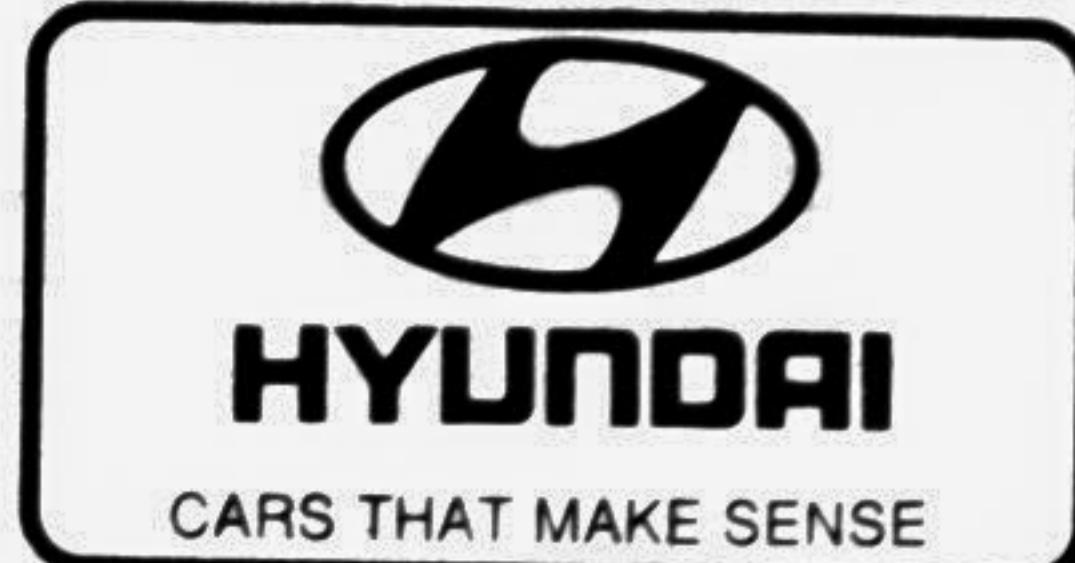




DHAKA SUNDAY, AUGUST 10, 1997



Indian fish in N-dists

SIRAJGANJ, Aug 9: Indian fish are being sold in the northern districts, including Sirajganj, Pabna, Rajshahi and Dinajpur at high prices while hilsha became scarce in these areas due to smuggling to India, says UNB.

The fish are being smuggled through different border routes along the north-western districts.

Acute shortage of fish including hilsha was prevailing in the region for the last four to five days. Price of small fish has also been doubled.

Due to scarcity of fish and meat in the local markets, varieties of Indian fish like ruhi, kathi and mrigal are coming at random through unauthorised routes.

The prices of Indian carp vary from Tk 60 to 80 per kg while the local variety is being sold at Tk 100 to 110.

74,883 hectares of land under jute cultivation in 11 S districts

BARISAL, Aug 9: A total of 74,883 hectares has been brought under intensive jute cultivation in 11 southern districts under Barisal agriculture zone during the current rainy season, says BSS.

The districts are: Barisal, Jhalakati, Bhola, Pirojpur, Patuakhali, Barguna, Faridpur, Madaripur, Gopalganj, Rajbari and Sharikpur.

According to an official source, the target of production is fixed at 8,73,423 bales jute this year.

Of the total, 66,492 hectares have been brought under *toshla* variety of jute while 8,391 hectares under local variety of jute, the source added.

Altogether, 5,070 hectares were cultivated in Barisal district, 90 hectares in Jhalakati, 22,425 hectares in Faridpur, 6,264 hectares in Madaripur, 9,320 hectares in Gopalganj, 12,670 hectares in Rajbari, 8,703 hectares in Sharikpur, 50 hectares in Patuakhali, 25 hectares in Barguna and 246 hectares in Bholia districts.

Bangladesh Agriculture Development Corporation (BADC) distributed seed, fertilizers, insecticides and other necessary inputs to the farmers for the successful implementation of the programme, the source added.

Besides, BADC installed 734 power pumps, 77 deep and 950 shallow tubewells and some 220 other local irrigation arrangements for the purpose.

DHL indicator shows Business confidence surging in Asia, Pacific

SINGAPORE, Aug 9: An underlying trend of business confidence is surging throughout Asia Pacific as exporters continue to anticipate growing demand for their products, according to findings in the fifth DHL Export Indicator which was released Wednesday, says a press release.

The latest quarterly survey incorporates discoveries from the previous four publications for the first time, to track the development of influential trade trends in the region.

The optimism — a prominent feature in previous issues of the DHL Export Indicator — is again shown with a majority of businessmen interviewed in 12 of 15 regional countries once more upbeat about exports in the short term over 12 months. And in each of the 15 countries involved the majority were also optimistic about export orders for long term export orders over five years.

Confidence among regional exporters was pinpointed in the first survey, published in April 1996, since then the DHL Export Indicator has continued to highlight a series of trends impacting on the region's business developments, including concerns over skilled labour shortages, trade initiation difficulties, and adverse market factors affecting trade growth.

In this DHL Export Indicator poll, 1,174 senior executives from large exporting companies in Australia, China, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, New Zealand, the Philippines, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Taiwan, Thailand and Vietnam were surveyed over a five-week period during April and May.

A majority of exporters in 12 of these 15 countries had optimistic expectations ("excellent" or "good") for orders in the coming 12 months compared to the previous 12 months period. Specifically, 80 per cent in both India and Malaysia, 73 per cent in Vietnam and 68 per cent in Hong Kong responded optimistically, with China, Sri Lanka, Singapore, Taiwan, Indonesia and the Philippines, all in excess of the 50 per cent optimism mark.

Expectations for export orders over the next five years compared to the last 12 months were high, with more than 50 per cent of respondents in each country citing as "good" or "excellent", with the exception of Japan, where only 40 per cent indicated optimism.

No new non-tariff barriers please, Tofael urges top trading nations

Commerce Minister Tofael Ahmed urged the major trading nations not to take any new protectionist measures to restrict the flow of exports from the least developed countries (LDCs) to respond to the opportunities offered by the new trading system.

He said a high-level meeting of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) is going to be held in Geneva in October next for giving operational content to the LDC plan of action.

It will be given by enhancing conditions for investment and providing predictable and favourable market-access conditions for LDC products to foster the expansion and diversification of LDC export to the markets of developed countries, the minister said.

Tofael said he would lead a delegation to the planned Geneva meeting and the government here appointed consultants who would suggest recommendations for Bangladesh's stand in the meeting.

The government would hold a series of discussions with the leaders of business community, he told the function.

The business-guide seminar has been arranged by Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry (DCCI) in collaboration with the Geneva-based International Trade Centre (ITC) at a city hotel.

He said the rule-based complex WTO system was now a reality for Bangladesh, a signature to the Marrakesh agreement which gave birth to the WTO. "We have no option but to face it boldly and endeavour to reap maximum benefit out of it."

President of DCCI, Mahbubur Rahman, said the business community of Bangladesh would have to perform a formidable task as the

country was beset with many handicaps in rising up to the requirements of meeting the challenges and exploiting the opportunities.

He emphatically said that instead of waiting for the developed countries to open up markets, the developing countries like Bangladesh should immediately choose areas where they could have competitive advantage.

President of DCCI, Mahbubur Rahman, said the LDCs like Bangladesh could only gain from the globalised market under the condition of fair competition with comparative advantages like bounty and endowment, craftsmanship, productivity, and quality.

Commerce and Industries Minister Tofael Ahmed, MP, delivering his speech as chief guest at a Business guide seminar on the implications of the Uruguay Round agreements jointly organised by the Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and industry and International Trade Centre (ITC/UNCTAD/WTO), Geneva, at a city hotel yesterday. Picture also shows DCCI President ASM Quasem, ICC-Bangladesh President Mahbubur Rahman and ITC Senior Regional Adviser Rudolf Macas.

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