

Business

Tk 2 cr yearly loss due to fires from cigarettes

Star Economic Report

Loss due to accidental fires from cigarettes is around Taka two crore annually in Bangladesh. Cigarettes industry is responsible for infant mortality, premature death, disability, accidents and problems of addictions. National Professor Dr. Nurul Islam says.

Prof. Nurul Islam said Bangladesh Tobacco Company's claim of contributing to the national economy must be judged in the light of final outcome. Prof. Islam, President of Adhunik, issued the following statement contradicting the BTC claim.

My attention has been drawn to the recent handout by the Bangladesh Tobacco Company (BTC) in which lofty claim has been made by the company that it has contributed significantly towards national economy. The company might have as well claimed to have helped various print media and sports events through their advertisement. I did not quite understand why they did not say a word about it. It is known that the tobacco company all over the world spends billions of dollars for their advertisement to counteract the anti-tobacco movement and encourage the deadly habit by concealing facts and misleading people.

It sounds patriotic when the company says that they have provided employment to many and added to the revenue earning of the government. They do not however say how much they have con-

tributed to the misery of mankind, helplessness of many families by the loss of their earning members through smoking related diseases like lung cancer, heart disease and stroke.

If we say there should be more income for the medical profession rather than preventing those, encourage more accidents to the cars and vehicles for the sake of development of repair shops, more fire for additional recruitment in fire service. I wonder how social scientists, economists and administrators would accept this queer proposal.

BTC's claim must be judged in the light of final outcome. On the basis of current scientific evidence they must admit that their industry is responsible for infant mortality, premature death, disability, accidents and even the present day much talked of problems of addiction. People must be aware of our loss due to the accidental fire from cigarette end. This is around Taka two crore annually in Bangladesh.

According to an estimate there are 20,000,000 male smokers and approximately 5,000,000 female smokers in

Bangladesh. In case of female this is rather conservative. They conceal their habit and again this is more common among rural poor.

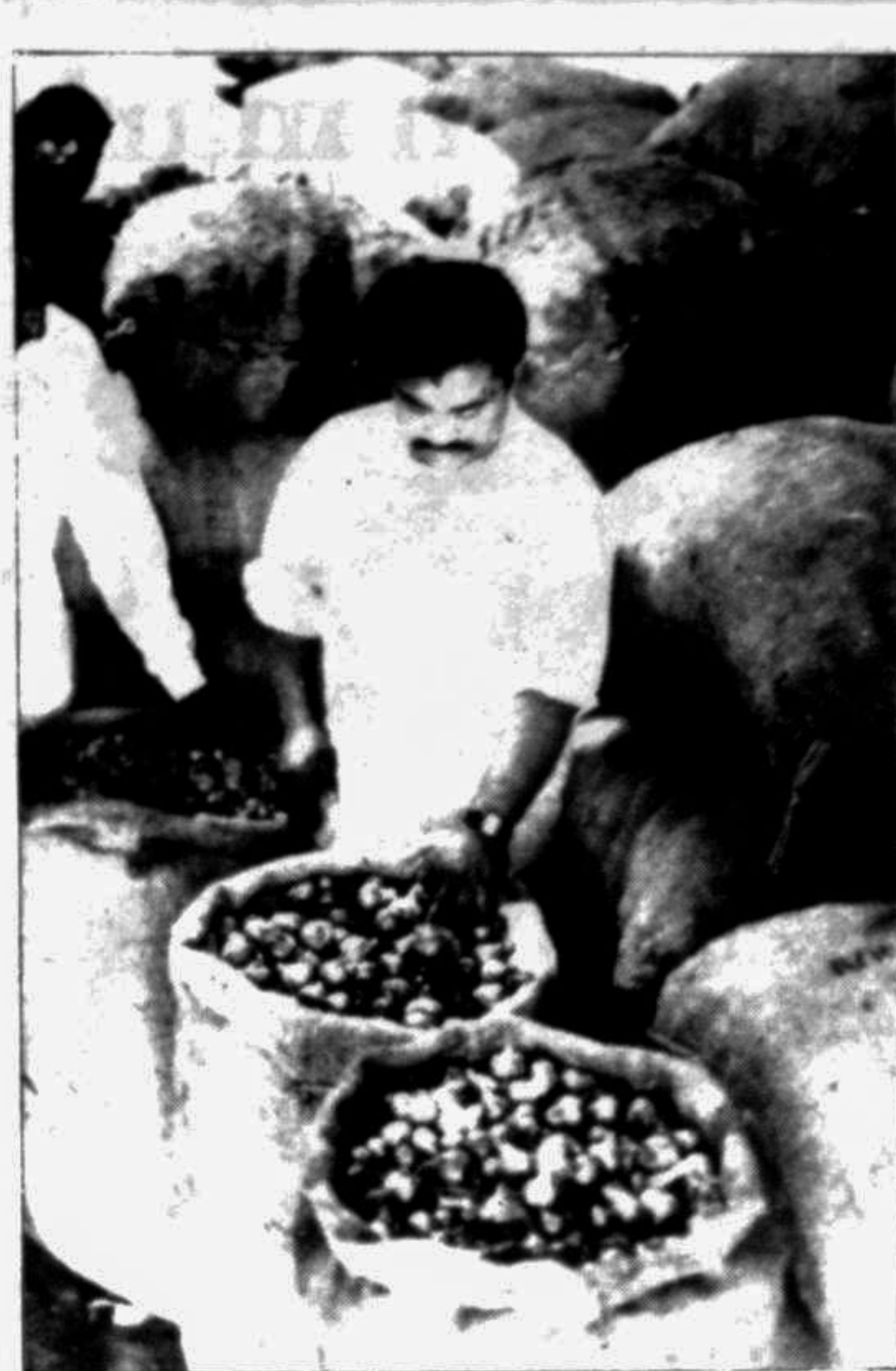
Smoking control programme has been argued against on economic grounds. In ultimate analysis this is found to be not valid. There are three ways by which smoking can reduce production.

These are: i) Reduced life expectancy. ii) Increased absenteeism from work. iii) Increased number of permanently disabled.

Health service expenditure on smoking related diseases, disablement, absenteeism from work, fires of cigarette-origins, use of fuel to cure tobacco and reduced food production all lead to economic loss which far outweigh the benefits of smoking as an industry. In the developing countries where tobacco production has been expanding per capita food consumption has either declined or remained stagnant. Malnourishment has increased. This has influenced respiratory and other smoking related diseases.

Production of tobacco in the developing countries is at the cost of food production and fuel, therefore in actual terms it does not add to the GNP.

Tobacco today is considered as the greatest single health hazard for mankind. Around one million new cases of lung cancer occur every year and it is estimated that by the year 2000 the number may be 20,000,000.



Supply of onion in city markets is plenty with fresh stocks coming from rural areas. The price of the commodity remains, however, unsteady. — Star photo

India, China to boost trade

NEW DELHI, Feb 12: India and China have agreed to boost bilateral trade to 300 million dollars in a year and decided to have joint ventures in the extraction of coking coal and high quality iron ore, reports PFI.

Disclosing this to newsmen today on his return from an official visit to China, the Commerce Minister, Dr Subramaniam Swamy said in a significant move the two countries have also agreed to resume border trade and exchange technologies in several fields.

India has also lined up options to import up to five million dollars worth of petroleum products and extracted a Chinese accord to buy up to 1.2 million tonnes of iron ore from India. China has also agreed to sell up to 2500 tons of raw silk and silk yarn to India worth rupees one hundred crore.

In what Dr Swamy described as a 'major breakthrough', India obtained for the first time from China the promise of a one time shipment of up to 50,000 tons of coking coal which is badly needed here.

Snippets

France to achieve economic growth

PARIS, Feb 12: France might achieve economic growth of slightly more than two per cent in 1991, and there is no need for an increase in French interest rates to match a recent increase in German rates, French Prime Minister Michel Rocard said on Monday, reports AFP.

Invest was being maintained at a high level despite the Gulf War, he told the newspaper La Tribune De L'Expansion.

Mr. Rocard Criticised Germany for increasing its key rates by half a point. The Bundesbank has done the international collective effort a very bad turn by increasing its rates without asking the opinion of anyone, he said.

China negotiating deals with Gulf states

BEIJING, Feb 12: China is negotiating civil engineering contracts with several Gulf countries and hoping for a rapid end to the war that has already cost it hundreds of million dollars, the China Daily said Sunday, reports AFP.

If we did nothing in the Gulf region now, we would lose the chance to enter the market after the war," the English language daily quoted an official from one of China's largest state-run civil engineering firms as saying.

Another Chinese company was negotiating with US and Japanese firms for civil engineering contracts in Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates, the newspaper said.

Bankruptcies cause suicides in Vietnam

HANOI, Feb 12: Widespread bankruptcies among Vietnam's state run factories caused some directors to commit suicide and put others in prison last year, the official labour newspaper's Sunday Magazine, says Reuter.

State-run factories ran up debts of three trillion dong (400 million dollars) in 1990, it said. It described the bankruptcies and resulting suicides and prison sentences as one of the 10 most important economic events of 1990.

Coal industry hits a crisis point

HANOI, Feb 12: The coal industry has hit a crisis point, here prompting thousands of layoffs, Vietnam's official Nhan Dan daily said Monday. The daily attributed the slump in Vietnam's domestic and export coal markets to poor quality coal, management's inexperience and inadequate infrastructure, adding that it highlighted the lack of an energetic state policy, reports AFP.

One of the three large state companies, Cam Pha, has 700,000 tonnes of unsold coal worth 100 billion dong (13 million dollars), while another company, Uong Bi, has sacked 2,300 miners.

India to set up cooperative bank

NEW DELHI, Feb 12: The Government would soon set up a National Cooperative Bank of India (NCBI), reports PFI.

This became evident when the Finance Minister, Mr. Yashwant Sinha said the Government would not be found wanting the necessary courage and will power to implement the "meritorious" proposal of cooperators for NCBI.

War stalls world's car industry

ATLANTA, Feb 12: General Motors Corporation's chairman in Atlanta said on Saturday the Gulf war had stalled the world's car industry, further eroding consumer confidence in the recessionary US market and hurting European sales, reports Reuter.

Robert Stempel, viewed after a speech to US auto dealers, told Reuters the war had hurt Middle East car sales and he hoped US firms in the region would not be hurt by lingering anti-Americanism. "The war has had a negative affect on consumer confidence. As a result, with the precipitous fall-off and the confidence not being there, people are staying away from our (new car and truck) showrooms," he said.

Zambian women urged to expand flower export

LUSAKA, Feb 12: Zambian women have been urged to expand flower export to contribute to the improvement of the national economy, reports Xinhua.

Honorary chairperson for the Village Industry Service (VIS) Mrs Joyce Mapoma said this at a summer flower show in Lusaka yesterday.

Decliners dominate share trading

Star Economic Report

Dhaka Stock Exchange on Tuesday witnessed a marginal fall in trading. The trading pattern was mixed. Most of the traded stocks advanced. But the decliners were of higher capitalised issues and thus involved more trading in value.

As a result Dhaka Stock Exchange (DSE) All Share Price Index, which is the indicator of price movements of all the listed stocks lost 0.3286 points to 333.3602 compared with Monday's 333.5888.

Thirty eight listed stocks were traded. Of them sixteen gained, eight declined and fourteen remained unchanged at their previous quoted prices.

In all 8032 shares and debentures changed hands compared with Monday's 8299. Traded shares and debentures valued Taka 514622.00 compared with previous day's Taka 680661.00.

Among the gainers, the debentures of Quasem Silk advanced Taka 50.00 to Taka 1450.00 at closing. Apex Tannery, another traded debenture, also gained Taka 2.00 to Taka 987.00.

Pubali Bank, Uttara Bank and National Bank advanced Taka 6.00, Taka 5.81 and Taka 1.45 to Taka 96.00, Taka 200.00 and Taka 103.45 respectively.

Chittagong Cement gained Taka 2.33 to Taka 136.22.

Satham Textile, 5th ICB Mutual Fund, 6th ICB Mutual Fund, Eastern Cables, Howlander PVC, Dhaka Vegetable, Oxygen, Ambee Pharma, Duxima Cotton and Talu Spraying advanced within the range between Taka 0.10 and Taka 1.00.

Among the losers S.T.M. (ORD) in textile sector got the major slash. It declined Taka 23.00 to Taka 12.00.

B.S.C. and Phoenix Leather in miscellaneous sector lost Taka 10.00 each Taka 45.00 and Taka 90.00.

Karim Pipe and IFIC Bank declined Taka 3.50 and Taka 1.22 to Taka 116.50 and Taka 141.00 respectively.

Islam Jute, Kohinor Chemical and Rupan Oil lost within the range between Taka 0.50 and Taka 1.00.

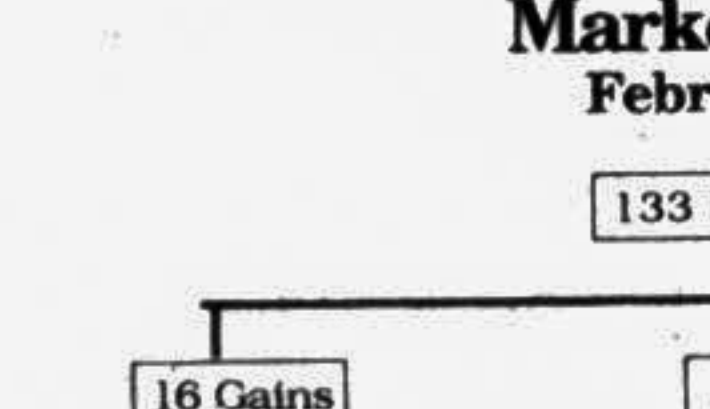
Quoted Prices of Traded Stocks

February 12

Table listing stock prices for various companies like IFC, National Bank, Pubali Bank, etc. with columns for stock name, price, and change.

Dhaka Stock Exchange Market Profile

February -12



* 113 unchanged stocks include fourteen traded on the day at the previous day's quoted prices. DSE All Share Price Index = 333.360 Issued Capital-Taka 4,602,377,190.00 Market Capitalisation-Taka 9,525,853,657.00 Turnover = Taka 514,633.00 (Value) 8032 (Volume).

Boro crop target in 70 lakh acres fixed

The government has fixed a target of producing boro crop in 70 lakh acres of land in the country during the current season, reports UNB.

26 lakh acres of land had already been brought under boro cultivation while the rest 44 lakh acres would be covered by March 15 next.

This was disclosed at a meeting held at the Secre-

CAB demands check to prices of goods

Consumers' Association of Bangladesh (CAB), at a discussion meeting on Tuesday 11 am at South Badda, demanded necessary steps to check the rising prices of goods and called for united role of consumers' to meet their demands, says a press release.

The meeting denounced the campaign of cigarette manufacturers in favour of smoking.

Organised by Gulshan Thana Committee of CAB, the meeting was presided over by Prof Nurul Islam and addressed by CAB Chairman Borhan Ahmed, Mr. Monirul Islam, Sarwar Jahan Abd Daud Patowary, Monjur Alam, Atubur Rahman Didar, Rokeya Jahan Reba, Bilkis Banu and Ruknuz-zaman.

The Adviser said that the country has a sufficient stock of oil for smooth cultivation of boro crop in the country. At the beginning of the Gulf war an artificial crisis was created in some pockets of distant upazilas. But the government had taken a prompt action to reach oil at those places.

The meeting was informed that 14000 deep tubewells out of total 27000 deep tubewells are now operating.

Investment Mission to visit US soon

The Bangladesh-US Business Council will sponsor an Investment Mission from Bangladesh in May this year, reports UNB.

A select group of people will travel to the United States to discuss pre-selected business proposals.

Exchange Rates

February 12

SELLING AND BUYING RATES, offered by Commercial Banks, for Bank Cheques, (BCs) and Overseas Drafts (ODs) One Unit of Foreign Currencies (FCs) for Taka

Table showing exchange rates for US Dollar, UK Pound Sterling, German Deutsche, French Franc, Saudi Riyal, Dutch Guilder, etc.

SECONDARY EXCHANGE MARKET

Table showing secondary market rates for Wage Earners Fund/Export Performance Benefit (XPB) Fund, US Dollar, UK Pound, Sterling, etc.

HIDES & SKIN (Wet/Salted)

February 12

Table showing hide and skin prices for Cow, Calf, Light, Medium, Heavy, Very heavy, etc.

US to continue export subsidies

WASHINGTON, Feb 12: The United States will continue to fund export subsidies as necessary even though funds are running low, Agriculture Secretary Clayton Youtter said Monday, reports AFP.

Talking to reporters, Mr. Youtter insisted, "if we run out of money in defending our interests internationally, so be it."

The Agriculture Secretary, who leaves his job at the end of the month to take over as Chairman of President George Bush's Republican Party, insisted the United States would "not hold back" in defending the international interests of its farmers.

Currently, the EEP has a cap of 425 million Dollars for fiscal 1991, which ends September 30.

Fluctuating onion prices baffle consumers

Fluctuating prices of onion and garlic have baffled the consumers. Onion sold at Taka 22 a kg, and garlic at Taka 54 a kg, in early January.

After the outbreak of Gulf war the prices of onion and garlic shot to Taka 28 and Taka 68 a kg respectively in the city markets.

Panic buying and hoarding by unscrupulous traders resulted in the price spiral. And now there is a downturn in prices. Last week the prices came down to Taka 20

British Airways to cut 4600 jobs

LONDON, Feb 12: British Airways PLC said on Monday it would cut 4,600 jobs worldwide and put 2,000 other staff on half pay due to rising costs and slumping passenger numbers caused by the Gulf War and the recession, reports Reuter.

The company said after talks with union representatives it would cut 4,300 jobs in Britain and 300 overseas, mostly through voluntary redundancy.

British Airways said in a statement it "will be forced to reduce staff numbers following the recent sharp downturn in world air travel and to counter the current exceptional circumstances created by war in the Middle East and deepening worldwide recession."

It said the trade unions supported the proposals to solve the problem and "secure the future prosperity of the airline."

Savings would be made in all areas worldwide "with a higher proportion of job losses amongst management."

The airline said it aims to cut 2,500 jobs by the end of March with the remaining 2,100 as soon as possible thereafter.

OPEC output falls

NICOSIA, Feb 12: OPEC crude oil production fell 760,000 barrels a day in January over December to 23.86 million barrels, with Iran accounting for most of the decrease, the Middle East Economic Survey (MEES) reported here Monday, says AFP.

The specialist weekly newsletter also said Saudi Arabia is planning, when the Gulf crisis is over, to carry out a thoroughgoing review of its future production capacity needs in the light of projected supply demand trends.

Iranian exports were disrupted when the country's Kharg island terminal in the Gulf was deemed to be in a war zone, following the outbreak of hostilities January 17.

Iranian output fell from 3.3 million barrels a day in the early part of January to 2.29 million in the second half, according to MEES.

Production by the Saudi firm ARAMCO held steady at 8.3 million barrels a day in January, the same as in December.

MEES said the Company's sustainable output was now put at close to nine million barrels a day, against 8.6-8.7 million barrels in December.

While Saudi authorities had originally planned to boost capacity to 10 million barrels a day by 1992-1994, second thoughts now appear to be surfacing about whether it is necessary to commit the huge sums required for such a programme so quickly given a potential over-supply outlook in the medium term, according to the newsletter.

Early economic recovery in E. Germany slim

BERLIN, Feb 12: Four months after the two German states were unified, rapid economic recovery continues to escape the grasp of Eastern Germany in the face of an economic and social crisis exacerbated by lack of confidence engendered by the Gulf war, reports AFP.

"Daily life at the moment in what used to be East Germany is altogether dramatic and in many ways alarming," the Christian Democratic President of Germany Richard von Weizsaecker said this week.

The level of unemployment is rising fast, enterprises are going out of business faster than experts had expected, and the newly-created federal states or Laender are trying to advance despite overwhelming financial difficulties.

It is proving difficult to establish new administrative structures. The judicial system "is in such a chaotic state that one wonders sometimes whether it is still worthy of the name," said a regional prosecutor Alexander Prechtel who had come from the west to help to re-build the country.

The adaptation of an economy confronting the laws of a market economy after having experienced 40 years of communism will "take longer and will be more difficult than had been expected," the head of the German Federation of Industrial Managers Heinrich Weiss said.

Just two months the centre-right parties led by Chancellor Helmut Kohl were returned to office in the newly unified state, German leaders have taken a firm line in urging people in the East of the country to work their way out of distress.

Until last year there was no official unemployment in what used to be known as East Germany.

Raw Jute

February 12

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

Table showing raw jute prices for White, Tossa, Meshta varieties.

Pucca bales FOB Narayanganj/Daulatpur Varieties (Ready) (Sight)**

Table showing pucca bales prices for White, Tossa, Meshta varieties.

White Rejection (WRS) / Tossa Rejection (TRS)

Table showing rejection prices for Habtaji, Cut Ropes, BWR, BWH, BTR, BTH, BCR.

White/Tossa Cutting

Table showing cutting prices for FWCA, FWCB, BTCA, BTBC, Meshta Spl, A, B, C, SPL-Cuttings, Ord. Cuttings, SMR.

* FOB ready = Narayanganj ** FOB sight = Chittagong/Mongla Ports. Indicative Price at which sales may be considered for EPC registration. The \$ prices are exclusive of any selling commission. O. D. (Sight non-traditional/applicable to export bills). One \$ = Tk. 35.4956.

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