

Proper marketing system for survival of farmers suggested

Speakers at a workshop on regulated markets called for ensuring a proper marketing system particularly for the survival of the farmers and promotion of the national economy, reports BSS.

Additional Secretary of agriculture Ahsan Ali Sarker attend as the chief guest at the opening session of the four-day workshop titled 'Rapid Market Appraisal (RMA) study on regulated markets in Bangladesh' arranged by the Department of Agriculture Marketing at Khumar Bari in the city yesterday.

Prof A Mannan Choudhury of the management department of Dhaka University presented the key-note paper while marketing specialist and former Director of Agricultural Marketing M Atiqur Rahman, who led the RMA study team, presented the study report.

Marketing M Aminul Islam chaired the function. Speaking on the occasion, Ahsan Ali Sarker said in Bangladesh where 60 per cent of the labour force is employed in agriculture and 30 per cent of the export earnings comes from agriculture, marketing of agri-products is of enormous importance.

He said although the agricultural produce markets regulation act was adopted 30 years back, a proper regulated marketing system is yet to be developed in the country.

In his key-note paper Prof Mannan Choudhury referred to different infrastructural problems of the markets in rural and urban areas and suggested reorganisation of the present market advisory committee headed by the Deputy Commissioners with effective executive powers.

The committee, which will comprise the representatives

of all concerned agencies and groups, must have executive powers of determining the charges or tolls, imposing fines, appointing and disciplining the *azaradars* of the markets, regulating *aradars*, spending a portion of the realised sum of fees and fines for the development of markets and other related matters.

Atiqur Rahman in his study report recommended for establishing a strong market information service at the Agricultural Marketing Department for quick collection and dissemination of market information for different target groups.

He suggested for taking up marketing extension work to motivate farmers and popularise sorting and grading of agricultural commodities like paddy, jute, pulses and oil seeds for enhancing the income of the growers and facilitating the traders and consumers.

He also suggested collaboration between the LGRD Ministry and Agriculture Marketing in designing infrastructural and physical facilities including market platforms, sheds, link roads landing ghats, storage and drainage.

Atiqur recommended for setting up of special type of cold storages for temporary storage of fruits and vegetables in the regulated markets around which there is abundant production of these items.

The 20-point recommendations of the RMA study report also emphasised displaying of market toll chart mandatory on the part of the *azaradars* on each hat day.

A document made available at the workshop showed that at present there are about 7903 markets across the country including 4950 rural primary markets, 2635 rural assembly markets and 182 urban retail markets.

GATT issue 'US may face Euro backlash'

PARIS, Nov 19: France's European affairs minister indicated Friday that Washington could face European backlash if it weakens US adherence to the GATT world trade treaty, reports AP.

"They tell us the Americans are going to match ratification of the treaty with a series of internal laws that risk going against the treaty and taking with one hand they gave us with the other," Alain Lamassoure told France Inter radio.

"We have to draw our own consequences on a European and national level" if the laws are contrary to the latest General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, he said without elaborating.

"We've asked the European Commission to study the legality of this internal American legislation," Lamassoure added.

The soon-to-be Senate Majority Leader, Robert Dole, wants a promise from the Clinton administration to support a separate bill early next year that would strengthen the ability of the United States to withdraw from the accord if its interests are harmed.

The treaty aims to lower countries' trade barriers to stimulate world commerce.

Dhaka urges FAO to take steps against toxic dumps

Bangladesh has urged the Food and Agriculture Organisation to take necessary steps against illegal export of toxic materials to the developing countries, reports UNB.

The call came from Agriculture and Water Resources Minister M Majid ul Haq addressing the 10th FAO council session in Rome Friday. He is leading a three member delegation to the session.

He stressed the need for development of a legally binding instrument for the mandatory application of the Prior Informed Consent (PIC) procedures to protect the developing countries from such toxic dumps.

The Bangladesh delegation leader also called for improving food security for the most vulnerable people of developing countries and helping them become self-reliant through coordinated efforts of World Food Programme and

other UN organisations. The FAO session began November 15 and will continue upto November 24, according to a message received here yesterday.

Majid-ul Haq made his intervention on activities of the WFP, collaboration within the UN system and with other organizations and development of a legally binding instrument for the mandatory application of the principles of Prior Informed Consent procedures.

He expressed Bangladesh's satisfaction and appreciated the WFP for taking new initiatives to further strengthen its collaboration and cooperation with FAO, the United Nations, IFAD, ODA, UNHCR and other UN agencies.

"A coordinated effort is very important in achieving WFP's objective," he said.

The minister hoped that international community, including recipient countries, would come forward to increase their pledges in cash and kinds so that the target for regular resources for WFP is met to strengthen its capacity to carry out its mandate effectively.

China signs 12 farm accords

BEIJING, Nov 19: China's capital-starved agricultural sector netted contracts worth 241 million dollars in foreign investment during a recent industry trade fair held in Beijing, the China Daily said, reports AFP.

A total of 12 agreements were signed with foreign partners from France, the United States, Italy, Sweden, Japan and Israel during the two-day Agro-Economic Cooperative Projects '94 Fair, which ended yesterday.

BRDB disburses Tk 8.50cr loan in Faridpur

FARIDPUR, Nov 19: Bangladesh Rural Development Board has disbursed Tk 8.50 crore as loan among 24,000 destitute people under its Productive Employment Project (PEP) for taking various income generating activities in the district, reports UNB.

According to the Assistant Director of PEP, under the project, loans are being given to set up dairy and poultry farms, pisciculture, small trade, rickshawpulling, weaving, vegetable cultivation, share cropping, carpentry, pottery and other handicrafts.

These income generating activities have created a long term employment opportunities to the beneficiaries for around 170 days per year, per member, with an average income of Taka 70 per working

day. These poor beneficiaries including men and women, who never got any institutional credit, are now receiving credit direct from the bank. They are to repay the loans on instalment basis. The recovery of loan is also 100 per cent.

He said a large number of private derelict ponds have been re-excavated with the WEP assistance, leased out to the beneficiaries for a period of 10 to 12 years. These ponds are now being profitably used for pisciculture and plantation of fruit bearing trees and cultivation of vegetables on its embankments.

The loanees also raised a number of nurseries of saplings for sale in the area, he added.

Japanese labour union seeks pay hike

TOKYO, Nov 19: Japan's biggest labour union said on Friday that it had decided to seek a monthly pay hike of 14,000 yen (142 dollar) during the annual round of wage talks next spring, reports Reuter.

An official at the eight-million-member Japanese Trade Union Confederation (Rengo) said that it would officially set the policy at a meeting slated for next Friday.

Rengo plans to specify only the amount of the pay increase, not the rate of the hike, as the latter formula has tended to result in a low, flat rate of increase, the official said.

In this year's wage negotiations or so-called 'spring labour offensive,' Rengo sought an average wage boost of five to six per cent.

Russia's '95 budget plan aims at reducing inflation, says Yeltsin

MOSCOW, Nov 19: President Boris Yeltsin, saying Russians were tired of politics and politicians, called on Friday for democratic forces to unite amidst the "typhoon" unleashed by his market reforms, reports Reuter.

Yeltsin, talking to a group of top intellectuals, also put his weight behind a tough 1995 budget plan intended to cut inflation and the budget deficit, and said cabinet mem-

bers newly appointed by him would strengthen reforms. "If they say that for an individual moving house is equal to a fire, then for a country reforms are like a typhoon," he said.

"We had to start reforms so quickly that regretfully we did not have time to prepare all safety nets," he said in reference to shock therapy reforms launched in 1992.

The reforms, which have

slowed since then, have worsened the living standards of most Russians and deprived them of the feeling of stability they enjoyed in the Soviet era.

Popular interest in politics has waned, especially since Yeltsin sent tanks into Moscow to crush a rebellion by his parliamentary opponents in October 1993.

Support for Yeltsin among the divided democratic forces has weakened in the last few months, while opposition to reforms among communists and other hardliners remains strong.

"People are tired and allergic," conceded Yeltsin, 63, reading from a prepared text and sounding tired himself.

"It is impossible to live when everyday on television you watch only unpleasant things like the collapse of the rouble or petrol stations drying up, or sea that someone has been killed."

In this situation, he said, all democrats should unite and put aside their differences.

"A union of democratic and reformist forces... is absolutely necessary for the continuation of reforms," he said and asked the group of intellectuals, most of them support, for help.

Dollar stabilizes in New York

NEW YORK, Nov 19: The dollar stabilized against major European currencies yesterday in relatively calm trading, reports AFP.

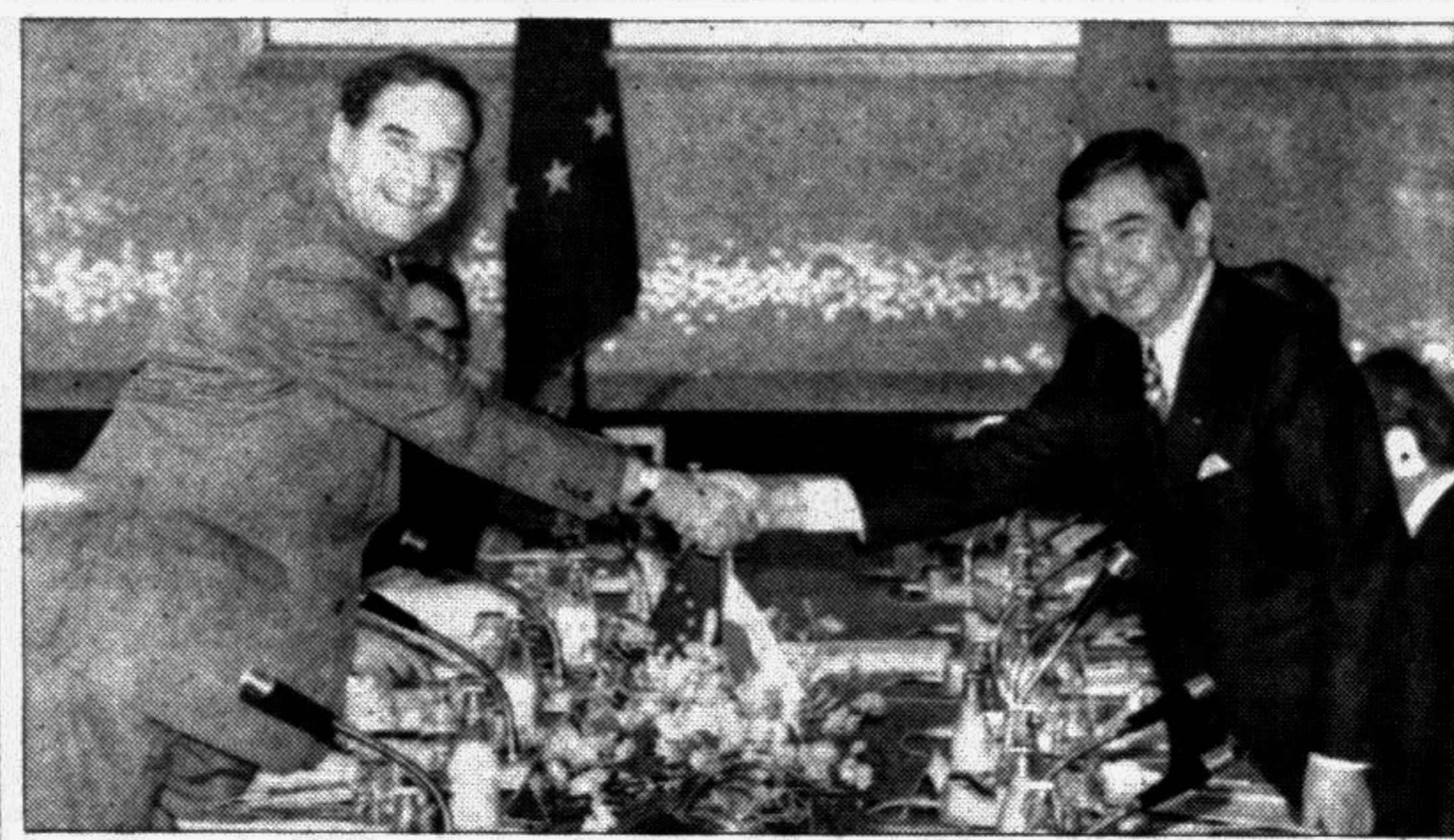
Gold dropped 1.30 dollars per ounce from Thursday to 383.90 dollars.

Around 4:30 PM (2130 GMT), the dollar was at 1.5547 German marks, up from 1.5530 at midday and 1.5525 Thursday. It was at 98.55 yen, up from 98.42 at midday and 98.30 Thursday.

The dollar gained ground against other major currencies, at 5.3365 French francs, up from 5.3335 Thursday, at 1.3190 Swiss francs, up from 1.3055 Thursday and at 0.6386 pounds sterling, up from 0.6365.

Traders said they expected the dollar to remain steady throughout the next week because of a slowdown in trading for the thanks giving holiday here on Thursday.

Figures due out next week include durable goods orders for October, which will be released on Wednesday, but that result is not expected to affect the dollar market.



Leon Brittan (L), EU Commissioner for External Economic Relations and Trade Policy shakes hands with Japanese Foreign Minister Yohei Kono prior to a ministerial meeting at Likura Guesthouse in Tokyo on Saturday. Japan and the European Union discussed a wide range of bilateral economic issues. —AFP photo

Agri Minister says

French farm income increases after reform of CAP

PARIS, Nov 19: French farms increased their incomes sharply last year, boosted by increases in subsidies, and the French Agriculture Minister said yesterday that the sky was now clear after storms over GATT and EU farm subsidy reforms, reports AFP.

Farm income, excluding inflation, rose by 11.5 per cent in 1994 from the figures for 1993 when farmers had campaigned violently against reforms, provisional official figures showed on Thursday, detailing increases in subsidies paid.

French Agriculture Minister Jean Pueck welcomed the increase and said that "the horizon is clear" for French agriculture.

He said: "after the uncertainty arising from negotiations in the (Uruguay Round) of the GATT (General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade) and reform of the European Union's Common Agriculture Policy (CAP), French agriculture is rediscovering its confidence and is moving forward to recover its markets."

He attributed the increase

to "substantial improvements made to reform of the CAP and to the policy of easing charges (on businesses) which I have introduced."

A law to modernise French agriculture, which is to be debated in parliament from November 24, "will consolidate this recovery to make French agriculture more efficient and ambitious," he said.

The head of the FNSEA farmers' union, Luc Guyau, said that the increases should now be supported by reductions in charges, particularly under the new law.

This was the only way in which farm income could be sustained.

He said that the increase in income had resulted from a reduction of charges, an increase in some aid from the European Union and reduction of debt.

He also noted that the fruit sector had benefited from an agreement between the FNSEA and chain retailers this summer to tackle what he described as unjustifiable price cutting.

In 1993, many French far-

mers fought hard against reform, restricting production and export subsidies, under the CAP and GATT.

The French government repeatedly threatened to block the entire Uruguay Round in defence of its farmers, many of whom were heavily indebted, saying that they, and an essential sector of French life and culture, faced ruin.

The government then set in hand a five-year domestic plan to help and restructure French agriculture.

The increase in income was the biggest for 10 years and was achieved in an environment in which the number of farms had fallen by three per cent, containing a trend, the figures from the agriculture ministry showed.

During the previous three years gross farm incomes had fallen by a total of 8.2 per cent.

But the figures revealed huge differences, incomes by fruit growing farms rose threefold, having fallen by 43 per cent and by 55 per cent in the previous two years.

British firms keen to invest in Lanka

COLOMBO, Nov 19: British firms have expressed keen interest in participating in the economic development of Sri Lanka, one of its former colonies, officials said yesterday, reports AFP.

The interest shown by British firms was conveyed to Sri Lanka's Justice and External Trade Minister by Tony Baldry, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office during his recent visit here.

Baldry mentioned the interest by many British firms to be involved in infrastructural projects linked to the island's economic development, including private projects, a British High Commission (Embassy) statement said.

During his visit from November 14-16, Baldry met government ministers to review economic relations, trade and bilateral aid, the statement said.

Sri Lanka gained independence from Britain in 1948.

Speaker for application of updated management skill

KHULNA, Nov 19: Jatiya Sangsad Speaker Shaikh Razzak Ali yesterday stressed the need for enhancement of theoretical and practical knowledge, applying of updated technique of management, congenial atmosphere and growing of joint venture tendency for developing entrepreneurship in the country, reports BSS.

He also underscored the need for identifying the aspects of profitable business in the country through research in order to ensure both individual and national economic augmentation.

He was addressing as chief guest the inaugural session of a 6-day workshop on "entrepreneurship development" at the seminar room of the business administration discipline of Khulna University here.

Jointly organised by the centre for entrepreneurship, small business development of Dhaka University and business

administration discipline of Khulna University under the sponsorship of the Association of Management Development of Bangladesh, the function was also addressed, among others, by Vice-Chancellor of Khulna University Prof Dr. Gollam Ali Fakir, Prof of Institute of Business Administration, Dhaka University Dr. Abdur Rab, head of Business Administration Discipline Khulna University ABM Rashiduzzaman and famous local businessman Hazi Abdul Malek.

Termining entrepreneurship as the prime socio-economic force in the society, the speaker said that entrepreneurship could play a pioneering role in solving unemployment problem as well as attaining national economic emancipation through revitalization of country's economy.

With this end in view, he laid emphasis on practical training, hard working and sincerity in business and industrial arena.

Loyalty pays back

By Staff Correspondent

'Loyalty pays back' — this is what he has learnt from his experiences. He is Rajani Kumar Mali, a peon of the Standard Chartered Bank (SCB).

When he joined the SCB as a cleaner in 1967, he had no idea that his long loyal services to the bank would someday be recognised by the top man of the best bank of Asia.

Mali was honoured Thursday with a certificate, signed by the SCB group Chairman Patrick Gillam, a crest and a 20-inch colour television.

BONN, Nov 19: German interest rates will not fall next year, but the economy will grow by 3.0 per cent and some 3.6 million people will be without work, five experts who advise the government forecast yesterday, reports AFP.

Unemployment of 3.6 million people on average would represent a slight fall but would remain at "a frightening and unacceptable level."

They said in their annual report that "monetary policy is going to be tightened almost everywhere next year and there will be no further cuts in rates."

Forecasting that US rates would be increased again, they said that there would be no room in which to reduce rates in Japan "and not in Germany either."

They expected German Gross Domestic Product (GDP) to grow by three per cent next year.

This would be the main factor in reducing the overall public deficit which they forecast would fall by 155 billion marks (10 billion dollars).

Consumer prices in the west of the country would rise by an average of 2.5 per cent next year and by 3.0 per cent in the east.

forties, only three or four received such rare honours. Operating in more than 60 countries, the Standard Chartered group introduced the long service award for encouraging corporate obligation from its employees few years ago.

The Chief Executive of SCB Bangladesh Stephen McCarthy, who was also present on the occasion which took place in the city, focussing on the corporate loyalty says, "The Bank has taken a new direction in

human resources management and people with unflinching loyalty and dedication will be recognised and taken care of."

Mali, now serving as a peon at Personal Banking Division of SCB in Chittagong, may not be an important man to the bank's clients, but for the organisation, his services acted as a pillar for growth.



Executive Director of Standard Chartered PLC, David Brougham honours SCB peon Rajani Kumar Mali for his 27 years of loyal service at the Chittagong office of the bank.

—Star photo