

Govt contemplating national plan to combat child labour

By Govinda Shil

The government is planning to formulate a national plan of action to combat child labour and help them build better future, according to Ministry of Labour and Manpower and International Labour Organisation, ILO, in Dhaka.

As part of the exercise a three-day national workshop on Child Labour that will begin in the city from January 5 to seek recommendations from people concerned.

"We have about six million child workers for whom we need education and other programmes," said Mahe Alam, Secretary, Ministry of Labour and Manpower last night.

He said a strong motivation programme was needed to mobilise people to stop child labour. "It is nearly impossible to eliminate child labour from our society within a short period of time," the Secretary said adding that the government along with other non-government and international organisations could solve this problem through their joint efforts.

Talking to The Daily Star on Monday, Paul J. Baily, Director, ILO said that his organisation and the Government of Bangladesh were trying to reach a national consensus through the joint workshop to combat child

labour and to increase the efficiency of the workforce in the country.

"We will proceed according to the recommendations of the workshop," Baily said adding that immediate attention should be given to address the issue of child labour.

He said those children working at brick kilns, welding workshops, brothels were in most vulnerable situation.

Terminating the Tripartite Memorandum of Understanding between the ILO, UNICEF and the Bangladesh Garments Manufacturers' and Exporters' Association (BGMEA) a success,

he said through a proper plan, the entire child labour could be eliminated from the society.

According to an ILO Action Programme which is now being administered by ILO, measures that could be taken to stop child labour includes, withdrawal of children from hazardous work and place them into schools, providing non-formal education and safety training to the working children, reducing parental resistance towards withdrawal of their children from work, advising the relevant social partners for protective legislation and development of national policies.

Report on viability of Shahjalal Fertilizer Project submitted

The report on the technical and economic viability of the proposed Shahjalal Fertilizer Project (SFP) using natural gas was submitted to the Industries and Commerce Minister Tofail Ahmed here yesterday, reports BSS.

The seven-member committee headed by Dr Iqbal Mahmood, the Vice-Chancellor of the Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET) formally handed over the report in the conference room of the industries ministry.

The committee comprises members from the ministries of industries and energy and mineral resources, Planning Commission, Petrobangla and Bangladesh Chemical Industries Corporation (BCIC).

Industries Secretary M Akhter Ali was also present, a PID handout said.

The committee reviewed and analyzed the various conditionalities under the proposed financial arrangement of buyer's credit and overall perspective of implementation of SFP.

It also reviewed the present and future production and the demand of urea fertilizer in the country and assessed the investment worthiness of the SFP.

The committee examined the natural gas requirement of SFP in the context of projected demand and supply of natural gas in the country considering the stipulations contained in the energy policy.

It recommended the setting-up of not only SFP but also another urea fertilizer factory of much higher capacity with a note that cheaper fund with softer terms would be more desirable.

The present production capacity of the six fertilizer factories under BCIC is about 21 lakh metric tons (MT) against the

demand of about 23 lakh MT. The demand will be raised to 26.4 lakh MT by 2000 and over 36 lakh MT by 2005.

Fenchuganj Fertilizer Factory, the first gas-based urea factory was set up in 1961 with an annual production of 1,06,000 MT. Due to prolonged operation, condition of equipment and machinery of the factory has deteriorated considerably.

Considering the situation, an initiative was taken to set up a fertilizer factory with modern technology having production capacity of 3,30,000 MT per year utilizing existing facility, off-site and infrastructural facilities in such a way that the operation of the Fenchuganj factory could ultimately be closed down on completion of SFP.

Presenting the report, Dr Mahmood praised the authorities for constituting the committee comprising members of all concerned government ministries and departments. As a result, he said, all issues relating to the SFP had been addressed properly in the report. While accepting the report, the minister highly appreciated the relentless efforts of the committee in furnishing the report.

The minister said with the diversification of cropping pattern and multiple uses of fertilizer in the country, the demand of urea had increased rapidly. He said to cope with demand the government would welcome any step to set up more fertilizer factories on joint-venture and private initiatives besides public sector efforts.

The minister said the government would soon take decision on setting-up of Shahjalal Fertilizer Factory after scrutinizing the report.

India trade fair Bangladesh gets 'overall best award'

Bangladesh Pavilion has secured 'overall best award' in the Industrial India Trade Fair (IITF)-96 which concluded Tuesday in Calcutta, reports UNB.

According to a message received here yesterday, West Bengal Minister for Commerce and Industry Bidyut Ganguly handed over the award to the Bangladesh Delegation Tuesday evening.

Wide range of Bangladesh products which include ceramic and melamine table-ware, knitwear, pharmaceutical, toiletries, automotive batteries, artificial flowers, voltage stabilizers, jamdani sarees, shoes and footwear, electric cable, wall clock and decoration pieces, carpets, ceramic bricks etc were on display during the 11-day long fair held at Calcutta maidan.

A huge number of people from all strata of life visited Bangladesh pavilion. About 20,000 people visited the pavilion while nearly 25,000 visited Bangladesh made luxury bus everyday.

New executive director of Bangladesh Bank

M A Majid Khan has been promoted as executive director of Bangladesh Bank, says a press release yesterday.

Khan joined State Bank of Pakistan as an Officer Class-I in 1968 and before the promotion he served as Secretary to the Board of Directors of Bangladesh Bank, General Manager Exchange Control Policy, General Manager, Foreign Investment & Inspection and held other important positions. He also worked on deputation for many years at home and abroad.

Khan did his Masters from Harvard University. He got a M Quereshi Gold Medal on standing 1st-Class-1st in BA, IBA (Dhaka University) Gold Medal on standing 1st with all 'A' grade in MBA and Bangladesh Bank Gold Medal, Agrani Bank and Rupali Bank prizes on standing 1st in banking diploma examinations.



ANZ Grindlays Bank launched its credit card programme in the country yesterday. Picture shows Frank Gamble, General Manager-Bangladesh of the bank, presenting a replica of the credit card to Shah AMS Kibria, Minister for Finance, at a function at Dhaka Sheraton Hotel.

Good demand marks Ctg tea auction

CHITTAGONG, Jan 1: There was a good demand of teas as both foreign and internal buyers are actively operating at the weekly tea sale held here yesterday, reports BSS.

According to market sources, Poland, Pakistan and Afghanistan operated at slightly lower while internal buyers including major blenders lent a strong support to the good liquoring.

Smaller brokens and fannings were also dearer than previous time, the sources added.

Bold and large brokens eased slightly often up to Tk 1 per kg. Medium brokens were also easier generally up to Tk 1.

Smaller brokens were again the strongest feature and generally sold at firm to dearer levels. Popular types sold quite well between Tk 51- 50 and Tk 55.

There was also a good demand from will fannings at slightly dearer levels. Good liquoring types continued to attract strong competition at generally dearer levels. Popular types also sold quite well at around last levels between Tk 52 and Tk. 56-40.

A total of 2,885 chests, and 514 gunny sacks of dust of old season were on offer which

continued to meet strong demand.

Better liquoring types were in strong demand and again dearer by Tk 2 and more following competition. All others were fully firm to dearer.

There were 18,011 chest and gunny sacks of teas were on offer.

New body of DU Tourist Society

The Dhaka University Tourist Society has re-elected Mohiuddin Helal as its president for the next two years, reports UNB.

The election was held at its annual general meeting held at TSC auditorium with Mohiuddin Helal in the chair, said a press release yesterday.

Other members of the newly elected committee are: vice president — Syed Mirazul Islam, general secretary — Nazir Ahmed Khan, programme coordinator — Saidur Rahman, finance secretary — Shahidul Islam, international affairs secretary — Qamrul Hasan Rocky, publicity secretary — Sidiqur Rahman Khan, office secretary — Maksud Chowdhury, members — Romana Afroz, Selina Fatema Binte Shahid and Ismail Hossain.



Samson H Chowdhury presiding over the 92nd Annual General Meeting of Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Dhaka on Tuesday. M Anis Ud Dowla, former president and member of the committee, Laila Rahman Kabir, newly elected Vice-President, Maj Gen (Retd) Amjad Khan Chowdhury, out-going Vice-President, C K Hyder, Secretary-General, S H Kabir, former president, Syed Manzur Elahi, former president, Latifur Rahman, former president and Zeaul Huq, former president also seen in the picture.

New ICAB president

Anil Chandra Nath FCA has been elected president of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Bangladesh for 1997 by the ICAB Council at its meeting held on Monday, says a press release.

The meeting also elected Md Anisur Rahman FCA, Abbas Uddin Khan FCA and Md Abdul Baree FCA as vice presidents for the same term.

AC Nath has been serving the Institute as Council Member for three terms now and had been its vice president for two consecutive years in 1994 and 1995. He is also chairman of various committees and sub-committees of the institute and has been contributing substantially towards development of the accountancy profession in the country.

Nath joined the profession in 1969 as a partner of Basu Banerjee Nath & Co.

Training course for Orion management: Certificate awarded

The certificate awarding ceremony of a training course on 'product management' for the management of Orion Group, comprising Kohinor Chemical Company (BD) Ltd. and Orion Laboratories Limited was held at the IBA on Tuesday, says a press release.

The course was organized as a part of Orion Group's ongoing Executive Development Programme and specially designed for exposing the key executives to the current development of highly competitive and consumer driven market to effectively respond to the rapid changes taking place in the business world.

The training was imparted by the faculty members of the Institute of Business Administration (IBA), University of Dhaka.

The certificate awarding ceremony was attended by the Director and concerned faculty members of IBA, members of the management of Orion Group, distinguished guests and the participants.

KSA boosts spending by \$8b in '97 budget

RIYADH, Jan 1: Saudi Arabia has boosted projected spending by more than eight billion dollars in 1997 amid expectations that crude prices will remain firm and non-oil exports will grow, reports AFP.

Announcing its budget for calendar 1997, the world's biggest oil producer and exporter said last Monday that high oil prices doubled growth rates to around 8.7 per cent in 1996 from 4.3 per cent in 1995.

Spending for 1997 was projected at 181 billion Saudi riyals (48.2 billion dollars) and revenues at 164 billion riyals (43.7 billion dollars). This created a deficit of around 4.5 billion dollars, lower than the estimated shortfall of 4.9 billion dollars in 1996.

Expenditure was higher by 8.2 billion dollars over the 1996 spending of around 40 billion dollars and bankers attributed this to an optimistic outlook about the world oil market and the Gulf country's exports.

"Saudi planners are optimistic about oil price in 1997 and they expect exports of petrochemicals and other non-oil products to increase further. This is the main reason for the higher forecast spending," a Saudi banker said.

The 1997 deficit accounted for around 3.2 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP) compared with nearly 3.5 per cent in 1996, bankers said.

A budget breakdown showed around 41.6 billion riyals (11 billion dollars) were allocated

for education and national manpower training, and 17.7 billion riyals (4.72 billion dollars) for health and social services.

The communications sector received about 10.4 billion riyals (2.77 billion dollars) while around 8.6 billion riyals (2.29 billion dollars) were earmarked for industry and electricity, and 7.1 billion riyals (1.89 billion dollars) for subsidies, according to the statement carried by the Saudi press agency.

It did not specify defence allocations but in previous years they consumed up to 30.35 per cent of the total expenditure as Saudi Arabia has been engaged in plans to bolster its army since the 1990 Iraqi invasion of Kuwait.

Saudi Arabia relies heavily on oil exports despite attempts to diversify sources of income. Such exports provide more than two thirds of its income.

The kingdom, which controls more than a quarter of the world's recoverable crude reserves, is believed to have earned nearly eight billion dollars in additional revenues in 1996 due to a three-dollar rise in crude prices.

The finance ministry did not make clear if the forecast 4.9 billion dollar deficit in 1996 was wiped out or slashed because of the high oil prices.

But it said they did have a positive impact on the economy, with GDP growing by 8.7 per cent to 510 billion riyals (136 billion dollars) in 1996.

Coming AGMs					
Company	Book Closure	AGM/EGM	Date	Venue & Time	Dividend Proposed
Chittagong Cement		AGM			18.2 / R2 (Pre 1000) 20
Beamco Demins (Deb)	15/12/96-31/12/96			(Half yearly interest)	
Beamco Knitting (Deb)	15/12/96-31/12/96	Do			
Beamco Tex. (Deb)	15/12/96-31/12/96	Do			
Beamco Pharma (Deb)	15/12/96-31/12/96	Do		(Last Instalment)	
Beamco Fisheries (Deb)	15/12/96-31/12/96	Do			
BOC Ltd	05/01/97-02/02/97		02/02/97	Sonargonj Hotel 2 pm	18.5 30
Phoenix Leather	22/12/96-04/01/97		04/01/97	387 (North) Tejgaon 9A, 2nd Floor Dhaka 12 Noon	
Eastern Housing (Deb)	24/12/96-31/12/96	Half yearly interest			
Tripl Ind	16/1/97-30/1/97				1R1 (Pre & Tk 125)

Shipping Intelligence

CHITTAGONG PORT						
Berth position and performance of vessels as on 01.01.96						
Berth No	Name of vessels	Cargo	L. port	Local agent	Date of Leaving	Arrival
J/3	Hafez	GI	Mong	SSL	27/12	1
J/4	Ikan Selar	D Peas	Geel	AASS	15/12	1/1
J/6	Rupea	D Peas	Dubai	BRESA	21/12	4/1
J/7	Alan Tegas	Wheat(P)	Espe	Seacom	18/12	3/1
J/8	Halvard	Urea(G)	Rwua	UMTL	27/12	7/1
J/10	Wan Ru	C. Clink	sing	MBL	25/12	1/1
J/12	Sea Elegance	Cont	Sing	PHIB	29/12	3/1
Co/1	Qc Pintall	Cont	Sing	QCSL	31/12	3/1
Co/2	Fong Shin	Cont	Sing	QCSL	31/12	3/1
Rm/14	Eva	Idle	Kara	BMA	R/a	1/1
Tsp	Banglar Asha	Idle	Mong	BSC	29/11	1/1
Rm/6	Canopus	Siko/MS	Sing	ECSL	29/11	1/1
Doj	Banglar Shourabh	C. Oil	Idle	BSC	R/a	1/1
Dd/1	Tanary Star	Idle	Para	PSAL	7/06	15/1
Dd/2	Banglar Urmil/Khanak	Idle	Momb	BSC	15/10	7/1
Rm/8	Banglar Mamata	Repair	Male	BSC	08/12	5/1
CUFLJ	Blue North	Cement	Qing	PSAL	03/06	15/1

Vessels due at outer anchorage						
Name of vessels	Date of Last port arrival	Last port call	Local agent	Cargo	Loading port	
Mantis	1/1	Col	Cross	Bunkering		
Stn-1	1/1	yang	AMBL GI(Wt. Cement)	R.Phos		
Gage Aksoy	1/1	Litmond	R.Phos			
Pathum Navee	1/1	Laem	UMTL	Scraping		
Gao Cat	1/1	Sinni	Scraping			
Sinhung-1	1/1	OSA	Bunkering			
Padma 28/12	2/1	Sing	RSL	Cont	Sing.	
Hon Jin	2/1	Sing	RSL	Cont	Sing.	
Harmony-II	2-1	Mong	SW	Bunkering		
Sun Flower			Everett	GI		
Banglar			BSC	Cont	Sing.	
Roby 21/12	3/1	Sing	BSC	Cont	Sing.	
Kota Berjaya	26/12	Sing	Pil(B)	Cont	Sing.	
Susak 28/12	4/1	Col	Baridhi	Cont	Col.	
Elbe Star 31/12	4/1	Sing	Bdship	Cont	Sing.	
Fong Yun 26/12	5/1	Sing	Bdship	Cont	Sing.	
Meng yang 26/12	4/1	Sing	AML	Cont	Sing.	
Progress						
Excellence	6/1	Lans	Delmure	Cement	Clinker	
Bravo	5/1	Sing	RML	Gssp		
Meng Kiat 24/12	5/1	Mong	Bdship	Cont	Col.	
Forest Prince	5/1	Saka	UMTL	Scraping		
Hong Gu Cheng	5/1		Bdship	Fert		
Morning Bright	6/1					
Roro/24/12/12	6/1	Oil	SST	Vehi		
Cheetah	6/1	Lmic	SST	Wheat(G)		
Petko R Slavej						
Kov9/1		AASS	Reed/50	Yractor		
Fong Lee 29/12	9/1	Sing	Bdship	Cont		
Kota Bintang						
30/12/91	Sing	Pil(B)	Cont	Sing.		
Banglar Shobha	10/1	Bca		Vehi		
Star Craft (Roro)	10/1					
2/24/5/12						
Astro Jyotin	14/1	JF		Vehi		
Roro/24/29/12						

Tanker due:			
Aspielos	03/01	BSL	Crude Oil
Margaletta	08/01	JF	Tallow

Vessels at Kutubdia					
Name of vessels	Cargo	Last port call	Local agent	Date of arrival	
Saraband	C.Oil	Jelbe	ASTA	25/12	
Tug Veritas	Col	Bel	ASTA	25/12	
Banglar Jyoti	C. Oil		BSC	R/a	

Vessels at outer anchorage:					
Ready on:					
Da Fu (Cont)	Cont	Sing	APL(B)	23/12	
Da Xing	Gssp(Fert)	Long	Rainbow	31/12	
Castor	HSD	Sing	ECSL	30/12	

Vessels not ready:					
Meric	Mop	Sing	Limond	24/12	
Anodad Naree	Wheat(P)	P.Land	Seacoast	25/12	
Taepling	Wheat (P)	Sing	Seacom	30/12	
Mathios	Cement	Sing	PSAL	30/12	
Astra Sky	Cement	Sing	Rainbow	30/12	
Feng Gee	Urea(G)	Chin	Bdship	30/12	
Guardian Angel	Salt(TCB)	Ind	CONT	31/12	
Danang Glory	Wheat(G)	Ling	SSST	1/1	

Vessels awaiting instruction:					
Banglar Sampad	GI (Bit/P)	Fuja	BSC	R/A (03/12)	
SEA BEE	Ballast	OIL	OIL	31/10	
HYDROUSSA	Ballast	Monr	OIL	21/12	

Vessels not entering:					
Varot	Scraping	Sing	Sinni	21/12	
Sugar	Sement	Lans	SBS	22/12	
Naira Express	Urea	Lans	BST	25/12	
Mezhdureshensk	Cement	Lans	Delmure	27/12	
Parnassus	Cement	Lans	USTC	28/12	
Al Watankah	Scraping	Kand	ARL	29/12	

Movement of vessels for 02.1.97					
Outgoing	Incoming	Shifting			
CC/72	Fong Shin	CC/72	Banglar Robi		
RM/6					