

Growth, target group oriented plan recommended for poverty alleviation

A leading agricultural economist has prescribed both growth and target group oriented programmes to alleviate rural poverty.

As agriculture is the main source of rural income, agricultural growth is likely to have a more direct bearing on rural poverty alleviation, agro-economist Dr Jahangir Alam told UNB Monday.

But increased production is likely to promote economic concentration and worsen the relative position of the lower income group due to unequal distribution of assets in the countryside.

According to Dr Alam, with intensification of targeted anti-poverty programmes there will be an improvement in the distribution of rural income and poverty situation.

Referring to the target group oriented programmes, he said by 1990, about one third of nearly eight million target households was said to have been covered by anti-poverty programmes of different governments and NGOs.

There has been repeated emphasis on land reform during the last few decades with little success, the agro-economist said stressing the need for a policy of radical redistribution of land to

strengthen the economic and social power of small and landless peasants.

He also suggested that targeted income and employment generating programmes be designed to provide support to the rural poor.

In the recent years, there has been moderate improvement in the poverty situation. The magnitude of poverty in early 1980s was about 80 per cent and the poverty situation improved towards the end of the decade due to stability in food prices and targeted anti-poverty programme executed by government and NGOs.

Despite repeated emphasis on poverty alleviation in the last few decades there has been very little improvement and the extent of poverty is still alarming, said Dr Alam, who conducted a number of studies on agricultural development and rural poverty.

The magnitude of poverty is much higher in Bangladesh compared to many other countries of Asia. It is 23 per cent in Pakistan, 27 per cent in Sri Lanka and 35 per cent in India.

About 50 per cent of all rural land of Bangladesh is owned by about 10 per cent households and the rest 50

per cent owned by about 90 per cent of the households. More than 50 per cent of total households are functional landless owning land up to 0.5 acres.

Agricultural growth rate declined from 3.4 per cent in the 1970s to 2.5 per cent a year in the 1980s. Industrial growth rate declined from about seven to about 4.5 per cent per year.

After independence in 1971, the country stepped into deep poverty with widespread misery in the rural areas. With only 1927 calorie supply per capita it now occupies ninth position from the bottom among 38 low income countries.

Dr Alam, former president of Bangladesh Agricultural Economists Association, noted that the strategy of growth oriented programmes in agriculture should aim at broadening the modern technological base for rapid transformation of traditional agriculture.

He emphasised on an appropriate mix of input subsidy, credit extension and output pricing policies to speed up the process of transformation.

To implement the policy package, he said, public expenditure in agriculture has to be increased. Adequate re-

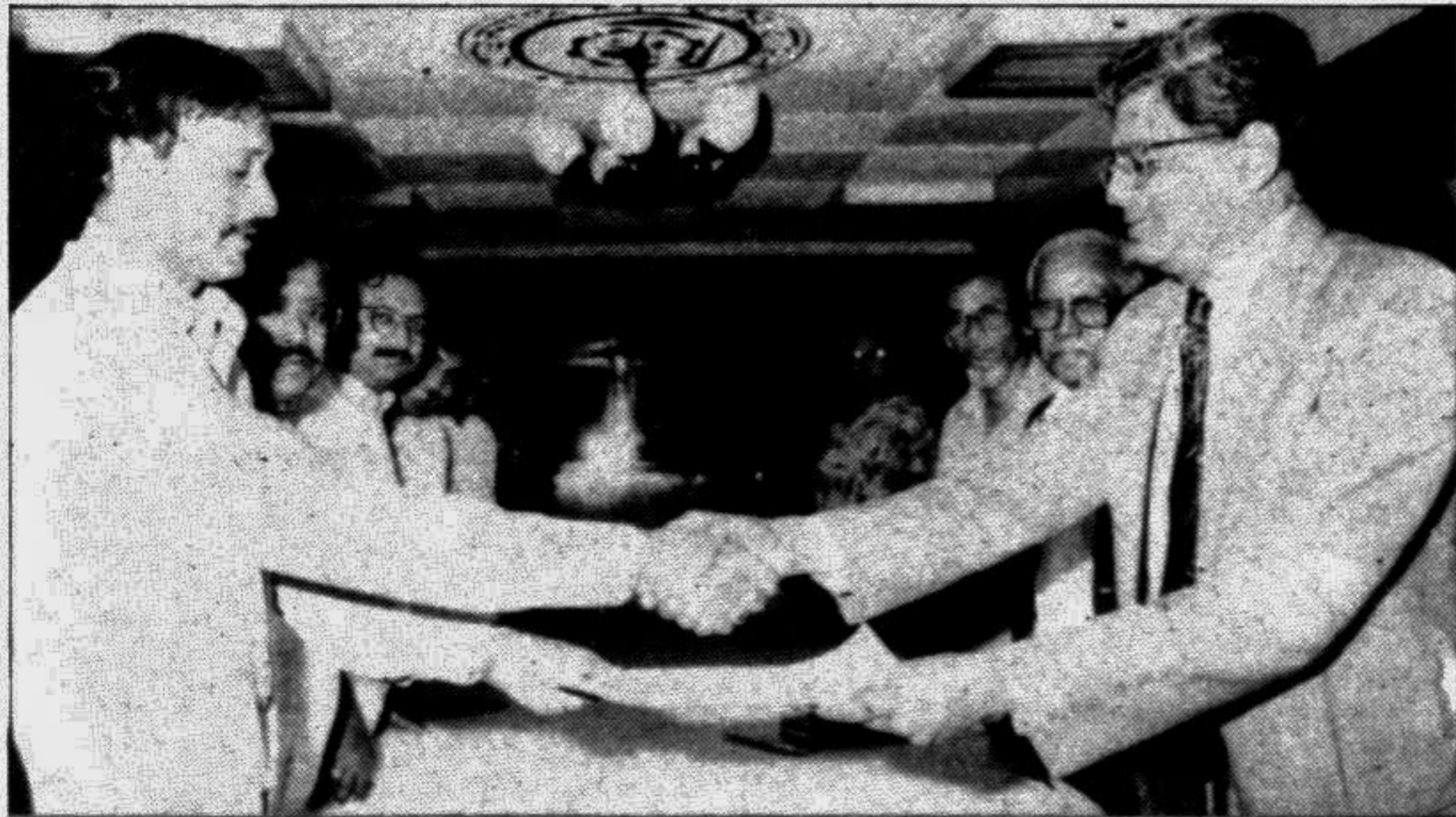
sources should be made available to the agriculture sector for allowing a significant increase in allocation of resources to crop, livestock, fisheries and forestry sub-sectors.

At the same time investment should be made on rural industries, rural electrification and infrastructure to diversify the horizon of employment in rural areas, he added.

About the role of NGOs, Dr Alam said they have made positive impact on rural income inequality and poverty. But the cost of operation of most NGOs is higher than that of government organisations with 60 per cent of their funds coming from foreign donors.

Therefore, sustainability of NGOs activities are questionable.

He felt a leading government organisation should take the responsibility of promoting growth target group oriented programmes simultaneously in the rural areas.



Bangladesh Krishi Bank (BKB) Karmachari Federation signed an agreement on their 34 point agenda with the bank authority in a meeting held on Feb 28 Dr A T M Shamsul Huda Managing Director, BKB and the leaders of the federation are seen exchanging the documents.

Government to ensure minimum service charge from foreign job-seekers

The eighth meeting of the parliamentary standing committee on Labour and Manpower Ministry Sunday decided to ensure conditions so that Bangladeshi workers could go abroad with jobs at a minimum service charge, reports BSS.

Held at the Committee Room of the Sangsad Bhaban the meeting was presided over by the Chairman of the committee and Labour and Manpower Minister Abdul

Mannan Bhuiyan. The meeting decided to take stern measures against those responsible for sending workers through illegal means to various countries including Malaysia.

It discussed in details the projects being implemented by the Ministry of Labour and Manpower in cooperation with International Labour Organisation (ILO). The meeting also discussed the existing labour situation, labour law reform

and sending of Bangladeshi workers abroad.

Committee members including Whip of the Jatiya Sangsad Ashraf Hossain, Begum Khaleda Rabbani, Mirza Muraduzzaman, Vice-Principal Md Abdus Shahid, Mohammad Aminul Islam, Mozhar Hossain, Sarifuddin Ahmed, Shahaduzzaman, and high officials of different offices under the Ministry of Labour and Manpower were present at the meeting.

Geological Survey Dept to be strengthened

The parliamentary committee on energy and mineral resources at a meeting Sunday decided to strengthen and expand the activities of the Geological Survey Department to accelerate the pace of exploration and exploitation of the country's natural resources, reports UNB.

It also decided to build up adequate infrastructures to facilitate exploration activities, including ascertaining the reserves and quality of the mineral resources deposits in the country.

The 11th meeting of the committee, held at the Sangsad Bhaban with Energy and Mineral Resources Minister Dr. Khandker Mosharraf

S'pore chamber welcomes '93 budget proposals

SINGAPORE, Mar 1: The Singapore International Chamber of Commerce (SICC) on Friday welcomed Finance Minister Richard Hu's 1993 budget proposals, saying they were progressive and conducive to doing business in Singapore, reports AFP.

The SICC congratulated Hu for a range of measures linked to the introduction of a Goods and Services Tax (GST) in April next year which were designed to minimise the impact of the consumption tax.

"Overall the chamber is hopeful that the measures taken will be broad enough to contain rising business costs, and in particular, pressure on wages brought about by the introduction of the GST," the SICC said in a statement.

paired by a Thai logging concern.

In addition, a company of French engineers recently re-opened and airstrip in Tbeng Meanchey and is currently repairing bridges and clearing mines on the road connecting the provincial capital to the district town of Rovieng.

Rovieng is heavily disputed by Khmer Rouge guerrillas and Phnom Penh government troops.

With the two roads, access would be opened to about 80 per cent of the province and provide an escape route if necessary for aid workers to Thailand, Bouchuiguir said.

UN officials studying possibility of reopening road link with Thailand

TBENG MEANCHEY (Cambodia), Mar 1: UN officials in this isolated northern Cambodian town are studying the possibility of reopening a road link with Thailand in a bid to lure aid and humanitarian organisations to the country's most-neglected province, reports AFP.

"Preah Vihear (province) is happy today for not being forgotten as usual," the chief provincial officials of the UN peacekeeping operation told James Grant, Executive Director of the UN International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF),

who was on a four-day visit to Cambodia. Siman Bouchuiguir, the UN Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC) provincial director, said aid agencies were conspicuously absent from the poverty-stricken and war-wracked province which borders Thailand and Laos.

UNICEF, which has dug precious wells and provided small quantities of drugs and textbooks for children, is the only overseas aid agency currently helping the underprivileged province of 90,000 people. Bouchuiguir called on all

Shipping Intelligence

Table with columns: Berth No., Name of Vessels, Cargo, L. Port, Local Call, Agent, Date of Arrival, Leaving. Sub-section: CHITTAGONG PORT.

Table with columns: Name of Vessels, Date of Last Port, Arrival, Local Call, Cargo, Loading Port. Sub-section: VESSELS DUE AT OUTER ANCHORAGE.

Table with columns: Name of Vessels, Cargo, Last Port, Local Call, Date of Arrival. Sub-section: VESSELS AT KUTUBDIA.

Table with columns: Name of Vessels, Cargo, Last Port, Local Call, Date of Arrival. Sub-section: VESSELS AT OUTER ANCHORAGE.

Table with columns: Name of Vessels, Cargo, Last Port, Local Call, Date of Arrival. Sub-section: VESSELS NOT READY.

Table with columns: Name of Vessels, Cargo, Last Port, Local Call, Date of Arrival. Sub-section: VESSELS AWAITING INSTRUCTION.

Table with columns: Name of Vessels, Cargo, Last Port, Local Call, Date of Arrival. Sub-section: VESSELS NOT ENTERING.

Table with columns: Outgoing, Incoming, Shifting. Sub-section: MOVEMENT OF VESSELS FOR 02.03.93.

The above were the Monday's Shipping position and performance of vessels of Chittagong Port as per berthing sheet of CPA supplied by HRC Group, Dhaka.

Table with columns: Item, Price. Sub-section: Price Index.

Table with columns: Currency, Selling B.C., T.T.(C), Buying OD Transfers. Sub-section: Exchange Rates.

Dhaka Stock Prices

Remarkable recovery. Monday's trading resulted in a remarkable recovery at Dhaka Stock Exchange. Although number of participants fell from Sunday's 42 to 33, transactions in terms of both turnovers jumped.

Table with columns: Company, Previous Price, Closing Price, Change (absolute), Change (% over Price), Number of share sold. Sub-section: DAY'S TRADING AT A GLANCE.

Table with columns: Company, Previous Price, Closing Price, Change (absolute), Change (% over Price), Number of share sold. Sub-section: Gains (06) Stocks.

Table with columns: Company, Previous Price, Closing Price, Change (absolute), Change (% over Price), Number of share sold. Sub-section: Losses (12) Stocks.

Traded at previous rates (13). Stocks: 5th ICB M Fund (250), 6th ICB M Fund (130), Aftab Automobiles (60), National Tea Company (196), Zeal Bangla Sugar (450), Modern Dying (10), Pharma Aids (25), the Ibbnsina (60), Rahman Chemicals (10), Paper Processing (20), Milton Tanneries (100), Green Delta (250).

Table with columns: Company, FV/ML Tk, Share Price, etc. Sub-section: DSE SHARES AND DEBENTURES.

Table with columns: Company, FV/ML Tk, Share Price, etc. Sub-section: INVESTMENT (06).

Table with columns: Company, FV/ML Tk, Share Price, etc. Sub-section: INSURANCE (04).

Table with columns: Company, FV/ML Tk, Share Price, etc. Sub-section: PHARMACEUTICALS & CHEMICALS (18).

Table with columns: Company, FV/ML Tk, Share Price, etc. Sub-section: ENGINEERING (10).

Table with columns: Company, FV/ML Tk, Share Price, etc. Sub-section: FOOD & ALLIED (23).

Table with columns: Company, FV/ML Tk, Share Price, etc. Sub-section: SERVICE (02).

Table with columns: Company, FV/ML Tk, Share Price, etc. Sub-section: MISCELLANEOUS (17).

Table with columns: Company, FV/ML Tk, Share Price, etc. Sub-section: FUEL & POWER (04).

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