

Tea prices at all-time-high

Star Economic Report

Offerings at weekly tea auction sale at Chittagong Tuesday stood at a record high level. This was the final sale of the season for 1990-91. The sale consisted of 20,532 packages of leaf along with 298 packages of old season and 528 packages of new season teas.

The Unity Brokers Limited reported that Tuesday's sale was by far the largest one in recorded history of Chittagong auctions in recent years.

Quality of offerings was mostly end-of-season fibrous types. Few lines of small clean broken, gany fannings and cleaner dusts were dearer.

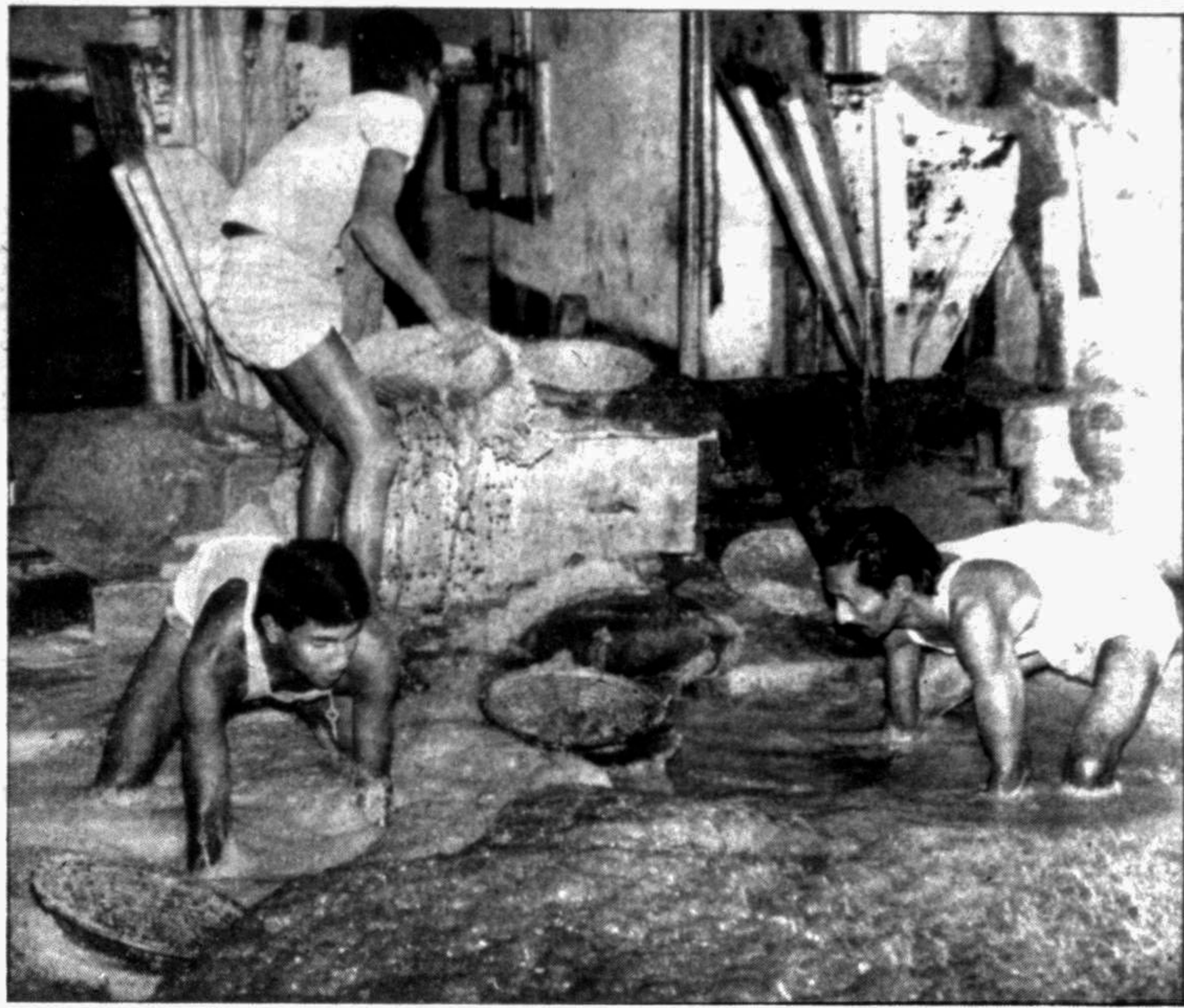
Most others eased and with-drawals were high.

Pakistan and Egypt lent some support for the low priced teas. Local buyers operated strongly for their types.

In all, 44 packages of stalky broken sold between Taka 15 and Taka 20.80. All others remained unsold. Small well-made broken and clean fannings were dearer by Taka one and Taka two than last. Most others eased between Taka two and Taka three. There were large withdrawals in the plannar categories and secondaries.

In the dust category, 3,793 packages along with 116 packages of new season teas were offered. Popular internal types often gained between Taka four and Taka six. Fibrous sorts eased by up to Taka five with large withdrawals. Seventy packages of green tea were offered. These were all with-drawn because of lack of interest.

Meanwhile, the new tea season is expected to commence from the last week of April or the first week of May. Decision will be taken by the Sale Coordination Committee, the Unity Brokers Limited said in its report.



This is how crude salt is being produced at a shabby plant at Narayanganj in a very crude way. —By Shafiuddin Bitu

Stock market remains dullish

Star Economic Report

Trading at Dhaka Stock Exchange (DSE) on Wednesday witnessed a slight uptrend in volume terms. But the market mood remained dullish. Transactions mostly involved stocks of lower equity base. Decliners dominated trading.

In all, 8204 shares changed hands compared with Tuesday's turnover of 4602. Traded shares valued Taka 3,41,402.00 against Taka 3,75,505.00 on the previous day.

With decliners larger in number than advancers, DSE All Share Price Index lost 1,0922 points to 349,8839 from Tuesday's 350,9761. The index is a broad indicator of price movements of all the listed stocks with the exchange.

In all, 34 stocks were traded. Of them 16 lost, eight gained and ten remained unchanged at their previous quoted prices.

Among the decliners Rupali Bank got the major slash. It lost Taka 9.88 to Taka 100.00 at closing.

Monno Ceramic and Atfab Automobiles declined Taka 5.18 and Taka 5.00 to Taka 144.82 and Taka 215.00 respectively.

National Bank and I. C. B. lost Taka 3.75 and Taka 3.00 to Taka 115.00 and Taka 97.00.

The 2nd ICB Mutual Fund declined Taka 2.00 to Taka 198.00.

Usumania Glass, Chittagong Cement, Beximco, Eagle Star, Ashraf Textile, Eagle Box, Bengal Food, Quasem Drycells, BGIC Insurance and 5th ICB Mutual Fund lost within the range between Taka 0.05 and Taka 1.00.

IFIC Bank and Al Baraka Bank advanced Taka 13.00 and Taka 5.00 to Taka 180.00 and Taka 965.00 respectively.

Talru Spinning and Bangladesh-Thal Aluminium moved up Taka 1.22 and Taka 1.25 to Taka 114.00 and Taka 91.25.

National Tubes, Kohinor Chemical, 6th ICB Mutual Fund and Milton Tannery gained within the range between Taka 0.15 and Taka 1.00.

Half of Asia's mass transit rlys in Japan

BANGKOK, Mar 13 : Seventeen cities in the Asia-Pacific region have mass transit railways but half of them are in Japan, a UN report says, reports AP.

Asian mass transport facilities are inadequate and rapid urban population growth has pushed road congestion to an intolerable level," said a summary of the 1990 general survey from the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific.

The survey was prepared for the 47th annual session of the UN body, to be held in Seoul, South Korea from April 1-10.

The cities with mass transit railways are Beijing and Tianjin, China; Hong Kong, Calcutta, India; Fukuoaka, Kobe, Kyoto, Nagoya, Osaka, Sapporo, Sendai, Tokyo and Yokohama, Japan; Seoul and Pusan, South Korea; Singapore; and Manila, in the Philippines.

Price Barometer Essentials

March - 13

		(Taka per Kg)
RICE		
Aman (Very fine)	17.00-18.00	
Aman (Fine)		
Pajim	14.25-15.00	
Ufisi	12.50-13.00	
VEGETABLES		
Potato (White)	3.50-4.00	
Brijjal	4.00-7.00	
Lady's finger	10.00-12.00	
Karola	9.00-11.00	
Kalshak	3.00-5.00	
Green Banana (Four Pieces)	5.00-8.00	
OTHER FOODGRAIN		
Floor	12.00-14.00	
Alta	10.50-11.00	
Wheat	9.50-10.00	
FISH		
Ruki (big)	110.00-140.00	
Kaila (big)	70.00-80.00	
Hilaha	40.00-45.00	
Pangas	110.00-115.00	
Shrimp (big)	86.00-100.00	
Singi	60.00-70.00	
Koi	75.00-80.00	
PULSES		
Mash	26.00-28.00	
Mashur	27.00-28.00	
Mooga	34.00-36.00	
Chakola	22.00-24.00	
Motor	26.00-27.00	
Khasur	18.00-20.00	
MEAT		
Beef	50.00-60.00	
Mutton	80.00-85.00	
OIL		
Mustard	50.00-54.00	
Soyabean	33.00-34.00	
Coconut (Colombo)	60.00-64.00	
Vegetable Ghee		
Onion (new)	10.00-12.00	
Chillies	20.00-28.00	
Chillies	58.00-60.00	
Turnmer (Round)	40.00-48.00	
" (Long)	42.00-50.00	
Green chillies	14.00-16.00	
Ginger	22.00-24.00	
Cinnamon* (10gms)	3.00-3.50	
Cardamom* (large)	3.50-4.00	
Jhira (50gms)	7.00-7.50	
MISCELLANEOUS		
Choc	220.00-230.00	
Sugar	29.00	
Molasses	16.00-18.00	

		(Taka per 100 pieces)
Gold & Silver		
Gold	(Taka for 11.66 grams)	
Tajubi	6,000.00	
Gulabi	6,300.00	
Silver	200.00	
Hides & Skin		
(Wet/Salted)		
March - 13		
Cow		
Light	12,000.00	15,000.00
Medium	25,000.00	30,000.00
Heavy	35,000.00	40,000.00
Very heavy	50,000.00	55,000.00
Rejected	25,000.00	30,000.00
Goat		
Light & Heavy	12,000.00	15,000.00
Medium	7,000.00	7,500.00
Rejected	3,000.00	3,500.00
Sheep	9,000.00	10,000.00
BUFFALO	55,000.00	57,000.00

Quoted Prices of Traded Stocks

March 13

	*FV/ML	Closing	**Changes	(Taka)
Banking				
Al Baraka Bank	1000/1	965.00	(6.00)	
I. F. C. National Bank	100/5	115.00	(3.75)	
Rupali Bank	100/10	100.00	(9.88)	
Investment				
I.C.B.	100/5	97.00	(3.00)	
2nd ICB M. Fund	100/5	198.00	(2.00)	
5th ICB M. Fund	100/10	120.00	(1.00)	
1st ICB M. Fund	100/10	93.00	(0.15)	
Insurance				
BGIC	100/10	110.50	(0.63)	
Green Delta	100/10	110.00	un-changed	
Engineering				
Atfab Automobiles	100/5	205.00	(5.00)	
Bangladesh Automobiles	100/5	120.00	un-changed	
B. Thal Aluminium	100/10	91.25	(1.25)	
Eastern Cable	100/5	95.00	un-changed	
National Tubes	100/10	123.00	(0.43)	
Quasem Drycells	10/50	8.10	(0.15)	
Food & Allied				
Apex Food	100/5	340.00	un-changed	
Bengal Food	100/5	308.00	(0.71)	
Rupali Oil	10/100	7.50	un-changed	
Pharmaceuticals				
Kohinor Chemical	100/5	82.80	(0.80)	
Usumania Glass	100/10	65.00	un-changed	
Paper & Printing				
Eagle Box	10/50	12.75	(1.25)	
Textile				
Ashraf Textile	10/50	32.00	(0.50)	
Eagle Star	10/50	35.00	(0.05)	
Quasem Silk	10/100	7.50	un-changed	
Talru Textile	100/5	90.00	un-changed	
Safham Textile	100/10	87.00	un-changed	
Talru Spinning	100/10	114.00	(1.22)	
Miscellaneous				
Apex Tannery	100/5	142.00	un-changed	
Bestmco	10/100	9.50	(0.52)	
Chittagong Cement	100/5	141.50	(0.50)	
Milton Tannery	100/5	36.00	(1.00)	
Monno Ceramic	100/5	144.82	(5.18)	
Usumania Glass	100/5	135.00	(1.00)	

* FV = Face Value, ML = Market Lot
** Changes: Plus signs mean gain and (-) signs losses.

Dhaka Stock Exchange Market Profile

March - 13

134 Listed stocks

8 Gains 16 Losers 110 Unchanged

111 Unchanged stocks include ten traded on the day at the previous day's quoted prices.
DSE All Share Price Index = 349,8839
Issued Capital - Taka 4,620,377,190.00
Market Capitalisation = Taka 9,998,023,062.00
Turnover = Taka 3,41,402.00 (Value), 4,602 (Volume).

Hosiery exports show brighter prospects

Tk 209 cr earned in 6 months

Star Economic Report

Hosiery products have emerged as the fastest growing export sector in fiscal 1990-91. Items like T. shirt and others, categorised by Export Promotion Bureau (EPB) as hosiery products, showed a 1467.55 per cent rise in export earnings in first seven months of current fiscal year. Receipts totalled Taka 209.24 crores between July 1990 and January 1991 compared with Taka 12.15 crores in the corresponding period last fiscal year.

Figures compiled by EPB showed that earnings from exports of T. Shirts rose to Taka 177.16 crore, in July-January period of fiscal 1990-91 from Taka 10.14 crores in the same period of fiscal 1989-90. Receipts from other hosiery products increased to 32.08 crores from Taka 12.15 crore.

There are some other encouraging trends in export operations in the current fiscal year. Thus, earnings in first seven months of the year were quite promising for items like specialised Textiles and household Linen, Ceramic Products, and Footwear.

Specialised Textiles and Household Linen export sector fetched in Taka 41.42 crores between July and January,

1990-91 compared with Taka 7.47 crores in the corresponding period of 1989-90. Terry towels was the major item in this sector.

Export earnings from Ceramic Products stood at Taka 6.11 crores in July-January in current fiscal year against Taka 2.12 crores in the corresponding period last fiscal year. Footwear exports totalled Taka 4.50 crores in first seven months of the current fiscal year. During the corresponding period in fiscal 1989-90, there were no export earnings from footwear.

Export items like Naptha, furnace oil, and bitumen also fared well in fiscal 1990-91. Earnings from these items stood at Taka 86.66 crores in first seven months of current fiscal year against Taka 35.91 crores in the corresponding period last year. Fertiliser exports in July-January (1990-91) totalled Taka 41.28 crores against Taka 29.70 crores in the corresponding period last year (1989-90).

The earnings from exports of ready-made garments rose to Taka 1466.63 crores between July and January in current fiscal year from Taka 1212.18 crores in the corre-

sponding period in 1989-90. This showed an increase in export earnings in garments sector by ten per cent.

Frozen food exports also rose by 15.90 per cent from Taka 266.13 crores to Taka 306.79 crores between July and January in current fiscal year from Taka 266.13 crores in the corresponding period last year. The export of wet-blue leather was banned with effect from July 1990 to encourage more value-added content in exports in the forms of crushed and finished leather.

Export earnings from engineering and agricultural products were also down in first seven months of current fiscal year from that of the corresponding period last year. In case of engineering products, receipts stood 68.60 per cent lower at Taka 3.25 crores, and for agricultural products, earnings were 42.78 per cent lower at Taka 15.34 crores.

Raw jute exports stood at Taka 175.43 crores in July-January (1990-91), recording a decline by 34.04 per cent from Taka 241.82 crores in the corresponding period of 1989-90. Receipts from jute goods however rose by 1.23 per cent to Taka 665.04 crores from Taka 628.61 crores.

Total export earnings from all items, traditional and non-traditional, or primary and manufactured goods, stood at 999.79 million Dollars (Taka 3521.25 crores) in first seven months of fiscal 1990-91 compared with 914.12 million Dollars (Taka 2927 crores) in the corresponding period last year. The aggregate receipts were 1.16 per cent short, in US Dollar terms, of the projected target for July-January period of current fiscal year. In Taka terms, the shortfall was 0.54 per cent.

According to EPB's figures, export earnings in July-January (1990-91) were 9.37 per cent higher than that of the corresponding period last year. The higher earnings were because of 8.85 per cent rise in average export price index and 0.52 per cent growth in export volume.

OPEC sets production ceiling at 22.3 MBD

GENEVA, Mar 13: The Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) moved Tuesday to prevent a collapse in oil prices by setting a 22.3 million barrels a day (MBD) production ceiling for the second quarter, with Algeria and Iran expressing formal reservations, reports AFP.

The decision was in line with Saudi Arabia's strong insistence on a moderate reduction, which would allow the kingdom to maintain its output at on less than eight MBD,

agates said. Algeria and Iran held out until the last minute in favour of a more substantial cutback on an overall ceiling of 21 to 21.5 MBD, in order to bring prices closer to OPEC's target level of 21 Dollars a barrel.

That target was reaffirmed in a communique issued by the ministers as they ended their talks shortly after 1730 GMT.

Oil industry experts said the accord implied a 0.7 MBD cutback from OPEC's current estimated output of 23 MBD.

But OPEC Secretary General Dr. Subroto said the decision, adopted by ministers in OPEC's market monitoring committee as they met for the

first time since the Gulf war, would reduce supply by "at least" one MBD.

He said it would have a "price-increasing effect."

Reuters from Singapore adds: OPEC's decision to abandon free for all oil production has cheered up the market and paved the way for a gradual price recovery, far east oil experts said on Wednesday.

AFP adds from London: The price of Brent, the benchmark North Sea crude oil, rose 80 cents a barrel on the London physical market on Wednesday following Tuesday's OPEC agreement to cut output.

Oilfield damage in Kuwait catastrophic

DAMMAM (Saudi Arabia), Mar 13: Kuwait's Oil Minister said on Tuesday Iraq's scorched-earth policy had caused "catastrophic" damage to oilfields and half the well-head fires would need lengthy drilling repairs.

"It is not only a crisis, it's a catastrophe," Rashid Salem al-Ameer told Reuters in an interview, one of his first since the country was liberated late last month.

He said some experts believed it would take two years or even two and a half to put out all the fires covering the country in a dense black shroud of smoke.

Kuwait had reserves of some 90 billion barrels

Exchange Rates

SELLING AND BUYING RATES, offered by Commercial Banks, for Bank Cheques, B/Cs and Overseas Drafts (O/Ds)		
One Unit of Foreign Currencies (FC) for Taka		
FC	Selling	Buying
US Dollar	35.9228	35.4432
UK Pound Sterling	66.9045	66.6222
German Deutsche Mark	23.7071	22.3899
SEKONDARY EXCHANGE MARKET		
Wage Earners Fund/Export Performance Benefit (EPB) Fund	Buying	Selling
US Dollar	36.48	36.53
UK Pound	67.47	67.52
Sterling	Not available	
* The rates of Pound Sterling are decided every day, based on the rates of New York market		
Source: Sonali Bank		

New BGMEA Chairman

Dhaka Region elected on Tuesday as Mohammed Atiqul Islam, Abdus Salam Mursheidi, Redwan Ahmed MP, Mohammed Zakaria, Engineer M.A.Taher, Capt (Retd) Anisur Rahman Sinha, M.Shamsur Rahman, M.Zinnat Ali Miah, Anisul Huq, Nur-e-Alam Siddiqui, Mahfuzur Rahman, Mostafa Gholam Qudus, Sham Alam Chowdhury, Kazi Muniruzzaman, ASM Quasem, Khondokar Moniruddin, Alhaj Mohammed Moqbil Hossain, Peroze M.Hassan and AB Moimuddin Hossain.

The Chittagong office bearers elected unopposed are Mohammed Faziul Azim, A.Ferdous Chowdhury, Mohammed Nasiruddin and Major (Retd) Abdul Mannan MP.

A total of 610 members of the association cast their votes in the election.



Mosharrarf Hossain

Nationwide strike call in USSR for higher wages

MOSCOW, Mar 13: Soviet miners' leaders are defying the Kremlin to press for a nationwide strike backing calls for higher wages and the resignation of President Mikhail Gorbachev, reports Reuter.

Trade Union spokesmen said on Tuesday an indefinite strike was beginning to take hold in the country's two biggest fields — the Ukrainian Donbass and the Siberian Kuzbass, an estimated 93 collieries were taking part and the labour leaders said they expected the action to widen this week.

Another report said: The Soviet Economy could slump sharply this year but the state planning agency Gosplan has dismissed recent pessimistic reports as being based on outdated scenarios for reform programmes that were never implemented.

A copy of the scenarios obtained by Reuter said forecasts of steep declines this year in Gross National Product (GNP), industrial and agricultural production were based largely on comparisons with planned and not actual performance in 1990.

Yakov Urinson, Deputy Head of Gosplan's forecasting department, said that unless tough measures were taken by Prime Minister Valentin Pavlov's government, the economy could shrink by 15 per cent or more this year.

A British television report said earlier that Gosplan had predicted a fall in GNP in 1991 of a staggering 11.6 per cent

Snippets

Strike cripples Algiers

ALGIERS, Mar 13: Algiers looked like a deserted city Wednesday, with virtually no traffic and the usual crowds outside schools and public buildings markedly absent, as a general strike entered its second day, reports AFP.

The General Union of Algerian Workers (UGTA), the country's leading trade union which called the strike, had said that nine out of 10 workers downed tools on Tuesday with the remaining 10 per cent ensuring a minimal public service.

The strike, called to protest spiralling costs, was boycotted by two rival Islamic unions and has been criticised by several politicians.

According to independent sources, the cost of living rose by 46.3 per cent in the 12 months to February, with prices soaring 25.19 per cent in January and February alone, against a government forecast of 20 per cent inflation for the whole year.

Indian rupee devalued against British pound

BOMBAY, Mar 13: The British currency has become costlier by another fourteen paise following a downward revision of the rupee by 0.39 per cent in relation to the pound sterling, as announced by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) here, reports PTI.

The new middle rate now works out to Rs. 35.63 per sterling as against Rs. 35.49 previously.

The rupee was depreciated by 0.14 per cent yesterday.

US House body rejects Funding Bill

WASHINGTON, Mar 13: The US House of Representatives on Tuesday rejected legislation providing 30 billion dollars in extra funding for the taxpayer bailout of the savings and loan industry, reports Reuter.

The Funding Bill died after a bitter bipartisan dispute over controversial reforms proposed by key Democrats, who wanted to load the Bill with restrictions.

The Bill, which provided 30 billion dollars with no strings attached, went down by 220 votes to 201.

Japan lifts economic sanctions on Kuwait

TOKYO, Mar 13: Japan is expected to lift soon the economic sanctions it imposed on Kuwait following the Emirate's annexation by Iraq last August, foreign ministry sources said Wednesday, reports AFP.

With the liberation of Kuwait at the end of February, the sources said, the cabinet would probably lift the sanctions this week, backdating the decision to March 12.

10m Britons live below 'decency levels'

LONDON, Mar 13: More than 10 million Britons who live below 'decency levels' set by the Council of Europe must still pay taxes, a Research and Lobby Group for the poor said on Tuesday, reports Reuter.

"It is an absurd situation that families considered poor enough by social security to get benefits are considered rich enough by inland revenue to pay taxes," said Chris Pond, Director of the Private Low Pay Unit.

Decency levels are set each year by the Council of Europe at two thirds of a country's per capita average weekly earnings, he said.

Japanese grant for Syria

TOKYO, Mar 13: Japan will grant Syria a 100 million dollar preferential loan to help tide it over economic and social dislocation caused by the Gulf crisis, the Foreign Ministry announced yesterday, reports AFP.

Syria thus becomes the fourth Middle Eastern nation to receive soft loans from Japan, following Egypt, Jordan and Turkey.

BOJ sells Dollar for Yen

TOKYO, Mar 13: The Bank of Japan (BOJ) sold Dollars for Yen at just below 136.50 Yen in Singapore, Tokyo market sources said, reports Reuter.

The BOJ intervened just after the Tokyo close, the sources said. Bank dealers in Singapore were unable to confirm the Dollar selling.

Earlier in Tokyo, the BOJ sold Dollars for Yen at around 136.70/80 Yen just before the close. Some dealers estimated the Tokyo intervention at less than 100 million Dollars.

The Dollar closed at 136.55 Yen and 1.5715/22 marks in Tokyo against 135.77/82 and 1.5690/00 at New York's Tuesday close.

Raw Jute

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