

Workshop on jute sector concludes

Continuous training needed for higher productivity

By Staff Correspondent

The speakers at the concluding session of the workshop on the jute sector adjustment credit (JSAC) underlined the need for continuous training of the workers to develop their skill.

However, they also felt that productivity should be looked upon as an interaction between all the three factors of production - man, machine and management.

The session on technical assistance was chaired by Jute Secretary, Mohammad Abu Hena while Md Janbul Huq, Joint Secretary, presented a paper on the topic.

Faisal Siddiqui of the Bangladesh Jute Mills Association (BJMA) speaking at the session said, training of the workers could help compete with the productivity of other countries like India.

He felt that if necessary, foreign experts should be brought in for imparting training to workers.

Humayun Shariful Kabir, Joint Secretary, Labour and

GATT ministerial meet begins

Dhaka for implementation of provisions

Bangladesh has called upon the developed countries to implement fully the provisions of special and differential treatment for the least developed countries (LDCs) for improving their facilities in world trade, reports UNB.

The call came from Commerce Minister M Shamsul Islam while addressing a plenary session of the GATT ministerial meeting on behalf of the LDCs at Marrakesh in Morocco on Tuesday, according to a message received in Dhaka yesterday.

"International cooperation is needed for adoption of concerted global strategy on environment and to assist developing countries in implementing plans aimed at sustainable development," he told the meeting where the international trade agreement reached through the Uruguay Round is scheduled to be signed tomorrow.

Describing the Uruguay Round as an "ambitious round of trade negotiations", Islam said comprehensive assessment of the negative outcome of the round need to be redressed through appropriate action, including additional trade preference development assistance and debt relief.

Referring to the declining share of the LDCs in world trade, he called upon the negotiators to improve the trading opportunities of these countries that need substantial technical assistance for implementing the recommendations of the round.

Ustad Sagiruddin Khan dead

Ustad Mohammad Sagiruddin Khan, the sarengi maestro who later earned fame as a classical vocalist, aged 70, died at the BIRDEM in Dhaka last night, reports UNB.

Harshad Mehta arrested

NEW DELHI, Apr 13: Stockbroker Harshad 'big bull' Mehta, the chief suspect in India's biggest financial scandal, was briefly arrested today in connection with a bank fraud, the AFP reports quoting Press Trust of India (PTI).

It was the first time that Mehta, 40, had been arrested since he was released in 1992 after spending 110 days in prison.

nance of the mills.

"The restructuring does not envisage any modernisation of machinery," he pointed out. "So, we even do not need to train the existing workers."

Motaharuddin, a labour leader of the Jubilee Jute Mills said unless the politicization of labourers is stopped, the productivity would not improve.

Kamran Rahman of the Pubali Jute Mills urged the World Bank to establish a credit line for modernisation of the mills.

Abdul Aziz, a director of a private sector mills, said provision should be made for training of workers of the private mills.

The Chairman of the Bangladesh Jute Spinners Association (BJS), Md Mahmud, said honest labour and management is a must for increased productivity. He said the training of the workers can be organised in the respective mills and there is no need for separate institutional set-up for the mills.

According to parliamentary sources, the fifth Parliament can fulfil its tenure even if the Opposition continues its boycott. As per the constitution, if a member remains absent from the House for 90 working days, then the authorities can take legal action, that is, striping the MP's membership.

But most of the MPs, while boycotting the session, sign their attendance register.

It will be an unhealthy situation in Parliament if the Opposition members continue boycotting the sessions, said another source.

BNP sources say they would try their best to bring the boycotting MPs to Parliament and Speaker Shaikh Razzak Ali's resignation from the BNP central committee was a 'positive democratic gesture' of the ruling party. But the sources categorically made it clear that the BNP would not appear the Opposition on certain vital issues, including the demand for the JP and the AL.

The distance between the BNP and the Jamaat widened after the ruling party MPs criticised the Jamaat in Parliament in September last year, but the Jamaat is still against a total boycott of the JS sessions. The party, however, strongly demands the provision of a caretaker government to hold the next general elections.

The JP, on the other hand, is closely watching the activities of the AL both in and outside Parliament. The JP had supported the April 7 siege of the secretariat, the hartal on April 10 and will support the planned hartal on April 26.

But the third largest opposition — the Jamaat-e-Islami, Bangladesh — joined the boycott of Parliament following Nazmul Huda's comment but did not participate in any action programme called by the JP and the AL.

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In the present political scenario, the role of the Jamaat during the next Parliament session is unpredictable. Other smaller parties, however, are in favour of a dialogue between the AL and the BNP.

The 14th session of the Fifth Parliament is likely to be convened on May 2.

However, the leaders of the political parties sounded a caution, saying "There is no last word in politics."

Action programme for Sylhet divn

From Our Correspondent

SYLHET, Apr 13: The Sylhet division implementation body will hold a rally at Madhabpur on April 17.

A meeting of the committee yesterday also called for staging rail and road blockade at Shaitaganj and Madhabpur on April 24 and a day-long siege of the Sylhet Osmany Airport on April 30.

Razzak Ali quits posts

From Page 1 Col 4

leader of the JP parliamentary party, said "Although delayed, the Speaker has come to realise that his office is an institution and he must keep himself above partisan politics in order to maintain his neutrality and dignity."

The JP leader appreciated Razzak Ali's decision saying, "It is good to see that he has responded to our reaction." Moudud maintained that the Speaker should have resigned from the Khulna district post much earlier, but he did not do so. "However, better late than never," he added.

Shaiikh Razzak Ali was not available for comments at the time of writing this report late last night. His family sources in Dhaka said he had left for Khulna yesterday.

He said he was quitting the posts in order to uphold the neutrality of the Speaker's chair and as a mark of respect to the sentiments expressed by certain opposition quarters and also in the hope that this gesture would create an atmosphere favourable to the growth of healthy democratic practice.

The Speaker, in his letter, also said that there was neither any legal bar nor was it contrary to parliamentary custom and tradition in this country against holding party positions. Yet, he was resigning in the greater interest of the country and democracy.

He said democracy has been restored in the country after a long struggle and it was the responsibility of every patriotic citizen to contribute his mite to give it an institutional shape.

The Speaker also thanked the Prime Minister and expressed gratitude to her for reposing confidence in him by giving him the prestigious party position.

When contacted last night, leaders of the Awami League (AL) and Jatiya Party (JP), the two major opposition parties in Parliament, reacted positively to the Speaker's decision.

AL General Secretary Zillur Rahman claimed it as a "victory of the opposition," saying, "He resigned because of opposition pressure." However, Zillur maintained that "By accepting the post earlier, the Speaker had proved that he was not unbiased."

The AL leader said that it was not fair on the part of the BNP to offer the Speaker a party post; on his part, the Speaker should not have accepted it in the first place.

Moudud Ahmed, acting



Awami League chief and Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Sheikh Hasina speaking as the chief guest at a civic conference meeting organised by the Mukti Joddha Solidarity Council in the city yesterday.

— Star photo

Political posturing

From Page 1 Col 4

any undue concessions because they still enjoy the people's confidence. They said the BNP was preparing for the next general elections which are likely to be held several months ahead of schedule. The elections are due in early 1996.

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The Midnight File

US-EU dispute over bidding govt contracts resolved

MARRAKESH, MOROCCO, Apr 13: The United States and the European Union (EU) have resolved a dispute over bidding on government contracts. The announcement was made by EU trade commissioner Sir Leon Brittan at a press conference with US trade representative Mickey Kantor.

New Kuwaiti cabinet

KUWAIT, Apr 13: Kuwait announced the formation of a new government, the official Kuwait News Agency reported today. Prime Minister Sheikh Saad Al-Abdullah Al-Sabah and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah remained in their posts. Five ministers were dropped including Oil Minister Ali Ahmed Al-Baghi, reports Reuter.

Pahela Baishakh today

The programmes of the day include colourful processions, Baishakhi melas or fairs, discussions, musical soiree, children's rallies and other cultural functions across the country.

In the capital, the central focus of the festival will be the Ramna Batamul where lakhs of people are expected to throng to enjoy the various musical soirees and the Baishakhi Mela.

Bangladesh Small and Cottage Industries Corporation (BSCIC) has organised a week-long Baishakhi Mela at the Dhanmondi Club ground. Handicrafts will be displayed and sold in the fair.

The Islamic Foundation is holding a two-day function at its premises. A three-day Bata photo contest titled "Rupashi Bangla", organised by the Bangladesh Photo-Journalists' Association, began at the Jatiya Press Club yesterday.

The BNP and its front organisations, including the Jatiyatobadi Samajik Sangskritik Sangha, will welcome the new century through a day-long programme.

The Amani League, the Workers' Party, CPB, JCD, and other political parties have also drawn up similar programmes.

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