

## Tk 1538.68m irrigation project being implemented in greater Sylhet

An ADB-financed ambitious irrigation project, now under implementation in greater Sylhet, is expected to bring about a radical change in farming and agricultural marketing in the country's northeastern region, reports UNB.

Official sources said work on the Taka 1538.68 million North East Minor Irrigation Project was going on in full swing. On completion, they said, it will boost agricultural production, employment and income through the expansion of minor irrigation in Sylhet, Moulvibazar, Habiganj, Sunamganj, Netrakona and Kishoreganj districts.

The NEMIP will bring 1.40 lakh hectares of new land under irrigation scheme. Besides having substantial surface water resources, the project area has an abundant groundwater potential in the country.

The project area consists of 13 per cent of the country's net cultivable area but has got only an estimated 3 per cent shallow tubewells and 7 per cent deep tubewells available in the country. National average irrigated

land area is 32 to 35 per cent, while the project area at present is lagging behind with only 20 per cent.

Out of 12.65 lakh hectares of cultivable land in greater Sylhet area, present irrigated area is 3.50 lakh hectare and more 1.40 lakh hectares will come under irrigation after commission of the project.

Talking to UNB, the Coordinating Director of the

project, ASM Rezaul Karim, said paddy yield is expected to increase to about 3.36 lakh metric tons per annum against present 2.5 mt, on the assumption that paddy production will be intensified in the low-land area.

Karim said the value of the incremental production of other crops, such as wheat, oilseeds and vegetable, is es-

timated at Taka 492 million on the assumption that crop diversification will occur in high and medium-high land.

The annual income of small farm households is expected to double after completion of the project. The overall increase in farm labour is estimated at 14 million man-days per annum. This labour will, in general, be shared among 8 lakh small and marginal farm families.

Karim said the average increase in wage income for each of these farm families is estimated at Taka 600 per annum, for about 18 additional man-days. Women are also expected to benefit from additional employment opportunities for unskilled labour for weeding.

Along with the increase in grain yields, a massive infrastructural development with construction of new 6000 metre of bridges and culverts will also help in developing marketing network for smooth transportation of farm produce, he added.

Work on the project began in September 1994, behind its July 1992 schedule, and will complete in June 1998.

## BKB realises Tk 8.47 cr loan in Noakhali

MAJDEE COURT (Noakhali), July 29: Bangladesh Krishi Bank (BKB) of Noakhali region has realised Taka 8.47 crore agricultural loan last financial year, reports UNB.

Bank sources said, the realisation of loan amount was higher than the target of Taka 7.69 crore.

BKB disbursed agricultural loan of Taka 11.81 crore through its 17 branches during the period.

A total of 2,957 certificate cases have been filed against the defaulter loanees for loan amount Taka 7.54 crore up to June, 95. Regional Manager of the bank said that realisation of loan amount was satisfactory.

BKB will disburse sufficient loan among the farmers during the current financial year to encourage them to boost production, he added.

## Essentials dear in Khulna

KHULNA, July 29: The prices of essential commodities are on the rise in Khulna Metropolitan city since the last week causing much suffering to the consumers, reports UNB.

According to the dwellers, per kg coarse rice is being sold at Taka 15, ata at Tk 13, flour at Taka 14, soya bean oil at Taka 50, sugar at Taka 30, beef at Taka 60 and chicken at Taka 80.

On the other hand, prices of fish and vegetables have also shot up. Brinjal is being sold at Taka 16 per kg while kochu at Taka 20, karala at Taka 12 and potol at Taka 12. Hilsa per kg is being sold between Taka 90 and 100, pangash at Taka 200 and ruhi at Taka 175.

## SABF to hold investment confce in Sept

SAARC-ASEAN Businessmen's Forum (SABF) will organise an international investment conference in Dhaka last week of September, 1995, reports BSS.

This was disclosed in "SABF" meeting held at the office of the State Minister for Industries Lutfor Rahman Khan here yesterday.

While speaking on the occasion the State Minister said the present government was implementing a massive reform programmes to accelerate the pace of industrialisation in the country. He said the government would play supportive role in expanding the initiatives of the private sector.

The meeting discussed necessary steps to properly apprise the investors of member countries of SAARC-ASEAN of the facilities offered by the government for investors from home and abroad.

The meeting decided to form a working committee to identify potential areas of investment in the country. The meeting also stressed the need for expansion of trade relation with the SAARC-ASEAN countries.

## TV, refrigerator sale declines

By Sharier Khan

The sale of TV and refrigerator, has declined during the last one month as their prices have not gone down following the duty cut on these products announced in the budget in June.

Customers believe that the prices of TV and fridge will go down in the next few months and therefore, they tend not to buy those nowadays," said Shamol, a salesman of an electronics shop in the Stadium Market.

Although the budget's duty cut was supposed to have reduced the prices of freezer and TV-set by Taka 1000 to 2,500 per set, the highest reduction found in the market was only worth Taka 300. The wholesaler of Korean Daewoo refrigerators has reduced Taka 200 to 300 on each of their products.

Since the budget was declared, importers have reportedly stopped bringing in fresh supply of electronics under the new duty structure. If this continues, prices of TV and freezer may go up instead of going down, shopowners of Stadium Market said.

"Yes, it is true that we have not imported any prod-

uct after June," said a representative of ATM Enterprise, the importer of Daewoo freezers, "because we already have adequate supply."

Retailers at the Stadium Market, the country's biggest electronics market having 554 shops, said that some wholesalers already had big stocks of TV and freezer which were imported under the previous duty structure.

The budget reduced duty on fridge to 30 per cent from 45 and supplementary duty on colour TV to 5 per cent from 20.

"They would not want to bring in fresh supply under the lower duty structure and then get stuck with the old stock," noted a shopowner, requesting anonymity adding, "soon there might be an artificial crisis of TV and refrigerators in the market."

Different refrigerators, imported mostly from Korea, Singapore and Thailand — often with a Japanese brand name, were sold at following prices now: Hitachi 6.5 CFT at Taka 15,300, Goldstar 7.5 CFT Taka 16,500, Seiko 8.5 CFT Taka 20,800, Kelvinator 8.5 CFT Taka 22,600, Daewoo 12 CFT Taka 20,400 and Samsung 22 CFT Taka

42,000. Local colour TV including Nikkon, National and Tanin are being sold at prices between Taka 15,300 to Tk 20,000 according to their sizes and number of functions.

Philips Powervision 20 inch colour TV sells at around Taka 23,300 and another of its model of the same size at Taka 20,200.

Sony TV, the most expensive trademark among other TV set, is sold at prices no less than Taka 26,500.

All of these prices are close to those in the last fiscal.

Meanwhile, the prices of VCPs have gone down by Taka 100 to 300 at the wholesale level. Mullick, a wholesaler, told this correspondent that the prices of Funai VCP dropped to Taka 7,800 from Tk 8,100 and Goldstar to Taka 8,800 from Taka 9,000.

"This fall of price has got nothing to do with the budget's tax cut," Mullick pointed out.

On the other hand, prices of cassette players have gone up by Taka 100 to 500 per set without any apparent reason.

## Hanoi seeks food security

HANOI, July 29: Prime Minister Vo Van Kiet, concerned that Vietnam may lose its self-sufficiency in rice, has ordered that rice farms be expanded in the country's biggest grain-growing region, a report said Saturday, according to AP.

An increasing number of foreign investors have converted Vietnamese rice farms into factory sites, which the country needs to develop its economy. But Kiet and other leaders worry that Vietnam, the world's third largest exporter of rice, may lose its ability to grow enough grain to feed itself as a result.

Kiet told officials in the southern Mekong River Delta not only to preserve the region's 4.5 million hectares (10.6 million acres) of rice paddies but also to keep the amount of paddy per local resident stable for the next 15 years, the Vietnam Investment Review reported.

The review is published by the State Committee for Cooperation and Investment.

To meet Kiet's target, farmers will have to boost their productivity to keep up with Vietnam's annual population growth rate of more than two per cent.

## Dialogue on collective action in dev held

The Centre for Policy Dialogue arranged a dialogue here on the role of collective action in development in the age of the market, reports UNB.

Presenting her key-note paper on the subject, Frances Stewart, Director International Development Centre, Queen Elizabeth House, Oxford, said end of the cold war marked the victory of the ideology of market capitalism.

In her paper Prof Stewart challenged free market orthodoxy and in this regard raised an important issue which she thinks has been neglected by the tradition. The issue is the critical role of "groups" in economic discourse.

She invoked various critical, theoretical and empirical studies done in recent years to support her argument.

Prof Stewart noted with concern that bureaucrats and politicians were universally seen as groups competing with other social actors for realizing their own interests and thereby distorting the rational allocation of economic resources.

In contrast, Prof Stewart argued, communitarians recognised the critical role of groups in human interaction.

Prof Rehman Sobhan, Executive Chairperson of the Centre for Policy Dialogue, who moderated the dialogue, solicited opinions from participants on issues like relationship between socio-economic structures and group behaviour.

Discussions focused on issues like why NGOs are better than the government in delivering services, political motives behind decentralisation, why and how resistances come from different vested interest groups in the context of socio-political reforms.



Dr Frances Stewart, Director, International Development Centre, Queen Elizabeth House, University of Oxford, seen addressing the opening day session of the three-day 11th biennial conference of Bangladesh Economic Association (BEA) at the Institute of Engineers Bangladesh in the city yesterday. — Star photo

## K Line Bangladesh Ltd opens

The inaugural ceremony of "K" line Bangladesh, Ltd, was held at hotel Sonargaon yesterday, says a press release.

The ceremony was attended by Shipping Minister M K Anwar, Shipping Community, importers and exporters, high government officials and the elites of the city.

"K" Line Bangladesh, Ltd joint venture company established in March 1994 was formed with Kawasaki Kisen Kaisha Ltd, a worldwide renowned shipping company.

The partners in this joint venture company are two foreign companies and two Bangladeshi companies.

The foreign companies are: Kawasaki Kisen Kaisha Ltd, Japan and "K" Line (Singapore) Pte Ltd, Singapore while the Bangladeshi companies are: Bangladesh Thai Plastic Industries Ltd., Dhaka and Sunrise Shipping Lines (Pvt) Ltd, Dhaka.

The total shares of two foreign companies being 49 per cent while that of Bangladeshi companies being 51 per cent.

It is learnt that this world renowned Japan-based Kawasaki Kisen Kaisha Ltd along with their joint venture company "K" Line Bangladesh, Ltd in Bangladesh apart from transportation of containers through international waters venture has come with the aim in the future to build up an international transport network in Bangladesh by establishing container terminal, trucking, warehousing and distribution.

"Kawasaki Kisen Kaisha will also be interested to invest in different aspects of the development of ports in

Bangladesh. All these development works will involve huge investment including foreign exchange component.

It is expected that the present policy of the government will allow investment of this nature by a joint venture company. Such intentions of investment by foreign investors in Bangladesh is indeed commendable and with the liberal policy of the government, it will go a long way towards development in the shipping sectors of Bangladesh.

H. Tanaka, senior managing director of Kawasaki Kisen Kaisha, Japan and Y Doi, managing director of "K" Line (Singapore) Pte. Ltd., Singapore had specially come to attend this function.

## US food giant prepares Asian invasion

Daniel Girard writes from Colombo

War-torn Sri Lanka is standing by for an invasion by the colonel — armed with fried chicken drumsticks.

United States-based food giant Kentucky Fried Chicken (KFC) is opening its first two KFC outlets in Colombo this year as part of a big push into South Asia. The company's first restaurant in the region was launched in Bangalore, India, in July and talks are underway for openings in Pakistan.

Throughout the Asia-Pacific region, the company's primary growth market internationally, plans are underway for at least 3,000 restaurants by the end of the decade.

In Sri Lanka, Cargills (Ceylon), part of a Scottish multinational, has landed the exclusive franchise rights for an undisclosed sum and plans to have up to 20 KFC outlets in operation in its Cargills supermarkets across the country, says managing director Ranjit Page.

He refused to discuss profit projections but told Gemini News service: "I'm confident we'll do well."

But if KFC is a big success in Sri Lanka, Page can expect more than chickenfeed from his company's latest foray,

into American popular culture.

From humble beginnings more than 40 years ago in rural Kentucky where it was started by a flatbroke 65-year-old named Colonel Harland Sanders, KFC has grown to 9,300 restaurants in 69 countries. Its sales last year reached 7.8 billion dollars — more than the value of Sri Lanka's gross domestic product.

Its parent company is Pepsico, the US consumer products manufacturer with annual revenues of more than 28 billion dollar and more than 423,000 employees. In addition, the Colonel's original jingle of "11 herbs and spices" and his trademark white goatee are among the most famous logos the world over.

Page lauds the restaurant as a natural for Sri Lanka for both dietary and cultural reasons. "We eat a lot of chicken in this country," he says. "It's more affordable and not bound by religious constraints."

Sri Lanka has a population of 18 million. Buddhists form the majority Sinhalese community comprise nearly 70 per cent, with Hindu Tamils accounting for about 15 per

cent and Muslims and Christians about 8 per cent each.

While for Hindus beef is forbidden and pork not eaten by Muslims, chicken is eaten across religious boundaries. Page says that when it comes to meat, most Sri Lankans choose between seafood, which is expensive, and chicken which is cheap. The result, he says, is that KFC is a natural for the country.

Dudley Dissanayake, permanent secretary in the Health Ministry, admits that the government is worried about the push of imported, processed foods into the country, which has resulted in people reaching for often less nutritious but highly recognisable international brandnames while ignoring the many healthier local foods around them.

But he says that because KFC will be sold to a select crowd in larger centres, he is not worried that it will result in a widening of the problem.

Though Page says prices are yet to be fixed, Cargills is conscious of the fact that Sri Lanka is a poor country and will look to make a fried chicken dinner affordable.

"We're looking at serving the masses rather than just

small, elite sections of the population," he says.

And Page adds that KFC will bring more than American fast food to Sri Lanka. The outlets will employ about 400 youths and three to four times that number in support industries, particularly the island's poultry business, he promises.

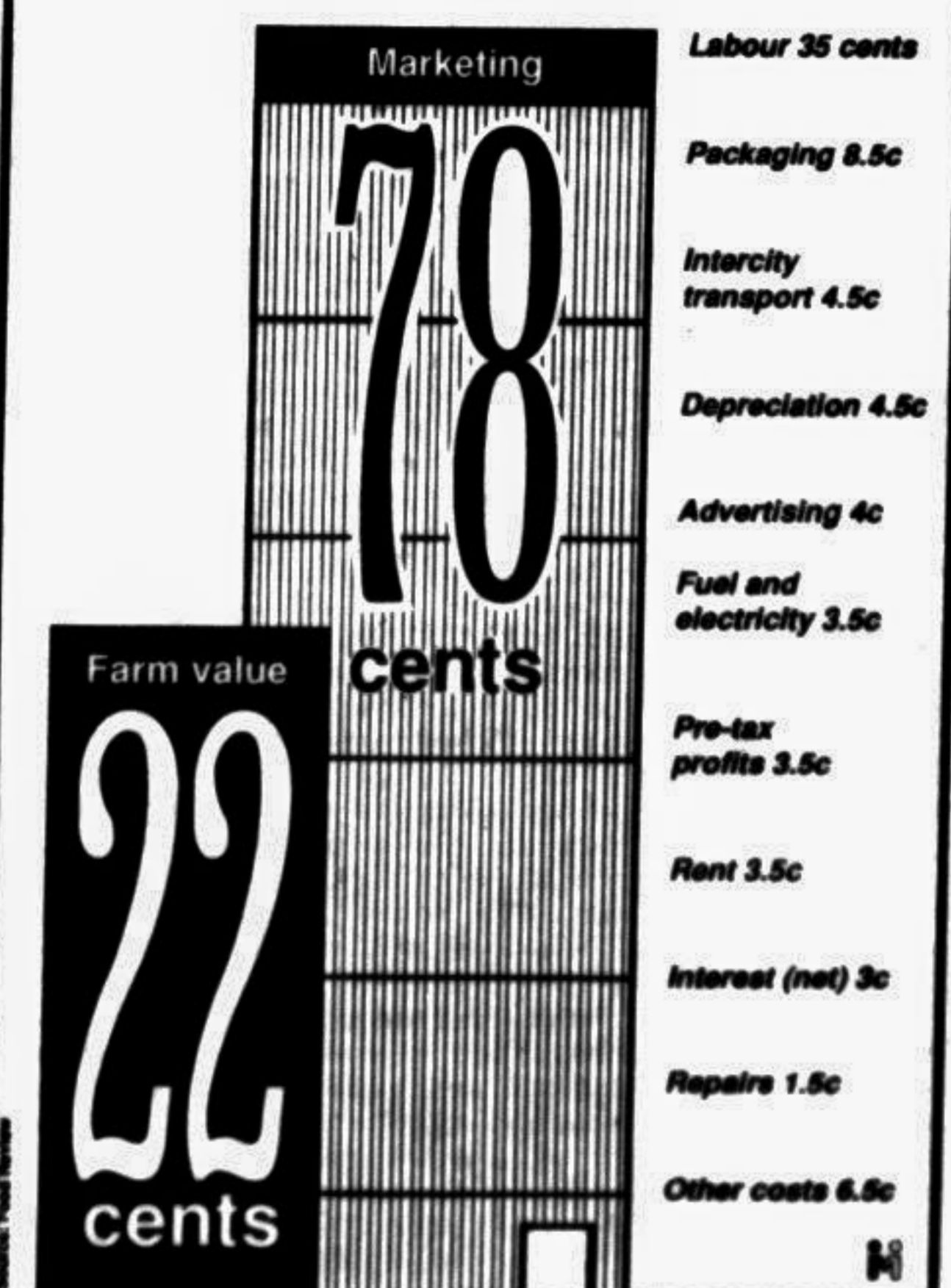
Virtually all chicken and other raw materials will be bought in Sri Lanka, creating much-needed jobs in a country that has an official unemployment of about 15 per cent but a real jobless rate that is much higher.

And what of critics who charge that Sri Lanka is already rich enough in home-grown foods without importing "junk foods" and culture? Page of Cargills, whose company in the past couple of years has become the Sri Lankan representative for American publisher Time Warner and master licensee for products from the Walt Disney Company, attributes the comments to "bad losers" among companies competing against his firm for the KFC franchise rights. — Gemini News.

Daniel Girard is a reporter with the Toronto Star in Canada. He was recently in Sri Lanka.

## Eating up the profits

Breakdown of US food costs per dollar spent



## Biman Bangladesh Airlines

BIMAN BHABAN, MOTIHEEL, DHAKA, BANGLADESH. Cable : AIRBANGLA, Tlx : 642649 DAGB BJ Phones : 240151, 240161, 240171, 240181-10 Lines, Fax : 880-2-833005

## Tender Notice

Sealed tenders are hereby invited from enlisted 'A' class steel furniture manufacturers/suppliers of Govt/ Semi-Govt/ Autonomous bodies for supply of steel Dining Table/Chair for Engineering Hanger in group 'A' and steel wheel chair in group 'B' for Station Traffic at Zia International Airport, Dhaka.

Tender documents will be available in the office of the Asstt Manager (Cash & Banking), 2nd floor, Biman Bhawan, Motiheel C/A, Dhaka on cash payment of Tk 100/- (One hundred) only for each group (non-refundable) during all working days up to 7-8-95.

Tenderers shall have to deposit the earnest money 2% (two & half per cent) for the total quoted amount in favour of Bangladesh Biman Corporation in the form of Bank Draft/Pay Order from any scheduled bank along with the tender schedule without which tender will not be accepted.

Tender will be received in the office of the Deputy General Manager (B&W) up to 1330 hrs on 08-08-1995 and will be opened by the Tender Committee on the same day at 1400 hrs in presence of tenderers (if any).

Biman Management reserves the right to accept or reject any or all the tenders without assigning any reason whatsoever.

DFP-18416-26/7  
G-1146  
Dy General Manager (B&W)