

## Finance minister addresses workshop

# Employment generation, increasing productivity can help combat poverty

By Staff Correspondent

Poverty cannot be eradicated from the country without achieving economic growth through increasing productivity and creating employment.

Finance Minister S A M S Kibria made this observation at a day-long national workshop on 'Stimulating Growth Through Rural Non-farm Activities in Bangladesh: Review of the Experience and Search for a Policy Agenda,' jointly organised by the World Bank and the Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS) at a city hotel on Wednesday.

The Finance Minister said poverty has not only been confined to the rural but also extended to the urban areas.

The condition of landless people are more vulnerable in the rural areas, Kibria said.

Chaired by BIDS Director General Abu Abdullah, the inaugural session was also addressed by the former Adviser of the Finance Ministry (under the caretaker government), Professor Wahiduddin Mahmud and Chief of the Resident Mission of the World Bank in Dhaka, Pierre Landell-Mills.

The minister said the government's main goal is to alleviate poverty for which growth and social justice should be maintained.

Prof Mahmud, in his speech, said despite its importance, rural non-farm sector has always been neglected in policy-making.

He said more than one-third of the rural labour force is engaged in rural non-farm activities. Shift of rural labour force from agriculture to non-farm sector is contributing to preventing poverty from rising, he added.

Pointing to the low productivity of the rural sector, Prof Mahmud said, "A huge amount of credit and capital were required to breakthrough the present rural productivity." It is easy to find out backwardness in any sector but difficult to solve the problem.

The World Bank Resident Mission chief said, rural

poverty has been shifted to the urban areas during the last couple of years. Only agricultural activities can not eradicate poverty. Rural sector has to be built in such a way so that it can employ more people.

Mills said some of the NGOs including the Grameen Bank have been contributing to help alleviate poverty.

The World Bank Mission chief suggested that the government should raise the literacy rate in the rural areas to help alleviate poverty.

Cities have strong political lobbies while the rural areas do not have. "So urban problems are solved earlier," he pointed out.

Expressing World Bank's concern, Mills said several World Bank projects are being executed in the rural areas to reduce poverty rate and raise productivity level.

Four papers were presented at the working session which was presided over by the Secretary of the Ministry of Planning Shah Md Farid.

Wahiduddin Mahmud of Dhaka University in his paper titled 'Macro Evidence, the push-pull debate reconsidered,' said although the Rural Non-Farm (RNF) sector could play a potentially important role in generating rural income and employment, it was not often adequately recognised due to deficiencies of the official statistics and a general lack of information regarding the rural non-farm sector.

For an over-all growth of RNF sector, he stressed the linkages between agriculture and RNF.

Binayak Sen of BIDS said the rural non-farm income grew at a faster rate than the farm income.

Evaluating different aspects of rural non-farm sector in Bangladesh, he said that participation in RNF sector helped the income mobility of the landless and acted in the direction of moderating overall inequality in rural income distribution.

He said the sustainability of the sector and possibility of its graduation into a dynamic sector will much depend on how the technology progresses.

Zaid Bakht of BIDS said the RNF sector played a dual role as it was perceived as a safety valve against rising rural unemployment and poverty caused by declining growth in agriculture.

He said although the coverage of rural Non-Farm Activities (RNA) in the official statistics has improved, considerable under-reporting still persists.

## BKB to disburse Tk 922 cr as loan in 5 divisions

PATUAKHALI, Aug 1: Bangladesh Krishi Bank has undertaken a programme to disburse Taka 922 crore loan among 6,86,494 farmers in five divisions of the country in the current fiscal year, reports UNB.

Official sources said, of the total Taka 715 crore will be disbursed as short term loan and Taka 207 crore as long term and agro-based project loan.

This programme will be implemented through 836 branches in Dhaka, Chittagong, Sylhet, Barisal and Khulna divisions.

The sources said the high allocation has been made for distribution of loan in crop sector as per principle set by Bangladesh Bank.

## Japanese team, DCCI leaders exchange views

A six-member Japanese Economic Mission exchanged views with the Board of Directors of DCCI and its past presidents at the DCCI auditorium yesterday, says DCCI press release.

The Japanese team was led by Uzuhiro UWATOKO, Chairman of the Japan-Bangladesh Committee for Commercial & Economic Cooperation, and also Chairman of Toyo Engineering Corp, while DCCI President Ali Hossain (Hasan) chaired the meeting.

Referring to the commitment of the new government to build Bangladesh economy on strong footing, the DCCI President urged the delegation for providing necessary cooperation from Japan.

Japan, as one of the significant development partners of Bangladesh may provide technical know-how to the entrepreneurs of Bangladesh, the president stated.

The leader of the delegation Uzuhiro UWATOKO, pointing out the very short visit informed that the same mission would visit Bangladesh again in November of this year for a longer period with specific proposal of investment.

## Parliament told No plan to return vested property

The government has no plan to hand over vested property to the owners, Parliament was informed yesterday, reports UNB.

The government has not formulated any policy in this respect, said State Minister for Land Alhaj Rashed Mosharaf replying to a starmarked question from Mashiur Rahman of BNP.

There are 755,705.08 acres of land under vested property in the country, the minister told the House.

## Food output target never achieved

Bangladesh could never achieve the target of food production since its independence.

The disclosure came from Food Minister Matia Chowdhury during question hour in Parliament.

According to year-on-year estimates provided by the Minister, the rate of achievement was the highest in 1989-90 and the lowest in 1994-95.

In 1989-90 fiscal production stood at 18,747,000 metric tons against the target of 20,000,000 metric tons, registering a 94 per cent achievement, the highest in last 23 years.

Achievement rate plummeted to 81 per cent in 1994-95 when production was 18,078,000 metric tons against the targeted 22,200,000 metric tons. Grain production remained almost stagnant between 1991-92 and 1994-95. During the period, yield declined to 18,078,000 metric tons.

The Minister said there is a plan to produce 25,000,000 metric tons of food in the country by the year 2000.

## Environment-friendly bus likely

The government plans to bring in more buses on big streets, simultaneously restricting movement of rickshaws, to ease vexing traffic problems.

Minister Matia Chowdhury

## Phoenix Insurance declares 21pc dividend

The 10th annual general meeting of the Phoenix Insurance Company Ltd. was held on Wednesday at Sonargaon Hotel with Chairman of the company Major General (Retd) Abdul Mannan Siddiqui in the chair, says a company press release.

The company declared 21 per cent dividend for the shareholders at the meeting.

During the year 1995, the company earned a pre-tax profit of Tk 3.56 crore as against Tk 3.09 crore in 1994. The year was Tk 36.13 crore as against Tk 32.72 crore in 1994.

The shareholders of the company expressed deep satisfaction over the performance and steady growth of the company. They viewed that if the present trend of business continues the profitability of the company would substantially increase this year.

Directors present at the meeting were Deen Mohammad, Abdul Rahman, Mobarak Ali, Nurul Islam, Aziz-Al-Mahmud, Md. Nasiruddin Ahmed, Mazharul Haque, Md. Habibur Rahman Mia, Farhad Bin Mannan, Mohammad Shoaib and the Managing Director E R Khan.

## BB treasury bill auction results

The 20th auction of the 90-day treasury bill and the 11th auction of the 30-day and 180-day treasury bills were held Wednesday, says BSS.

Four bids for a total of Taka 11.00 (eleven) crore and two bids for a total of Taka two crore were offered respectively against the 30-day and the 90-day bills and all the bids were accepted.

No bid was offered against the 180-day bill.

The weighted average prices of the accepted bids against the 30-day and the 90-day bills were Taka 99.47 and Taka 98.35 per 100 Taka respectively.

The corresponding yields are 6.45 per cent and 6.71 per cent per annum, a Bangladesh Bank press release said here Wednesday.



Pubali Bank Ltd. signed a loan agreement with Phoenix Leasing Company Ltd. (PLC) for extending a Term Loan of Tk 80.00 million. The agreement was signed by Md. Qamrul Huda, Managing Director, Pubali Bank, and A. Quadir Chaudhury, Managing Director, Phoenix Leasing on behalf of their respective organisations at a simple ceremony held at the bank's head office on Tuesday.

## Metropolitan

## 137 killed in city road accidents since Jan

By Staff Correspondent

About 137 persons were killed in city road accidents during the first six months of this year, according to a statistics of the Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP).

During the same period of the previous year, police recorded 169 incidents of deaths. A total of 486 cases related to road accident were filed during this time this year while 656 cases were lodged in the corresponding period of 1995, the statistics added.

Besides, the DMP collected Tk 1.04 crore from cases under Motor Vehicle Ordinance during the first six months this year. In the same period Tk 61.93 lakh was collected in 1995, police sources said.

Meanwhile, the DMP yesterday began a two-day traffic awareness campaign in the city.

During the campaign, the traffic police were seen at different strategic points in the city with loud speakers informing people of road safety and traffic rules.

Besides, special enforcement was added in eight different points in the metropolis for the campaign while banners were hung besides city roads.

The Dhaka Metropolitan Police initiated the drive to check traffic congestion, accident and other related problems in the city roads.



Joy Bangla Sangskritik Oikya Jote brought out a silence procession in the city yesterday as part of its month-long programme in observance of the 21st death anniversary of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. — Star photo

## Call to ban 'Nari Sanghita'

Tahjif-e-Harmine Parisad yesterday demanded imposing ban on the book titled 'Nari Sanghita' written by Rashida M Karim, reports UNB.

They also demanded punishment of the writer for disgracing Islam in her book, says a press release.

## JS told Tk 11 cr earned by sending troops to UN missions

Energy and Mineral Resources Minister Noruddin Khan who is in charge of Defence Ministry in Parliament, yesterday said Bangladesh has so far earned US dollar 10,95,52,899 by sending troops in the UN missions, reports BSS.

He said this in reply to a question from Mohammad Rafiqul Islam Bakul (Pabna) in the Jatiya Sangsad.

The minister said there is no income tax on this earning.

## Obituary

Abdus Sobhan, former Additional Attorney General of Bangladesh, died of old age complications in the city yesterday afternoon. He was 82, reports BSS.

He left behind his wife Anowara Sobhan, former Principal of Eden Girls College and two sons — Iqbal Sobhan, senior economist of FAO and Dr Ajmal Sobhan.

Namaz-e-janaza of the deceased will be held today after Juma prayers at the Gulshan Central Mosque before his burial at Banani Graveyard.

His Kulkhwani will be held on Sunday after Asr prayers at his residence at Road 123, house 20, Lake View Apartment, Gulshan.

## Japanese business team meets FM

The members of the visiting Japanese Economic mission met Foreign Affairs Minister Abdus Samad Azad in the city yesterday, reports UNB.

Chairman of Japan-Bangladesh Committee for Commercial and Economic Cooperation Uzuhiro Uwatoko led the 8-member delegation.

Talking to them, the Foreign Minister said Japan is the largest development partner of Bangladesh and would make more investment in the development sectors.

## Month-long Aug 15 programme begins

Joy Bangla Sangskritik Oikya Jote and its front organisations have begun their month-long programme in observance of the 21st death anniversary of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, reports BSS.

The programme, according to a press release, is part of the observance of the national mourning day on August 15.

The first day programme of the monthlong observance has begun in the city yesterday with the voluntary blood donation at the Bangabandhu Avenue. The programme was attended among others by Salahuddin Badal, Fazlul Huq, Dr. Mostafa Jalal Mohiuddin, Akhtarul Alam, Sheikh Abdul Kader, Zahid Hussain and Gulshan Akhtar.

The second phase of the programme has begun in the afternoon with a discussion meeting where Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad attended as the chief guest.

## 2-day strike at JU ends

By JU Correspondent

A two-day strike, demanding expulsion of 26 activists belonging to Islami Chhatra Shibir (ICS) from the university, ended yesterday.

Protesting the delay in ousting the ICS activists the All Party Students Unity (APSU) of JU gave the two-day strike call. APSU brought out processions and held rallies on the campus on Wednesday and Thursday in support of the demand.

No classes, however were held during the strike. APSU has been demanding expulsion of 26 ICS activists arrested from the campus on July 1 following an abortive bid to capture the residential halls of university.

## Confce on primary edn Aug 6-10

A five-day conference on "Universal primary education in Bangladesh 1996" will be held from August 6 to 10 in the city, says a press release.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina is expected to inaugurate the conference as chief guest, Minister for Education A S H K Sadique will be the special guest at the inaugural session and preside over the conference on the concluding day.

The conference will review national efforts made so far in achieving the goals of education for all in terms of access and equity of education and institutional capacity development. It will also identify the policy implications in respect of implementation of education development programmes and review the strengths and weaknesses in the present system of planning and management of primary education, with a view to exploring the scope of restructuring the system and strengthening the management. Other critical issues related to the universalisation of primary education in Bangladesh will also be discussed.

The participants will include, among others, educationists from the government and non-government sectors, development thinkers, scholars and journalists.

The inauguration of the training programme will be held at the Bangladesh Jute Research Institute auditorium on Monday (August 5).

State Minister for Jute A K Faezul Huq will inaugurate the training course as chief guest.



Teachers belonging BCS General Education cadre brought out a procession in the city yesterday in support of their various demands. — Star photo

## IJO course on jute, kenaf begins Aug 5

A 9-day regional training course on "support for varietal improvement of jute and kenaf" will be held in the city on August 5-13, reports UNB.

The inaugural session of the training programme will be held at the Bangladesh Jute Research Institute auditorium on Monday (August 5).

State Minister for Jute A K Faezul Huq will inaugurate the training course as chief guest.

## Gonadabi Parishad team meets Speaker

A delegation of the United Kingdom based "Gonadabi Parishad" led by Humayun Kabir called on Speaker Humayun Rashid Chowdhury at his office in the city yesterday, reports BSS.

The delegation appraised the Speaker of the case of late Suruj Miah, who was allegedly assaulted on arrival at the Zia International Airport on May 9 and subsequently died.

The Speaker assured them that appropriate measures would be taken to stop recurrence of such incident in future.



## DEPARTMENT DAY TALK TOGETHER

Students of Mass Communication and Journalism department of the Dhaka University brought out a colourful procession on the campus yesterday marking the 34th founding anniversary of the department. — Star photo



Chittagong Hill Tracts Peace Coordination Council brought out a peace procession in the city yesterday. — Star photo

## Death anniversary

The 14th anniversary of death of former Chief Justice of Bangladesh Syed AB Mahmud Husain will be observed today. He died on August 2 in 1982 at the age of 65. He was the Chief Justice of Bangladesh from 1975 to 1978, says a press release.

To mark the day Chief Justice Syed AB Mahmud Husain Smriti Sangsad will hold a discussion meeting and Milad Mahfil at Central Law College building, 6, Bijoynagar, Dhaka at 4.30 pm.

Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad and the State Minister for Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs Advocate Abdul Matin Khasru will attend the programme as chief guest and special guest respectively. Justice AM Mahmudur Rahman will present a paper on life sketch of late Chief Justice.



Charge d'Affairs of Kuwait embassy Tareq Ali Al-Oraifan handed over a consignment of essential goods to Director General of Multilateral Economic Affairs Wing in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Akramul Quader, at a simple ceremony in the city recently. The Kuwaiti government donated the aid in support of the country's people affected by natural calamities. — Embassy photo