

Canada to resume wheat trade with Iraq

OTTAWA, Apr 11: Canada is ready to resume wheat sales to Iraq and the Federal government expects 'business as usual' in this respect with its wartime foe, the globe and mail reports, reports Xinhua.

The paper quotes Charles Mayer, Federal Grains and Oilseeds Minister, as saying that Canada, Australia and the United States will all be eager to resume wheat trade with Iraq. The three were major suppliers of grain to Iraq before the Gulf war.

In an interview at the annual meeting of the Canada grain council in Winnipeg, Mayer said, 'It's an important market. I think they have been purchasing three million tonnes or better.'

Iraq agreed last week to meet the United Nations conditions for a formal ceasefire that allows the resumption of food exports to that country.

Mayer said that because all of Iraq's potential grain suppliers were members of the coalition that forced Iraq out of Kuwait, he does not expect Iraq will be reluctant to deal with Canada.

Prior to the August 2 invasion, Iraq was buying about 3.6 million tonnes each year. About half of that wheat came from Australia, with most of the remainder from the United States and Canada.

China cuts yuan value

BEIJING, Apr 11: China cut the value of the yuan by about one per cent against the US dollar in a move analysts said could be the beginning of loosened controls on the tightly managed currency, reports Reuters.

'This is a highly significant move,' a western diplomat said on Wednesday. 'Of they devalue by many small steps every two weeks or every month, basically following the market value, it is a step towards de facto convertibility.'

Effective from close of business on Tuesday, the yuan was worth 5.2589 to the dollar, down from 5.2090, or 0.95 per cent lower using the International Monetary Fund method of calculating devaluations.

The move was not formally announced, appearing first in a routine message about currency rates issued daily by the official New China News Agency.

Officials at the State Administration of Exchange Control, an arm of the Central Bank, confirmed the new rate, but were reluctant to discuss it.

'This was a managed float, not a free one,' one official said by telephone. 'There was human intervention.'

Lone issue traded at DSE

Star Economic Report

Dhaka Stock Exchange (DSE) in the most bullish feature of its trading pattern witnessed on Thursday a record low performance.

Only one listed stock was traded and that too involved only 15 shares in volume. The market has been on a downswing in trading activities over the last fortnight. It dipped to its lowest performance in the closing day of the week.

In value terms, trading stood at Taka 1575.00. On Wednesday, 1174 shares worth Taka 103930.00 changed hands.

The lone traded issue on Thursday was that of Eastern Cables. It gained Taka 5.59 and stood at Taka 105.00 at closing. The market gains for Eastern Cables pushed the DSE All Share Price Index slightly up. It stood at 355.9197 compared with Wednesday's 355.5285. The index in the broad indicator of price trends of all the listed stocks.

Quoted Prices of Traded Stocks

Stock	Price
Eastern Cables	105.00 (+5.59)
Other Stocks	Not Traded

Dhaka Stock Exchange Market Profile

April - 11

134 Listed stocks

1 Gains, No Losses, 133 Unchanged

DSE All Share Price Index = 355.9197
 Issued Capital - Taka 10,146,299,601.00
 Market Capitalisation = 10,170,498,112
 Turnover = Taka 1575.00 (Value) 15 (Volume)

Dhaka-Beijing JEC meet concludes

China to continue barter trade

China has agreed to Bangladesh's request to continue barter trade at least for the next one year as a special consideration, reports UNB.

The agreement was reached at the sixth meeting of the China-Bangladesh Joint Economic Commission (JEC) which concluded in Dhaka on Thursday.

Both sides signed an agreed minute on the four-day meeting at the NEC (National Economic Council) building this morning. ERD (Economic Relations Division) Secretary Enam Ahmed Chowdhury and Chinese Vice Minister for Foreign Economic Relations and Trade Wang Wen Dong represented their respective governments.

China has discontinued barter trade with all other countries. But its agreement to continue barter only with Bangladesh was seen by officials as the most significant outcome of the JEC meet.

The two governments maintain 31 million US Dollars of barter trade each way annually.

China has also agreed to fund a 250-bedded modern hospital in Dhaka. A protocol to this effect was signed.

A China - BSEC (Bangladesh Steel and Engineering Corporation) joint venture bicycle chain manufacturing unit with an annual capacity of producing five lakh pieces will be established under the agreement.

Chinese side agreed to finance construction of a bridge on the river Mahananda at Chapainawabganj after completion of the on-going Shambhuganj bridge.

A contract to this effect was signed during the JEC talks. Work on the proposed Mahananda bridge, the third China-aided road bridge, is expected to begin in November.

CCC&I official leaves Dhaka

Secretary of Chittagong Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCC&I) Mahmudul Huq Chowdhury left Dhaka recently to participate in a seminar on 'The Role of Chambers of Commerce in Trade Promotion' being held in Budapest, Hungary and Helsinki, Finland from April 10 to April 24.

The Chinese side also agreed to provide technology for the development of Bangladesh's sericulture and silk industry.

Meeting sources said that no specific progress could be made in regard to reducing fast-growing trade imbalance between the two countries.

Balance of trade has been heavily in favour of China over the years. According to official figures, Bangladesh's import from China in 1989-90 totalled Tk 415 crore against its export of Tk 60 crore only.

On signing the agreed minute, leaders of both sides expressed the hope that cooperation between China and Bangladesh would continue to improve on the basis of equality and mutual benefit.

Chinese Vice-Minister said 'obligations stipulated in the agreed minute of the sixth JEC session must be carried out with joint efforts.'

The seventh meeting of JEC, commissioned in 1983, will be held in Beijing next year.

The Chinese team left for Beijing this morning. ERD Secretary Enam Ahmed Chowdhury saw him off at ZIA.



On bicycle into the New Year: Federal President Richard von Weizsacker (in foreground) and the former German world road champion Rudi Altig (at the rear - on the left) embarking on a 'test run '91' in Bonn - for cycling is once again 'in'.

BSCIC, Bata sign MOU on sub-contracting

Star Economic Report

A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was signed between Bangladesh Small and Cottage Industries Corporation (BSCIC) and Bata Shoes (Bangladesh) Ltd. on Thursday.

Mohammad Maniruzzaman Chowdhury, Chairman, BSCIC and M. Old Royed, Managing Director of Bata Shoes (Bangladesh) Ltd. signed the MOU on behalf of their respective organisations.

The MOU, first of its kind between BSCIC and a multinational company, aims at linking small industries units with the large industries on the basis of the basis of sub-contracting system.

A press release of BSCIC said on Thursday that it signed so far MOU's with 24 public and 10 private organisations, excluding the one with Bata Shoe. Following the signing of MOUs, the small engineering units enlisted with BSCIC as sub-contractors received work-orders for supplying spareparts worth Taka 35.44 crores from these organisations, the press release added. Already, spareparts valued Taka 25 crores have been supplied by the enlisted small engineering units.

Shippets

2 m gold coins on sale in Japan

TOKYO, Apr 11: Japan's Finance Ministry put two million commemorative gold coins on sale on Wednesday, hoping new anti-counterfeit precautions will make this issue go better than the last, reports Reuters.

The coins, with a face value of 100,000 Yen (740 dollars), mark the start of the reign of Emperor Akihito, who formally succeeded his late father Hirohito last November.

The previous commemorative issue, 11 million coins released in 1986 and 1987 for the 60th year of Hirohito's reign, stirred a major counterfeiting controversy.

Australia may raise uranium production

CANBERRA, Apr 11: Australia should increase production of uranium beyond the current approved three mines, a key committee of the ruling Labour Party said here Wednesday, reports AFP.

The Committee, reviewing the Labour Party's strict policy on uranium mining, said such a move would allow Australia's nuclear industry to expand, though under stringent safeguards.

Oil production cost may rise in Kuwait

KUWAIT, Apr 11: Some blazing oil wells are emitting clouds of steam, indicating that underground water is entering oil reservoirs and could raise production costs long after the hundreds of fires are snuffed, reports AP.

On the desert floor, where water is desperately lacking, American firefighting teams Wednesday built an improvised lagoon to hold 5 million gallons (19 million liters) of water from the Gulf needed in fighting the more than 500 raging infernos.

Japan compensating pollution victims

TOKYO, Apr 11: Japanese government and industry have done much to cleanup the mess they made as big-time polluters over the last four decades. But compensating pollution's victims in another matter, reports AP.

Recently, however, Japan's courts have begun to champion victims claims and apply a judicial knife to the once-seamless alliance of big business and government bureaucracy.

Yet the government, which long looked the other way as industries it nurtured sullied the environment, continues to stonewall many cases. Among them is the notorious Minamata mercury poisoning that first brought worldwide attention to Japan's severe environmental problems in the 1950s.

Alaska to pursue claims against Alyeska

JUNEAU (Alaska), Apr 11: Alaska will continue to seek civil damages from Alyeska Pipeline Service Co. for its role in the Exxon Valdez oil spill, even if the proposed settlement of spill litigation with Exxon Corp. is approved, Gov. Walter J. Hickel said Wednesday, reports AP.

Hickel issued a statement in response to a letter released Tuesday by US Representative George Miller of California, who alleged Hickel's proposed 1-billion dollar settlement would let Alyeska off the legal hook.

G-7 FMs meet in London Sunday

PARIS, Apr 11: When Group of Seven (G-7) Finance Ministers meet in London on Sunday they will be less preoccupied by exchange and interest rates than by the sea changes in economic relations touched off by Eastern Europe's democratic revolution and by the Gulf war, officials say, reports Reuters.

Finance Ministers and their deputies will meet informally on the eve of the inaugural session of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), the changes wrought by the collapse of 40 years of communism.

Oil prices up in New York

NEW YORK, Apr 11: Crude oil prices on US markets hit their highest level in nearly two months on Wednesday, topping 21 dollars a barrel amid shrinking supplies of crude and petrol ahead of the summer driving season, reports Reuters.

On the New York Mercantile Exchange, crude oil for May delivery was up 81 Cents at 21.07 dollars a barrel in afternoon trading.

Dhaka to get Tk 52.22 cr Canadian grant

Bangladesh will receive a grant of Canadian Dollars 17 million (equivalent to about Tk 52.22 crore) for financing the North-East Regional Study, a major component of Flood Action Plan under a memorandum of understanding signed in Dhaka Thursday, reports UNB.

The project will assist the country in establishing a regional water management plan to guide future development in greater Sylhet and Mymensingh districts, said a press release.

K M Ejazul Huq, Joint Secretary, Economic Relations Division, Ministry of Finance and Emile Gauvreau, Canadian High Commissioner in Bangladesh signed the MOU on behalf of their respective governments.

Technical assistance for selection, design, implementa-

tion, operation and maintenance of individual water management will be provided which will mainly benefit the country's agricultural and fisheries sectors.

A comprehensive multi-disciplinary study of the hydrological, socio-economic environmental conditions will result in recommendations for water resources development by both structural and non-structural means, it added.

The project will provide for rehabilitation, construction of civil works and enhancement of technical, managerial and organisational skills of farmers, representatives of village organisations, women cooperatives and government agencies associated with the project. The Bangladesh Water Development will implement the project, the press release further added.

EC bankers call for licencing of Iraqi claims

BRUSSELS, Apr 11: European banks called for regulatory authorities in the 12 European Community member states to implement a licencing procedure in order to avoid financial claims on EC banks by Iraq, reports Reuters.

In a statement, the European Banking Federation said it had told the European Commission that unless such a procedure is adopted, Iraq could force EC banks to meet obligations frozen by the economic sanctions against Baghdad.

'The end of the embargo (against Iraq) could result in Iraq making a large number of claims under the guarantees given by EC banks,' the Federation said.

The Federation said that before Iraq invaded Kuwait last August EC firms were involved in billions of ECUs in Iraq.

Robots in Malaysia's rubber industry

KUALA LUMPUR, Apr 11: Malaysia's century old natural rubber industry, badly hit by rising production costs and labour shortages, is entering the age of robots to stay in business, reports AFP.

In the future, robots strapped to rubber trees will tap and collect latex in a technological quantum leap from the last century, when indentured labour was imported from India to get plantations going officials say.

'If you stretch your imagination you can see the whole contraption linked by pipes to a central collection centre and controlled by a computer, which can regulate latex flow,' Minister of Primary Industries Lim Keng Yaik said.

'The potential is unlimited with the availability of electronics and microchips,' he said, adding that in the long

run the capital intensive system could prove life-saving for the industry.

Mr. Lim said rising costs and labour shortages necessitated a new look at the direction of the rubber industry.

Although Malaysia, aided by superior research and development, is still the largest and most efficient producer, the cost of producing a kilo (2.2 pounds) of natural rubber has risen to 220 cents (80 US

This compares with 160 cents (58 US cents) in Indonesia and Thailand, Malaysia's competitors, where labour is abundant.

Malaysia's rapid industrialisation drive in the 1980s, its diversification into oil palm in the 1960s and low rubber prices combined to turn the rubber industry into a loser in the scramble for a small domestic labour pool.

Price Barometer Essentials

April - 11

Item	Price
RICE Aman (Very fine)	17.00-17.50
Aman (fine)	14.50-15.00
Pujon	13.00-14.00
Uthi	11.50-12.00
VEGETABLES (Taka per kg)	
Potato (White)	3.00-3.50
Brinjal	5.00-7.00
Lady's finger	8.00-10.00
Karola	8.00-10.00
Lalaha	4.00-6.00
Papa	5.00-6.00
Green Banana (Four Pieces)	5.00-10.00
ONION/POGGAN (Taka per Kg)	
Flour	12.00-14.00
Atta	10.00-11.00
Wheat	8.50
Suati	18.00-20.00
FISH (Taka per kg)	
Rubi (big)	110.00-135.00
Katla (big)	80.00-110.00
Hilsha	55.00-60.00
Pangas	100.00-110.00
Shrimp (big)	80.00-100.00
Singi	75.00-80.00
Koi	90.00-100.00
PULSES (Taka per Kg)	
Mash	31.00-32.00
Matar	26.00-28.00
Mocha	33.00-34.00
Cholai	22.00-24.00
Matar	24.00-26.00
Khesari	16.00-18.00
MEAT (Taka per Kg)	
Beef	50.00-60.00
Mutton	80.00-90.00
OIL (Taka per Litre)	
Mustard	52.00-54.00
Soybean	33.00-34.00
Palm Oil	40.00-41.00
Cocunut (Colombo)	64.00-68.00
Vegetable Ghee	40.00-52.00
SPICES (Taka per Kg)	
Onion (new)	12.00-14.00
Garlic	36.00-40.00
Chillies	52.00-60.00
Turner (Round)	40.00-44.00
(Long)	44.00-50.00
Green chillies	20.00-24.00
Ginger	20.00-24.00
Cinnamon* (10gms)	3.00-3.50
Candemam* (large)	3.50-4.00
Rice (50gms)	7.00-7.50
MISCELLANEOUS (Taka)	
Chen	220.00-230.00
Sugar	27.00-28.00
Melasses	18.00-20.00

Source: Department of Agricultural Marketing

Japan welcomes Soviet plan to set up regional economic bloc cautiously

TOKYO, Apr 11: Japanese economists and officials are giving a cautious welcome to a project by Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev to set up a regional economic bloc in northeast Asia that could rival the European Community, reports AFP.

Gorbachev says he wants to create a zone of prosperity around the sea of Japan thanks to the region's considerable wealth, combining Japanese and South Korean cash, Chinese and North Korean manpower and Soviet natural resources.

The idea, first aired by the Soviet leader in an interview last week with the economic daily Nihon Keizai Shimbun, is 'interesting,' Japanese economists agreed.

But they also cautioned that the main stumbling block - more than infrastructural and logistical difficulties. Or major political differences - was the Soviet Union's domestic woes.

'How about the Soviet Union and Japan becoming the initiators of the creation of another 'common market', Gorbachev asked in the interview published Friday, a market among countries on the

Japan sea? 'There are a number of big countries there, with a combined population of more than 1.5 billion, and another region of prosperity and peace should be created there through joint efforts,' said Gorbachev, who arrives here next week on the first visit to Japan by a Soviet leader.

Fresh miners' blow to Soviet reforms

MOSCOW, Apr 11: President Mikhail Gorbachev's efforts to rescue the Soviet economy from collapse and avert confrontation with rebellious republics have been dealt fresh blows by strikes in Byelorussia and Georgia, reports Reuters.

An estimated 150,000 people rallied in the Byelorussian capital Minsk on Wednesday in support of strikers demanding the resignation both of Gorbachev and the government of the normally quiet republic bordering

Poland. A spokesman for the strikers said much of the city was at a standstill after workers at 66 enterprises walked out and added that the action would continue until local leaders agreed to talks.

On the Soviet Union's southern fringes, Georgia's separatist leaders organised strikes in protest against the presence of Soviet troops in a corner of the republic resisting Georgian efforts to wrest it from Kremlin jurisdiction.

South Korea and the Soviet Union established diplomatic relations in September.

In another first, South Korea President Roh Tae-Woo visited Moscow in December and signed an economic and commercial cooperation agreement.

And Gorbachev is expected on a ground-breaking visit here from April 16 to 19.

Tokyo's Nomura, Japan's biggest securities house, is convinced that countries of the sea of Japan have replaced those of the south China sea as potentially the most promising in Asia.

'Northeast Asia has the largest potential in terms of its endowment of natural resources and complementary economies,' Nomura said in a report released in March on the area comprising northern China, the Soviet Far East, the Korean peninsula and Japan.

Other economists believe that despite shortages of cash, manpower and infrastructure, eastern Siberia, with immense natural resources in oil, gas, minerals and wood, will become the driving force behind any economic cooperation.

Gold & Silver

April - 11

(Taka for 11.66 grams)

Gold	6,000.00
Tejabi	6,300.00
Outrun	6,300.00
Silver	200.00

Source: Department of Agricultural Marketing

Hides & Skin

(Wet/Salted) April - 11

(Taka per 100 pieces)

Cow	15,000.00 - 18,500.00
Buff	28,000.00 - 34,500.00
Light	40,000.00 - 45,000.00
Medium	50,000.00 - 60,000.00
Heavy	60,000.00 - 70,000.00
Very heavy	65,000.00 - 70,000.00
Rejected	25,000.00 - 30,000.00
Big & heavy	12,000.00 - 14,000.00
Light & 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 - 60,000.00

Source: Department of Agricultural Marketing

Spending in US business slows

WASHINGTON, Apr 11: Spending by American businesses to expand production is rising at the slowest pace in five years, the US Commerce Department estimated Wednesday, reports Reuters.

Analysts say the slow growth is chiefly due to the US recession's pinch on profits and clouded prospects for economic recovery.

A survey of 1991 investment plans conducted between January and March showed companies intended to increase spending by 3.2 per cent after allowing for inflation, the weakest rate of increase since 1986 when spending fell 3.1 per cent.

That follows actual rises in real capital spending of 4.5 per

Exchange Rates

April - 11

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

One Unit of Foreign Currencies (FC) for Taka

FC	Selling	Buying
US Dollar	35.9226	35.4432
UK Pound Sterling	64.3798	63.6150
German Deutsche	21.5587	21.2583
Mark		
French Franc	6.3093	6.2815
Swiss Royal	6.6101	6.4819
Dutch Guilder	19.1381	18.8628
Pakistan Rupee (AMU)	1.5511	1.5362
Singapore Dollar	20.3574	20.0587
US Dollar	9.8141	9.6831
Kuwait Dirham		Not available
Indian Rupee		
AMU	1.8293	1.8119
S. Kroner	5.9992	5.8946

*AMU - Asian Monetary Unit

SECONDARY EXCHANGE MARKET

Wage Earners Fund/Export	Buying	Selling</
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