

Formulation of nat'l water policy suggested

Vice Chancellor of BUET Prof M Shahjahan yesterday stressed the need for formulating a national water policy and a national water plan for proper management and optimum utilization of the country's water resources, reports UNB.

"Water was popularly believed to be a free gift of nature in Bangladesh whose economic and efficient use was not a major concern... but blissful ignorance of the comprehensive water resources planning process could not continue for long, he said.

"There is a need to give due importance to social, economic and environmental aspects, particularly in the areas of desertification, salinity intrusion, erosion, sedimentation and ecosystem", said the Engineering University VC while inaugurating a four-day workshop on Water Management.

The workshop, titled Planning for Integrated Water Resource Management, was organised by the Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET-DUT) Linkage Project and Civil Engineering Building of BUET.

It is sponsored by DGIS, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands.

Counsellor of the Royal Netherlands Embassy in Bangladesh Anton RM Schutte, head of the Water Resources Engineering Department Prof Fazlul Bari, coordinating Resident Engineer of BUET-DUT Linkage Project MCLM Van Mierlo and Project Director Prof A Hannan also spoke at the inaugural function.

Prof Shahjahan said a unified system for collection, storage, retrieval and analysis of data should be established and the policy option and analysis

should precede and accompany the formulation of the proposed national water plan to attain the plan's short and long-term objectives.

He said the Delta of Bangladesh had been created by three major river systems of the world which attract different races of mankind from all over the world.

"Rural and trading settlements were organised and a culture developed deeply influenced by the interaction between man, land and water," he added.

The VC said rapid population expansion, demand of growing more foodgrains, improvement of health services and certain upstream water diversion works demonstrated that this resource could no longer be taken for granted.

"The changed situation called for a new equation be-

tween man, land and water in which the selection of appropriate planning tools and modern technology would play a crucial role," he added.

Pointing out different sort of cooperation through the linkage programme with the Netherlands university, Prof Shahjahan called for working together of the various disciplines engaged in the integrated water resource development.

Anton RM Schutte called for taking and integrated water resource management approach to resolved water problem in the country as it is "dependent on the activities in the upstream countries".

The available water resources in Bangladesh are also strongly interconnected and complex which means local improvement measures will have consequences for other water users as well, he observed.

DCCI observes Export-oriented dev policy yet to be backed by field actions

By Staff Correspondent

The government's policy announcements for export-oriented development programmes are yet to be backed by necessary field-level actions in most cases, the Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry (DCCI) felt.

The observation came in the editorial write-up of the latest issue of DCCI Monthly Review.

Despite spurts in the export of some non-traditional items, the overall export performance in relation to the country's long-term needs to earn enough for foreign exchange remain fundamentally weak, the Review noted.

"Export still lags considerably behind import. Given the likely external aid levels, more export earnings are needed to permit increased imports of current and capital inputs essential to the very process of our development," the write-up said.

But, the DCCI observed, the existing export promotional policies are inadequate in Bangladesh to sustain whatever small gains have been achieved in non-traditional export.

"The minimum basis for a balanced strategy is that policies should not be seriously biased against production for exporting vis-a-vis production for the domestic market," the editorial maintained.

The DCCI also felt the urgency of establishing backward linkage, adding that "effective incentives are still not available to business in export-oriented sectors to procure inputs from domestic producers." DCCI identified this as the reason for the stagnation in the share of local content of most non-traditional items.

To overcome these problems and to promote co-ordination among banks, ministries and the business circle, the DCCI suggested forming a national export promotion council.



Mahbubur Rahman (M), President, FBCCI, addressing a meeting at the chamber's auditorium yesterday. Abdul Matin Chowdhury, Minister for Home Affairs seen on his right. — Star photo

Home Minister warns

Adulterators of edible oil to be seriously dealt with

Home Minister Abdul Matin Chowdhury yesterday iterated that stern action would be taken against manufacturing and marketing of adulterated and sub-standard edible oil, powder milk and medicines, reports BSS.

There would be no leniency on the question of quality control of these essential consumable items in the public interest, the Home Minister said.

Chowdhury was addressing a discussion meeting with the manufacturers and refiners of edible oil, importers of various food items including powder milk and related traders and businessmen at the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI).

He said the present democratic government is determined to ensure the quality of various edible items including medicine. Chowdhury sought the cooperation of concerned manufacturers, importers and traders in this regard.

President of FBCCI Mahbubur Rahman, Home Sec-

retary Azimuddin Ahmed and a representative of Vegetable Oil Manufacturers Association also spoke on the occasion.

Acting Inspector General of Police (IGP) Azizul Huq and Additional Inspector General of Police in-charge of Criminal Investigation Department (CID) Shahidul Islam Chowdhury were present.

The Home Minister said the manufacturing and marketing of adulterated edible oil, sub-standard powder milk and spurious and fake drugs and medicines had posed a very "serious and grave problem."

Chowdhury said considering the public interest any irregularities with regard to these items would continue to be handled under the special powers act.

In this connection, he pointed out that the existing "pure food rule" and provisions of Bangladesh Standard Institution (BSI) were not strong enough to deter such malpractices.

The Home Minister gave the assurance that collection of

samples and functioning of the agencies like Central Testing Laboratory and concerned departments would be streamlined.

He urged the concerned manufacturers, traders and importers to be vigilant against such malpractices and added "the genuine people have nothing to fear."

Chowdhury said the present democratic government was ready to solve problems of business and trade through consultations with the concerned people.

Home Secretary Azimuddin Ahmed said the government had no option other than to apply special powers act when poisonous things are sold in the name of medicines and edible oil contained elements which are injurious to health.

FBCCI President Mahbubur Rahman called for updating the "pure food rules" and the BSI provisions to handle the cases of adulteration and marketing of sub-standard, spurious and fake items.

Int'l symposium on electrical energy system opens Monday

A four-day international symposium on Electrical Energy System will begin at the Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET) on Monday, reports UNB.

Some 15 experts from USA, India, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Singapore and Malaysia are expected to present papers in the symposium. About 150 professionals in the field of electrical energy system of the country will take part in the symposium.

First AGM of EBL held

The first Annual General Meeting and Extra-Ordinary General Meeting of the Eastern Bank Limited was held on Thursday at a City Hotel, says a press release.

The meeting was presided over by the Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Bank Nurul Husain Khan.

The shareholders had discussed in threeday the overall activities and annual report 1992 of the Bank.

It may be mentioned that amongst the "KA" group shareholders the government has nominated the former Secretary and Chairman of National Board of Revenue, Nurul Husain Khan as the chairman of the Board of Directors of the Eastern Bank Ltd. and Vice Chairman, Export Promotion Bureau, Anisul Huq Chowdhury as Director.

Amongst the "KHA" group shareholders, (Financial Institution representatives), Quazi Baharul Islam, Managing Director, The City Bank Limited, Muhammad Taheeruddin, Managing Director, Janata Bank and M. Ahsanul Haque, Managing Director, Sonali Bank, have been elected as Directors.

Biswas urges youths Come up with proposals to set up poultry, dairy farms

President Abdur Rahman Biswas called upon the youths to devote themselves to the development activities of their respective areas and make them self-reliant through their hard work, reports BSS.

He said that the present generation should be motivated towards achieving the prosperity of the nation by setting up macro industries.

The President was addressing a large youth delegation of the greater Mymensingh district when he called on him at Bangabhaban yesterday led by the convener of the Mymensingh division implementation youth council Mahfazur Rahman Babul, the function was also addressed, among others, by Yakub Khan-Dual and member-secretary Akbar Ali Bhuyan.

President Biswas said the present democratic government is striving hard to develop all the areas of the country in a balanced manner.

Dhaka, ADB sign loan accord

MANILA, Dec 10: A loan agreement for second water supply and sanitation project for an amount of SDR 21,832,000 and two technical assistance agreements for grant amounting 350,000 US dollar and 450,000 US dollar were signed here today between Bangladesh and the Asian Development Bank, reports BSS.

The Bangladesh Ambassador to the Philippines, Mohammad Abu Hena and Mitsuo Sato, President of Asian Development Bank signed agreements on behalf of their respective sides.

The main objective of the project is to provide sustainable and safe water and sanitation services in the nine district towns of Bagerhat, Dinajpur, Faridpur, Jamalpur, Kushtia, Pabna, Rangpur, Sylhet and Tangail.

The project will be implemented by the Department of Public Health Engineering of the Local Government Division. It is expected to be completed by March 31, 1999.



Nurul Husain Khan, Chairman, Eastern Bank Ltd. Board of Directors, delivering speech at the first Annual General Meeting of the Bank at a local hotel yesterday.

World trade talks

France blasts EC negotiator

BRUSSELS, Dec 11: French Foreign Minister Alain Juppe blasted EC negotiator Leon Brittan's handling of GATT trade talks Friday and accused him of exceeding his mandate on protection for Europe's film industry, reports AFP.

Juppe told reporters outside the EC summit here that the "Hollywood lobby is threatening the Uruguay Round" of talks under the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) as they raced to meet Wednesday's deadline.

He complained of a "total absence of transparency" in the Geneva discussions and said he was unable to find out Brittan's latest position.

"I know what his mandate is and it is coming back to me by various channels that the discussions are taking a turn that is without doubt decidedly different," the chief French diplomat said.

He said he had written to Brittan, who was to fly to Geneva on Saturday, to remind him France and the other EC states wanted "exceptional and separate treatment" for the audio-visual sector to preserve their subsidies and quotas.

The American position has hardened considerably because the lobbies are at work. The Hollywood lobby is threatening the Uruguay Round," he said.

"For the audiovisual, if there is no agreement there is a simple solution and that is we don't speak about it anymore in GATT."

Juppe added that negotiations on a dispute over subsidies to European aircraft makers "had not advanced."

US considering compromise with EC
Another report from Washington adds: US Trade

Representative Mickey Kantor said yesterday that he was considering a compromise with the European Community over the stalled GATT free trade talks.

He would not reveal what was under consideration, but said he would discuss his ideas for a compromise with Sir Leon Brittan on Saturday.

Although Kantor said he was optimistic about the chances of concluding the Uruguay Round

of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), he warned that the European Community would have to agree to removing barriers to audiovisual products something strongly resisted by France in particular.

"We are not going to have a Uruguay Round without addressing this sector," he said. He also warned that Washington would not sign the accord if it did not include anti-dumping legislation.

Nationwide protest in South Korea

AP from Seoul says: More than 5,000 farmers, dissidents and students nationwide on Saturday protested government plans to ease the ban on foreign rice and demanded the resignation of President Kim Youngsam.

In spite of his campaign pledge to keep the rice market closed, Kim proposed a partial opening during a nationally televised speech Thursday.

The move came in response to pressure to lift the ban to help conclude talks aimed at liberalizing world trade. Many blamed US pressure, adding to anti-American sentiment here.

Protesters waving colorful banners marched in the streets after the rally, causing gridlocked traffic for blocks.

'Mental health, unemployment intimately related'

LONDON, Dec 11: British researchers said today they had found a stronger than expected link between unemployment and admission to psychiatric hospitals, reports Reuters.

The researchers working at the Bristol Health Authority in western England studied the rate of admission to psychiatric hospitals in the region around the port city between March 1990 and March 1992, comparing them with local unemployment data for the same period.

"There was a remarkably strong correlation between admission rates, however calculated, and unemployment," they reported in the British medical journal.

"The relation between socio-economic factors and admission to psychiatric hospital has long been recognised," they said.

"What is surprising about our analysis is the power of the relation, with unemployment rates alone explaining over 90 per cent of the variation in standardised admission ratios." They said there was evidence to support a direct relation between unemployment and poor mental health, and cited studies identifying the development of psychiatric disorders after lengthy periods without work.

India supports proposed GaTT deal

NEW DELHI, Dec 11: India virtually expressed support for a proposed GATT accord on Friday despite its concerns over proposals relating to seed and drug patents and access to textile markets, reports AFP.

Commerce Minister Pranab Mukherjee told parliament that India could not risk isolation from the rest of the world by staying out of the multilateral trading system it joined in 1948.

"Obviously the balance of advantage is to be in a multilateral forum", Mukherjee said, urging MPs to adopt a "dispassionate and objective" stand on the accord due for signature in Geneva next Wednesday.

Opposition members protested Mukherjee's remarks, saying the government was doing nothing to protect Indian interests particularly in the farm sector.

Tokyo plans to trim Income tax by \$65b

TOKYO, Dec 11: Japan is preparing to cut income taxes by seven trillion yen (65 billion dollar) as part of an economic stimulus package now expected to be unveiled next week, a local news report said yesterday, reports AFP.

Tokyo Broadcasting System Inc (TBS) said in its main evening news bulletin that the government planned to fund the income tax cut by 6 per cent.

The government of prime Minister Morihiro Hosokawa has been struggling to come up with a compromise on how to finance a reduction in income taxes, seen as an urgent requirement to boost depressed consumer spending.

The Social Democratic Party, the biggest party in the coalition,

strongly opposed the consumption tax introduced in 1989 and is also cool to any further increase. But the Japan Renewal Party, the other main force behind the coalition, adheres to the Finance Ministry line in opposing deficit financing.

Chief Cabinet Secretary Masayoshi Takemura reiterated Thursday that the package, initially expected this week, would now be announced after the government's supplementary budget clears the Upper House, probably next week.

"The Prime Minister along with concerned officials have already prepared for it," he told a lecture meeting in Tokyo. "We would like to announce it soon after the passage of the supplementary budget."

Seoul to export 42 APCs to Kuala Lumpur

SEOUL, Dec 11: South Korea will export 42 armoured personnel carriers (APCs) to Malaysia this month in the first foreign sale of the locally produced military vehicles, a defence ministry spokesman said, reports AFP.

The deal, signed in October, was worth 25 million dollar.

It was the first time that South Korea has sold APCs abroad, the spokesman said, adding that Malaysia wanted to buy more of the vehicles.

The sale was boost for South Korea's efforts to expand weaponry exports, especially to southeast Asian countries in a bid to ease financial pressure on its defence industry.

Europe looks for cheaper ways to create jobs

BRUSSELS, Dec 11: European Community leaders pulled back Saturday from an ambitious plan to raise new debt to fund jobs-creating public works but clung to a broad menu of cheaper ways to turn around rising unemployment, reports AP.

The draft communique from the two-day summit of the 12 EC members was to be endorsed later in the day. A copy obtained by the Associated Press said the leaders approved jobs measures drawn up by EC chief executive Jacques Delors.

The draft, however, did not mention Delors' plan for multi-billion dollar borrowing. Led by Britain and Germany, leaders bashed key parts of the French-backed plan when it was introduced Friday, saying they couldn't endorse new debt when their countries are all trying to shrink deficits.

Unemployment in the EC is expected to rise from its current level of just below 11 per cent — 17 million people jobless — and Delors had been ordered to present a counterplan at the summit.

Meeting for the first time as the European Union, the leaders formed up the leadership of the future European central bank, called the European Monetary Institute in its formative stage.

The draft communique said international banker Alexandre Lamfalussy, a Belgian, will head the institute for three years starting January 1. The institute is to develop the common European currency that is envisioned to be in circulation by 1999. The EC leaders also rubber-stamped economic guidelines so that their economies will perform similarly — if all goes according to plan.

The two-day summit was vexed by the difficult world trade talks in Geneva, where the EC and the United States hit new problems as the Wednesday deadline approaches for completion of a new general Agreement on Tariffs and Trade.

Though the Belgian hosts tried to keep trade off the agenda, it surfaced at dinner. The leaders decided to ask their negotiators to drop the contentious issue of maritime shipping from GATT, said Dutch Prime Minister Ruud Lubbers.

And French Foreign Minister Alain Juppe said France insisted on protection for the European film industry against Hollywood. "We can't accept that what is already the domination of one industry becomes the total monopoly," Juppe told reporters late Friday.

Juppe expressed confidence

that the other EC members would guarantee compensation for farmers hurt by a new EC-US agreement on farm subsidies, cuts, and a senior German official said the issue would be looked at favourably.

Germany has a long record of backing France financially in helping get EC compromises through.

Summit leaders also spent time on violence in Northern Ireland and former Yugoslavia. British Prime Minister John Major and his Irish counterpart, Albert Reynolds, said they hoped their bilateral meeting will help bring a peace formula to Northern Ireland by Christmas.

On Yugoslavia, the leaders issued yet another plea for peace in Bosnia and scheduled for December 22 a face-to-face meeting in Brussels between EC foreign ministers and the warring Bosnian factions.

EC delegations Friday praised parts of Delors' almost 200-page "white paper" on job-creation, though the suggestion of having the EC issue eight billion European currency units (8.8 billion dollar) worth of special bonds was brusquely put down by Germany, Britain and others.

The Delors plan cautions against pump-priming deficits to create jobs quickly.