



ASEAN agri-ministers considering reducing tariff on key products

SINGAPORE, Aug 25: Agriculture Ministers from Southeast Asian Countries are considering reducing tariffs on key farm products in a bid to open trade in the region by 2003, officials said at talks here yesterday, reports AFP.

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) is working on including "sensitive" unprocessed agricultural products into a scheme to free up regional trade, said officials attending talks on how tariffs on these products should be removed.

The products include rice, cocoa, palm oil, coffee, tobacco, coconut and sugar, the primary commodities of Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand, the Philippines and Vietnam. Brunei and Singapore are also ASEAN members.

Certain agricultural sectors are considered sensitive

because opening them up too quickly to cheaper foreign competition will threaten the livelihood of farmers and hurt commodity-exporting economies.

The lifting of tariff barriers on such products is seen as "sensitive" as the move could displace large farming sectors. ASEAN members are allowed to submit a list of products sensitive for their country.

Vietnam, which joined the grouping this year, is scheduled to come on board the regional free trade wagon by 2006.

The region's tariff-reduction to a maximum five per cent by January 2003 is being achieved through a Common Effective Preferential Tariff (CEPT) scheme, which lays out the timetable for lowering tariffs.

Malaysian Agriculture Minister Sulaiman Daud warned Thursday that the inclusion of "sensitive" unprocessed agricultural products into the CEPT scheme could affect farmers' livelihoods.

"I propose that such sensitive products be excluded from the CEPT scheme and member countries be allowed to decide on their inclusion on the basis of affordability," Sulaiman said.

Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines and Thailand have already offered "non-sensitive" unprocessed agricultural products for immediate inclusion in the trade liberalisation scheme, officials said.

But they also want a special mechanism for tariff reduction and elimination for a range of "sensitive" products,

the officials said.

Soetatwo Hadiwigono, Secretary-General of Indonesia's Agriculture Ministry, told reporters that Jakarta proposed that farm products which member countries wanted excluded temporarily could be brought into the CEPT scheme five years before the free trade deadline.

He admitted that member countries which earlier agreed to exclude products temporarily from the scheme now wanted these products to be categorised as "sensitive." Officials say this could delay the region's farm tariff liberalisation.

Lim Hng Kiang, Singapore's Minister for National Development, warned that industrialisation was causing farm labour shortages and decreased availability of farmlands as food demand rises.

Construction of Ctg Railway Station may be completed in Sept

CHITTAGONG, Aug 25: The construction works of the Chittagong railway station under a remodeling project at a cost of about Taka eleven crore are likely to be completed by the next month, reports BSS.

About 85 per cent works of the modern railway terminal building have already been completed, a senior railway official said.

Taka 4.56 crore will be spent for the construction of the terminal building, Tk 75 lakh for a spacious platform with shade, Taka 60 lakh for renovation of railway track, Taka 35 lakh for development of signalling system and Taka 20 lakh for construction of a connecting road.

Being built with architectural beauty the terminal building will have modern amenities including air conditioned VIP lounge, tourist booth, fax, telephone and canteen facilities for the passengers, spacious rest room for different classes of the passenger and luggage space, the source said.

Communications Minister Oli Ahmed recently visiting the ongoing construction works of the terminal bhaban expressed his satisfaction over the rapid progress of the works. He said the passengers as well as the foreigners who would travel to Chittagong for trade and commerce would feel the train journey comfortable and safe.

Fish can recover from exploitation, if given chance, study shows

WASHINGTON, Aug 25: Kill of enough fish and eventually there's a point of no return and a whole species vanishes. Researchers say some commercial fish stocks are approaching that final crash, but most can recover if given a chance, reports AP.

Jeffrey A Hutchings of Dalhousie University in Halifax, Nova Scotia, said Thursday that overfishing can drive a species population down so far that reproduction cannot keep up with natural loss, no matter how much restraint is shown by fishermen.

It happened in Lake Erie with the blue pike, now thought extinct. And it happened to the passenger pigeon, a vanished bird that once darkened the North American sky with its numbers.

And, said Hutchings, it could happen with the cod, herring, turbot, sturgeon, haddock and salmon, all dangerously depleted fish stocks that are the main source of protein for millions of people worldwide.

It has been demonstrated that a species can disappear if the density becomes so low that it can't keep up with natural loss, said Hutchings. Eventually, he said, a fish population becomes so short of spawners that mates are scarce and the whole reproduction cycle of a species is disrupted.

"After a certain level, the population is doomed to extinction," he said.

In the last 30 years, many of the world's fish stocks have gone into a population crash due to overfishing. Hutchings said biologists have been worried that some of the species will never recover.

But a study to be published Friday in the journal Science indicates it is not too late.

Hutchings and three other researchers found that 125 of the major commercial species would bounce back if fishing pressure was reduced and the fish were given a chance to reproduce. The chances for survival, however, are less certain for three species: the spring spawning Icelandic herring, and salmon from the Sashin Creek and Prince William Sound areas of Alaska.

Some experts hailed the study as good news that also carries a warning.

An implication of their work is that there is little evidence to indicate fish stocks won't recover once you stop fishing them," John Beddington of Imperial College, London, said in Science.



The 12th annual general meeting of Islami Bank Bangladesh Limited was held at the BCIC auditorium in the city on Thursday with Commodore (ret'd) Mohammad Aatur Rahman, Chairman of the bank, in the chair.

Islami Bank declares 15pc dividend

Islami Bank Bangladesh Limited declared 15 per cent dividend for the year 1994, says a bank press release.

This was approved at the 12th annual general meeting of the bank held at BCIC auditorium in the city on Thursday.

Presided over by Commodore (ret'd) Mohammad Aatur Rahman, Chairman of the bank, the meeting adopted the Balance Sheet and Profit and Loss Account for the year that ended on December 31, 1994.

The bank earned income of Tk 82.66 crore in 1994 as against Tk 62.29 crore in the preceding year. The deposit of the bank increased from Tk 826.11 crore as on 31.12.93 to Tk 1,022.67 crore as on 31.12.94 with an increase of Tk 196.56 crore i.e. 23.79 per cent compared to 18.47 per cent in the banking sector of the country.

Investment of the bank also increased from Tk 554.25 crore to Tk 807.65 crore.

The growth rate of the bank in this regard is 45.72 per cent as against 6.56 per cent in the banking sector of the country.

Mexicans doubt bank debt plan will bring relief from econ crisis

MEXICO CITY, Aug 25: The working class agrees on this: that a new bailout plan by the government to stave off widespread defaults on bank loans will do little to bring relief from Mexico's economic crisis, reports AP.

Those expressing doubts about the creditors' plan include customers standing in bank teller lines, taxi drivers and department store sales people.

President Ernesto Zedillo and the Mexican Bankers Association have signed a 1.5 billion dollar debt relief accord to lower interest rates for small and medium debtors crushed by inflation and high interest rates.

"This agreement is one step more toward the solution of the crisis," Zedillo said Wednesday, vowing to ease the sting for heavily indebted farmers, small businessmen, and car loan and home mortgage holders.

Variable interest rates on cars, mortgages, credit cards, and bank loans soared above 80 per cent and many borrowers suddenly couldn't keep up with payments following a 40 per cent devaluation of the peso starting Dec 21.

Zedillo said the federal government and banks holding many of the loans would now share the estimated 1.5 billion dollar cost of capping interest rates.

"I suppose this plan may help," said Manuel Velazquez, manager of Espiegra Fiesta, an office furniture outlet forced to return showroom furniture to the distributor after sales tumbled 80 per cent.

But Velazquez said the debt problem will only be solved once the economy recovers from a deep recession. Thousands of jobs have been lost and the GDP dropped 5.8 per cent in the first half of 1995.

"The situation isn't going to get better until the economy does," said Velazquez, idle amid unsold desks.

FBCCI seminar

The Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI) will hold a seminar on "Bangladesh Poverty to Prosperity - Opportunities and Challenges" at Hotel Sonargaon in the city today, says a press release.

Deputy leader of the House Dr A Q M Badruddoza Chowdhury and Abdus Samad Azad will attend the seminar as guest of honour.

230 projects completed under FWP in Gaibandha

RANGPUR, Aug 25: A total of 230 projects were completed under food for work programme in Gaibandha district during the last financial year, says BSS.

Official sources said the projects implementation involved utilisation of 5709 metric tons of wheat.

The agencies involved in implementation of the projects were Water Development Board, Local Government and Engineering Department and Fisheries Department.

The digging and rehabilitation of ponds and water bodies, rehabilitation of roads and embankments and earth filling in educational institutions and grounds were included in the projects.

Fujitsu Ltd plans to produce 42" colour flat TV screens

TOKYO, Aug 25: Flat televisions that hang on walls like paintings have been predicted for years. But Japanese companies have started betting hundreds of millions of dollars that the sets are finally almost here, reports AP.

On Thursday, Fujitsu Ltd announced it will invest 20 billion yen (210 million dollar) this year to construct a production line for 42-inch colour flat TV screens. It plans to spend another 40 billion yen (420 million dollar) in 1998, and by the year 2000 be making 100,000 panels a month.

The so-called plasma display panels are a mere 75 millimetres (3 inches) thick, making the production of flat TVs possible. Fujitsu says the image quality is equal to the best conventional picture tubes and is superior to that of any rear-projection-type displays.

But don't throw out your TV just yet - when mass production starts in the fall of 1996, each screen will be priced at about 500,000 yen (5,200 dollar) Fujitsu President Tadashi Sekizawa said.

Prices are expected to gradually decline, and Fujitsu expects the screens will "become a key device of the multimedia age," he said.

The displays will be targeted primarily at makers of home-entertainment systems, he said.

Three other Japanese electronics companies have also recently announced large plasma display investments.

Matsushita Electric Industrial Co. said Monday that it will begin making 26- and 40-inch plasma displays. Earlier this summer, Sony Corp. announced it will make screens of up to 50 inches,

and NEC Corp. said it will invest 15 billion yen (156 million dollars) over the next two years to make 20- to 60-inch screens.

By the year 2000, NEC expects it will be producing 150,000 screens per month with sales in excess of 100 billion yen (1.05 billion). And by 2002, it predicts the market for 20-inch screens alone will total 760 billion yen (7.9 billion dollar).

Ramos calls for Asia Pacific econ security

MANILA, Aug 25: Philippine President Fidel Ramos on Thursday said the combined economic clout of the so-called "middle powers" namely Australia, New Zealand and ASEAN would provide a counter force against major international players to maintain security in Asia, says AFP.

Ramos, however, reiterated that he was not calling for a military alliance.

"There is no military alliance contemplated in the proposal," Ramos said.

He was calling on "the so-called middle powers to get together and provide the country vailing force to the big players in the Asia Pacific."

"It is the combined economic power and influence of some 500 million people that cannot be ignored," he said in reference to the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, Australia and New Zealand.

"If you look at the combined economic power of this group, this is very, very substantial," he said, he was speaking to journalists on his return from an eight-day visit to Australia and New Zealand.

ASEAN is a non-military grouping that includes Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam.

Ramos' proposal would include these nations, potential ASEAN members, Cambodia, Laos and Burma, and Australia and New Zealand.

Adulterated cement being sold in Barguna

BARGUNA, Aug 25: Adulterated cement is on open sale in several thanas of Barguna and Patuakhali districts, reports UNB.

It is reported that traders of the two southern districts had been selling cement mixed with sand for a long time. As a result both the private and public construction works are being hampered seriously.

According to reports the adulterated cement being sold at an exorbitant price is creating artificial crisis in the local markets.

Some cement traders said that they were not responsible for mixing sands with the cement rather they get the same from the wholesale dealers.

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার
স্থানীয় সরকার প্রকৌশল অধিদপ্তর
৪/৫, লালমাটিয়া, রক-বি
ঢাকা-১২০৭
ফোন নং-এলজিইডি/পিডি/এলডি (কম্পি/পি-১১৩/৯৫ (অফ-৪)/২০২৫
তারিখঃ ০৪-০৫-১৯০২ বা/১৩-০৮-৯৫ ইং।

বহনযোগ্য ইস্পাত সেতুর ট্রাস বন্ডের হইতে খালাসকরণ, ব্রীজ স্থলে পরিবহণ এবং সেতু স্থাপনের স্থানীয় দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি

স্থানীয় সরকার প্রকৌশল অধিদপ্তরের আওতায় জাপানী সহায়তায় বহনযোগ্য ইস্পাত সেতু নির্মাণ প্রকল্পের অধীনে জাপান হইতে বহনযোগ্য ট্রাস ডেক জাপান হইতে আমদানির শেষে লাইসেন্স প্রাপ্ত ক্রিমারিং এজেন্টের সহায়তায় চট্টগ্রাম সমুদ্র বন্দরে পৌঁছানোর ১৫ (পندر) কর্মদিবসের মধ্যে খালাসকরণ, বন্ডের হইতে ট্রাসসমূহ ব্রীজ নির্মাণ স্থান পর্যন্ত পরিবহণ সজ্জকরণ এবং ব্রীজ স্থলে নির্মিত সাব স্ট্রাকচারের উপর ইস্পাত সেতু স্থাপনের নিমিত্তে এলজিইডি'র আওতায় তালিকাভুক্ত বিশেষ শ্রেণীর এবং এলজিইডি'র পূর্ব যোগ্যতাসম্পন্ন প্রথম শ্রেণীর বিভিন্ন উন্নয়ন প্রকল্পের টিকাদারদের নিকট হইতে সীলমোহরকৃত দরপত্র আহ্বান করা যাইতেছে। দরপত্রসমূহ আগামী ০৭-০৯-৯৫ ইং তারিখ কোলা ০১-০০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত নিম্নস্বাক্ষরকারীর দপ্তরে গ্রহণ করা হইবে এবং ঐ দিনই কোলা ০১-০০ ঘটিকার সময় দরপত্রাদা বা তাহাদের প্রতিনিধিদের উপস্থিতিতে যদি কেউ উপস্থিত থাকেন। খোলা হইবে।

বহনযোগ্য ইস্পাত সেতুর ট্রাস বন্ডের হইতে খালাসকরণ, ব্রীজ স্থলে পরিবহণ এবং সেতু স্থাপনের বিস্তারিত বিবরণ ও প্রয়োজনীয় শর্তাবলীসহ নির্মাণ টেন্ডার নোটিশ নিম্নস্বাক্ষরকারীর দপ্তর হইতে অফিস চলাকালীন সময়ে আগামী ০৪-০৯-৯৫ ইং তারিখ পর্যন্ত নির্ধারিত যোগ্যতার সপক্ষে প্রয়োজনীয় কাগজপত্রাদি প্রদর্শনসহ লিখিত আবেদনের মাধ্যমে ন্যূন ১,০০০ (একহাজার) টাকা মূল্যে (অফেরতযোগ্য) ক্রয় করিতে পরিবেন।

কোন কারণ দর্শানো ব্যতিরেকে যে কোন টেন্ডার গ্রহণ কিংবা সকল টেন্ডার বাতিলের ক্ষমতা কর্তৃপক্ষের নিকট সর্জনিক্ত থাকিবে।

মোঃ শহীদুল হালদার
তত্ত্বাবধায়ক প্রকৌশলী (রক্ষণাবেক্ষণ)

DFF-20445-22/18
G-1255

Solar energy in Bangladesh

Afroz Rahim

Each year, the earth receives an energy input from the sun equal to 15,000 times the world's commercial energy consumption and more than 100 times the world's proven coal, gas and oil reserves. The abundance of the solar resources can be illustrated by comparison of the land requirements of Solar Photovoltaic (PV) projects with those of hydro-projects.

The land requirements of hydro range from roughly ten to several hundred times those of solar projects at today's conversion efficiencies, averaging around 25 to 50 generating stations at widely dispersed areas are not economically feasible. Initial investment cost for machinery, long overhead transmission line or submersible water proof cable and huge voltage drop in the line in most of the cases have outweighed their feasibility. Solar PV System has been found to be the best and most appropriate technology in those areas for such widely dispersed localities.

Although, initial investment cost for Solar PV System is higher, than the conventional generators, the system is cost competitive

mic Energy Commission who were then reportedly entrusted with investigating feasibility of utilisation of energy from Solar sources. In the late 1980s, Rahimafroz set up their industrial batteries plant and solar batteries came in the scope of manufacturing.

Solar PV Systems principally comprise Solar Panels and Solar Batteries. Rahimafroz soon realised the potential of importing Solar Panels and supplying Solar PV Energy Systems alongwith their Solar batteries to projects in rural Bangladesh. Utilising Solar PV Systems in

Because of low capacity of the rural population to afford electricity made available through Solar PV Systems, World Bank, other international agencies and the Government in most of the above noted countries provide credit facilities. In Bangladesh, to our knowledge, only the Government of France has provided grant funds to the Bangladesh Rural Electrification Board for providing energy through Solar PV Systems to a project at Nursingdi Char area. We are, however, aware that the World Bank is providing funds under Global Envir-

In Bangladesh, inadequate supply of grid electric supply at present and in the foreseeable future is a fact of our life, although lately we have been reading of several Memoranda of Understanding setting up power plants with the private sector. But we can reach energy to the non-grid, specially rural areas covering nearly 80 per cent of our country by proven alternate renewable energy sources. Are we doing anything about it? The answer is no, nothing much.

times. This means that solar energy is capable, in principle, of supplying five to ten times the total electricity demands of developing countries today while occupying land areas less than are currently used by hydro-electric projects.

Advanced industrialised countries of the North discovered and utilised Photovoltaic technologies, and gained significant operational experiences with solar technologies that is today relevant for developing countries of the South, with vast rural habitations. As such, energy from Solar PV Systems are presently being availed by Sri Lanka, India, Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, China and countries in the African Continent.

Experiences in Sri Lanka, Indonesia, Malaysia and Philippines where rural conditions and situation are similar to ours, showed construction of centrally located non-grid rural areas can meet energy requirements of rural community by providing:

-pumping systems for clear drinking water and for irrigating farmer's crops, power for health clinics and vaccine refrigeration, power for schools, community centres and cyclone shelters, power for wireless equipments for defence forces and power for Bouy lighting in marine vessels.

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(The author is Managing Director of Rahimafroz (Bangladesh) Ltd)

Government of Bangladesh
Office of the Executive Engineer
Dhaka PWD Division No. III, Dhaka
Notice Inviting Tenders
No. 13 of 1995-96

1. Sealed tenders in Bangladesh Form No. 2911 are hereby invited from special class-1 approved building contractors under PWD, Class-1 approved sanitary & plumbing contractors under PWD, Dhaka for the undermentioned works and will be received by the undersigned and the Executive Engineer, Eden Bldg. PWD Divn/PWD Divn. No. III/IV/Medical College PWD Divn/Mohiul PWD Divn/Azimpur PWD Divn/City PWD Divn/Arboriculture PWD Divn/Resources PWD Divn/Sheer-e-Banglanagar PWD Divn. No. III/III, Mohakhali PWD Divn/Mirpur, PWD Divn/Savar, PWD Divn/Maintenance PWD Divn, Dhaka up to 12:00 Noon of 11-9-95 and will be opened on the same day at 12:15 PM in presence of the tenderers who may like to remain present. Each tender shall be in a sealed cover with the name of work superscribed on it. No tender form will be sold after 10-9-95.

2. Name of work Construction of Ministerial Staff Quarters at Mill Barrack at Police Line, Dhaka, 5-storied, 10-unit (Each floor 2-unit), 800.00 sq. Residential building (SH: Sanitary and water supply arrangement works) during the year 1995-96 (Building No. 1).
Tk 7,93,658/-
Tk 15,874/-

3. Estimated amount
4. Earnest money
5. Time allowed for completion of the work from the date of issue of work order 60 (sixty) days.

6. Contract documents consisting of BD Form No 2911, schedule of items, additional terms & conditions etc. can be seen and obtained from the office of the undersigned and the Executive Engineer, Eden Bldg. PWD Divn/PWD Divn. No. II & IV/Medical College PWD Divn/Mohiul PWD Divn/Azimpur PWD Divn/City PWD Divn/Resources PWD Divn/Sheer-e-Banglanagar PWD Divn. No. II, III & IV/Mohakhali PWD Divn/Mirpur PWD Divn/Savar PWD Divn/Maintenance PWD Divn/Arboriculture PWD Divn, Dhaka during office hours on all working days on payment of usual charges of Tk 400/- for each set of schedule of items, additional terms and conditions etc and a sum of Tk 25/- per copy of Tender Form No. 2911 (Non-refundable). The tender form may be purchased by the contractor himself or his representative on production of registration book of enlistment and VAT registration certificate during office hours on all working days.

Id Zahurul Hoque Khan
Executive Engineer
Dhaka PWD Divn. No. III, Dhaka

DFF-20446-22/8
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