

Record tea crop likely in Lanka this yr

COLOMBO, Nov 21: Sri Lanka appears to be heading for a record tea crop this year, but high production costs still plague the industry, the island's main foreign exchange earner, officials and analysts said yesterday, reports Reuters.

Tea board officials said they expect the crop to exceed 240 million kg (529 million lbs), up from 232 million (511 million lbs) last year because of good weather and higher increased productivity, boosting exports and maintaining Sri Lanka's position as one of the world's biggest tea exporters.

Sri Lanka earned 241 million dollars in tea exports up to July this year, against 230 million dollars in the same period last year.

"We're looking for 240 million kilograms without fail," Michael De Zoysa, Tea Director at Lipton-Brooke Bond told Reuters.

"We need to do only 59 million to break the record of 240.7 million kg in 1991," he said.

Sri Lanka's January-September tea output rose seven per cent to 181.9 million kg (401 million lbs) from

170.5 million kg (375.8 million lbs) in the same period last year, although black tea production in September fell 16 per cent to 17.5 million kg (38.5 million lbs) from 20.8 million (45.8 million lbs) in the same month last year.

The tea crop for the last quarter of 1993 was 61 million kg (134 million lbs).

Tea Board officials said that despite better productivity by private management firms, which took over the loss-making state owned tea estates in June 1992, the industry's production costs were higher than the average sales price.

"The cost of production is very high," said an industry analyst who declined to be identified. "The industry is still in a great deal of trouble."

He said the management firms had improved agricultural practices, increased yields, used fertiliser regularly at the right time and modernised factories.

"They also improved the quality of tea," he said. "All that has helped. But that does not take away the cost of production which hangs like a

sword of damocles over the industry."

Industry officials said production costs were high because of wage hikes won by the powerful Ceylon Workers Congress (CWC) tea plantation trade union.

CWC strongman Sauwmi-oorthy Thondaman, with a big chunk of minority Tamil votes in the estates, was brought into the ruling People's Alliance (PA) ministry on the eve of last week's presidential poll, won by President Chandrika Kumaratunga.

Thondaman, a minister in the previous regime, promised Kumaratunga votes to help swing the poll in her favour but demanded guaranteed income for 25 days a month for his union. The private management firms say they cannot afford this.

"In the short term the industry is very precariously placed because of the cost of production factor," said an economist who declined to be identified.

"Sri Lanka has a major problem—whatever agricultural practices they implement they

cannot get the yields of India, Kenya or Indonesia — our tea lands are older, the top soil washed away," he added. "If we can't get those yields, we can't break the cost of production syndrome."

The alternative was to control costs but flexibility and a change of attitude were needed from union labour, he said.

"The prospects for the industry are not that bad except for our cost of production which is very high — about 75 rupees per kg (34 rupees per lb), said Merrill Fernandes of M/J exports, a top tea exporter. "The net sales average is less than that."

De Zoysa said tea prices at Colombo auctions seem to have bottomed for the year. "Prices are normally low at this time of year because of low quality," he said.

The January-October gross sale price of all tea sold shows the average at almost 65 rupees per kg (30 rupees per lb) against 69 rupees (31.4 rupees) in 1993 and 59 rupees (26.8 rupees) in 1992. De Zoysa said.

Pak policies attract \$18b for energy projects

ISLAMABAD, Nov 21: The buoyant economic policies pursued by the present government has attracted over 18 billion dollar foreign investment for various energy and infrastructural projects, Petroleum Minister Saifullah said here yesterday, reports AFP.

Inaugurating "World Energy Council, Pakistan Forum", he said private sector has committed to invest in power generation, in new refineries, in gas importation schemes, oil pipelines, oil and gas exploration and development and various other infrastructural projects.

"This is by no means a small achievement and is the result of dedicated efforts of our professionals and the far sightedness of our government," he added.

He said private sector was included into electricity generation, distribution and transmission and in exploration of oil and gas besides refining transportation and marketing of petroleum products.

"The new energy policies

set out a vision of sustain and unhampered economic growth in the country with a much greater dependence on market forces while streamlining the institutional and regulatory frameworks in the sector," he added.

Pakistan, he said wants international cooperation in the energy sector to meet its requirements on sustainable and just basis.

\$12m EC fund for Palestinians

GAZA CITY, Nov 21: The European Community (EC) has signed a 12-million-dollar agreement with PLO chairman Yasser Arafat's self-rule authority for the rehabilitation of freedom prisoners, the social welfare "minister" said today.

Intissar al-Wazir (um Jihad), widow of slain PLO second-in-command Abu Jihad, said the funds were expected to be released in three weeks.

"The agreement signed is for training, rehabilitation and small projects," she told AFP.

Dhaka Stock Prices

At the close of trading on November 21, 1994

Index up by 12 points

Star Report
The Dhaka Stock Exchange All Share Price Index registered another sharp rise of 12.61 points on Monday while the turnovers on the DSE fell.

The index jumped to 870.33278 from Sunday's 857.72345.

The turnover in volume suffered a loss of 2.61 per cent and the turnover in value decreased by 19.63 per cent.

A total of 162647.50 shares worth Taka 16918980.50 changed hands as against Sunday's 167006.00 shares valued at Taka 21050623.00.

The number of issues traded reached 95 from 87, in which 55 gained, 33 incurred losses and the share prices of seven issues remained unchanged.

Apex Foods experienced a gain of Taka 500.00 per share, leading the gainers in terms of value. Aaz Pipe, IFIC and BCIL (Deb) also gained significantly.

On the other hand, Bangladesh Lamps led the losers with fall of Taka 100.00 per share.

Yusuf Flour became the top volume leader on the day. Its 20000 shares were traded.

Other volume leaders were: Quagem Drycells (14100), Rupon Oil (13550), Northern Jute (11000), Ashraf Textile (16500), Ambee Pharma (6300).

DSE All Share Price Index

Company Name	Change (per share)	Number of shares traded
The City Bank	40.000	35
IFIC	2.000	21
National Bank	88.000	45
Rupon Oil	13.000	110
Utara Bank	5.000	4
Al Baraka Bank	5.000	6
United Leasing	5.310	290
1st ICB M Fund	10.000	35
2nd ICB M Fund	10.000	42
3rd ICB M Fund	5.830	36
5th ICB M Fund	14.000	390
8th ICB M Fund	19.000	2580
Aziz Automotives	5.710	870
Aziz Pipes	89.580	60
Bengal Carbide	40.000	20
Bangladesh Lamps	100.000	20
Eastern Cables	3.370	420
Karim Pipe	4.780	15
Monno Jute Spinners	90.000	30
Suisse Bangladesh	67.950	30
Atlas Bangladesh	1.480	510
Bangladesh Autocars	5.660	1270
Alpha Tobacco	5.830	240
National Tubes	5.770	630
B Thai Aluminium	4.770	1350
Alpha Dairy	1.020	140
Amam Sea Food	38.330	30
Apex Foods	500.000	10
Bengal Food	9.090	500
ITC	5.000	140
NTC	4.000	140
Yusuf Flour	2.000	20000
Dhaka Vegetable	5.450	820
Zeal Bangla	05.000	7450
Rupon Oil	44.000	13550
Tulip Dairy	8.020	140
Chittagong Vegetable	4.630	1470
Beximco Fisheries	4.490	1380
Bengal Discuits	2.530	5020
Bangladesh Oxygen	5.720	100
Padma Oil Co	10.000	105
National Oxygen	8.710	790
Northern Jute	9300	11000
Shine Pakur Jute	00	90
Ashraf Textile	1.710	16500
Swan Textile	5.000	40
Rahim Textile	67.950	30
Quagem Silk	00	1800
Sulham Textile	2.190	400
Modern Dyeing	1.360	110
Eagle Star Textile	00	80
Dulhan Cotton	9.200	240
Taluk Spinning	4.800	120
Tampanjuri Textile	2.720	200
Apex Spinning	3.880	240
Beximco Knitting	3.330	2280
Dynamic Textile	3.000	200
Milum Corporation	2.450	250
Milum Textiles	3.720	240
Ambee Pharma	2.180	6300
Beximco Pharma	34.000	10
ACI Limited	24.300	10
Petro Synthetic	1.000	350
Therapeutic	7.780	100
Pharmia Aids	5.180	100
Kohinoor Chemical	18.420	2850
Wasa Chemical	6.500	40
Beximco Infusions	2.500	90
Beximco Infusion	1.000	100
Libra Pharma	5.260	190
Milum Corporation	3.720	240
Monosopul Paper	1.590	10
Apex Paper	4.800	10
Araram Ltd	5.000	10
Baba Shoe	1.020	10
GG Ball Pen	00	30
Monno Ceramic	19.290	10
Lanama Glass	6.500	10
Modern Industries	00	100
Suisse Bangladesh	67.950	30
Beximco Ltd	48.000	10
Chittagong Cement	8.100	10
New Dhaka Refac	40.000	10
Apex Footwear	6.220	100
Eastern Housing	08.000	100
BGIC	1.000	100
Green Delta Insurance	0.000	100
United Insurance	4.200	100
Eastern Insurance	4.200	100
Janata Insurance	2.116	100
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Mustafa Aminur Rashid, Managing Director, Agrani Bank, seen speaking at the certificate awarding ceremony of the week-long course on "Human relation and communication development." Khondker Ibrahim Khaleed, Deputy Managing Director, and Director of Agrani Bank Training Institute Badruddin Ahmed are also seen.

Self-censoring electronic newspapers likely

SYDNEY, Nov 21: New technology could allow news subscribers to customise the information they receive, down to screening out news they find distasteful, an international conference was told Monday, reports AP.

"If you were tired of reading about famines in Africa or crime, you could just select it out," said Thomas Kent, the international editor of the Associated Press, the world's biggest news agency.

"People would live in a virtual reality world where there was no crime," he said at a panel discussion at a conference of Asian, Australian and Pacific media executives organized by the Australian Associated Press.



Mustafa Aminur Rashid, Managing Director, Agrani Bank, seen speaking at the certificate awarding ceremony of the week-long course on "Human relation and communication development." Khondker Ibrahim Khaleed, Deputy Managing Director, and Director of Agrani Bank Training Institute Badruddin Ahmed are also seen.

ADB will lend Pakistan \$1.5b

ISLAMABAD, Nov 21: The Asian Development Bank said Monday it would lend 1.5 billion dollars to Pakistan over the next three years, with almost half the money targeted at social programmes such as women's education, reports AP.

Pakistan, a country chronically short of cash, desperately needs such assistance to help supply schools, health clinics and other social services for its 130 million people.

The bank said the 1.5 million dollars in loans for the period 1995-97 would cover seven projects. They included building primary schools for girls, restoring degraded forest land and improving health and sanitation services.

Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto has introduced economic reforms that include reducing government spending and selling off state industries to the private sector.

Asian stock markets close lower

HONG KONG, Nov 21: Asian stock markets closed mostly lower Monday, with Tokyo's key index falling to an eight-month low as Sony shares continued to slump, reports AP.

Tokyo's 225-issue Nikkei Stock Average lost 180.84 points, or 0.94 per cent, closing at 19,121.72. On Friday, the index fell 34.01 points, or 0.18 per cent, to 19,302.56.

Monday's was the lowest finish for the barometer index since 19,111.92 on March 31.

The Tokyo Stock Price Index of all issues listed on the first section closed down 11.09 points, or 0.73 per cent, at 1,512.38. It had lost 4.14 points, or 0.27 per cent, to 1,523.47 on Friday.

Traders said Sony Corp's decision last week to write off 265 billion yen (2.7 billion dollars) in the book value of its money-losing movie subsidiary continued to hurt the market.

Sony stock, which lost 5.35 per cent of its value Friday, fell another 250 yen, or 4.56 per cent, to 5,230 yen Monday.

In Hong Kong, share prices plunged for the second straight session following an increase in local interest rates.

The Hang Seng Index, the Hong Kong market's key indicator of blue chips, fell 24.20 points, or 1.3 per cent, closing at 9,303.24. On Friday, the index had tumbled 90 points.

Hong Kong's leading banks announced Friday that they were raising their prime lending rate by 0.75 percentage points to 8.50 per cent, effective Monday.

Interest rates on savings and all deposits also were raised by 0.75 percentage points.

WELLINGTON: New Zealand share prices closed slightly lower. The NZSE-40 Capital Index fell 21.64 points to 2,031.22.

TAIPEI: Share prices closed lower in moderate trading because of profit-taking after two sessions of gains. The market's Weighted Index fell 45.06 points to 6,404.62.

MANILA: Share prices closed lower in thin trading as investors took profits. The Philippines' PSE Index of 43 selected issues fell 13.07 points to 2,899.79.

SEOUL: Share prices closed mixed in active trading. The Korea Composite Stock Price Index fell 0.5 point to 1,117.08.

SYDNEY: Australian share prices closed lower in lackluster trading because of a lack of market-moving news. The All Ordinaries Index fell 12.5 points to 1,909.5.

KUALA LUMPUR: Malaysian share prices closed lower in line with weak overseas markets. The KLSE Composite Index fell 3.5 points to 1,045.38.

SINGAPORE: Share prices closed lower in thin trading in the absence of buying incentives. The 30-share Straits Times Industrials Index fell 32.68 points to 2,321.99.

BANGKOK: Thai share prices closed lower in light trading. The Stock Exchange of Thailand index fell 16.90 points to 1,440.59.

JAKARTA: The stock exchange's Composite Index fell 3.179 points, closing at 506.657.

Nintendo reports 18pc drop in net profits

TOKYO, Nov 21: Nintendo Co, the world's biggest maker of video games, on Monday reported an 18 per cent drop in net profits for the first half of the fiscal year, reports AP.

Hit by the strong yen and slumping sales of video game devices overseas, Nintendo's income slumped to 26.66 billion yen (272 million dollars) in the six months ended September 30 from 32.52 billion yen (332 million dollars) in the year-earlier period.

Sales fell 36 per cent to 166 billion yen (1.69 billion dollars) from 260.18 billion yen (2.65 billion dollars).

The company plans to pay an interim dividend of 35 yen (35.7 cents) a share.

US firm study for fertiliser plants in Hanoi complete

HANOI, Nov 21: A US firm has completed a study to build two fertiliser plants in Vietnam that would increase the country's production capacity by 45 per cent, the Vietnam news agency said yesterday, reports AFP.

All Ocean International of the United States has finished studies for a joint venture with Vietnamese company Ferchemco and is expected to apply for a government licence, the report said.

Vietnam's six plants currently produce only one million tonnes of fertiliser and can meet just 70 per cent of demand for phosphate fertiliser and 10 per cent for urea.

MCI to introduce Internet computer service

NEW YORK, Nov 21: MCI Communications Corp on Monday will unveil its Internet service to consumers and businesses, becoming the biggest brand name to sell access to the global computer network, says AP.

The "InternetMCI" service, which begins in January, will put the second-largest long distance company in competition with national on-line companies like Prodigy and America Online and scores of local computer bulletin boards tied to the Internet.

It is the second announcement in just days with the potential to reshape the on-line industry. Microsoft Corp last week provided a first glimpse of the Microsoft Network, an on-line service available next summer that will also have a tie to the Internet.

MCI announced its Internet connection several weeks ago as part of a software product called "networkMCI" that packaged e-mail, a news and database service and other productivity programmes together. However, it was still hammering out agreements and withheld details until now.

The MCI plan is striking in its breadth, with an electronic shopping mall that is secure for credit card transactions, simple software for consumers and programming tools and consulting services for businesses that want customers and suppliers to reach them on the Internet.

"There's really no one doing all of what we're doing," said John Donahue, vice-president of marketing for MCI's business products.

Consumers will be charged about 50 dollars for the Internet software and 20 dollars a month for seven hours of access in cities and three hours in rural areas, where calling in will be done over toll-free lines. After that, extra hours will cost 4 dollar each. For its first subscribers, MCI will provide three months of service for 20 dollars.

MCI declined to disclose subscriber or revenue goals but Donahue called it "a big revenue opportunity and an increasingly strategic opportunity."

With it, MCI moves to the forefront of companies trying to expand the Internet beyond its base of scientists, students and the computer-savvy.

Some current devotees of the Internet loathe such efforts, expressing feelings like those of a rural homeowner who has a housing subdivision go in nearby.

Prominent Internet developer Vinton Cerf said he has faced many questions from early Internet users about its growth and his recent decision to become senior vice-president for data architecture at MCI.

"For people who enjoyed the small town, cliché atmosphere, which I did too, once you realise the value of this system, what it can do to bring people together and stimulate the economy, you can't possibly help but want this for everyone," said Cerf, co-creator of the standard language called TCP-IP that computers use to talk to each other on the Internet.

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DSE Shares and Debentures

Company	FV/ML (Taka)	Closing Rate (Taka)
Al-Baraka Bank	1000/1	835.00
A.B. Bank	100/5	180.00
City Bank	100/5	425.00
Eastern Bank	100/20	102.00
IDLC Ltd	100/20	545.42
ULC	100/20	405.38
IFIC	100/5	162.00
Islamic Bank	1000/1	1585.00
National Bank	100/5	119.12
Pubal Bank	100/5	100.00
Rupali Bank	100/10	78.18
U.C.B.L	100/5	100.00
Utara Bank	100/5	90.00

Govt of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Office of the Executive Engineer, RHD
Planning & Design Division, Rangpur

Notice Inviting Quotations (2nd Call)

- Quotation Notice No: 03/EE/PD/1994-95.
- Name of the work: Supply of Survey Instruments for the office of Executive Engineer, RHD Planning & Design Division, Rangpur during 1994-95.
- Earnest money: 2% of the total quoted amount.
- Time for completion: 10 (Ten) days.
- Eligibility of quotations: Enlisted Contractor of RHD and bonafide Suppliers & Manufacturer.
- Last date for the sale of quotation documents: Up to 30.11.94 Eng/16.8.1401 Beng.
- Last date for the receipt of quotation: 1.12.94 Eng/17.8.1401 Beng.
- Schedule of opening of quotations: 1.12.94 Eng/17.8.1401 Beng. (Up to 12-30-45 hours)
- Officers receiving quotations: 1. Additional Chief Engineer, RHD, Rangpur Zone, Rangpur.
2. Superintending Engineer, RHD, Planning, Monitoring & Evaluation Circle, Rangpur.
3. Superintending Engineer, RHD, Monitoring & Evaluation Circle, Sarak Bhaban, Ramna, Dhaka.
4. Executive Engineer, RHD, Planning & Design Division, Rangpur.
- Availability of quotation documents: 1. Executive Engineer RHD Planning & Design Division, Rangpur.
2. Executive Engineer, RHD, Planning Division, Sarak Bhaban, Ramna, Dhaka.

Md Ruhul Alam (CC)
Executive Engineer, RHD, Planning & Design Division, Rangpur.

DDP-10296-16/11 G-18/4

Riyadh, Moscow sign accord to improve trade ties

RIYADH, Nov 21: Saudi Arabia and Russia signed an agreement on Sunday to improve relations and strengthen trade ties between the two countries on an unprecedented trip by a senior Russian official to the kingdom, reports Reuters.

The pact was signed during a two-day visit to Saudi Arabia by Russian Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin who held talks with King Fahd, Saudi officials and businessmen from the world's biggest oil producing nation.

Saudi Arabia and Russia only established full diplomatic relations after the 1990-91 Gulf crisis and the general agreement signed on Sunday opens the door for more specific deals on trade, economics, culture, technology and sports, Russian officials said.

They said they also hoped for closer political ties. Diplomats in the region said Chernomyrdin was keen to reassure wealthy Gulf Arabs suspicious of Moscow's ties with Baghdad that Russia would not develop them at the expense of relations with the Gulf states.

Moscow has been leading a campaign in the UN Security Council to ease sanctions on Baghdad imposed after its 1990 invasion, especially after Iraq's recognition of its southern neighbour earlier this month.

They said Chernomyrdin, who is on a Gulf tour, will emphasize Moscow's crucial role in obtaining that recognition and its insistence on Iraqi implementation of the Security Council's Gulf War resolutions as it tries to make inroads into the lucrative Gulf market.

"We hope this trip will open opportunities for signing concrete agreements," a spokesman for Chernomyrdin told Reuters through an interpreter. Russian and Saudi officials said this was the highest level Russian delegation to the kingdom.

Total trade turnover between the two countries is small and worth only about 30 million dollars a year, mostly comprising Russian exports, including timber and cars, to Saudi Arabia.

AMF may set up ratings agency for Arab cos

DUBAI, Nov 21: The Arab Monetary Fund (AMF) was assessing the feasibility of establishing a ratings agency for Arab companies, AMF Director General Jassim al Mannai said, reports Reuters.

Addressing a banking conference on Sunday, Mannai said, "We are trying to establish the feasibility of setting up a ratings agency in conjunction with a major international financial institution to rate Arab companies."

Mannai, the head of the Arab world's prime financial institution, did not name the foreign financial house involved.

Henry Azzam, chief economist at Saudi Arabia's National Commercial Bank, said that to encourage the development of a private bond market, corporates needed to get ratings.

Exchange Rates

Following are the Sonali Bank's dealing rates to public for some selected foreign currencies effective as on November 21. (Figures in Taka)

Currency	Selling	Buying
	TT & OD	TT OD OD
US Dollar	40.3815	40.1000
GBP	63.7281	62.2996
DM	26.2504	25.5430
F Franc	7.6463	7.4398
C Dollar	29.8728	29.0558
S Franc	30.9919	31.0164
Jap Yen	0.4162	0.4165
Indian Rupee	1.2939	1.3036
Pak Rupee	1.3210	1.3309
Iranian Ryal	0.0232	0.0234

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Currency	Selling	Buying
	TT & OD	TT OD OD
S Riyal	10.7675	10.8303
UAE Dirham	10.9971	10.8581
Kuwaiti Dinar	135.1908	133.1474
D Guilders	23.3622	23.0601
S Kwana	5.4760	5.4013
Malaysian Ringgit	15.7599	15.5576
Singapore Dollar	27.4089	27.0440

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US Dollar	40.3815	40.1000
GBP	63.7281	62.2996
DM	26.2504	25.5430
F Franc	7.6463	7.4398
C Dollar	29.8728	29.0558
S Franc	30.9919	31.0164
Jap Yen	0.4162	0.4165
Indian Rupee	1.2939	1.3036
Pak Rupee	1.3210	1.3309
Iranian Ryal	0.0232	0.0234