Bangladesh and University of Liberal Arts Bangladesh are the co-partners.

BBF started its journey in 2007 with the vision of transforming Bangladesh through brands. BBF seminar is an initiative where well-known personalities of business, brand and marketing come and share their insights and expertise with the local business leaders and managers.

Mushtaque Ahmed, adviser to BBF, and Rubaba Dowla, chief communication officer of Grameenphone, were also present at the press conference.

Wall Street trades mixed

AFP, New York

US stocks closed mixed Friday, with financials gaining interest but sprawling conglomerate General Electric's grim outlook unnerving investors.

The Dow Jones Industrial Average fell 45.24 points (0.56 percent) to close at 8,077.56.

The tech-heavy Nasdaq rose 11.80 points (0.81 percent) to 1,477.29 and the broad-market Standard & Poor's 500 index edged up 4.45 points (0.54 percent) to 831.95.

After opening in the red, stocks crisscrossed back and forth into positive territory.

"Today's market looked more like an advanced yo-yo session rather than a regular stock market trading day," said Jon Ogg, analyst at 24/7 Wall Street.com.

Stocks had slid Thursday after a strong rally the previous day, with

dismal government reports on rising unemployment and housing construction, as well as poor corporate earnings results, weighing on sentiment.

Briefing.com's Patrick O'Hare said the market's inability to stretch the positive bias beyond a single session Wednesday reflected the "understandably skeptical manner in which equity markets participants are operating."

"The skepticism toward the financial sector and the government's ability to manage the situation is on display again," he said.

President Barack Obama warned in a meeting with congressional leaders on Friday that the economic crisis may be unprecedented, and needed to be dealt with "rapidly."

"We are experiencing an unprecedented, perhaps, economic crisis that has to be dealt with, and dealt with rapidly," the president said in his third

full day in office.

Falling stock markets in Europe and Asia also weighed on sentiment, as did news that Britain's economy shrank 1.5 percent in the 2008 fourth quarter, pushing the economy into recession for the first time since 1991.

The US economic calendar was bare, leaving investors to focus on the week's drumbeat of grim corporate and economic news.

Among stocks in focus, General Electric plunged 10.76 percent to 12.03 dollars. The huge conglomerate, considered a bellwether of the US economy, reported fourth-quarter net profit fell 44 percent and predicted an "extremely difficult" 2009.

"GE insists that its capital position will make it nearly certain that the company can keep its AAA rating. If its results worsen that still may not be true," said Douglas McIntyre at 24/7 Wall Street.



Badiur Rahman, chairman of Al-Arafah Islami Bank Limited, inaugurates the bank's '31st Branch Managers Conference' at Dhaka Sheraton Hotel on Sunday.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE)

Project Implementation Wing (PIW)

Khamarbari, Farmgate, Dhaka

Invitation for Tenders

1.	Ministry/Division	Ministry of Agriculture, Department of Agricultural Extension.		
2.	Name of the project	Northwest Crop Diversification Project (NCDP) (Marketing Component).		
3.	Implementation agency	Project Implementation Wing, Department of Agricultural Extension, Khamarbari, Farmgate, Dhaka.		
4.	Procurement method	Open tendering method.		
5.	Source of fund	Asian Development Bank (ADB).		
6.	Invitation for tender No. & date	DAE/PIW/Engg/NCDP/Pro-S2/2008/97 dt. 19.01.2008		
7.	Amount of tender security	The bidder must submit the tender security for an amount of taka as mentioned in Item No. 15 in the form of Pay Order/Bank Draft/B.G. (valid up to 150 days) from any schedule bank of Bangladesh in favour of Executive Engineer, PIW, DAE, Khamarbari, Dhaka.		
8.	Eligibility of tenderers	<p>a) The tenderer must submit with the tender the experience in executing similar nature of supply for not less than Tk. 4.00 lac for Package No. NCDP(M)-1 and not less than Tk. 6.00 lac for Package No. NCDP(M)-2 in a single contract during the last 5 years, from the concerned Executive Engineer.</p> <p>b) The tenderer must submit certificate for liquid asset or working capital or credit facilities not less than Tk. 4.00 lac for Package No. NCDP(M)-1 and not less than Tk. 6.00 lac for Package No. NCDP(M)-2 with other necessary papers from any schedule bank.</p> <p>c) Up-to-date trade license, Income Tax, VAT clearance certificate, must be submitted with the tender.</p> <p>d) The tenderer must fulfill other requirements as per tender document.</p>		
9.	Name & address of the office's selling tender documents	Project Implementation Wing (PIW), DAE, 5 th Floor, Middle Building, Khamarbari, Farmgate, Dhaka.		
10.	Name & address of the office's receiving tenders	-Do-		
11.	Name & address of the office's opening tenders	-Do-		
12.	Last date and time for selling tender document	During office hours on all govt. working days up to 17.02.2009.		
13.	Last date & time for tender submission	Up to 1-00pm on 18.02.2009		
14.	Date & time for opening tender	At 2-00pm on 18.2.2009		
15.	Brief Description of the work:			
	Pkg. No.	Name of work	Price of tender document (non-refundable) (Taka)	Bid security (Tk.)
	NCDP(M)-1	Supply of Digital Camera-18 Nos., Video Camera-1 No. & IPS-6 Nos.	400.00	13,000.00
	NCDP(M)-2	Supply of Visitor Chair-18 Nos, Senior Executive Chair-6 Nos., Secretariat Table-2 Nos, Normal Table-4 Nos, Plastic Chair (with handle)-270 Nos, Plastic Chair (without handle)- 620 Nos., Plastic Table-54 Nos. & Almira-35 Nos.	750.00	20,000.00
16.	<p>a) Tender will be separate for each package.</p> <p>b) If the tender security or experience certificate or other documents to be submitted with the tender is/are found false or fabricated, the tender will be rejected outright and his tender security will be forfeited and other legal action will be taken against the tenderer.</p> <p>c) The procuring entity reserves the right to accept or reject any or all tenders prior to acceptance without assigning any reason whatsoever.</p>			

GD-395

Executive Engineer
Project Implementation Wing