

# Regent starts flight to Kathmandu on Dec 21

STAR BUSINESS DESK

Regent Airways will start its flight to Kathmandu from Dhaka on December 21, the airline said in a statement on Monday.

The private carrier will fly a Boeing 737-700 aircraft that has 12 business class and 114 economy class seats.

The aircraft of the carrier will leave Dhaka on Saturdays, Mondays and Wednesdays at 3pm and reach the capital of Nepal at 4.15pm local time. It will leave Kathmandu at 5.15pm

and reach Dhaka at 6.45pm.

It is the sixth international flight of Regent, according to the statement.

The minimum fare on the route will be Tk 12,493 for one way and return Tk 17,512, including all taxes, according to the statement.

"The tourism sector of Nepal is rising again after the devastating earthquake last year," said M Fazle Akber, CEO of Regent.

To overcome the losses of the horrible tremor, Nepal has increased facilities for tourists to give a boost to the

sector as well as to the economy, he said. Many of the tourists in Nepal are Bangladeshis, he said.

"We also have the opportunity to carry the expatriate workers of Nepal living in Malaysia by using Dhaka as a transit." That is why the airline has launched the new flight to take benefit of the new opportunity, Akber said.

Regent Airways started its journey in November 2010 and a flight to Kuala Lumpur was its first international flight, which was launched on July 15, 2013.

# Food ministry launches research programme on food security

STAR BUSINESS DESK

The food ministry announced the launch of a new comprehensive food security research programme together with Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS), International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) and University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign on Tuesday.

Around 150 representatives from civil society organisations and partner institutions from Bangladesh and the United States took part in the event, IFPRI said in a statement yesterday.

The Bangladesh Integrated Food Policy Research Programme will combine policy research with capacity strengthening to tackle all four aspects of food security—availability,

access, utilisation and stability—in a holistic and sustainable approach.

"Bangladesh is prone to natural disasters that can wipe out the country's supply of cereals if they are not properly stored," said Qamrul Islam, food minister.

The programme is a part of the food ministry's Modern Food Storage Facilities Project financed by the World Bank.



From left, Sheema Abed Rahman, director of ACI Ltd; Juned Ahmed Choudhury, director; Shusmita Anis, director; M Anis Ud Dowla, chairman; Arif Dowla, managing director; Md Ifthikhar-uz-zaman, director, and Abdul-Muyeed Chowdhury, director, attend the company's 43rd annual general meeting, at Officers Club in Dhaka yesterday. The company approved 115 percent cash and 10 percent stock dividends for the period ended on June 30, 2016.

ACI LTD

# 75pc of migrant workers received lower wages than promised: survey

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Jureidini also said the money also goes into funding expenses for skills testing and candidate selection in home countries.

And despite these costs to workers, or perhaps because of them, there is often a skills mismatch, leading to dissatisfaction for both workers and employers.

Among other reasons, worker payments put them in debt and trap them into accepting less favourable wages and conditions than originally promised, he said.

This, in turn, forces them into debt bondage and forced labour, much of which can also be classified as human trafficking for labour exploitation -- that violates both local and international laws.

"Since low-skilled workers pay employers for jobs, employers profit from recruitment. This has driven an excessive supply of labour and less use of technology, particularly in the construction sector."

Jureidini went on to call for changing the culture of workers needing to pay to get jobs abroad. Phongsaysack Inhalant, chair of the Asean Senior Labour Officials Meeting, said protection and promotion of the rights of migrant workers are high on the Asean agenda.

"Almost 10 years ago in 2007, Asean leaders signed the Asean Declaration on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Migrant Workers or the Cebu Declaration. This declaration symbolises common interest and the top political commitment shared by our 10 countries."

The Cebu Declaration recognises the contributions of migrant workers to society and economy to both the receiving and sending states. While the declaration respects sovereignty of member states to decide their own migration policies, it provides general principles: obligations of receiving and sending states, and commitments by Asean for protection and promotion of workers' rights, he added.

At the session, Farooq Ahmad, secretary general of Bangladesh Employers' Federation, said the majority of the labour migration in the Asia-Pacific region is facilitated and regulated primarily by the national migration systems.

Clear and transparent national immigration laws and policies that do not hinder the free movement of labour are greatly beneficial for all stakeholders.

Labour market protection and national laws are at risk when such systems are changed in regular frequencies, Ahmed said.

Unfortunately, there are only a limited number of governments that have well-regulated systems facilitating the legal and transparent movement of low- or semi-skilled workers.

"This is the stage where low-skilled workers aspiring to secure jobs abroad become prone to abusive recruitment practices like debt bondage, forced labour and human trafficking carried out by unregulated intermediaries," he added.

ILO Deputy Director-General Gilbert Hounbo moderated the session.

# Shell to develop major oil field in Iran

REUTERS

Royal Dutch Shell Plc will agree on Wednesday to develop a major Iranian oil field, the Wall Street Journal reported, citing an Iranian oil ministry spokeswoman.

Total SA of France is also planning another investment in the energy sector in Iran, the Journal reported.

The agreements are for developing the South Azadegan and Yadavaran oil fields, the Journal said. Shell and Total declined to comment.

# Indian, Chinese firms get Payra port deals

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By 2018, the authority plans to ensure 10-metre depth of the channel through dredging and build a multipurpose terminal and a bulk terminal to handle higher volumes of shipments.

The Payra seaport began operation three years after the government's announcement with the view to facilitating the entry of bigger ships that cannot anchor at Chittagong and Mongla ports.

The main port to be built on the west bank of Rabnabad channel will allow up to 250-metre vessels to come through once dredging of 35-kilometres of the channel is done.

A preliminary deal has been signed with Belgium's Jan De Nul for dredging and maintenance.

The Chittagong port that now handles more than 90 percent of the export-import trade of Bangladesh can handle 186-metre vessels, according to officials of the Payra port.

# Posco Daewoo signs contract for gas exploration in Bay

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South Korean resource developer Posco Daewoo is engaged in the exploration of a gas block in the maritime area of neighbouring Myanmar. The block is adjacent to the block-12. Junn of the Korean company said Posco Daewoo discovered gas reserves in Myanmar in February this year.

The achievement has encouraged the company to agree to explore gas on the Bangladesh side, an official said. "As the company has found gas at the adjacent block, we might get good news from our block," said Nazimuddin Chowdhury, energy secretary.

In February this year, Petrobangla sought expression of interest for three gas blocks -- DS-12, DS-16 and DS-21 -- and received proposals from Singapore-based KrisEnergy (Asia), Posco Daewoo and Norway's Statoil.

But when the final offer was sought from the companies, only Daewoo came up with a proposal for DS-12.

If commercially viable gas is found, Petrobangla will find its own portion as well as buy gas at \$6.5 per 1,000 cubic feet, said Shahnewaz Parvez, deputy general manager for contract at Petrobangla.

Under the PSC, the provision of export has been kept. But Petrobangla Chairman

Ahmad said Posco Daewoo will have to offer gas to Petrobangla first.

If Petrobangla refuses to buy, the Korean company will have to find buyers inside the country. Once the first two options exhaust, they can look for buyers outside the country.

Bangladesh's gas production averages 2,700 million cubic feet per day with demand running at more than 3,300 mmcf, according to Petrobangla.

As the gas reserves are depleting with no new discovery, the government is awarding deep-sea blocks to international oil companies to boost production. The government also plans to import liquefied natural gas to meet the growing energy demand.

Posco Daewoo now produces 500 mmcf of gas in Myanmar and South Korea, according to Junn.

Posco Daewoo estimates that the Myanmar gas fields have 4.5 trillion cubic feet of reserves, enough to cover three years of liquefied natural gas supplies to Korea, reported the Pulse News of Korea last month.

The report said Posco Daewoo hopes it could dig up similar yield from Bangladesh. The Korean developer hopes to expand exploration elsewhere in Bangladesh waters.

# Mobile internet grows 7.87pc in September

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In September, mobile operators got back 13.29 lakh SIMs while the industry now has 11.91 crore active connections.

The industry started 2016 with 13.37 crore active connections, which went down to 11.77 crore by the end of August.



Executive Director of Mindshare Bangladesh Morshed Alam, Deputy General Manager Rezaul Hasan and Director Tusnuva Ahmed receive the Campaign South Asia's Agency of the Year award, at a programme at ITC Grand Central Hotel in Mumbai on November 30.

MINDSHARE BANGLADESH



MJL BANGLADESH

Azam J Chowdhury, managing director of MJL Bangladesh; Yaseer Al-Azzawi, Asia Pacific FDS cluster manager of ExxonMobil; Joanne Eu, Asia Pacific lubricants marketing manager; and Teoh Song Ping, director for Asia Pacific lubricants sales, attend the launch of new packaging of Mobil Lubricant, at Radisson hotel in Dhaka. The event was organised by MJL Bangladesh, the strategic alliance partner of ExxonMobil in Bangladesh.