

Iran gets first WB loan since 1978

WASHINGTON, Mar 16 : The World Bank (WB), with US approval, has given Iran its first loan since 1978, the year before Iranian students took hostages at the US Embassy in Tehran, a bank official said Friday, reports AP.

A 250-million-dollar loan for earthquake reconstruction was approved by the bank's Board of Executive Directors on Thursday but not immediately announced. It is repayable in 20 years.

The board represents the bank's 155 member governments, which include Iran. It acts behind closed doors. The United States owns the biggest block of stock but has no veto over loans. The official, who asked that his name not be used, said there was no dissent to Thursday's decision.

The bank is the biggest source of aid to the Third World and has a charter forbidding it to take political issues into account.

Iran's fundamentalist Muslim government has been improving its relations with the West. It supported United Nations resolutions against Iraq's invasion of Kuwait, but remained neutral in the war against Iraq.

Week begins with modest uptrend in trading

Star Economic Report

The week began Saturday at Dhaka bourse with a modest uptrend in trading. But the mood of the market remained depressed. The rally, witnessed particularly after the parliamentary election, was apparently weakening.

Dhaka Stock Exchange (DSE) All Share Price Index lost 1.56 points to 348.6610 compared with Thursday's 350.2224. Decliners dominated trading on the floor.

In all 4119 shares and debentures changed hands compared with last Thursday's 3060. Traded issues valued Taka 249892.50 against last weekend's Taka 205735.00.

Twenty-six stocks were traded. Of them ten lost, ten gained and six remained unchanged at their previous quoted prices.

Among the decliners, Dulamia Cotton and Savar Refractories lost Taka 5.00 and Taka 4.00 to Taka 95.00 and Taka 106.00 respectively.

Modern Dying and Bengal Food declined Taka 2.00 and Taka 1.50 to Taka 40.00 and Taka 209.70.

National Bank, BGIC, Insurance, Quasem Silk, Quasem Textile, Saltham Text-ile and Beximco lost within the range between Taka 0.25 and Taka 1.00.

Beximco Pharma, the lone traded debenture and Islami Bank advanced Taka 30.00 and Taka 35.00 to Taka 1720.00 and Taka 1075.00 respectively.

Chittagong Cement moved up Taka 9.60 to Taka 151.10.

Apex Tannery and 5th ICB Mutual Fund gained Taka 3.00 each to Taka 145.00 and Taka 124.00.

Milon Tannery moved up Taka 2.89 to Taka 38.89.

United Insurance, 6th ICB Mutual Fund, National Tubes and G.G. Ball Pen advanced within the range between Taka 0.56 and Taka 1.00.

Banking hours in Ramzan rescheduled

Star Economic Report

The office timings of all the Scheduled Banks including Bangladesh Bank will be from 9-00 a.m. to 3-30 p.m. during the month of Ramzan in place of 9-00 a.m. to 4-00 p.m. as announced earlier, says a Bangladesh Bank press release.

The above office hours will be in effect from Saturday to Wednesday. The office will work without any break from 9-00 a.m. to 12-30 p.m. on Thursday.

Other timings will remain unchanged.

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Price Barometer Essentials

March - 16

RICE	(Taka per Kg)	
Aman (Very fine)	17.00-18.00	
Aman(fine)	14.25-15.00	
Pajam	13.50-14.50	
Ufahi	12.50-13.00	
VEGETABLES	(Taka per kg)	
Peas(White)	3.50-4.00	
Brinjal	5.00-8.00	
Lady's finger	10.00-12.00	
Kavala	9.00-11.00	
Kalshak	3.00-5.00	
Green Beans (Four Pieces)	5.00-8.00	
OTHER FOODGRAN	(Taka per Kg)	
Flour	12.00-14.00	
Atta	10.50-11.00	
Wheat	9.50-10.00	
FISH	(Taka per kg)	
Rubi(big)	120.00-150.00	
Katla(big)	80.00-100.00	
Hilsa	50.00-55.00	
Pangas	120.00-130.00	
Shrimp(big)	100.00-120.00	
Singi	70.00-80.00	
Koi	80.00-90.00	
PULSES	(Taka per Kg)	
Mash	26.00-28.00	
Mashur	27.00-28.00	
Noogh	34.00-36.00	
Chhola	22.00-24.00	
Matar	26.00-27.00	
Khasari	18.00-20.00	
MEAT	(Taka per Kg)	
Beef	50.00-60.00	
Mutton	80.00-85.00	
OIL	(Taka per Litre)	
Mustard	50.00-54.00	
Soyabean	33.00-34.00	
Coconut (Colombo)	60.00-64.00	
Vegetable Ghee	44.00-52.00	
SPICES	(Taka per kg)	
Onion (new)	10.00-13.00	
Garlic	20.00-30.00	
Chillies	58.00-60.00	
Turmeric(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	(Taka)	
Choc	220.00-230.00	
Sugar	28.00-29.00	
Molasses	16.00-18.00	

Source : Department of Agricultural Marketing

Hides & Skin

(Wet/Salted)

March - 16

(Taka per 100 pieces)

Cow	15,000.00	-	19,000.00
Light	28,000.00	-	35,000.00
Medium	40,000.00	-	45,000.00
Heavy	55,000.00	-	60,000.00
Very heavy	70,000.00	-	75,000.00
Rejected	30,000.00	-	35,000.00
Goat			
Dig & heavy	14,000.00	-	15,000.00
Light & medium	7,500.00	-	8,000.00
Rejected	3,500.00	-	4,000.00
Sheep	10,000.00	-	10,500.00
BUFFALO	60,000.00	-	63,000.00

Source: Department of Agricultural Marketing

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South Asian employers underscore sound relation with employees

Wage hike beyond productivity level to increase inflation

Star Economic Report

South Asian employers' meeting, just concluded in Kathmandu discussed productivity improvement and wage fixation for the countries of the region which are faced with rapid population increase, deteriorating terms of trade, growing indebtedness and widening poverty.

The meeting also discussed threadbare new trends of wage fixation in the world which are mostly linked with productivity and capacity to pay.

Organised by International Labour Organisation (ILO), the South Asian Employers' meeting held from March 10 to March 13, was inaugurated by Nepalese Prime Minister K. P. Bhattarai. Senior office-bearers of the employers federations attended the meeting. Mr. Latifur Rahman, President of Bangladesh Employers' Association led Bangladesh delegation to the meeting.

The ILO is keen to help the social partners in the Sub-Region quickly recognise that solution to these problems can come through improved productivity. Productivity cannot only help improve the standard of living and increase employment opportunities, but yield improved profitability for the employers and increased revenue to the Government.

National productivity depends as much on sound em-

ployer-worker relationship, as on political, economic, social and cultural forces which are largely within the control of the Government.

Based on a background paper prepared by an expert of Japanese Employers' Federation which has developed a Computer Model for wage fixation, the meeting discussed ways of linking wage increase to productivity increase. In Japan, the employers, workers and Government now follow the principle that average national wage increase rate must be held close to the real rate of increase in national productivity.

Any wage increases which exceed the level of productivity will result in higher inflation and adversely affect not only stable economic growth, return on investments and real wages of the workers. Recognition of this wage principle has resulted in robust economic expansion and stability in consumer prices in Japan.

The meeting concluded that productivity should no longer remain a neglected issue in South Asia. Its importance need to be recognised nationally. National awareness of the significance of productivity improvement and socio-economic development plays an important role in creating a productivity culture in all strata of the society.

workers co-operate amongst themselves. Over protection of labour has a negative impact on productivity inasmuch as over-protection of industries is harmful to the economy.

Productivity cannot improve until a productivity culture takes roots in all strata of the society.

On the other hand, a fundamental change in wage fixation system is essential. A national campaign is needed so as to link wage increase to productivity and ability to pay.

In a socially sensitive issue like wages, conflicting attitudes between the social partners must give in to co-operative relationship based on the principle of due distribution of the fruits of productivity improvement fairly among man-

agement, labour and the consumers.

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KATHMANDU: Nepalese Prime Minister K. P. Bhattarai (sitting third from left) is seen with the delegates to the South Asian Employers Meeting concluded here recently. Bangladesh Employers' Association (BEA) President Mr. Latifur Rahman (sitting extreme left) and other BEA delegates Mr. M Anisuddowla (standing in front row - third from left) and Mr. C. K. Hyder (standing in front row-third from right) are also seen in the picture.

Baker urges Arabs to end boycott of trading with Israel

WASHINGTON, Mar 16 : US Secretary of State James Baker called on Arab countries to end their boycott of companies which trade with Israel as a goodwill gesture prior to peace talks, diplomats said Friday, reports AFP.

The Secretary of State in turn demanded Israel cease expelling Palestinians from the occupied territories and abandon other repressive measures, the diplomats said.

Mr. Baker, who recently finished a Mideast tour, has urged Arab states to take steps toward establishing trust with Israel and asked Israel to do the same with Palestinians.

In a meeting in Riyadh with foreign ministers from Egypt, Syria, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates, Mr. Baker suggested the Arab League abolish its black list of countries which do business with Israel.

Drought threatens 15 m Africans' lives

WASHINGTON, Mar 16: The administration of President George Bush said Friday the lives of up to 15 million people in Ethiopia and the Sudan are at risk because of drought and civil strife, reports AP.

It said 394.6 million Dollars have been earmarked during the current fiscal year for emergency food relief for those two countries and four other African countries where hunger is widespread: Angola, Mozambique, Liberia and Somalia.

Scott Spangler, an assistant administrator for the Agency for International Development, told reporters the Sudan, with 9 million people at risk, faces the most serious situation in Africa "and it can only worsen." More than a million tonnes of food will be needed for the Sudan to avert starvation, he said.

Spangler said he expects European Community (EC) and other countries to join in the Africa relief effort, particularly Britain, Germany and Japan.

He noted the US relief programme for the Sudan was hampered when the State Department shut down its embassy in Khartoum because of concerns about terrorism. The Sudan was one of the few countries which supported Iraq in the Gulf conflict. US Ambassador James Cheek returned to Khartoum earlier this month after a six-week absence.

Spangler gave this account of the situation in other African countries with severe food shortages:

ETHIOPIA: Donors estimate some 750,000 metric tonnes of food are needed to feed the 5 to 6 million affected Ethiopians. The United States is planning to provide as much as one-third of this amount. On the plus side, the northern port of Massawa has been reopened for deliveries after being shut down for an extended period.

ANGOLA: About 1.9 million people could face starvation as a result of four years of drought and 15 years of civil war and stagnation. An agreement with the United Nations to provide safe passage of food to the warring factions was broken in December, but an agreement on resuming the deliveries has been reached. Nearly 4,000 tonnes of food are due to arrive in Angola on Saturday.

LIBERIA: Almost 2 million people are threatened by hunger largely the result of civil unrest that began in late 1989. Some 750,000 Liberians have fled as refugees to neighboring countries.

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Raw Jute

March - 16

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

	White	Tossa	Meshta
Medium	1393	1500	1125
Bot.* (B)	1340	1447	1098
Bot. (C)	1206	1286	1045
Bot. (X)	1072	1125	857
* FOB = Freight on board			
* Bot. = Bottom			

Pucca bales FOB (Ready)* (Sight)**

	White	FOB	FOB
Varieties	(Ready)*	(Sight)**	
Bangla	Tk. per	\$ per	
White	bale*	MT*	
BW SPL.	3450	585	
BWA	3350	570	
BWB	3300	550	
BWC	2900	480	
BWD	2600	410	
BWE	2000	365	
Bangla			
Tossa			
BT SPL.	3500	595	
BTB	3450	580	
BTB	3400	560	
BTC	2950	490	
BTD	2650	420	
BTE	2100	375	
White Rejection (WRS)/			
Tossa Rejection (TRS)/			
Habibaji Cut Ropes			
BWR	1650	290	
BWH	1300	220	
BTR	1750	300	
BTII	1400	230	
BCR	1250	230	
White/Tossa :			
Cutting			
BWCA	1450	235	
BWCB	1300	220	
BWCA	1600	250	
BWCB	1500	235	
Meshta			
Spl.	1950	355	
A	1900	345	
B	1800	330	
C	1600	295	
SPL Cuttings	1000	175	
Ord. Cuttings	900	170	
SMR	1125	200	
* 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) nontraditional/applicable to export bills. One \$ = Tk. 35.4956			
* MT = Metric Ton			

Annul economic blockade : Iraq

BAGHDAD, Mar 16 : The Al-Iraq newspaper called on the United Nations to annul or suspend its economic blockade against the country, saying the continuing action amounted to taking revenge on the people of Iraq rather than putting pressure on the Government, reports Reuters.

Baghdad newspapers also reported on Wednesday that the country has introduced new coins carrying the legend, "victory is ours."

The new high-denomination coinage was announced in

two Presidential decrees published in the newspapers. No explanation for the move was given.

The five-dinar and 10-dinar coins are the first to exceed the one-dinar (3.2 dollars) metal piece.

On one side, the coins show the arch of victory — two swords and a palm tree with President Saddam Hussein's first, created in 1988 after the August ceasefire in the eight-year Iran-Iraq war. "Victory is ours" is shown on the over-side.

On the blockade, Al-Iraq newspaper said that "punishing the Iraqi people by leaving the unjust resolutions hanging over their head like the sword,

Lanka becomes largest tea exporter

COLOMBO, Mar 16 : Sri Lanka has beaten its traditional rival India to become the world's largest tea exporter last year following a bumper crop, leading tea firm John Keells Limited said here yesterday, reports AFP.

Sri Lanka's tea exports last year hit 215.3 million kilos (473.66 million pounds) compared to 204.1 million kilos (449.02 million pounds) in 1989, John Keells said.

India, which had been exporting slightly more than 200 million kilos annually, saw its exports drop to 199.6 million kilos (437.8 million pounds) last year, the company said.

John Keells said Sri Lanka was able to take the top slot thanks to a crop of 233.2 million kilos (513.04 million pounds).

The biggest Sri Lankan tea buyer during the year was Egypt, with 29.3 million kilos (64.46 million pounds). Iraq, traditionally the second largest buyer was pushed to third place after Iran because of economic sanctions against Baghdad.

Iraq's purchases were 18.9 million kilos (41.58 million pounds) while Iran bought 24.6 million kilos (54.12 million pounds). Comparative buying figures for 1989 were not immediately available.

Gold & Silver

March - 16

(Taka for 11.66 grams)

Gold	6,000.00
Telab	6,300.00
Gutha	200.00
Silver	

Source: Department of Agricultural Marketing

Hides & Skin

(Wet/Salted)

March - 16

(Taka per 100 pieces)

Cow	15,000.00	-	19,000.00
Light	28,000.00	-	35,000.00
Medium	40,000.00	-	45,000.00
Heavy	55,000.00	-	60,000.00
Very heavy	70,000.00	-	75,000.00
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Goat			
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Sheep	10,000.00	-	10,500.00
BUFFALO	60,000.00	-	63,000.00

Source: Department of Agricultural Marketing



Mr. M. A. Yussouf Khan, Managing Director of The City Bank Ltd. inaugurated the 5th Branch of the Bank at Hazigonj, Chandpur on Thursday March 14, '91.

Exchange Rates

March - 16

SELLING AND BUYING RATES, offered by Commercial Banks, for Bank Cheques, (BC) and Overseas Drafts (OD)

One Unit of Foreign Currencies (FC) for Taka

FCs	Selling	Buying
US Dollar	35.9226	35.4432
UK Pound Sterling	66.8095	66.0236
German Deutsche	22.8370	22.5179
Mark		
French Franc	6.703	6.6201
Saudi Riyal	6.7183	6.4819
Dutch Guilder	20.2666	19.9849
Pakistan Rupee	1.5965	1.5815
AMU*		
Singapore Dollar	20.5695	20.2950
UAE Dirham	9.8111	9.6831
Kuwait Dinar		Not available
Indian Rupee		
AMU	1.8767	1.8587
S. Kroner	6.1973	6.1093
*AMU: Asian Monetary Unit		

Wage Earners Fund/ Export Performance Benefit (XPB) Fund

	Buying	Selling
US Dollar	36.48	36.53
UK Pound Sterling	67.88	67.93

* The rates of Pound Sterling are decided every day, based on the cross-rates of New York market. Source: Small Bank

Quoted Prices of Traded Stocks

March - 16

Bank	FV/ML	Closing (Taka)	Change (Taka)
Islamic Bank	1000/1	1075.00	(+35.00)
National Bank	100/5	114.00	(+1.00)
Investment	100/5	114.00	(+1.00)
5th ICB M. Fund	100/10	124.00	(+3.00)
6th ICB M. Fund	100/10	94.50	(