

# Barisal holds out hope for strawberry

UNB, Barisal

Success in strawberry cultivation in Barisal has created enthusiasm among local farmers to go for massive cultivation of the fruit.

Al Amin Talukdar Tutul, owner of Barisal Nursery at Baroitala in Sadar upazila, has cultivated strawberry on five decimal lands in his one-acre nursery on the eastern bank of the Kirtonkhola River.

Professor of the Department of Botany of Rajshahi University Manzur Hossain first launched the strawberry farming using tissue culture method, Tutul said.

Bangladesh Strawberry Society has undertaken a series of programmes to expand strawberry farming in the country through the Strawberry Nursery Research Project (SNRP).

The experts took steps to expand strawberry farming in the country and the success has been achieved in different areas.

"As part of the programme, I have experimentally cultivated strawberry in my nursery and



became successful," Tutul said.

Researches show the climate, topographic conditions and soil composition of Barisal suitable for strawberry farming.

Strawberry saplings are generally planted in comparatively high land having sunshine and dewatering

facilities and can be sown in rows in November and December.

Strawberry plants start flowering within one month of plantation and fruits can be collected until March.

The research team has so far developed three varieties of strawberry: RB-1, RB-2 and RB-3.

Imported strawberry sells at the local market at prices ranging from Tk 900 to Tk 1,000 per kilogram. A farmer can yield 2,000kg of strawberry by cultivating one bigha of land.

"If we can sell strawberry even at Tk 100 per kg, it will help earn Tk 2 lakh from one bigha of land," Tutul said.

Taiwan govt could cost 6,000 jobs

APP, Taipei

Up to 6,000 Taiwan civil servants may lose their jobs as President Ma Ying-jeou's administration plans to build a leaner but more efficient government, a report said Sunday.

The number of ministries and cabinet-level agencies will be reduced from 37 to 28 and up to 6,000 government employees may lose their jobs in an early retirement scheme due to be completed in 2010, the China Times said.

"More than 80 percent of people have shown their support to the plan according to our surveys," Minister Jiang Yi-huah of the Research, Development and Evaluation Commission, was quoted by the paper as saying.

Ma became president in May last year on a platform of building an efficient government but doubts have emerged over whether he can implement the plan when Taiwan's economy is deteriorating.

The Kuomintang government first raised the idea 22 years ago but previous attempts to implement it have failed.

"We should not allow that a new Iron Curtain should be set up and divide Europe," Gyurcsany told reporters. "In the beginning of the nineties we reunified Europe, now the challenge is whether we will be able to reunify Europe financially."

"EU nations are all grappling with a worsening recession, compounded by a severe credit crunch that has left many EU countries looking ever more inward to protect jobs and companies from international competition. Those policies are now undermining the open market cornerstone on

# Merkel rejects bailout plan for eastern EU nations

AP, Brussels

Germany rejected appeals Sunday for a single multibillion euro (dollar) bailout of eastern Europe, even after Hungary begged EU leaders not to let a new "Iron Curtain" divide the continent in rich and poor.

The swift, strong comments by German Chancellor Angela Merkel dampened hopes that leaders at Sunday's European Union summit could forge a unified stance to tackle the global economic crisis.

As Europe's largest economy, Germany has been under rising pressure to take the lead in rescuing eastern EU members, but Merkel insisted that a one-size-fits-all bailout was unwise.

"Saying that the situation is the same for all central and eastern European states, I don't see that," said Merkel, adding "you cannot compare" the dire situation in Hungary with that of other countries.

Hungarian Prime Minister Ferenc Gyurcsany, saying the credit crunch was hitting the eastern members hardest, had called for an EU fund of up to euro 190 billion (\$241 billion) to help restore trust and stability in those nations.

"We should not allow that a new Iron Curtain should be set up and divide Europe," Gyurcsany told reporters. "In the beginning of the nineties we reunified Europe, now the challenge is whether we will be able to reunify Europe financially."

The crisis has sorely tested solidarity among EU nations.

The Czech Republic has accused France of trying to protect its local car plants at the expense of foreign subsidiaries, while Germany rejected earlier calls to help bail out economies in Ireland, Greece and Portugal.

# Japan economy faces more pain

APP, Tokyo

Japan's worst economic crisis since World War II is far from over as its heavy reliance on exports leaves it vulnerable to crumbling demand in recession-hit world markets, analysts say.

Japan's economy is now shrinking much faster than many other major economies including the United States. It is a traumatic turn of events for a nation which was once seen as relatively immune to the credit crunch.

Japan was "sitting right on the

global bubble when it exploded," said Mitsuhige Akino, chief fund manager at Ichiyoshi Investment Management. "I don't think the economy has hit bottom. The situation will worsen."

The economy's performance in the first quarter of 2009 could be even worse than the 12.7 percent annualized contraction seen in the last quarter, he said.

Standard and Poor's warned last week that Japan "looks very likely to suffer its worst recession since World War II."

Japanese exports almost halved

in January compared with a year earlier as factory output plunged a record 10 percent, the government said last week.

The figures were simply "horrible," said Jan Lambregts, head of Asia research at Rabobank International in Hong Kong, who said he expects another "dramatic slide" in the economy in the first quarter of 2009.

There are growing fears of another downward spiral of falling consumer prices like the one after Japan's economic bubble burst in the early 1990s.

"We expect deflation to return and take a firm hold over the course of this year," warned Lambregts.

Japan's corporate titans have taken world markets by storm with their cars, electronics and high-tech goods, but with consumers no longer willing to part with their cash, the country's traditional export engine has gone into reverse.

"Japan has concentrated on goods that are very sensitive to the global economy. When the cycle weakens, Japan is hurt at a multiplied rate," said Robert Feldman, senior economist at Morgan Stanley.

BM ten Tusscher, ambassador of the Netherlands to Bangladesh, and Shahjahan Majumder, acting CEO of Apollo Hospitals Dhaka, shake hands after signing an agreement in the capital recently. Under the deal, the hospital will provide priority corporate benefits and medical services for the employees of the Netherlands embassy.

# Oil prices climb, gold loses sparkle

APP, London

Oil prices rallied this week, buoyed by signs of stabilizing energy demand and hints of Opec production cuts, but gold lost its sparkle after breaching 1,000 dollars per ounce the previous week.

Crude futures trimmed their gains late Friday after news that the American economy -- the biggest global energy consumer -- contracted at a faster than expected pace in the final three months of 2008.

The US economy shrank at a 6.2 percent annual pace in the 2008 fourth quarter, government data showed Friday, highlighting the stunning meltdown in activity late last year. The decline was the worst since the first quarter of 1982, the Commerce Department said.

**OIL:** Crude oil fell Monday in tandem with global stock markets amid stubborn fears about weak demand stemming from the worldwide economic downturn.

But prices rebounded Tuesday as the market shook off demand concerns and traders went bargain-hunting.

The market bolted even higher on Wednesday and

1,032.70 dollars hit on March 17 last year.

By Friday on the London Bullion Market, gold fell to 936.50 dollars an ounce at the late fixing from 989 dollars a week earlier.

Silver dropped to 13.21 dollars an ounce from 14.28 dollars.

**BASE METALS:** Base metals prices mostly rose after sharp falls the previous week.

"In the short term, we are looking for demand to remain very weak, but producer cutbacks should provide support," said Standard Chartered analyst Dan Smith.

By Friday, copper for delivery in three months rallied to 3,420 dollars a tonne on the London Metal Exchange from 3,171 dollars the previous week.

Three-month aluminium rose to 1,306 dollars a tonne from 1,301 dollars.

**SUGAR:** Sugar prices continued to advance amid a strong demand picture.

By Friday on LIFFE, the price of a tonne of white sugar for delivery in May climbed to 399.90 pounds from 392.50 pounds a week earlier.

On NYBOT, the price of unrefined sugar for May rose to 13.78 US cents per pound from 13.10 cents.



Chevron Bangladesh, a subsidiary of energy company Chevron Corporation, has recently donated school furniture comprising 22 sets of desks and chairs as well as teachers' chairs and tables to the authorities of Kalachara Catholic Primary School in Moulvibazar. Buffie Wilson, wife of Chevron Bangladesh's President Steve Wilson, officially handed over the furniture.

## Thai economy to contract further

APP, Bangkok

The struggling Thai economy is likely to contract further in the first three months of this year as exports take a hit from the global financial meltdown, the prime minister said Sunday.

Gross domestic product fell by 4.3 percent in the fourth quarter of last year, and Prime Minister Abhisit Vejjajiva warned worse could come.

"The government believes that the Thai economy in the first quarter of 2009 is likely to remain in the negative zone -- equal to or down further than that of the fourth quarter last year," said Abhisit.

"During the past week we saw poor export and trade figures from several countries around the region. Not only our country but also other countries were affected," he added.

Speaking during his weekly television address, Abhisit said he was confident a 116.7-billion-baht (3.3-billion-dollar) government stimulus package would help boost the economy in the second and third quarters.

In the meantime his

Military Engineer Services		CMES (Army) Bogra Bogra Cantt							
Invitation for Tenders									
4034/PPR-2008/72/E-4									
1. Ministry/Division		Ministry of Defence.							
2. Agency		Military Engineer Services (Army).							
3. Procuring entity name		CMES (Army) Bogra.							
4. Procuring entity district		Bogra.							
5. Procurement method		Open tendering method (OTM).							
6. Budget and source of fund		Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh.							
7. Project/programme code		Maintenance Head.							
8. Project/programme name		Maintenance works.							
9. Tender publication date		03 Mar 2009.							
10. Selling of tender will commence on		05 Mar 2009 (during office hours only).							
11. Selling of tender will terminate on		16 Mar 2009 (during office hours only).							
12. Last date and time for submission of tender		18 Mar 2009 up to 1100 hours.							
13. Date and time for opening of tender		18 Mar 2009 1200 hours.							
14. Name & address of the office(s)		a. Selling of tender document CMES (Army) Bogra, Bogra Cantt, Bogra.							
b. Receiving of tender document		CMES (Army) Bogra, Bogra Cantt, Bogra.							
c. Opening of tender document		CMES (Army) Bogra, Bogra Cantt, Bogra.							
15. Eligibility of tenderer		MES enlisted 'D' & 'E' class & non-enlisted contractors in MES duly security cleared from DGFI.							
16. Brief description of works		Location	Tender security in the form of Bank Draft/Pay Order Amount (Tk)	Price of tender document (non-refundable)	Completion time in weeks/months				
a.		GE (Army) Saidpur	7,000/-	500/-	12 (twelve) months				
b.		GE (Army) Saidpur	7,000/-	500/-	12 (twelve) months				
c.		GE (Army) Saidpur	5,000/-	300/-	12 (twelve) months				
17. Name of official inviting tender	CMES (Army) Bogra.								
18. Designation of official inviting tender	Lt Col.								
19. Address of official inviting tender	CMES (Army) Bogra, Bogra Cantt, Bogra.								
20. Contact details of official inviting tender	Tel No: 051-67021								
21. The procuring entity reserves the right to accept or reject any tender document.									

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