

Season's last tea sale ends with strong internal demand in Ctg

By Staff Correspondent

The season's last tea sale in Chittagong auction market ended on Wednesday and Thursday with a strong internal demand which led most prices to substantially dearer, market sources said.

The final sale of the season 1995-96, held after a gap of 29 days due to political imbroglio, constituted an offering of 26,154 packages of leaf along with 785 packages of new season leaf, 1890 packages of supplement leaf and 795 packages of old season teas.

According to Unity Brokers Ltd's (UBL) report, withdrawals stood at 20 per cent as against 19 per cent in sale 41/42 and were generally limited to poorer teas.

"Prices were strong for all cleaner, good liquoring and held-back teas. Poorer end of seasons occasionally eased or met with some withdrawals," the UBL's report pointed out.

With the national elections due in late May or June, the UBL forecast, the first few sales in the next season would see strong internal demand.

The next season (1996-97) is expected to start on May 7, 1996.

The category-wise sale performance follows:

CTC: Bold brokens were dearer by Tk 2/4. Medium sized brokens included by upto Tk 5/-.

Well made smaller brokens were well sought after and these appreciated substantially.

selectively. Selective best lines sold between Tk 58.00 and Tk 60.20. Teas with poor liquor and indifferent met with fair withdrawals.

All cleaner and good liquoring fannings met with strong internal demand at Tk 3/5 dearer rates than last. Selective popular lines sold between Tk 59.00 and Tk 64.00. Some poorer types remained unsold.

GREEN TEA: A total of 150 packages on offer were withdrawn without registering any bids.

BUST: A total of 5,703 packages of new season and 928 packages of supplement were on offer. Strong demand

led to dearer rates, often substantially. Poorer types eased or were withdrawn.

France signs \$100 m aid for Lebanon

BEIRUT, Apr 6: France signed a 500-million franc (100 million dollar) aid package for Lebanon Friday during a visit here by President Jacques Chirac, and said it would take part in security arrangements on the Israeli border in the event of a peace deal, says AFP.

BRIEFS

TOKYO, Apr 6: Japanese refining giant Nippon Oil Co purchased eight million shares of Nippon Petroleum Refining Co from Caltex Petroleum Corp of the United States, said officials at Nippon Oil on Tuesday.

Nippon Oil paid 200 billion yen, or about two billion dollars, for the shares in an exchange which took place in Hawaii, they said.

To coincide with the expiration of a 10-year-old law which effectively limited oil product imports to refiners Nippon Oil has entered a new era of international competition, with Nippon Petroleum Refining as its wholly-owned subsidiary, industry sources said.

Caltex's decision to sell its 50 per cent stake in Nippon Petroleum Refining to Nippon Oil was announced by both companies in December 1995.

Nippon Oil has now acquired new muscle to compete in the liberalised domestic and international markets, while Caltex can focus on new Asian interests with the huge cash supplies it now holds.

MANILA: Philippine exports rebounded in February to 1.594 billion dollars from 1.420 billion dollars in January as sales of electronics and apparel began to pick up again, the National Statistics Office said Tuesday.

Electronics and component exports reached 606.2 million dollars in February, up 65 per cent from a year earlier. They accounted for 38 per cent of total export receipts.

Exports of apparel totalled 201.53 million dollars, basically flat from February 1995, and accounting for 12.6 per cent of export revenues.

Electronics and apparel exports rose from January levels by eight per cent and two per cent respectively.

Among the top five export commodities, only coconut oil moved lower, falling 32 per cent to 41.55 million dollars from a year earlier.

The United States remained the biggest market for Philippine exports with shipments amounting to 497.28 million dollars, 13.3 per cent higher than last year.

The second biggest export market was Japan, where sales totalled 276.94 million dollars, up 35 per cent.

SYDNEY: Hong Kong-based construction group OLS Asia Holdings Ltd said it has been selected as one of seven companies to tender for fitout contracts for Hong Kong's new Chek Lap Kok airport.

Chairman and Managing Director Alfred Siu said Tuesday this means OLS is in a strong position to contest the current eight project packages for fitout work on the terminal.

"As a pre-qualified contractor, OLS has already been in a tender for two of these contracts, including the terminal's main fixed link bridges and the public amenities area," Siu said Monday.

'Short term take over of Fokker not feasible'

AMSTERDAM, Netherlands, Apr 6: A takeover by outside interests of the construction units of Dutch aviation group Fokker, in partial bankruptcy since March 15, "is not feasible in the short term," the group's receivers said yesterday, reports AFP.

They said their talks with representatives of Russian aviation companies Tupolev and Jakovlev had "not yet been concluded," as the Russians had not presented any clear takeover project or financing guarantees.



Keith Bonson, Sales Manager South, Emirates (second from left), seen with Business Travel Award along with Tim McDermott, Head of Marketing, Manchester Airport, Richard Caisley, Publisher, Business Travel World, and Ans Dickie, Passenger Sales Manager UK and Ireland, Lufthansa.

ROK rejects DPRK's renewed offer to discuss food aid

SEOUL, Apr 6: South Korea said Saturday it will not accept North Korea's renewed offer to discuss additional food aid to the flood-ravaged communist nation, reports AP.

South Korea's Unification Ministry, which oversees affairs between the rival countries, said that the offer did not meet Seoul's preconditions.

The offer to hold a fourth round of food aid talks in Beijing came from Jon Kum Chol, who led the North Korean delegation for the three rounds of food aid talks held in Beijing last year.

South Korea has said that the next round of talks must take place on the Korean peninsula, and that the communist country must make an official request.

Jon is the head of a North Korean trading company, and Seoul does not consider his request as coming from the government.

North Korea reported Friday that it had made a second offer, and had demanded that South Korea agree to it without preconditions.

South Korea made an unprecedented gesture of goodwill by providing 150,000 tons of free rice following last year's talks.

But when a hoped-for thaw in relations did not materialise and military tensions increased, Seoul faced criticism, for having been too soft.

Mutual distrust runs deep between the two Koreas, who remain technically at war with just an armistice ending their 1950-53 Korean War.

For the first time in its history, North Korea asked for outside help last year, saying the heaviest rains in a century destroyed vast areas of crop land and left 500,000 people homeless.

DPRK denies involvement in dollar forgery

BANGKOK, Apr 6: North Korea denied involvement in counterfeiting US dollars yesterday following the arrest of a man who lived in the exclusive Stalinist state and has been accused of faking the currency, reports Reuters.

In a statement issued by its embassy in Bangkok, North Korea said it gave refuge to Yoshimi Tanaka and eight of his Japanese Red Army colleagues on humanitarian grounds after a 1970 hijacking.

What they did outside North Korea was entirely their own business, it said.

Tanaka was arrested in Cambodia late last month and sent to Thailand where he faces counterfeiting charges following a joint investigation by Thai, Cambodian and US authorities.

Tanaka has been identified as one of nine Red Army guerrillas who defected to North Korea in 1970 after hijacking a Japanese plane.

He was carrying North Korean identity papers when Cambodian police detained him on the border with Vietnam last month. Two other people held with him were released after they produced genuine North Korean diplomatic passports. Thai police

confirmed that the US secret service helped Thai police investigate Tanaka and his alleged counterfeiting activities.

North Korea said in its statement that it had nothing to do with any counterfeiting.

"There is no reason to connect the case to the DPRK," the statement said.

Compensation demanded for coalmine death in Japan

TOKYO, Apr 6: A Chinese man today filed a petition against Mitsui Coal Mining Co. demanding compensation for the death of his grandfather who was forced to work in one of its coal mines in southern Japan during World War II, Kyodo news service said, reports AFP.

Zhu Guang, a 25-year-old translator from Beijing, went to Mitsui Mine in Omura, Fukuoka prefecture, and handed documents to the company demanding compensation and an apology.

Emirates voted 'best ME business airline'

Frequent business travellers from the United Kingdom have voted Emirates the 'best middle east business airline.' Says a press release.

This is the result of a readership poll conducted by UK publication, 'Business Travel World', and marks the second successive year that Emirates the international airline of the UAE, has won the prestigious award-a vote of confidence from discerning business travellers.

This latest accolade brings to 97 the total number of awards received by Emirates since its inception in 1985.

The awards ceremony, attended by major industry leaders from across the world, took place in London on March 21, '96 at BAFTA (The British Academy of Film and Television Arts).

The Emirates trophy was presented by Richard Caisley, Publisher of Business Travel World, to Keith Bonson, Emirates UK Sales Manager South.

DHL prepares intra-Asia network

Air Cargo Equipment, a US-based ULD manufacturer, has received an order from DHL to supply main deck containers for the B727-200 freighters which the express company will operate on its Manila-based intra-Asia network, says a DHL press release.

Prior to the launch of the new service, which was scheduled to start on January 29, DHL last month carried out training flights between Manila and Singapore.

Initially, the company will operate two B727-200s freighters on its intra-Asia network, but it is expected that the fleet will comprise four 727-200s by the end of April. DHL has set up a warehouse and sorting centre in one of the hangars of the former maintenance base of Philippine Airlines at Manila airport.

Malaysians urged to eat more chickens

KUALA LUMPUR, Apr 6: Malaysian poultry farmers yesterday dropped a threat to kill a million day old chicks in return for a government appeal urging people to eat as many chickens as they can, reports Reuters.

The farmers had threatened to bury the chicks alive in protest against a slump in prices due to a market glut.

"We ask the public to help solve this problem by consuming more chicken. This opportunity won't last long," Agriculture ministers Sulaiman Daud told reporters.

The farmers dropped their threat after protests from horrified animal lovers and consumer groups, followed by a meeting with Sulaiman and Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs Minister Abu Hassan Omar.

"I had to consider the emotions of (poultry) producers who had mortgaged houses, land and even signed personal guarantees with banks and are unable to repay the loans now because of low chickens prices," Chia Keok Keong President of lives stock Farmers Association said.

About 1.08 million chickens are supplied to the Malaysian market daily while demand amounts to only 900,000.

Chi said the farmer now got between 1.20 ringgit (0.47 dollar) and 1.40 ringgit (0.47 dollar) and 0.55 dollar for one kg of chicken. His costs totalled 2.80 ringgit (1.10 dollars) a kg. He said that federation tried to convince Sulaiman and Abu Hassan to impose tariffs on imports of poultry and abolish government controls on chicken price.

Work hard to prepare next budget

Adviser of Finance and Planning Ministries Dr Wahiduddin Mahmud has urged officials of the Finance Ministry to work hard in view of the preparation of the budget for the next fiscal 1996-97, reports UNB.

He was talking to senior officials of Finance Ministry and Banking Division at the Ministry's conference room yesterday.

"Whatever will be the character of the next budget, the time is very short," Dr Mahmud said, adding the officials concerned have to work round the clock to prepare the next budget keeping in view the next general election.

"We have to create a best possible standard of non-representative government within the shortest possible tenure of the present Non-Party Caretaker Government, Dr Mahmud said.

He also called upon the officials to work with sincerity and dedication with strictly adherence to the government rules and regulations.

Secretary, Finance Division, Dr Akbar Ali Khan and Secretary, Banking Division, Dr ATM Shamsul Huda assured the Adviser of all possible co-operation in discharging his duties.

China, Japan agree to cooperate in auto sales

TOKYO, Apr 6: Japan and China ended two days of automobile industry consultations Tuesday with an agreement on cooperation in distribution and marketing, Kyodo News said, reports AP.

The Japanese delegation included government officials and representatives of the Japan Automobile Manufacturers Association. The Chinese sent officials from government departments, including the State Planning Commission and the Ministry of Machine-Building Industry.

The next session is to be held in Beijing in April 1997.

Mexican rebels call for fighting free economy

LA REALIDAD, Mexico, Apr 6: Arriving on horseback at a jungle economic forum, the military leader of the Chiapas peasants uprising blasted free-market Western nations before an audience of hundreds of attentive international supporters, reports AP.

"Globalized markets allow a powerful few to benefit at the cost of the many," Subcomandante Marcos said as he convened the four-day meeting in La Realidad, an Indian village in Chiapas, Mexico's southernmost and poorest state.

More than 500 people from the United States, Canada, Mexico and other nations attended the Zapatista National Liberation Army's summit, called the Encounter for Humanity and Against Neoliberalism. Rebels said the summit was part of their effort to launch peaceful civilian movements to press for social and economic reforms.

Marcos arrived by horseback to open the convention late Thursday, circling the perimeter of a compound of wooden lean-tos and campsites, his rifle strapped to his back.

The rebels are strong critics of the North American Free Trade Agreement between the United States, Mexico and Canada, which took effect on January 1, 1994, the same day as the Chiapas uprising.

Marcos called the creation of the world's largest free trade zone a "death knell" for poor Indians.

Thursday night, Marcos

called on participants to find alternatives to free-market policies that dominated the world economy, but offered no alternatives himself.

Several ski-masked Indian rebel commanders took part in the convention, along with villagers and foreigners, some wearing tie-dyed T-shirts or sporting nose rings and shaven heads.

The rebellion is a "ripple that is being felt on every edge of the Americas," said one participant, director-actor Edward James Olmos.

Japan to give \$13.45m loan to Nepal

KATHMANDU, Apr 6: Japan is to loan up to 13.45 million dollars to Nepal to prevent disasters like flooding and landslides at a hydro-power project, the Nepalese Finance Ministry said yesterday, reports AFP.

The disaster prevention project would be implemented at two Kulekhani hydro-power stations, 30 kms (19 miles) southwest of here, built by Japan in the early 1980s.

The Kulekhani hydro-power stations produce 92 megawatts of electricity and provide about 40 per cent of Nepal's total power capacity of 240 megawatts.

A statement by the Japanese Embassy said major floods had struck one of the hydro-power projects during construction in 1984 and in 1986, triggering landslides.

US unemployment rate up to 5.6 pc in March

WASHINGTON, Apr 6: The US unemployment rate edged up to 5.6 per cent in March as a strike in the auto industry resulted in a sharp drop in manufacturing jobs, reports AP.

The US Labour Department report Friday showed that even with the small rise in the jobless rate, up from 5.5 per cent in February, the US economy appeared to be performing at a faster clip than last year.

A survey of business payrolls showed that companies added 140,000 jobs in March, down from a revised increase of 624,000 in February.

The huge February increase in jobs, the biggest gain since 1983, spooked financial markets. It triggered a 171-point drop in the Dow Jones industrial average, the third largest point decline in history, as investors worried that the economy was rebounding so quickly that inflation could become a problem.

Analysts said Friday's more moderate increase in jobs should help allay inflation concerns while at the same time pointing to an economy that is regaining its footing after nearly coming to a halt at the end of last year.

Friday's report is not expected to change the view that the Federal Reserve, which had cut interest rates in December and January in an effort to boost growth, will remain on the sidelines for the foreseeable future believing it has done enough to keep the country out of a recession.



Ambassador of the Netherlands Embassy in Bangladesh R A Vornis (3rd from right) called on Ali Hossain (2nd from right) President, Dhaka Chamber of Commerce & Industry, at the DCCI office on Thursday. They discussed various issues relating to bilateral trade promotion possibilities of joint venture investment & economic cooperation between the two countries.

Urgent Re-Tender Notice

Re-Tender No. S-222/95-96/ (Part-4)/178/Betar Dt: 31-3-96
Sealed tenders are invited for purchasing Micro computer, AC & Dehumidifier to be used in Bangladesh Police Telecom organisation.

Tender schedules may be purchased from the office of the undersigned during office hours up to 16-4-96 on cash payment of Tk 400/- (four hundred) only (non-refundable).

Tenders will be received in the office of the undersigned on 17-4-96 up to 12.00 Noon and will be opened on the same day at 12.30 PM in presence of the tenderers (if any present). No tender schedule shall be sold on the opening day i.e. on 17-4-96.

Tenderers should submit their tenders along with forwarding letters in their own firm's letterhead pads with seal and signature.

The authority reserves the right to accept any re-tender and reject any or all re-tenders without assigning any reason whatsoever.

DFP-6645-2/4
G-426
AIG of Police (Telecom)
Bangladesh, Dhaka.

US bond market plummets

NEW YORK, Apr 6: Treasury bond prices plunged and yields soared to more than seven-month highs Friday in a powerful market sell-off triggered by news of surprising employment strength in March, reports AP.

The jobs stamina dashed remaining hopes among investors that a stunning gain in February was a fluke. With the economy looking brisk, investors doubt the Federal Reserve will lower short-term interest rates anytime soon.

The price of the Treasury's benchmark 30-year bond closed down 1.27-32 points, or 18.44 dollars per 1,000 dollars in face value, in trading that ended at noon EST because of the Good Friday holiday.

The bond's yield, which moves in the opposite direction, jumped to 6.82 per cent, its highest since closing at 6.91 per cent on August 23, 1995. The yield closed at 6.67 per cent on Thursday.

The strong employment report dampened hopes of an interest rate cut by the Fed to stimulate the economy.

"It pushes the Fed easing back further and further. If it occurs at all," said Charles Pradilla, chief investment strategist at Cowen & Co, a New York investment firm.

"If you push it further back, the next move" could be an interest rate increase by the Fed, he said.

Bond investors generally embrace signs of interest rate cuts, since lower rates on new securities enhance the value of those already in circulation.

Bonds pay a fixed rate of interest.

Bond prices in the five trillion dollar Treasury market began plummeting immediately after the Labour Department reported that companies added 140,000 jobs in March, triple many economists' predictions.

The March jobs increase came after a revised increase of 624,000 jobs in February. Before Friday's release, some bond buyers believed the February job growth was an aberration, fueled by labour demand pent up by January snowstorms and a federal government shutdown.

Still, Pradilla said the bond market reaction seemed an overreaction to March's modest employment strength. Many market players apparently are seeking excuses to sell after stubbornly buying bonds for many months in a rally that abruptly ended last month, when the Labour Department reported the February jobs increase.

The overall economy, as

measured by the gross domestic product, expanded at a barely discernible annual rate of 0.5 per cent in the last three months of 1995.

Economists said the March increase in jobs is consistent with their view that the economy in the first three months of this year grew at a somewhat faster clip of around one per cent.

Still, the bond-market sell-off raised concerns that stocks would follow suit on Monday, since higher interest rates raise the cost of borrowing for US corporations, cutting into profits. Bond yields influence interest rates in the broader economy. The stock market was closed for Good Friday.

Elsewhere in the market, prices of short-term Treasury securities ranged from 13-32 point to 9-16 point lower and intermediate maturities ranged from 1 9-32 points to 1 14-32 points lower, reported Dow Jones Fletch Inc., a financial information service.

The Lehman Brothers Daily Treasury Bond Index, reflecting price movements on bonds with maturities of a year or longer, dropped 11.78 points to 1,234.04.

Yields on three-month Treasury bills rose to 5.13 per cent as the discount rose 0.03 percentage point to 5.01 per cent.

New diamond deposit found in Siberia

MOSCOW, Apr 6: Geologists have discovered a major new diamond deposit in the permafrost of west Yakutia in eastern Siberia, the head of the Russian state geology committee said yesterday, reports AFP.

The head of the committee, Viktor Orlov told ITAR-Tass news agency that it was the second such find of Kimberlite in the region since the Botuobinskaya deposit was discovered in 1994.

Other such deposits were highly likely to exist in the neighbouring Krasnoyarsk region, he said. The discoveries were "of global importance."

"We have not had such success in more than two decades of work," he said.

In February the Russian government and South African diamond giant De Beers signed a new cooperation agreement after months of delicate negotiations.

De Beers has been losing market share as increasing quantities of Russian diamonds flood the international market, despite a contract stipulating that Russia must hand over for sale 95 per cent of its diamond exports to the CSO.

Orlov said that in 1991-1995 geologists also discovered 234 oil and gas deposits in Russia.

In central Kamchatka in the Far East a promising gold deposit estimated to contain about 50 tonnes had been discovered, along with a platinum deposit.

Meanwhile, preliminary prospecting of Russia's richest zirconium deposit had been completed in the Nizhny Novgorod region on the Volga. It will enable Russia to halve imports of zirconium concentrate once development of the deposit begins, Orlov said.