

Tea demand falls at Ctg auction

CHITTAGONG, Dec 17: The weekly tea sale here Tuesday witnessed a depressing market for lack of sufficient demand from both export as well as internal buyers, reports UNB.

Prices this week were much lower and withdrawals were also heavy, according to a market report of National Brokers Ltd.

There was fair interest from Poland and Russia whilst a limited enquiry from Pakistan/Afghanistan. Loose Tea Trade was subdued with fair interest from the Blenders for the better liquor types.

CTC LEAF: 15,889 chests, 17,687 Gunny Sacks and (12 chests of old season) on offer met with much less demand at lower levels amid heavy withdrawals.

CTC BROKENS: Large and Bold Brokens met with a fairly good market but eased by Tk 1 to Tk 2. Medium and smaller Brokens met with a selective market and mostly sold at Tk 2 to Tk 3 below last levels except for a few better liquor types which were about steady following competition.

Plain types were mostly neglected and where sold were discounted heavily.

CTC FANNINGS: The better liquor types met with fair demand and generally sold at Tk 2 to Tk 3 easier while all others declined by Tk 3 to Tk 4 and sometimes more. The poorest sorts were mostly neglected and withdrawn without bids.

GREEN TEA: 300 Chests on offer met with fair demand. FYH sold at Tk 90, YH Tk 88 and Hyson Tk 90.

CTC DUST: 1,049 chests and 3,271 Gunny Sacks on offer met with a selective demand at mostly lower rates. Better liquor types eased by up to Tk 5 following quality. Others eased further. Plain liquor types often being neglected.

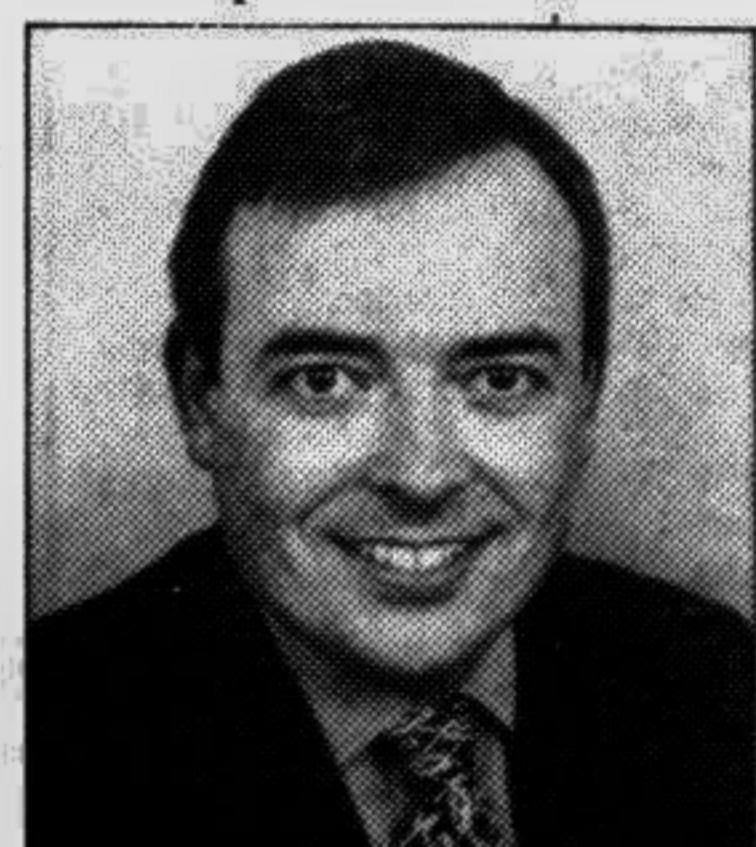
CDs met with a strong demand and were firm to slightly dearer following competition. Internal buyers were selective.

SB disburses Tk 189 cr agri loans

Sonali Bank has so far disbursed a credit amount of Taka 189.16 crore out of the total Taka 636 crore allocated for the agriculture production and rural credit programme during the current fiscal year, a Sonali Bank press release said here yesterday, reports BSS.

The credit programme of Sonali Bank covers crop production, irrigation and agriculture, fish culture in ponds, shrimp production, poultry under special investment programme, fisheries and cattle rearing investment in rural industries and related self-employment projects and poverty alleviation project.

Emirates manager elected WAEA president



ICB to launch lease financing in Jan

By Monjur Mahmud

The Investment Corporation of Bangladesh (ICB) will start lease financing and debenture operations from next month.

All necessary works regarding our lease finance operation have been completed. After obtaining licence from the Controller of Export and Import, the Corporation will buy scrips from either the bourses or from the company.

At present, the trading of debentures at both the bourses is very limited and a new issuer faces problem if its debentures are not fully subscribed. Even the debenture holders often face problem in selling their scrips, particularly when they possess bulk of it.

The country's bond market will be strengthened with the introduction of ICB's debenture discounting scheme, said a high official of the Corporation.

Besides, a debenture dis-

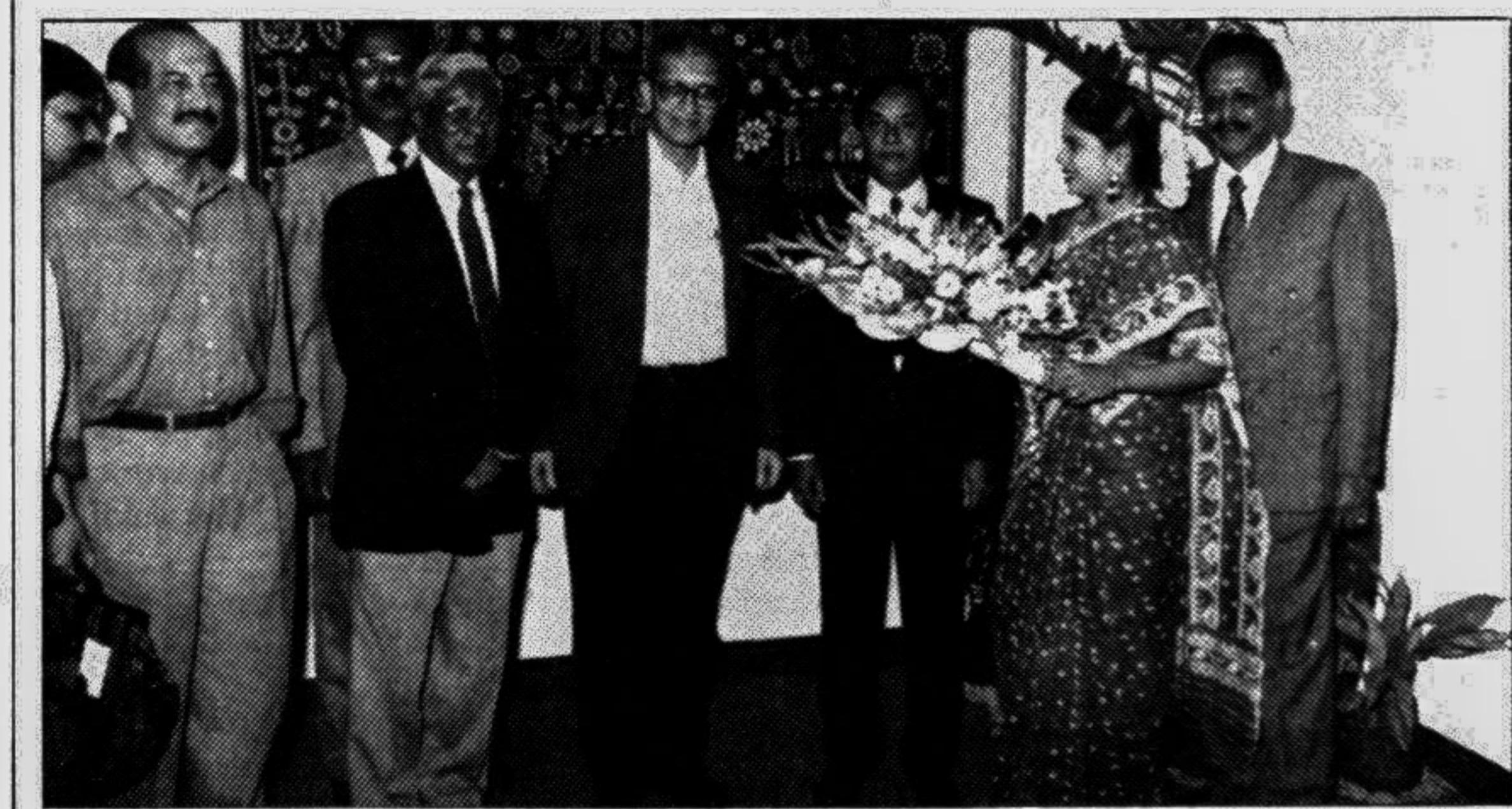
counting scheme, the first of its kind in Bangladesh, is at the final stage of approval. ICB is expected to start this new scheme sometime next month.

Earlier, ICB extended bridge finance to different companies to help them go public soon.

However, about 60 per cent of the companies which had enjoyed bridge financing from the ICB could not float their shares so far. The Corporation is now remoulding its strategies for investment, sources said.

It has also started giving loans against its unit certificates and taking term deposits for six months to five years from general investors since August this year.

Earlier, only some commercial banks provided loans to their customers against ICB unit certificates.



Professor Amartya Sen, eminent economist and Nobel Prize winner, is being received with a bouquet on his arrival at the BRAC Centre Inn — which was formally opened by him. F H Abed, Executive Director of BRAC, C M Mesbahuddin Zahed, Shaheed Hamid MHCIMA, Zahir H Chowdhury, and Kh Asaduzzaman of host management consultants — the management company of BRAC Centre Inn are seen in the picture. — BRAC Centre photo

Financial giant Citigroup cuts 10,400 jobs

US financial services giant Citigroup is cutting 10,400 jobs around the world as its seeks to slash costs.

The turmoil in the world's financial markets this year has caused the group to sack many more workers than expected.

More than a third of the job losses will occur in the US and the rest throughout its international operations as the group embarks on a major overhaul of its business.

The job cuts are equivalent to 6% of the bank's global workforce and the move will cost the group \$900m.

Worse than expected

The job cuts are far worse than feared. The group had been expected to cut 8,000 jobs from its workforce, as part of the integration of Travelers and Citicorp which merged to form Citigroup in October.

Posts will be lost throughout the group, with anybody from

managers to administrative staff leaving the bank.

The restructuring programme is aimed at saving

Japanese firms slash winter bonuses

TOKYO, Dec 17: Tis the season to be jolly, but not in Japan, where companies slashed winter bonuses for the first time in five years, according to an employer's association, says AP.

The average bonus was cut 1.6 per cent from last winter, the Japan Federation of Employer's Associations said in a survey released Wednesday. It was the first time the winter bonus has fallen since 1993, the group reported.

— BBC Internet

Jobs bloodbath

Recent reports suggest that up to 80,000 jobs could be lost in the City of London alone. The slowdown in the global economy has caused leading banks to scale down their operations. A flurry of mergers across the sector has also caused banks to cut jobs to eliminate duplication between organisations.

Banking problems

The merger of Citicorp and Travelers has suffered from teething problems which has led to the departure of several top executives.

Citicorp's profits plunged by more than a half to \$729m in the third quarter of 1998 due to the global market turmoils.

This will be the 6th APTECH centre in Bangladesh. There are four centres in Dhaka and one in Chittagong.

Country operations head of APTECH worldwide Tarun Mitra and Rizwan Bin Faruq of Dharmontech APTECH centre were present at the press conference.

Govt plans three RMG villages

By Rafiq Hasan

Three readymade garments (RMG) villages will be set up at Savar, Ashulia and Sonargaon to shift hundreds of factories which flourished in Dhaka and Narayanganj city areas, industry ministry sources said.

According to sources, the main objective of the establishment of the villages is to relieve these two cities of the burden of 2211 factories, set up in an unplanned way in the congested residential areas.

There are as many as 1855 factories under the Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) demarcated area, and 356 in Narayanganj poushava. More than sixty per cent of these are located in the residential areas.

About 14 lakh workers engaged in these factories are also living in the cities in most unhygienic conditions.

The government took the initiative to set up these garment villages in response to the demand of the garment factory owners and to address the environmental concerns.

Talking to The Daily Star, Tofail Ahmed, Minister for Industries and Commerce, said: "The present government is seriously thinking of shifting the garment factories from the cities to some specially developed areas."

All types of logistics will be made available to the factories at the villages so that the RMG industry can get further impetus," Tofail said.

He said the industries ministry will prepare a Project Concept Paper (PCP) on the proposed garment village and it will be sent to the Planning Commission for approval.

"The construction work of the villages will start after getting approval from the ECNEC," he said.

Tofail further said that the existing garment owners would get priority in the villages for shifting their factories from the city areas.

Earlier, the government formed a committee headed by a high official of the Export Promotion Bureau (EPB) for selecting at least three sites outside Dhaka for the proposed villages.

Dhaka-Narayanganj link road. The committee recommended that the government should assign Bangladesh Small and Cottage Industries Corporation (BSCIC) or Rajdhani Unnayan Kartipakha (RAJUK) to implement the project as they have previous experience in this regard.

According to sources, the committee initially had six members headed by Abdur Razzaq, Director General of EPB, textile cell. It had representatives from the Ministry of Works, RAJUK, BGMEA and BKMEA.

The other members of the committee were: S K Adhikary, Director of Planning of BSCIC, A S Abdul Kadir Mahmud, Director of EPB, M A Razed, Deputy Secretary of the Ministry of Housing and Works, Kazi Golam Hafiz, Director of city planning of RAJUK, Zinnat Ali Mian, executive committee member of BGMEA and Monjurul Haq, President of BKMEA.

The committee members visited as many as ten locations for selecting the places.

Technomart '98 opens at BCSIR

'Govt working for creating venture capital Fund'

The government is working for creating a Fund for venture capital to encourage the entrepreneurs for commercialisation of scientific and technological processes developed by different research organisations.

State Minister for Science and Technology, Dr Mohiuddin Khan Alamgir, said here yesterday, reports BSS.

He said the Fund was expected to get an institutional shape within a year.

Dr Alamgir was speaking as the chief guest at the inaugural ceremony of a three-day science and technology exhibition styled Technomart '98 in the premises of Bangladesh Council

of Scientific and Industrial Research (BCSIR).

He said the banks also

should come forward with term capitals to help transfer the technologies from the laboratories to the fields in the greater public interest.

Organised by the Science and Technology Ministry on the occasion of Victory Day, the exhibition will remain open for public from 10 am to 7 pm till December 19.

The research organisations under the Science Ministry are exhibiting their scientific and technological innovations and process while 11 entrepreneurs

who have taken lease of BCSIR processes are showing their products in the Technomart.

Dr Alamgir said such exhibitions will be organised every year in the month of victory to attract attention of the people and the entrepreneurs towards scientific and technological development at the same time to establish accountability of the scientists and scientific organisations.

He said development of science and technology was essential to ensure socio-economic progress and prosperity of the country to consolidate national victory and independence.



Exchange Rates

American Express Bank Ltd foreign exchange rates against the Taka to clients.

| Currency | Selling TT & OD | Buying TT Clean | Selling BC | Buying OD Sight Exp | Buying OD Transfer |
|----------|-----------------|-----------------|------------|---------------------|--------------------|
| USD | 48.7050 | 48.7450 | 48.3100 | 48.1570 | 48.0850 |
| GBP | 81.8488 | 80.6535 | 81.9160 | 80.3981 | 80.2779 |
| DEM | 29.3174 | 28.9005 | 29.3415 | 28.8089 | 28.7659 |
| JPY | 0.4221 | 0.4149 | 0.4224 | 0.4135 | 0.4129 |
| FRF | 8.8106 | 8.5474 | 8.8178 | 8.5203 | 8.5076 |
| SFR | 36.3742 | 35.7852 | 36.4040 | 35.6719 | 35.6185 |
| CAD | 31.9965 | 31.1095 | 32.0227 | 31.0110 | 30.9646 |
| ITL | 0.0314 | 0.0276 | 0.0316 | 0.0275 | 0.0275 |
| AUD | 30.9764 | 29.7348 | 31.0018 | 29.6406 | 29.5963 |
| BGF | 1.4266 | 1.4101 | 1.4278 | 1.4056 | 1.4035 |
| HKD | 6.2293 | 6.2227 | 6.3035 | 6.2030 | 6.1937 |
| SGD | 29.8932 | 28.9229 | 29.9178 | 28.8313 | 28.7882 |
| SAR | 13.0175 | 12.8365 | 13.0282 | 12.7958 | 12.7767 |
| AED | 13.2976 | 13.1167 | 13.3085 | 13.0751 | 13.0566 |
| KWD | 167.3136 | 155.0385 | 167.4510 | 154.5475 | 154.3164 |
| QAR | 13.4192 | 13.2320 | 13.4302 | 13.1901 | 13.1704 |
| NLG | 26.0692 | 25.5771 | 26.0906 | 25.4961 | 25.4580 |
| DKK | 7.7521 | 7.5572 | 7.7585 | 7.5332 | 7.5220 |
| SEK | 6.0923 | 6.0151 | 6.0973 | 5.9960 | 5.9871 |
| THB | 1.3313 | 1.3158 | 1.3324 | 1.3116 | 1.3097 |
| ECU | 58.1927 | 56.1900 | 58.2405 | 56.0210 | 55.9373 |

Bill Buying Rates:

TT Doc 30 Days 60 Days 90 Days 120 Days 180 Days

48.2112 47.9074 47.5048 47.1023 46.6667 45.8945

US dollar London Interbank Offered Rate (LIBOR) as of December 17, 1998

| | Buying | Selling | Current | 1 Month | 3 Months |
|--|--------|---------|---------|---------|----------|
|--|--------|---------|---------|---------|----------|