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weekly economic rpt

**NEW SUGARBEET SEED** The Ministry of Agriculture's institute for improved seed has developed a variety of sugarbeet seed for temperate regions. It yielded 109 t/ha on the Dasht-e Moghan experimental farms, and is expected to yield more than 50 t/ha when grown in Khorasan, Azarbayjan and western parts of the country. (Tehran home service 1030 gmt 13 Jul 85)

## IRAQ

**RAIL PROJECT** (Text) Muthanna, 8th July: Member of the Revolution Command Council and Iraq's First Deputy Premier, Taha Yasin Ramadan, today inaugurated here part 3 and 4 of the arch-like railway track project that links the Iraqi cities of Karbala, Najaf, Kufah and Samawah (the city centre of Muthanna province). The project, with a total cost of 122m Iraqi dinars, is considered to be one of the modern railway projects in the world in technical terms. Once completed, the project will facilitate commuters' travel from and to Iraq's holy cities of Karbala, Najaf and Kufah, while the part of the project that links Samawah with Karbala and Musayyib districts is going to be a part of the proposed intra-Arab Gulf railway track. (INA in English 1833 gmt 8 Jul 85)

(Excerpts from Indian report) New Delhi, 6th July: A high-speed rail line project executed by the Indian Railway Construction Company (Ircon) in Iraq will be formally inaugurated by First Deputy Premier of Iraq Taha Ramadan at Samawah, 280 km south of Baghdad, tomorrow. . . The Musayyib-Samawah railway line, with a track length of 95.6 km, is designed for a high speed of 250 km per hour. It connects two important Iraqi holy towns - Karbala and Najaf - where pilgrims from all over the world come every year. Ircon managing director V.K.J. Rane said the company had earned 850m rupees in this project. The Iraqi railway authorities have also given a fresh contract of 1,300m rupees to construct a high-speed branch-line at Muthanna, he added. (PTI in English 6 Jul 85)

**WATER PROJECT** Baghdad, 10th July: The first phase of the Karkh district drinking water project is to be inaugurated during the celebrations of the 14th and 17th July revolutions. The first phase has a design capacity of 450,000 cu.m. day; total capacity will be 1.35m cu.m., and the total cost is estimated at 400m dinars. (INA in English 1846 gmt 10 Jul 85)

## ISRAEL

**RETAIL PRICES** (Excerpt) In June the retail price index increased by 14.9%. This is the highest June index since the establishment of the state. However, our correspondent, Gadi Sukenir, reports that the index is much lower than was expected by the government's economic ministries and the banks. . . (Israel home service 1350 gmt 15 Jul 85)

(Excerpt) It was the highest June index ever, but much lower than expected. The fruit and vegetable prices actually went down absolutely by nearly 2%, and housing rose by only 9%. Excluding these two items, the index would have been 18.5%. Food, Education, Transport and communications went up much more than the average. The Central Bureau of Statistics, measuring the first week of July against the June average, said prices were about 25% higher due to the new economic policy. However, fruit and vegetable prices were continuing to drop, the seasonal sales were (?starting), and firms were marking (?down) [words indistinct] could not forecast the July index will definitely go up by this figure [words indistinct] including housing. Under the old cost-of-living agreement, employees were entitled to an 18% increment. The government's compensation of 14% for August [word(s) indistinct] means wage erosion of 4%. . . (Israel home service in English 1700 gmt 15 Jul 85)