

Issues relating
to newsprint
sales reviewed

Issues relating to production and sales of paper and newsprint produced by paper and newsprint mills under BCIC were reviewed at a meeting held at BCIC Bhaban here yesterday, reports BSS.

The meeting was attended by Industries Secretary AHM Abdul Hye, Waseq al Azad, chairman, BCIC, directors of the corporation and senior officers of BCIC head office.

After the discussion of the pertinent issues, the meeting decided to take specific measures to augment the supply of paper and newsprint at fair price, particularly to the students of schools, colleges and universities.

The Industries Secretary directed BCIC to optimise production and streamline the distribution procedure for stabilisation of price level of paper and newsprint in the market.

Biswas speaks on
unemployment

President Abdur Rahman Biswas said that the unemployment problem in the country could be solved to some extent by creating more private employment opportunities, reports UNB.

The President was addressing a 52-member delegation of the former students of Barisal Rab Sathirha Samity, a commercial institute, when they called on him at Bangabhaban yesterday.

He said that technical knowledge could make an individual a resource person, which the country requires for smooth functioning of the administration.

The need of our society should be met by the trained manpower and more emphasis should be given on commercial education," he added.

The delegation apprised President Biswas of their different problems and sought cooperation in establishing a commercial institute for providing training to the unemployed youths.

Call money rate

Money rates in the call money market during the week ended November 23, ranged from one per cent to six per cent, a Bangladesh Bank press release said here yesterday, reports BSS.

During the same week interest rates offered by the bank on certificate of deposits varied from 3.50 per cent to 8.25 per cent.

Seminar on 'Money
and capital market'
at BIBM Sunday

A one-day seminar on 'Money and capital market in Bangladesh' will be held on Sunday at the Bangladesh Institute of Bank Management (BIBM) in the city, says a press release.

A good number of articles written by eminent scholars will be presented at the seminar.

Sultan-uz Zaman Khan, Chairman, Securities and Exchange Commission, will grace the occasion as chief guest.

Israel lifts ban
on Palestinian
produce

JERUSALEM, Nov 24: Israel, trying to beat the high cost of tomatoes, on Wednesday lifted a ban on Palestinian produce from the Gaza Strip imposed 15 days ago in response to a cholera outbreak, reports Reuters.

The Agriculture Ministry said tomatoes would arrive by Thursday, relieving a shortage that sent prices in Israel soaring by more than 50 per cent last month. A kilo now costs about 4 dollar (one pound costs 1.80 dollar).

Palestinian health officials said the cholera, which peaked at 77 cases and took the life of a toddler, had been brought under control. They said four cholera patients remained in hospital and they would be cured soon.

"From tests conducted in recent weeks in the Gaza Strip, it became clear that all the produce and the sources of water are free of cholera germs and so it was decided to let the produce in," the Agriculture Ministry said in a statement.

It said tomatoes were also arriving from Jordan, one of the first fruits of a peace treaty signed last month.

Israel had slapped a ban on imports of produce from the Gaza Strip, home to a million Palestinians, fearing contamination from the outbreak of cholera.

Duty-free entry of Bangladeshi items into India sought

Delhi offers Dhaka cooperation
in small-scale industries

NEW DELHI, Nov 24: Bangladesh has asked the Indian government to allow duty-free entry of selected Bangladeshi exportable items to Indian markets with a view to reducing the wide trade imbalance against Bangladesh, reports BSS.

Bangladesh Industries Minister AM Zahiruddin Khan said this when he called on Indian Finance Minister Dr Manmohan Singh yesterday.

The Indian side offered cooperation in the fields of small-scale industries particularly horticulture, electronics, agro-products and village industries.

Khan said Bangladesh can meet the needs of India's northeastern states if tariff

concession is allowed to Bangladeshi consumer goods. He said with Indian finance industries could be set up in Bangladesh with an arrangement for buy-back to India or to third countries.

Dr Singh lauded the economic policy of Bangladesh.

Earlier, Zahiruddin Khan held a bilateral meeting with Indian Minister of State for Industries Krishna Sahi.

During the talks, the two ministers discussed in detail the entire gamut of economic cooperation between the two countries.

Speaking about joint venture industries, Khan mentioned cement, bulk drug, textile, leather complex, steel, engineering and paper and

pulp industry based on green jute in which the two countries can cooperate for mutual benefit. He offered the expertise of Grameen Bank to set up similar banks in India.

Khan proposed signing of an investment protection agreement between the two countries with a view to encouraging investment.

He mentioned that Bangladesh offers the most liberal economic policy in South Asia and an attractive market for Indian investors.

Khan highlighted the macro-economic achievements by Bangladesh during the last three and a half years.

Later, addressing a meeting of the Indo-Bangladesh Joint Business Council (JBC), the

minister called upon the Indian entrepreneurs to take full advantage of the Bangladesh's economic liberalisation policies by setting up joint venture industries. In this regard, he said in comparison to India, joint venture undertakings could be set up much more easily in Bangladesh.

Referring to existing trade gap between the two countries, the minister urged the Indian government to allow import of Bangladeshi goods with zero or preferential tariff under Bangkok Agreement and GATT as the Bangladesh is a least developed country.

Bangladesh High Commissioner Farooq Sobhan was present during the talks and at the JBC meeting.

KLM offers special service for
unaccompanied minors

By Asiuzzaman, back from Amsterdam

Osei, a 14-year-old African boy, was playing video game in a specially decorated room for children at the busy Schiphol Airport in Amsterdam. The boy, a transit passenger from Nairobi to Toronto, was alone.

He does not even know what is travel document or passport. "He cannot express himself and does not know anything about airport formalities necessary for a traveller. But Osei was looking nonchalant and free from anxiety probably KLM,

the Royal Dutch Airlines, took full responsibility to send him to his parents.

KLM, one of the world's oldest airlines, offers this service for unaccompanied minor (UM) across the globe.

"It may happen that a minor boy has to reach somewhere but his parents or any relatives are not in a position to accompany him. KLM offers this UM service for those children with a great responsibility," Cees Ursem,

General Manager, Bangladesh branch for KLM said.

Ursem was accompanying a group of journalists who visited Amsterdam from November 17 to 21 to see for themselves the KLM activities.

"This is a unique example of service KLM offers for its passengers," Ursem said, adding: "We believe in service, security and safety."

The 75-year-old European carrier alone operates in 155 destinations in 80 countries

worldwide and with its business partner Northwest Airlines of USA, the number of destinations reached 450. Dhaka is the newest link for KLM which was opened on October 31, 1994. It operates twice-a-week flight between Dhaka and Amsterdam with a stopover in Dubai.

It has an youngest fleet of 90 aircraft each of which has an average age of seven years. The airlines has a total of 24,000 staff.

KLM's on board service has already made a mark to the passengers. The airlines' schedule punctuality is more than 90 per cent. It has its own reservation and communication systems which ensure 100 per cent accuracy.

Starting from October 7, 1919, KLM now turned to be among the world's top 10 carriers, transports over 11 million passengers and 500,000 tons of cargo every year.

The inaugural flight of KLM was in between Amsterdam and London on May 17, 1920 and during the first year of operation, it carried only 345 passengers.

KLM has a huge establishment in Dubai, UAE, from where it operates in the Middle-East and South Asia.

Dubai has an immense potential for aviation and tourism business. More than 60 airlines operate from Dubai International Airport to 110 destinations. Last year 450,000 travellers from Russia alone visited Dubai, a free port for tourists and businessmen.



KLM officials explaining the UM service system of the airlines to Bangladeshi journalists at the Schiphol Airport in Amsterdam.

Industrial investment marks
significant growth

Industrial investment in the country marked a significant growth during the first four months of the current fiscal year (1994-95) till October 1994, compared to the corresponding period of the last year, reports BSS.

This was disclosed at a meeting of the chairman and managing directors of the nationalised commercial banks (NCBs) and private banks, and development finance institutions (DFIs) held here Wednesday evening with the Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman in the chair, an official handout said.

The meeting was informed that during the period the banks sanctioned a total of Taka 787 crore as loan out of the target amount of Taka

3,110 crore fixed for the current year for setting up to 1836 large, medium and small scale industrial units.

In addition, the industrial investors who were sanctioned the loans, are also expected to invest an amount of Taka 270 crore as equity.

Out of the 787 crore, the banks have already released Taka 362 crore till October, 1994. The rest amount is expected to be released with the completion of formalities.

Expressing satisfaction over the performance of the banks and DFIs, the Finance Minister stressed the need for bringing in more dynamism in the banking sector to boost investment in the country.

Regarding the outstanding and bad loans the Finance

Minister suggested to introduce liberal and careful rescheduling facilities to bring the defaulters back into production.

The meeting was informed that apart from Janata Bank the performance of other NCBs regarding release of the industrial loans this year have been satisfactory.

The meeting decided to raise the maximum limit under the on-going small investors' credit guarantee scheme from existing Taka 25 to 30 lakhs.

Under the scheme, if a small investor invests Taka one lakh, the bank will provide Taka four lakh out of which Taka three lakh will be covered by guarantee from the Bangladesh Bank.

Russian bank
aiming to open
branch in UAE

ABU DHABI, Nov 24: A major Russian bank is aiming to open up in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) as Moscow launches a drive to gain an economic foothold in the lucrative Gulf region, a senior Russian official said yesterday, reports AFP.

The Moscow-based Stolichny Bank, one of the biggest Russian banks, has applied to the UAE Central Bank to open a branch in the main Gulf commercial centre of Dubai, said Deputy Prime Minister Oleg Davydov, who is accompanying Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin on a Gulf tour.

It will be the first Russian bank to set up in the six-nation Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), where more than 40 foreign banks already operate mainly financing the profitable construction and trade sector.

Scientists reduce negative effect
of leather industries

By Staff Correspondent

The old idea about the leather industries being an environmental hazard is no more valid as the scientists working with the leading tanneries have reduced the negative effect of the tanning process through appropriate chemical treatment.

This was observed at a seminar on 'Beamhouse and tanning process' held yesterday at a local hotel under the joint auspices of Limex Technologies Limited of Bangladesh and Roehm GmbH of Germany.

Chairman of the Bangladesh Finished Leather Goods Exporters Association (BFLGEA) AKM Rahmatullah attended the function as the chief guest while Dr Thomas Feigl, Head of Commercial Marketing Operating Division of the German company was the main speaker. Managing Director of Limex Technologies Ltd AM Morshed Hossain delivered the address of welcome at the seminar.

Rahmatullah in his speech said many companies in the developing countries can not afford setting up of pollution control units in their factories due to lack of appropriate technology as well as high cost of the technology. The companies like Roehm can play a leading role in this regard through their research and development of environment

friendly beamhouse chemicals, he said.

He also said the tannery industries of the world are undergoing a major relocation and a number of tanneries are also closing down in the developed countries due to high cost of labour and pollution control plants.

Most of those are being re-



Dr. Thomas Feigl of Roehm GmbH, Germany, presenting key-note paper at the seminar. — Star photo.

located in the developing countries, he said and added that Bangladesh can also benefit from this situation if appropriate technology transfer follows the relocation.

"During the last four five years Bangladesh leather in-

dustry has undergone a major change. We have moved vertically from wet-blue to crust leather", he said, and added that the tannery industries in the country have much to learn about beamhouse operation, which is the most important process in tanning industry.

Success of producing good leather depends a lot on correct 'beamhouse' operation, he said. "Bangladesh also lacks any support institution to educate the tanners," he added.

The German company provides the leather industries of the world with the most environment friendly 'beamhouse' process. The Roehm has also the enzymic product that can dispose of the most difficult disposable solid waste of the tannery.

Explaining the technological aspects of the Roehm introduced beamhouse operation, Dr Feigl said the main object of the technology adopted by Roehm is to improve quality of leather as well as protection of environment from the toxic effluents.

He described a whole process of leather industry from soaking to tanning and said the leather making process is an input-output system during which the main aim is to optimise the interaction of the individual factors in order to obtain an ideal result.

Tourism Month '94

Foreigners willing to
organise group tours

A visiting team of foreign tour operators and travel writers have said Bangladesh has vast potential for tourism development, reports UNB.

The group includes guests from USA, Canada, Germany, Japan, Italy, France, Belgium, Singapore, India and Nepal.

They attended the inaugural function of the Tourism Month-94 and were taken to important tourist spots of Bangladesh on a familiarisation tour.

Sate Minister for Civil Aviation and Tourism Abdul Mannan met the visiting tour operators and travel writers at the Bangladesh Parjatan Corporation head office in the city yesterday.

He exchanged views with the visiting guests regarding potentials of tourism and development of required international standard facilities for overseas visitors.

The tourism professionals said Sundarban, Rangamati and Srimangal have a great potential for development of international tourism while Cox's Bazar can be developed for domestic segment of tourists.

They also stressed the need for trained guides to conduct group tours efficiently.

The foreign tour operators

expressed their willingness to organise group tours to Bangladesh.

In observance of the Tourism Month, a handicraft exhibition, tribal cultural function and food festival were held under the auspices of BPC and BSCIC at Rangamati on Thursday.

Deputy Minister for LGED and Cooperatives Abdul Hye attended the function as chief guest while Rangamati, Hill District Local Government Parishad Chairman Parijat Kusum Chakma and Mamaching MP was special guests.

As part of the month-long programme, a tribal fashion show, handicraft exhibition and food festival were held at Hotel Agrabad in Chittagong on Wednesday.

State Minister for Science and Technology Prof MA Mannan was present as chief guest while Chittagong City Corporation Mayor ABM Mohiuddin Chowdhury and M A Jinna MP were special guests. BPC Chairman Abdus Samad Bhuiyan was also present.

BPC will organise Orchid and Flowers Exhibition at Water Front restaurant adjacent to Zia International Airport, Dhaka today at 10 am.



M. Fazlul Islam, Director of Janata Bank Training Centre in Comilla, giving away certificates among the participants attending the 48th officers' basic training course organised by the Centre recently.

World import of raw fibre falls for 4th consecutive year

World import of raw fibre has declined beckoning the rejuvenation of already shaken global jute market, reports UNB.

Officials at International Jute Organisation (IJO) in the city Wednesday said, in a decline for the fourth consecutive year world import of raw fibre dropped to 3,30,800 metric tons in 1993 from the 1992 level of 354,800 tons.

Imports of the developing countries also decreased to 2,60,200 tons in 1993 from the 1992 level of 275,000 tons.

On the other hand, the average export price of raw jute BWD grade, the representative export grade, increased to US dollars 302 per metric ton in 1993-94 as against US dollars 294.90 in 1992-93,

indicating a slight recovery of the decline since 1990-91.

Jute export from Bangladesh, the largest exporter, grew by a marginal 2.1 per cent to 288,000 tons in 1993-94 from 282,200 tons in 1992-93, giving a mild stir to the sagging market. Export from China during the time remained static at 32,000 tons. There were no exports from India in 1993-94.

Bangladesh intends to export 270,000 metric tons of raw jute this fiscal year (1994-95) against its production target of 929,500 tons.

Against the backdrop of increased production in 1994-95, prices of raw jute at the growers level were subdued in the primary market of the country towards the beginning of the year.

Also, the drought situation during the rainy season, particularly in the northern region, resulted in the shortage of water for retting jute.

Production of jute products decreased further in Bangladesh, Thailand, Nepal and Pakistan in 1993, while in India it increased. Bangladesh produced 456,400 tons in 1993 as against 568,700 tons in 1992.

In India, on the contrary, production during 1993 increased to 1,439,200 tons from 1,166,900 tons in 1992.

Bangladesh continued to be the largest exporter of jute goods followed by India, Thailand and China. Exports from Bangladesh, China, India and Thailand declined in 1993-94 while from Nepal those slightly increased.

While exports from Bangladesh slightly increased from 487,000 tons in 1991-92 to 491,800 tons in 1992-93, those decreased to 462,300 tons in 1993-94.

The average internal price of raw jute rose to Tk 816.60 per quintal in 1993-94 against Tk 653.50 in 1992-93. In the current fiscal year, it has ranged between Tk 600 and Tk 650.

World imports of jute goods decreased by 6.8 per cent in 1993 to 868,000 tons from the 1992 level of 931,900 tons showing declines in the volume of imports into both the developed and developing regions, although external price index marked a slight rise.

Acres under jute cultivation in the five major producing countries — Bangladesh,

China, India, Nepal and Thailand — was estimated to have increased by 7.5 per cent to 4,516,700 acres in 1993-94 from 1992-93 level of 4,201,000 acres, indicating a recovery of the decline from 1991-92 level of 4,993,000 acres.

In 1994-95, the area under jute cultivation in Bangladesh was estimated at 1,403,000 acres.

World production of raw jute in 1993-94 was estimated at 2.98 million tons, 5.5 per cent down from the 1992-93 output of 3.15 million tons, a fall in production for the third consecutive year.

Bangladesh's production was 783,000 tons in 1993-94 as compared to 885,400 tons in 1992-93. India produced 1,224,000 tons in 1992-93 as

against 1,332,000 tons in 1992-93.

Production in China increased to 670,000 tons from 619,000 tons in 1992-93, as it did in Thailand (to 134,000 tons from 130,400 tons) and Nepal (to 14,000 tons from 10,000 tons).

One of the reasons for the decline in production despite increase in the acreage is attributed to the decline in the per acre yield, particularly in India.

Production in 1994-95 is expected to increase according to informal forecasts. Production in Bangladesh, India and Thailand in 1994-95 are expected to be 929,500 tons (5,164,000 bales), 1,820,000 tons (9,000,000 bales) and 141,000 tons respectively.

Prof Emajuddin Ahmed, in his speech, identified three major problems of the country — poverty, sex discrimination and ecological imbalance.

Prof Emajuddin observed that without overall promotion of women the problems could not be faced effectively.

In his key-note paper Prof Sajjadur Rashid said it is now universally accepted that as users and preservers of natural resources women play an undeniable role in environmental management and that the empowerment of women is crucial for their participation.

Prof Sajjad categorised the women's work in three areas — the informal sector, unpaid family work and agricultural production.

Sajjad, however, referred to a survey of agriculture sector review of 1989 which showed that 40 per cent of the women is directly engaged in primary agricultural production.