



## RAKUB sets up example thru' 100 pc recovery of SRLP

NATORE, Dec 8: Rajshahi Krishi Unyan Bank (RAKUB) has set an example for other scheduled banks through hundred per cent recovery of its Self Reliance Loan Project (SRLP), reports UNB.

Like other scheduled banks, RAKUB had also loan programmes for large and medium scale projects. But once it found that the number of defaulters was increasing and about 80 per cent of total projects failed, said an official of RAKUB.

To overcome the situation, leaders of RAKUB management began to appraise at the grassroot level, he added.

They pointed out that the major bottlenecks of grass root funding were collateral and lack of supervision. In most of the cases following obligatory collateral system the funding become limited within rich and influential people.

The destitute and landless never get a chance. Moreover, the total credit sector came under the control of

loans and middlemen. As a result the credit had always remained out of reach of vital groups of people on whose labour the economic wheels run on.

Following the realisation, the official said, the RAKUB introduced SRLP for landless, small and marginal farmers of Kurigram district in January, 1992 without any collateral.

Recovery rate of the project in the district was 100 per cent, he informed.

Encouraged by the success of Kurigram project under-taken four more projects in Puthia of Rajshahi, Baragachha and Bariagram of Natore and Mohadevpur of Naogaon district.

All the SRLP projects in the districts are doing well, officials of the projects claimed.

In fact, according to RAKUB officials, the Self Reliance Loan Project is an integrated programme.

At first a group of 10 to 20 people are united under a

president, a secretary and a treasurer. Before receiving loan a member has to form the habit of savings in the group for about one year. Usually a member saves Taka four a week.

The group is also given training and motivation on literacy, nutrition, primary health care, human rights, common laws, women's rights, account maintaining, group savings, income generating activities, formation of groups and writing of resolution.

Only one member of a family can become the member of a group. After a group saves for one year, members of it can apply for loan from RAKUB. No application fees and price for application form is charged.

The loan under the project is disbursed for the following activities: a) Various crops production (cultivation) loan for 18 months term. b) agriculture investment loan is disbursed for

purchasing of agro machineries, bullocks, pisciculture, fruit gardening etc. Sixty months are given for repayment. c) Loan for non agricultural investment such as cottage industries, food processing and crops preservation are given for a period of 60 months.

According to officials, no defaulter of any bank or any other financial institution is eligible for getting loan. Each member can get Tk 2000 to 5000 as loan depending upon the project. The annual interest rate is 13.50 per cent.

Officials sources till June this year said RAKUB has disbursed Tk 12.63 lakh among 660 beneficiaries in 44 groups and the amount of total saving was Tk 2.55 lakh.

The SRLP will undoubtedly play a great role for the reconstruction of the country's economy if the programme was extended to 298 branches of RAKUB and other scheduled banks, hoped the RAKUB officials working in different SRLP projects.

## Mine Institute seen vital for 2 projects in Dinajpur

By Govinda Shil

A Mine Institute (MI) and a set of Mine Codes are necessary to run the Barapukuria Coal and the Madhyapara Hard Rock mines, the first-ever underground mines in the country, according to experts.

These mines are likely to go into full production by the year 2000 but initial production might take place earlier.

"Barapukuria will be one of the largest coal mines in the world with an annual extraction of 10 lakh metric tons," said a mine expert adding that the project would employ some 1000 miners who needed training to work beneath the earth.

He said that the Madhyapara Hard Rock would also be a comparatively big mine that would employ five hundred workers.

According to the agreement signed between the foreign firms and the Petrobangla to implement the mines, the experts will leave the projects

handing them over to Petrobangla after the operation starts.

"Then who will run the mines?" asked another official adding that without proper training, mine operation would be badly affected.

He further said that the longevity of these mines would be more than 60 years, so a mine institute is needed.

According to sources, a set of Mine Codes should be formulated which would be the guidelines for directing the mine operation. Without codes, any dispute in the mine area regarding exploration, accidents, sell of mine products cannot be done properly.

Talking to The Daily Star, a Petrobangla expert said that the government was looking for foreign funds for the institute.

He said about Taka 50 lakh will be needed for preparation of training course for the miners.

However, he said the proposed institute might require Taka 9 to 10 crore which could be had from coal as well as hard mines.

Both the mines are situated in Dinajpur. They would cost Taka 1600 crore approximately.

Therefore, contributing some Taka 10 crore from these mines would not affect their activities," the official said.

The sources rejected the idea proposed by a section of experts that the training of the miners could be done from a neighbouring country. "It will not be economically viable in the long run," they said.

The abandoned Joypurhat Lime Stone project area could be selected for the proposed institute because it could provide some infrastructural facilities once developed for the project.

Joypurhat, some 50 kilometers away from both the mines, are well communicated by rails and roads, sources said.

An official of the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources said the government is yet to take a decision about the institute.

## Tokai Bank to absorb Osaka Credit Union

TOKYO, Dec 8: Tokai Bank Ltd, a leading commercial bank, will absorb a troubled Osaka-based credit union next summer. Japan's Ministry of Finance announced Thursday, reports AP.

Yoshimasa Nishimura, head of the ministry's banking bureau, said Osaka Credit Union will carry on regular business until then at its 20 branches, and the national association of credit unions will provide the necessary liquidity.

## Traffic jam of cargo vessels in Chittagong port eased

From Staff Correspondent  
CHITTAGONG Dec 8: Arrival of foreign cargo vessels at Chittagong port in recent days marks a downward trend. According to port sources, as a result, the traffic-jam of cargo vessels at the outer anchorage has now totally eased. The turn around period of ships on average comes down to 5 days as against 15 to 7 days earlier.

A senior official of the port said we don't have ships waiting for berthing at the outer anchorage and for that reason some of the port jetties are sure to wear a vacant look now," he added.

He attributed the downward trend to fall in number food grain carrying ships and container vessel which earlier used to call in large numbers.



A seven-day food festival of the SAARC countries began at the Dhaka Sheraton Hotel yesterday to mark the 10th founding anniversary of SAARC. — Star photo

## 'Pvt sector participation must to develop infrastructure'

Private sector participation is significant and necessary to design, develop and build a modern and efficient system of infrastructure in Bangladesh, reports BSS.

This was stated by Dr Towfiq-e-Elahi Chowdhury, Executive Chairman, Board of Investment, in a discussion session held at a hotel here on Wednesday.

The discussion was held as a team of the World Bank mission is currently visiting Dhaka to assist Bangladesh in identifying areas of support that will be provided by the World Bank for development of infrastructure by private

## 'Pvt sector participation must to develop infrastructure'

sector operators.

The bank mission also observed that infrastructure development will promote Bangladesh's investment attractiveness and build confidence in the global business community through the establishment of professional project promotion, solicitation and evaluation process.

World Bank is going to provide an initial support to Bangladesh for getting a long-term credit of 150 million US dollars for development of project in power, energy and other sectors by private investors.

Participants in the discussion session were from planning commission, ministries of energy, telecommunications, road and highways, shipping and from agencies like WASA, Rajuk, DESA, PDB and other relevant bodies who are primarily responsible for providing infrastructure support services.

There was a general consensus among the participants for continued cooperation and discussion. For greater participation of private sector infrastructure development of the country, Board of Investment mounted serious effort, Dr Chowdhury said.

## Duchess of York's stolen jewelry recovered

LONDON, Dec 8: The Duchess of York's diamond bracelet and necklace, stolen on a New York to London flight Monday, have been recovered in New York, British Airways said here. A spokesman said the necklace was found in the home of an employee of a baggage handling company under contract to British Airways, and the bracelet in a coin-operated locker at John F. Kennedy Airport. The employee was arrested, BA said, adding that Scotland Yard had worked with New York police on the case, reports AFP.

The jewelry, an estimated value of 250,000 pounds (400,000 dollars) had been a wedding gift to the Duchess from her mother-in-law, Queen Elizabeth II.

Buckingham palace, which announced the theft on Tuesday, said the two pieces had been contained in baggage checked on the flight by the Duchess of York's lady in waiting.

## Tea production may fall due to bad weather in India

COONOOR, India, Dec 8: Tea production in South India maintained last year's record, but bad weather looks likely to have cut output in other parts of the country, an industry group said here, reports Reuters.

The Calcutta-based Consultative Committee of Plantation Associations (CCPA) said total tea production in calendar 1995 was expected to fall to 728 million kg from 748 million kg (1.605 billion pounds) a year ago.

CCPA said it estimated tea production in the 11 months to November at 691 million kg against 711 million kg (1.523 billion pounds) in the same period the year before.

Bad weather, particularly in the northeast, cut the crop by 26.6 million kg (58.6 million pounds) in the first 10 months to October, CCPA said.

The weather improved somewhat in November and overall production rose seven million kg (15.4 million pounds) over November 1994.

CCPA said it expected the favourable weather to continue through December, bringing crop losses to about 20 million kg (44 million pounds) for the whole of 1995.

While overall tea produc-

## New Indian communications satellite launched

NEW DELHI, Dec 8: A new Indian satellite that will extend the reach of broadcasters and improve mobile communications was launched Thursday by a French rocket, Indian space officials said, reports AP.

The INSAT-2C was put into an elliptical orbit 27 minutes after the French Ariane rocket lifted off from the European Space Agency launch center in Kourou on South America's northeast coast in French Guyana, the Indian Space Research Organisation said in a statement.

The satellite will extend the reach of broadcasters and improve mobile communications was launched Thursday by a French rocket, Indian space officials said, reports AP.

Despite a fall in output, exports in the first half of fiscal 1995/96 (April-March) were higher than the previous year at 78.68 million kg (173.5 million pounds) valued at 5.5 billion rupees (158 million dollars), Harinarain said.

In fiscal 1994/95, exports were 67.18 million kg (148.1 million pounds) worth 4.06 billion rupees (116 million dollars).

To encourage exporters, the Tea Board had relaxed licensing norms, Harinarain said.

"Anyone with three years of good track record in exports can now get a permanent licence to export," he said.

## Tk 400cr Grameen loan disbursed in six districts

COMILLA, Dec 8: Grameen Bank has disbursed more than Tk 400 crore in six districts of greater Comilla and Noakhali in the last five years, Bank sources said, reports UNB.

During the period from 1991 to October, 1995, the recovery was more than Tk 320 crore, the sources added. The amount of outstanding loan was Tk 80.41 crore.

The loan was disbursed among 1.64 lakh bank members of 40 thanas in Comilla, Chandpur, Brahmanbaria, Noakhali, Laxmpur and Feni districts through its 100 branches of 10 regions.

The disbursed loan includes Tk 246 crore as general loan, Tk 124.76 crore as seasonal loan, 13.57 crore as house building loan, Tk 7.74 crore as deep tubewell loan, 6.74 lakh as technology loan and Tk 1.21 crore as sanitation loan.

During the period the bank also arranged 2.179 dowryless marriages, Bank officials said.

## British prof warns of environment pollution in Bangladesh

By Inam Ahmed

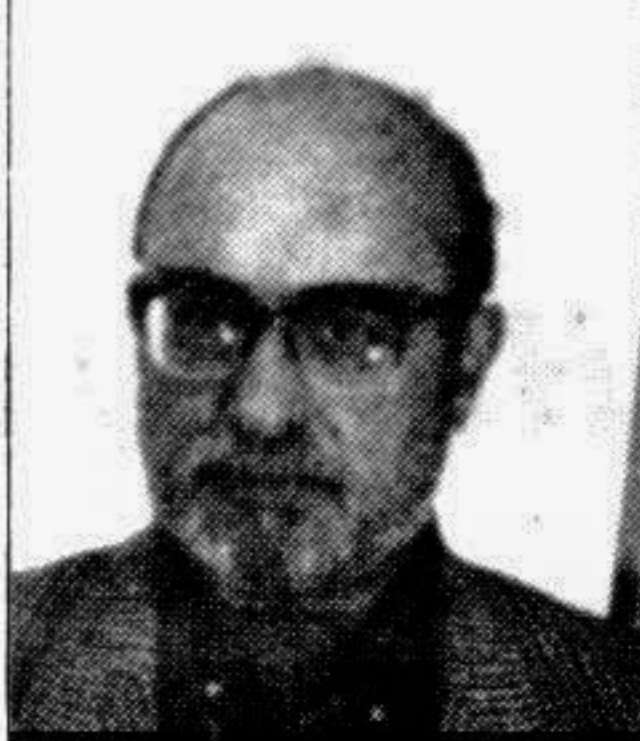
Along with its export-led economic drive, Bangladesh should pay attention to mitigate the environmental effects of the activities to sustain the momentum generated, a British professor of development planning, Nigel Harris observes.

Prof Harris of University College London was in the city to attend a seminar on the Dhaka city's development. He talked with The Daily Star in a short interview.

He believes that as Bangladesh like other developing countries will be becoming industrialised, more pollutions will be generated which if left unattended to will be self-destructing for the country.

"These export-oriented industries will be energy intensive in nature which will rapidly deplete the environment," said Prof Harris.

"Already two-third of the world's waste are being produced in the developing countries. Five out of six most polluted cities are in the South. This concentration of pollutants in the developing countries will destroy the economic development of these



Nigel Harris

countries," he maintained.

Prof Harris feels that one of the most important agenda of the government should be to immediately improve the civic amenities like water supply, health facilities and education.

"The traditional services of the cities are too poor for the population. This is very dangerous for productivity of labour. If productivity can not be increased, poverty alleviation will be a far cry. Sectors like water, sewerage etc are not side issues and they have to be taken seriously," said Prof Harris.

## Nespray's 'Countries of the World' series

Something very global seems to have hit the cities in Bangladesh. Walk into any retail outlet and you see an avalanche of Nespray Milk powder packs, assembled very creatively by the outlet to promote the 'Countries of the World' series, as it is called, says a press release.

Taking a closer look, one finds this an interesting departure from the blatant consumer promotions foisted on the public — glass plates and what have you. That's why Nespray's 'Countries' series carried on the back panel of their Milk Powder packs, is a meaningful innovation in this country.

The first series, focuses on six countries in different continents: Japan, Nigeria, Switzerland, Brazil, America and of course Bangladesh. The panel is colourful and interesting and carries basic information of the country, with graphic illustrations of native costumes, worn by its people.

This kind of series is ideal for children in their learning of the world they live in and a welcome aid to teachers in bringing to their students the global village, as we know the world today.

## BGMEA iterates appeal to exempt garment sector from hartal

Country's garment manufacturers fear that the next hartals will invite a severe crisis for the industry which is trying to meet the quota deadline and make up the losses caused by earlier shutdowns, reports UNB.

The ensuing hartal will bring disaster to this sector and deal a severe blow to the economy," Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA) President Redwan Ahmed said in a statement on Thursday.

BGMEA iterated its appeal to all concerned to save the export oriented garment industry keeping the sector out of the purview of the ensuing hartals.

Redwan Ahmed said many orders have been cancelled by foreign importers as the suppliers here failed to maintain the export schedule due to frequent hartals. They are transferring their business to other competing countries due to loss of confidence in Bangladeshi manufacturers.

Ahmed said the current month is extremely important for the garment manufacturers and exporters as December 31 this year is the deadline for the United States and Canadian quota year.

## Tk37cr Dutch grant for two projects

Bangladesh will receive grant assistance from the Netherlands amounting to Tk 37.42,40,000 (Netherlands Guilder 15.22 million) for financing two projects, reports UNB.

Two separate agreements were signed here in this regard between the two governments.

Joint Secretary of the Economic Relations Division (ERD) Abu Saleh and Dutch Ambassador in Dhaka RA Vornis signed the two agreements on behalf of their respective governments.

Under one of the two agreements, the Netherlands will provide Tk 29.75,00,000 equivalent to NLG 11.90 million, for financing Crop Diversification programme.

Phase 3.

Bangladesh Agriculture Development Corporation (BADC) will implement the project to increase the use of improved varieties of seeds.

In another agreement, the Netherlands will provide Tk 7.67,40,000 equivalent to NLG 3.32 million for financing the project — "Environment and Geographic Information System (GIS) Support project for the Water Sector". Flood Plan Coordination Organisation (FPCCO) will implement the project.

Meanwhile, another agreement, also signed here on Thursday Bangladesh will receive grant assistance amounting to Tk 27,50,00,000 equivalent to NLG 11 million.

## BDR seizes contraband worth Tk 35,000 at Companiganj

COMILLA, Dec 8: BDR personnel in a recent drive at Companiganj Bazar in the town have seized contraband smuggled from the neighbouring country, reports UNB.

Following a tip-off, the BDR men launched the drive in the bazar and recovered the contrabands, including Indian saree and sugar, worth about Tk 35,000.

The haul was handed over to the local Customs department.



M Harunur Rashid, Executive Director, United Insurance Company Limited, seen handing over a cheque for Taka five lakh to A N M Shahin Morshed at the head office of the company as full and final settlement of a claim against a Personal Accident Policy of A S M Shamim Morshed who died in a road accident.