A total of 6.11 lakh tons of fertilizer were distributed from November 1 to January 28 in current boro season. The quantum is about 0.44 lakh ton lower than the level of the corresponding period last year.

The Agricultural Ministry under its latest assessment of fertilizer requirements set the sales target for the on-going boro scason at 10.07 lakh tons. Sales performance upto Japuary 28 was at about 60.6 pcr cent of this target for November- April.

The current year's boro production target under the latest projection of the Agricultural Ministry is 72 lakh tons. The production in last boro season was officially estimated at 63 lakh tons.

Boro crop production is mostly dependent on availability of irrigation support facilities, besides fertiliser and

While scrtiliser supplies at the farmers level recorded so far a decline despite higher output target set for the year, seeds delivery through the government agency also registered a sizcable shortfall.

Uptrend in stock prices

Star Economic Report

Trading on Monday a Dhaka bourse witnessed modest recovery with uptrend in stock prices maintained for the second consecutive day.

With stocks gaining some ground after a continuous retreat in fast two weeks, the All Share Price Index of Dhaka Stock Exchange (DSE) rose to 336.4033 points compared with Sunday's 336.3325.

The index which indicates the price movements of all the listed stocks with the exchange was under downward pressures from the third week of January

In all, 2656 shares and debentures changed hands on Monday against 2012 on the previous day. In value terms trading stood at Taka 10,450.00 compared with Sunday's Taka 89,720.00.

Traded stocks involved 20 issues. Of them, seven gained in prices, three fell and 10 remained unchanged at their previous quoted rates.

Among the advancers. Beximeo debenture rose Taka 10.00 to Taka 1650.00. Savar Refractories in miscellaneous sector advanced Taka two to Taka 132.00, City Bank and Bangladesh That Aluminium gained Taka one each to Taka 181.00 and Taka 77.00 respectively.

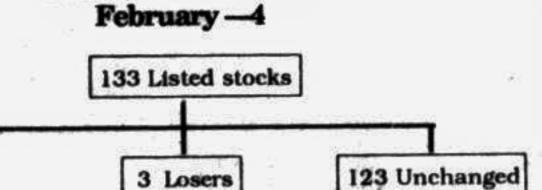
Marginal gainers included Renwick Jaineswar. Zeal Bangla Sugar and Beximco Pharma with their prices up within the range of Taka 0.25 and Taka 0.85.

The decliners were Aftab Automobiles, Sixth ICB Mutual Fund and United Insurance. Aftab lost Taka three. Sixth ICB Mutual Fund Taka 1.00 and United Taka 0.24.

Quoted Prices of Traded Stocks

February - 4				Kana(Oig)	90.00-100.00
				Hilsha	70.00-75.00
				Shrimp(big)	80.00-100.00
	-	544005277.G	Market Market	Singi	60.00-65.00
	FV/ML	(Taka)	Changes (Taka)	Koi	- 65.00-75.00
Sanks City Bunk	100/5	181.00	(+1.00)	PULSES	(Taka per Kg)
City trains	100/5	101.00	(+1.00)	Mashur	36.00-40.00
Investment 6th ICB M.				Moogh	34.00-36.00
Pund	100/10	88.00	(-1.00)	Chhola	26.00-28.00
Insurance				Mator	27.00-28.00
Green Delta	100/10	106.00	Unchanged	Khesari	18,00-20.00
United	100/10	107 50	(-0.74)	MEAT	(Taka per Kg)
Engineering Altab Autom				Beef	50.00-55.00
optie	100/5	199.00	(-3.00)	Mutton	75.00-80.00
B. That			4.1.001		
Aluminium Eastern Cables	100/10	77.00 80.00	(+1.00) Unchanged	577	(Taka per Litre)
Howlader PVC	100/10	103.00	Unchanged	Mustard	48.00-54.00
Quasem Dr yeells	10/50	7.50	Unchanged	Soyabean	33.00-33,50
Renwick	10/30	1.30	Oncharged	Coconut(Colombo)	60.00-64.00
Jajneswar	100/5	48.85	(+0.85)	Vegetable Ghee	44.00-52.00
Pood & Allied		*		SPICES	(Taka Per kg)
Rupan Oil Zeal Bangla	10/100	7.00	Unchanged	Onion((new)	. 22.00-25.00
Sugar	10/50	8.25	(+0.25)	Garlic	- 56.00-60.00
Pharms & Chem	541.0500000			Chillies	55.00-70.00
Kohinoor	99532	322332	26/72/ 24	Turmeric(Round)	42.00-46.00
Chemical The Ibraina	100/5	70.00 85.00	Unchanged Unchanged	" (Long)	48.00-550.00
	CONTRACTOR OF	(3570.75)	Sindle Sur	Green chillies	20.00-24.00
Peper & Printing Eagle Box	10/50	12.50	Unchanged	Ginger	16.00-20.00
Miscellansons	17.11-17.11			Cinnamon* (10gms)	3.00-3.50
Bextmoo	10/100	8.50	(+0.25)	Cardamom* (large)	8.00-8.50
Chittagong Cement	100/5	132.00	Unchanged	Jhira (50gms)	7.00-7.50
Server	100/0	1-32-00	AMERICAN	MISCELLANEOUS	
Refractories	100/5	132.00	(+2.00)	Ghee	220.00-230.00
Usmerta Glass	100/5	141.00	Unchanged		31.00-32.00
Debenture Berdm		2320		Sugar	
Pharma I		1650.00	(+10.00)	Molasses	16,00-18,00
*FV = Face Value, ML = Market Lot ** Changes Plus signs mean gain and (-)				Source : Department of	of Agricultural
The second secon	THE RESERVE AND ADDRESS OF THE PARTY OF THE	The second second	CONTRACTOR OF THE PARTY OF THE	- H-44-27-57-61 124 135	

Marketing



* 123 unchanged stocks include ten traded on the day at the previous day's quoted prices. DSE All Share Price Index = 336.4033

Issued Capital-Taka 4,602,377,190.00

Market Capitalisation=Taka 9,612,811,234.00

Turnover - Taka 240390.00 (Value) 2656 (Volume).

7 Gains

Star Economic Report

The latest figures available from Bangladesh Agricultural Development Corporation (BADC) showed that a total of 1395.85 metric tons of seeds were distributed during current season against the target of 2000.00 tons. Distribution of seeds is over now.

BADC sources said that the shortfall in seed distribution would not affect boro production performance much. The farmers can meet the shortfall from their own stocks. The sceds have been no major problem this season, they claimed.

But, the distribution programme for irrigation equipment in the current boro season has run into major operational troubles, mostly because of low demand and slowed down credit disbursements to agricultural sector.

BADC has now its exclusive operational control in Deep Tubewells (DTW) in irrigated agriculture. Minor irrigation sales and distribution operations involving Shallow Tubewells (STWs) and Low Lift Pumps (LLPs) have been opened to the private sector in recent years.

According to BADC figures, 927 BWTs were sold up to January 28 in current boro season. The target for the scason (November-April) was set at 4986. The corporation sunk of 531 DTWs up to January 28 against the target of 4986 for the season. It commissioned 1143 DTWs against the target of 2905 for the current boro

The latest available figures showed that a total of 3705 DTWs were in operations up to January 28. This included 1058 DTWs operating on rental basis and 2706 DTWs sold. The target for the boro scason is 11347 operational DTWs, including 11,347 on rental basis and 16600 units of

In STW sector, BADC's sales target for current boro season is 8000 units. Up to January 28, the corporation sold 1863 STWs. On a cummulative since its inception, the corporation sold 1,36,293 STWs, sunk 1,13,094 and commissioned 1,13,094 up to January 28. How of many of these STWs

Price Barometer: Essentials

RICE

Aman Very fine)

VEGETABLES

Aman(fine)

Paijam

February 4 (Taka per Kg)

17.00-18.00

14.00-15.00

13.00-14.00

11.50-12.50

(Taka per kg)

	VEGETABLES	(Taka per kg)
1	Potato(White)	4.50-5.00
1	Brinjal	7.00-10.00
4	Lady's finger	15.00-16.00
ı	Cauliflower piece	6.00-10.00
ı	Karolla	15.00-16.00
ı	Lalshak	6.00-8,00
١	Green Banana (Four I	Pieces) 5.00-8.00
1	OTHER FOODGRAIN	(laka per Kg)
ı	Flour	12.00-1400
1	Atta	11.00-12.00
1	Wheat	9.50-10.00
1	FISH	(Taka per kg)
1	Ruhi(big)	130.00-140.00
1	Katla(big)	90.00-100.00
	Hilsha	70.00-75.00
	Shrimp(big)	80.00-100.00
	Singi	60.00-65.00
	Koi	- 65.00-75.00
	PULSES	(Taka per Kg)
40	Mashur	36.00-40.00
	Moogh	34.00-36.00
	Chhola	26.00-28.00
a l	Mator	27.00-28.00
	Khesari	18,00-20.00
20)	MEAT	(Taka per Kg)
	Beef	50.00-55.00
1	Mutton	75.00-80.00
	OIL	(Taka per Litre)
	Mustard	48.00-54.00
	Soyabean	33.00-33.50
	Coconut(Colombo)	60.00-64.00
1	Vegetable Ghee	44.00-52.00
	SPICES	(Taka Per kg)
	Onion((new)	. 22.00-25.00
	Garlic	- 56.00-60.00
	Chillies	55.00-70.00
	Turmeric(Round)	42.00-46.00
	" (Long)	48.00-550.00
	Green chillies	20.00-24.00
•	Ginger	16.00-20.00
1	Cinnamon* (10gms)	3.00-3.50
1	Cardamom* (large)	8.00-8.50

Dhaka Stock Exchange

Market Profile

are in operations for irrigation purpose is however not known for certain.

BADC is now engaged in sales operations for STWs. Private sector and Bangladesh Krishi Bank (BKB), Bangladesh Rural Development Board and Bangladesh Bank are also involved in sales of STWs.

In low lift pumps irrigation, BADC sold 1931 units up to January 28 against target of 7000 units for current boro season. The corporation's cumulative sales of LLPs up to January 28 stood at 82,326 units. But, a good number of LLPs are in use for non-agricultural purposes. Meanwhile, the private sector is also involved now in direct sales of LLPs.

Performance of banks reviewed

The overall performance of the banking sector in the country's economic development was reviewed at a high level meeting held in Dhaka on Monday with the Finance Adviser. Mr Kafil Uddin Mahmood, in the chair, reports BSS.

The meeting was held at the VVIP room of Shaheed Suhrawardy Hospital where the Finance Adviser is now convalescing, a PID handout

During review, the Finance Adviser stressed the need for strict financial discipline in all the sectors of the Nationalised Commercial Banks (NCB) and the Development Financial Institutions (DFIs).

Different aspects of credit situation and the measures to be adopted for the recovery of loans were discussed at the meeting. It took some decisions aimed at improving the banking service of the NCBs. the handout added. The Principal Secretary to

the President, Mr. Khorshed Alam, the Governor of Bangladesh Bank, S B Choudhuri, the Additional Secretary (Banking) of the Finance Ministry Dr Harun-Ur-Rashid the Joint Secretary (Banking) Mr M M Reza, Managing Director of Sonali Bank, Mr Ahsanul Haque, Managing Director of Bangladesh Shilpa Bank, Mr Abdul Karim and senior officials of the Ministry of Finance were present at the review meeting.

Foreign trade course ends

Two regular courses on "Foreign Trade and Foreign Exchange" and Financing Agriculture and Rural Development concluded at Bangladesh Institute of Bank Management (BIBM) in Dhaka on Monday, reports UNB.

A total of 41 officers from different banks and financial institutions attended the Foreign Trade course.

Twenty-three officers participated in the course on Financing Agriculture and Rural Development, says a press release.

The Foreign Trade course delt with exchange control, foreign exchange transaction, foreign exchange market and exchange rate.

The course on Financing Agriculture and Rural Development was designed to acquaint the participants with the knowledge and skills of identifying, formulating, appraising and financing agriculture and rural projects.

A. B. M. Mahbubul Amin Khan, Director of BIBM, presided over the concluding sessions of both the courses and gave away certificates to the trainees.

Sujit R. Saha and Bandana Saha, Faculty members of BIBM, were the main coordinators of the courses.

Gold & Silver

February 4

(Taka for 11.66 grams) 7200.00 7000.00

200.00 Source: Department of Agricultural Marketing

(HIDES & SKIN) (Wet/Salted)

February 4

Taka per 100 pieces)

	ARREST WATER CO.	COLUMN TO THE	
Cow			
Culf	12,000.00	-	15,000.00
Light	25,000.00	-	30,000.00
Medium	35,000.00		40,000.00
Honey	50,000.00	-	55,000.00
Very heavy	65,000.00	: 	70,000.00
Rejected Gost	25,000.00	344	30,000.00
Big &	12,000.00) 2 20	12,500,00
Light & Medium	7,000.00	-	7,500.00
Rejected	3,000.00	_	3,500.00
Shoop	9,000.00	9332.5	10,000.00
BUFFALO	55,000.00	1200	60,000,00

Source: Department of Agricultural Marketing



Supply of gourds in city markets is plenty but the prices are still prohibitive. -Star Photo

Polls pledges slow farm loan recovery

Electoral commitments being made by political parties that they would exempt farm loans have slowed the rate of recovery, banking sources said Monday, reports UNB.

They said loance farmers had virtually stopped repaying their credits since the two major political parties, Awami League and BNP, started telling election meetings that farm loans up to Taka 5,000 and interest on up to Taka 10,000 would be written off, if either voted to power. The sources said field-level

employees of concerned banks were virtually compelled to cease from outstanding loan recovery drives. The farm loan recovery rate

before the present slowdown was about 20 per cent.

WASHINGTON, Feb 4:

President George Bush on

Monday is sending Congress a

1.4 trillion -dollar budget that

is constrained by war and re-

cession and likely to be re-

membered more for its record

deficits than any of its new

fiscal year starting Oct. 1 does

seek more money for the war

on drugs, space exploration

and education. But in most

cases, the increases are mod-

The budget also proposes

giving the states complete

control over some 22 billion

Dollars in federal aid now ear-

marked for specific activities,

a reprise of the "new federal-

ism" espoused by Presidents

Ronald Reagan and Richard M.

ing increased and to help re-

duce the budget deficits, the

to save more than 50 billion

Dollars over five years by cut-

ting such government benefit

programs as the Medicare

lower the budget deficit but

trition.

Bush administration is seeking

To pay for the programs be-

The spending plan for the

initiatives, reports AP.

According to official sources, outstanding loans in the agriculture sector have now stood around Taka 5,700 crore, of which about Taka 3,500 crore already due or overdue. Banking sources said cx-

emption of loans and interest as committed in election campaigns would involve about Tk 1,700 crore. They also pointed out

marginal loances had so far shown better repayment performance, while people close to "power structure" were mostly defaulters.

The "wilful defaulters" bankers think, would mostly derive benefit from the promised exemptions, instead of marginal farmers.

\$ 1.4 trillion budget placed

before US Congress

instead is proposing to cut the

ment profits, a perennial Bush

favorite. The effort is certain to

spark renewed wrangling with

Democrats who charge it is a

· Bush previewed many of his

budget initiatives in his state of

the Union address last

Tuesday, when he called for a

pro-growth economic package

to achieve " the competitive

strength that will carry us into

economic forecast that ac-

knowledges a recession, de-

fined as two consecutive quar-

ters of declining output. But

the administration predicts

the downturn will be mild and

be in error, the deficit could

be much worse than the al-

If that forecast turns out to

For the current 1991 fiscal

brief, ending by spring.

ready huge projections.

The budget is built on a

the next American century."

give-away to the rich.

tax on capital gains, or invest

Jordan to get Syrian oil

AMMAN. Feb 4: Syria is to sell Jordan badly-needed oil at world market rates to help Amman replace dwindling Iraqi supplies, a Cabinet Minister said on Sunday, reports Reuter.

The Syrians have told us they are willing to sell us crude oil and oil derivatives at market prices," said the Minister, who asked not to be identified Jordan needs an alternative

supplier because of allied air attacks on targets in Iraq. which have all but stopped oil tanker traffic on the highway from Baghdad to Amman.

"A Jordanian delegation will open technical talks in Damascus yesterday (Monday) to worked out details on the quantities, payment terms and issues related to their overland transport," the Minister told Reuters.

He said Amman was considering buying an oil tanker with a storage capacity of between 100,000 to 150,000 tonnes and docking it off the southern Red Sea port city of Agaba

"The tanker could get oil etther from Oman, Iran or

Import duty on some items reduced

The government has red need the import duty on date. dry date, raisin, pistachio and nut by 50 per cent and completely withdrawn the sales tax with a view to making these items available at the market at fair price during the month of Ramzan, according to a press release of the National Board of Revenue in Dhaka Monday, reports BSS.

The reduced import duty and sales tax withdrawal will be applicable only on those consignments of these items where the bill of entry of the ships into Bangladesh carrying them would be submitted to the concerned customs authority from February 25 to March 25, the press release added.

have been even higher had the

administration included the

full costs of the Gulf War

Instead, budget director

Richard Darman said Sunday

that the administration as

sumes that U.S. allies will pick

up all but 15 billion Dollars of

of the allies so far in making

contributions, critics contend

that is a highly optimistic view.

They predict the cost of war

will push the government

Nicholas Brady said Sunday

that the administration had

commitments of 41.5 billion

Dollars in payments to be

made in the first three months

of this year by Saudi Arabia,

Just a year ago, the admin-

istration was estimating that

the 1992 deficit would be 25

billion Dollars and on its way to

a surplus in 1993, when the

original Gramm-Rudman

deficit reduction law mandated

promised deficit reductions

and the old targets were

scrapped last year when

Congress passed a measure fo-

cusing more on controlling

The law never produced the

a balanced budget.

spending

Kuwait, Japan and Germany.

But treasury Secretary

deficit much higher.

Based on the performance

the war's tab.

Yemen at market rates and also help us boost our suppites," he added.

An official source said ear lier a two-man team had left for Damascus on Sunday for talks on the oil agreement.

Jordan has been importing up to 60,000 barrels of oil per day from Iraq at below-market prices in repayment of debts incurred by Iraq during its 1980-1988 war with Iran.

Amman buys the Iraqi oil at 16.60 dollars per barrel while current market rates are just over 20 dollars per barrel.

Some economists say the flow of oil has been cut to as little as 5.000 barrels a day. prompting the government last week to announce conservation measures.

The decision has angered Jordanians who say they would prefer rationing or higher prices to restricting the use of cars to odd and even days.

Oil Minister Thabet Al Taher told Reuters last week that Jordan had "reasonable" oil reserves but some diplomats and economists estimate they would last as little a

354 tolas of gold seized

Customs authorities on Friday seized 354 tola pure gold worth about Taka 25 lakh plan aimed at boosting profrom four tourists while they were crossing over to India through Benapole checkpost, a Customs official said here las evening, reports BSS.

The four Somalian citizens Fahmuda Hussain Gulith, Batula Molin, Kin Mohammad Ahmed and Kin Absir Ahmed were ar rested by the Customs officials and handed over to the Sharsha police station.

A case has been lodged with Sharsha police station in this connection.

The six-member Customs team were led by Assistant Collector Md. Lutfur Rahman.

Earlier, the Customs officials scized 137 tola gold worth about taka nine lakh 60 thousand from another Somalian woman Asha Ahmed Abdullah at Benapole or Thursday.

30 p.c. decline in Pak exports to Gulf

KARACHI, Feb 4 : Pakistan has suffered a 30 per cent decline in its exports to the Gulf since war broke out between the allied coalition and Iraq, officials said Sunday, reports AFP. Businessmen and industrial-

ists are to meet here Monday to consider ways to offset the war's impact and Foreign Minister Sahabzada Yaqub Khan chaired a Cabinet Meeting Saturday in Islamabad to discuss the economic impact of the loss of trade, they Pakistan's exports to the

Middle East in the fiscal year ended June 30, 1990, were estimated at 11.45 billion Rupees (520.27 million dollars), most of which went to the Gulf region, the officials said. As well, remittances from

Pakistani workers in the region have also shrunk, they In fiscal 1989 to 1990, offi-

cial foreign exchange receipts from Pakistani nationals overseas came to 1.94 billion dollars, of which 1.32 billion dollars came from Middle East countries, the officials said. Remittances from Kuwait

during the same period were registered at 167 million dollars or about 8.6 per cent of the total, according to central bank figures.

Exchange Rates February 4

SELLING AND BUYING RATES, offered by Commercials Banks, for Bank Cheques, (BCs) and Overseas Drafts (ODs)

One Unit of Foreign Currencies (FCs) for Taka 35.4433 35.9226

CO DUNIAL		ALC: 4 . 4 . 4 . 4
UK Pound Sterli	ng70.8845	70.0628
German Deutsche	24.4754	24.1326
Mark	25	
French Franc	7.1924	7.0922
Saudi Riyal	9.6101	9.4819
Dutch Guilders	21.7318	21.4223
Pakistan Rupce	1.6160	1.6006
(AMU*)		
Singapore Dollar	20.8247	20.5313
UAE Dirham	9.8141	9.6831
Kuwait Dinar	Not availab	le
Indian Rupee (A)	MU)1.9305	1.9119
S. Kroner	6.5054	6.4098
*AMU-Asian Mo	notary Union	
SECONDARY	EXCHANGE	MARKE
	UK Pound Sterli German Deutsche Mark French Franc Saudi Riyal Dutch Guilders Pakistan Rupee (AMU*) Singapore Dollar UAE Dirham Kuwait Dinar Indian Rupee (AB S. Kroner *AMU-Asian Mo	French Franc 7.1924 Saudi Riyal 9.6101 Dutch Guilders 21.7318 Pakistan Rupee 1.6160

Wage Earners Fund/ Expert Performance Benefit (XPB) Fund 36.53 36.48 US Dollar 70.95 UK Pound Storling

* The rates of Pound Storling are decided

every day, based on the cross-rates of New

York market Source: Sonali Bank

Snippets

Petrol prices

SINGAPORE, Feb 4: Petrol prices in Singapore rose between five per cent and 13 per cent Monday, and oil companies attributed the increase to higher official duties aimed a promoting use of unleaded petrol, reports AFP.

The latest hike represents a 15 Singapore cent (nine US cent) increase in premium gasoline (leaded) to 131.5 cents (77 US cents) per litre.

The unleaded petrol pump price rose by five cents (three US) to 121.5 tents (7) US) for 97 octane brands and to 112.5 cents (63 to 66 US) for 92 oc tane brands. Diesel prices were un-

changed at 56.6 cents (33 US). Major of companies in Singapore Shell, Mobil, Caltex. Esso, BP Singapore and Singapore Petroleum Company (SPC) announced the increase in pump prices

Plan to hunt tax evaders

BUENOS AIRES, Feb 4 Argentina Sunday announced plans to hunt down tax evaders by publishing lists of the citizens who do pay and seeing which names are missing, reports AFP. The proposed measure was

announced by the new Economy Minister, Domingo Cavallo, on national television as part of an economic reform duction and reducing chronic budget deficits.

The country's "enormous tax evasion problem" prevents the government from taking in enough money to function, he

Oman, UAE to cut oil prices

TOKYO, Fcb 4: Oman and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) have told Japanese of firms they will cut direct-deal crude oil prices for January shipments 15 to 19 per cent from a month carlier, industry sources said Monday, reports The move is the third con-

secutive monthly oil price cut. Oman crude is now priced at 20.70 dollars per barrel. down 3.82 dollars, while UAE's marban crude is priced at 20.70 dollars per barrel, down 4.85 dollars, they said.

Both prices are the lowest since August, when Iraqi troops invaded Kuwait, they

Raw Jute

February 4

Tossa

Meshta

FOB

345

330 295

175 170 200

KUTCHA bales FOB * Narayanganj/Daulatpur Varieties (Tk. per 100 Kg)

White

MEDIUM 1393 * FOB = Freight on board * Bot. = Bottom

PUCCA bales

(Sight)** (Ready)* Varieties Bangla Tk. per \$ per MT* bale* BW SPL 3450 BWA 3350 570 3300 550 BWB 480 2900 BWC BWD 2600 Bangla TOSSA BT SPL 3500 BTA BTB 2650 2100 WHITE REJECTION (WRS) TOSSA REJECTION (TRS) LABRIABL CUT ROPES 290 220 BWH 1300 1750 300 BTR 230 BTH 1400 WHITE/TOSSA CUTTING **BWCA** 235 220 BWCB 250 BTCA

FOB ready = Narayangan ** FOB sight = Chittagong/ Mongla Ports. Indicative Price at winch sales may be consi-dered for EPC registration.

BTCB

MESHTA

SPL Cuttings

Ord. Cuttings

The \$ prices are exclusive of any selling commission. O. D. (Sight nontraditional/appli-cable to export bills). One \$ = Tk. 35.4956) · MT = Metric Ton

Imports/arrivals of Kutcha bales at Narayanganj were seven to eight thousand mounds while a Daulatpur at six to seven thousands mounds. (One manund is equal to 37.32417 KGs.)

Labour shortage top problem in Japan structural unemployment TOKYO, Feb 4: The robust levels, which many industri-

health of Japan's economy has unleashed a persistent labour shortage that has become a problem more worrying for businesses than the Gulf war or the world recession, reports

Last year the job-market offered 140 positions for every 100 job seekers, rising to 143 in December, according to statistics released Friday by the Labour Ministry.

Kenneth Courtis, an economic researcher here for Deutsche Bank, estimated that Japan currently has 1.6 million available jobs. Some signs of easing in the

labour market have appeared as the current business cycle comes to an end and economic activity slows. But in the long run the graying of Japan's population is sure to aggravate the problem.

Japan's joblessness, at 2.1 per cent in 1990, is well below

get deficit of 318 billion Dollars. That amount would decline to 281 billion Dollars in fiscal 1992, but the red ink in both years would be well

health program, farm subsidies, student aid and child nu-The administration is not calling for any tax increases to in 1986.

year that ends next Oct. 1. the administration forecasts a budabove the previous record deficit of 221.1 billion Dollars

The 1991 deficit would

the temporarily unemployed. Indeed, if such structural factors are considered, the figure, the lowest level since 1980, shows a case of overemployment. Japan's 50 consecutive months of economic expan-

alised countries use to reflect

sion.fed primarily by domestic consumer demand, is at the heart of the problem. The drawbacks of steady growth are many: it inflates salaries and production costs, fuels inflation, overheats the economy. Strains productive

capacity creates difficulties in

satisfying demand for goods

and services. In the labour market, many employers can be choosier. while small and medium-sized businesses as well as foreign firms and businesses with hazardous jobs have recruitment problems, and Illegal immigra-

Employers have responded to the labour shortage by de- Us Dollar centralising away from the ma-

jor cities, shortening the work week, offering more part-time jobs and flexitime, as well as employing more women and elderly people . Authorities are seriously considering delaying the retirement age to 65 years from the current 55 to 60 and facili-

tating hiring of qualified for-

eign workers. The slight downturn has shown a few signs of easing tension in the labour market. such as higher interest rates and sagging stock and property markets, but few believe the situation is improving fundamentally because of Japan's

Some 1.2 million more people started new jobs in 1990 than in 1989.

demography.