

Fate of BSRS still uncertain

By Sohail Manzur

The fate of Bangladesh Shipha Rin Sangstha (BSRS) as a development financing institution (DFI) remains uncertain as no step could yet be taken to lift the embargo on the Sangstha's function.

Asian Development Bank embargoed BSRS in March, 1985 from further financing projects in the backdrop of its poor loan recovery performance and sickness of many projects it financed.

The government in a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with ADB and some other donor agencies including UNDP and IDA agreed to improve the situation through appropriate measures.

In September, 1990 ADB in response to a government request for lifting the embargo on BSRS offered some advice as precondition for the proposed lifting.

The conditions include privatisation of at least 51 per cent share of BSRS in two

years, finalization of a pragmatic operating policy and strategy for the DFI providing it an additional function of a commercial and merchant bank as well as a clean-up of its portfolios so that all of its non-performing loans are taken out of the book of accounts.

The ADB also suggested that appointment of the BSRS MD be made by its Board of Directors, not by the government.

Although a number of measures are under consideration of the government, no definite move is likely until March 1992, a highly placed source informed.

The solution to BSRS problems will come as part of a comprehensive reform package for the units under all DFIs after being okayed by the Committee on Privatisation and the Sub-Committee on Sick Industries.

BSRS is currently confined only to providing working cap-

ital to some of the projects in operation and BMRE (balancing, modernisation, replacement and expansion) of some other projects with its full set-up, which in lying mostly idle, according to sources.

The BSRS set-up includes 311 staff and involves a total expenditure of Tk 45 crore annually.

Meanwhile, quite a few experts have left the agency as there is little for them to do in the DFI, sources said.

Meanwhile, the loan recovery performance of the agency, however, is disappointing, according to official figures.

BSRS, since its inception in 1972, provided term loans to the tune of Tk 3349.82 million for 302 projects, of which 90 are now sick. Legal actions were taken against about 85 projects for not paying back the loans. Two hundred 64 projects are now in operation.

The amount of total out-

standing loans, including interests, was Tk 8607.67 million in June 1991 year while it stood at Tk 7736.27 million in June, 1990 and Tk 8077.92 million in June, 1989.

The total amount recovered till June, 1991 was Tk 4758.64 million and it reached Tk 4789.89 million in September.

With regard to the poor performance of the BSRS-financed projects, a high official of the agency said non-availability of working capital on time is a major problem for which the entrepreneurs cannot implement their projects timely and incur increased interests.

An official at the Economic Relations Division (ERD) told this correspondent that an accord with the World Bank was under process for further fund for BSRS to provide term loans and working capital. He, however, did not figure out the amount.

SAARC women team visits Agri Training Centre

The visiting SAARC women NGO delegation now in the capital attending a seminar visited the Agriculture Training Centre at Savar Tuesday, reports UNB.

Delegates from Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka observed various activities of the centre and appreciated its efforts to provide training to the distressed women to become self-reliant.

Established in 1979, the centre has so far provided training in agriculture, pisciculture, poultry breeding and horticulture to about 869 poor women from villages.

Price Index

December—23

RICE	(Taka per kg)
Amam (fine)	14.00-15.50
Pajam	13.00-14.00
Ufshi	13.00-14.00
VEGETABLES	(Taka per kg)
Potato (New)	7.00-8.00
Brinjal	5.00-6.00
Karolla	14.00-16.00
Lakshak	2.00-3.00
Papaya	4.00-6.00
Green Banana (Four Pieces)	4.00-5.00
OTHER FOODSTUFFS	(Taka per kg)
Flour	12.00-12.50
Ata	9.50-10.50
FISH	(Taka per kg)
Rohu (big)	12.00-14.00
Katla (big)	8.50-10.00
Hilsha	5.00-5.50
Pangas	11.00-12.00
Shrimp (big)	80.00-90.00
Singi	50.00-60.00
Koi	60.00-70.00
EGG (4 pieces)	(Taka per kg)
Hen	10.00
Duck	9.00
Fim	11.00
PULSES	(Taka per kg)
Mung	28.00-30.00
Moth	28.00-30.00
Chholha	23.00-24.00
Khesari	14.00-15.00
OIL	(Taka per litre)
Mustard	52.00-54.00
Soyabean	36.00-37.00
Coconut (Colombo)	80.00-85.00
Vegetable Ghee	45.00-48.00
SPICES	(Taka per kg)
Onion	17.00-18.00
Garlic	40.00-44.00
Chillies	80.00-85.00
Turnip (Round)	50.00-52.00
Long	54.00-56.00
Green chillies	20.00-22.00
Cumin	12.00-15.00
Cinnamon* (10gms)	3.00-3.50
Cardamom* (large)	3.00-4.00
Jhira (50gms)	6.50-7.00
MILK (Two kg)	(Taka per kg)
Dano	26.00-27.00
Red Cow	26.00-26.60
Eden	25.00-25.50
MISCELLANEOUS	(Taka)
Chet	22.00-24.00
Salt	7.00-7.50
Sugar	27.00
Melassess	15.00-16.00

Source: Department of Agricultural Marketing

Danida education scheme okayed

Tk 350 cr Barind uplift plan

The government has taken up a plan for integrated development of Barind area at a cost of Taka 350 crore. The programme will be implemented during the current Fourth Five Year Plan (1990-95) period, reports BSS.

A meeting of the Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (NEC) okayed the plan Tuesday with Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman in the chair.

The Barind project will initially cover 25 upazilas which will be extended to more than

50 upazilas by the end of the Fourth Plan Period. The government also contemplates setting up of a separate authority for proper execution of the project.

The ECNEC also approved 10 other projects. They are: Construction of multipurpose buildings to be used as cyclone shelters and government primary school under EEC grant, EEC aided 1988 post-flood rehabilitation project, further development of Jahangirnagar University, construction of an auditorium and a girls hostel at Jahangirnagar University, Danida assisted informal mass education programme in greater Noakhali, Patuakhali and Barguna districts, establishment of nuclear medical centres at Rangpur, Khulna, Barisal and Mymensingh, lowlift pump project for Dhaka city flood-control rehabilitation, supplementary shallow-tubewell project and small farmers and landless labour development project.

Agriculture Minister M Majeed-ul-Haq, LGD and Cooperatives Minister Abdus Salam Talukder, Commerce Minister M K Anwar, Planning Minister A M Zahiruddin Khan,

Bangladesh Bank bill auction results

By Staff Correspondent

Twenty bids for a total amount of Tk 69 crore were received at the 13th auction of the 91 day Bangladesh Bank bill held Monday.

Ten bids were accepted. Total face value of the bids accepted was Tk 25 crore.

The weighted average price of the accepted bids was Tk 97.79 per 100 taka. The corresponding yield is 9.05 per cent per annum, according to a Bangladesh Bank press release.

Education Minister Zahiruddin Siran, Members of Planning Commission and other high officials attended the meeting.



Bangladeshi engineer gets top US award

By Staff Correspondent

The American Concrete Institute has recently awarded a Bangladeshi engineer, Dr M A Mansur, with the 'structural engineering award' for his research paper titled 'Design and construction of an elevated ferrocement water tank', according to a press release.

The prestigious international award is given for notable contributions to the advancement of structural design concepts and design techniques. Dr Mansur is the first to receive the award twice in its long history.

Dr Mansur, Associate Professor at the Department of Civil Engineering of National University of Singapore received the same award in 1989.

He also received the 'award for excellence in concrete research' from the Singapore Concrete Institute.

Political interest responsible for public jute sector over-employment: WB

Star Economic Report

Excess employment resulting in low productivity, large wage increases and stagnant export prices have significantly contributed to the poor financial performance of the jute industry in recent years, according to a World Bank (WB) report.

Total losses by all 64 mills amounted to about Taka three billion, despite the government's export and interest subsidy of Taka 2.3 billion, notes the WB draft report titled "Bangladesh: Restructuring options for the jute manufacturing industry."

Financial losses of Bangladesh Jute Mills Corporation (BJMC) increased from Taka 1.8 billion in FY '90 to an alarming Taka 2.4 billion in FY '91 and unit cost exceeded the export price by 55 per cent, the report points out.

Addressing the employment and compensation issues are central to improving the performance of the jute manufacturing in Bangladesh because of the existence of large excess employment in the sector and the related low productivity, the high and rising employee compensation costs relative to the revenues, and the impact of these factors on the poor financial performance of the mills, the WB document states.

Excess employment resulting in low productivity and high and rising employee compensation costs have contributed significantly to the poor state of finances of the jute industry, the report notes.

Under social and political pressures, the document points out, the public jute mills function essentially as employment centres in Bangladesh. The government's interest in gaining workers' support has given the unions scope to pressure mill management to create jobs irrespective of the financial situation of the mill, the report went on to add.

The worker/loom ratio, used as the main employment norm in the mills, is about 45

per cent higher in the BJMC mills than the ratio achieved in India, according to the report. Furthermore, labour productivity in Bangladesh is almost half of that in India.

Total employment in the industry is estimated at 157,318 in FY '91, of which 65 per cent is in the public sector and 85 per cent of them in both sectors are classified as workers while the rest as 'officers and staff'.

However, the report also points out, it is difficult to establish the exact number of employees because of discrepancies in the mills records.

Over-manning, particularly in the public sector, is very high and productivity is low, the document says. Of the total number of workers, 75 per cent are designated as permanent and the rest are temporary (badli) or casual workers.

The main causes of over-manning in the industry as a whole, the WB report notes, includes the inefficient use of machinery and equipment, assigning more workers to machines than warranted for normal operational requirements, setting employment targets on the basis of installed capacity, hiring more temporary workers than necessary and keeping a large number of officers, clerical staff and other personnel not directly involved in production.

The wage policy, the WB document points out, is determined by the government irrespective of the financial position of the mills.

Termining the wage determination process as 'rigid and highly politicized,' the report notes that since FY '83 nominal wages increased by 14 per cent a year in the industry while labour productivity grew at only 6 per cent (-4 per cent in real terms).

Preliminary calculations were made by the World Bank to estimate excess employment in the industry with the objective to have a broad view

of the magnitude of the problem.

The extent of excess employment in the mills would depend on the level of expected demand and improvement in labour productivity, the report notes.

Thus, calculations were made for a level of expected demand of both 500,000 and 400,000 tonnes and regarding labour productivity, two scenarios were tried: increasing productivity by 30 per cent and to the level of the Indian mills, the report says.

According to mill managers, the study says, a 30 per cent increase in labour productivity could be achieved by phasing out labour assigned to currently redundant equipment and consolidating capacity in better performing mills.

For a level of demand of 500,000 tonnes, 37,178 employees in the sector need to be retrenched if labour productivity is to be increased 30 per cent, the WB report suggests.

However, the report adds, for a credible reform programme labour productivity should be increased to the Indian norms and this would require retrenchment of about 45 per cent of the total labour (about 71,164 employees).

For an expected demand of 400,000 tonnes, excess employment would amount to 39 per cent for a 30 per cent improvement in labour productivity and attainment of Indian productivity would imply 56 per cent of excess employment in the industry as a whole.

The WB report recommends that a viable reform programme in the industry aims at retrenching about 30 per cent of the labour force (about 47,000 employees) immediately by closing some of the worst performing mills.

Phasing out the remaining

excess employment would critically depend on reconditioning of equipment and significant improvement in management and labour discipline, the report adds.

A more detailed estimation, under the Jute Manufacturing Study (JUMS), will be undertaken on the basis of mill level data and projected world demand, the draft report notes, and an action plan will be prepared for phasing out excess employment. Thus, 'our preliminary calculations would therefore be subject to change,' it adds.

However, the WB draft report also recommends that for a credible reform programme the Indian standard of labour productivity be followed.

Attainment of this objective should be taken as one of the key goals of the reform programme, says the report. 'Because it is labour-intensive, the jute industry in Bangladesh could not be a viable industry unless the labour productivity approximates the level achieved in India,' it adds.

Raw Jute

As of December—24

Kutchi Bales FOB

Nariyanganj/Daulatpur

Varieties	(Taka per 100 Kg)
White	1099
Tossa	1139
Meshtia	1018
Bot. (B)	1018
Bot. (C)	911
Bot. (X)	831

Note: *FOB = Freight on board

Bot. = Bottom

Pucca Bales

Variety	FOB (Ready)	FOB (Nanj)	FOB (Sinh)
White	1099	1139	1018
Tossa	1018	1058	804
Meshtia	911	978	737
Bot. (B)	831	898	670

Bangla White (BW)

Special	3000	555
A	2800	530
B	2600	425
C	2350	395
D	2150	365
E	1950	335

Bangla Tossa (BT)

Special	3050	565
A	2850	540
B	2650	425
C	2400	405
D	2200	375
E	2200	345

BW Cutting

Rejection	1500	245
IN		
Habtbjabi	1150	210
BT		
Rejection	1600	255
BT		

Meshtia

Special	1700	-
A	1600	-
B	1550	-
C	1450	-

Spl Meshtia

Cutting	800	-
Ord. Meshtia	700	-
Cutting	700	-
Meshtia SMR	900	-

Remarks:

Quality	— Normal
Condition	— Average
Nanj imp	— 8,000/10,000 mds
Daulatpur	—
Imp	—
10,000/12,000 mds	—
Market	— steady

** Indicative prices at which sales may be considered for EPC registration. Dollar prices shown above are without selling commission.

Shipping Intelligence

Chittagong Port

Name of Vessels	Berthed	ETA	ETD	L Port	L Agent
Ronjoy	07/12	20/12	J/1	NA	PSAL
Sea Star	13/12	22/12	J/3	NA	OML
Bona	12/12	22/12	J/6	NA	NA
Amitee	12/12	22/12	J/7	NA	NA
Banglar Gourab	10/12	20/12	J/8	Peng	BS
Iron Thrust	04/12	20/12	M/12	Kand	DYNAMIC
Al Dora	06/12	20/12	CCJ	Col	UMAL
Fong Yun	21/11	20/12	RM/5	Singapore	BDSHIP
Bouira	12/12	19/12	TSP	Alger	TSLL
Maritz Star	22/10	12/12	DDJ/2	Singapore	UNISEA
Shakir-2	24/11	18/12	RM/6	NA	NA
Banglar Swarna	05/12	20/12	RM/9	NA	ISC

Banglar Shourabh

Atlantic Clipper

Vessels Due At Outer Anchorage

Name of Vessels	ETA	L Port	Call	Local Agent
Hafez	16/12/91	Mong	SS	SSI
Banglar Urmil	17/12/91	Mong	BS	BS
Knud Jespersen	17/12/91	Singapore	CT	CT
NCS Ranger	17/12/91	Singapore	BDSHIP	BDSHIP
Thomaseverett	17/12/91	NA	EBPL	EBPL
Atalanta-T	17/12/91	Carra	ROYAL	ROYAL
Lion of Gulf	17/12/91	NA	SEACOAST	SEACOAST
Ping Yin	17/12/91	Kand	OWSL	OWSL
Tug Durian	18/12/91	NA	COAST	COAST
Al Rahman	18/12/91	NA	KSL	KSL
Continental-1	19/12/91	Pen	CLA	CLA
Kota Buana	19/12/91	Singapore	CTS	CTS
Peter Starostin	19/12/91	Mongla	Aqua	Aqua
Nikos A	20/12/91	NA	EGSL	EGSL
Progress	21/12/91	NA	TMIL	TMIL
Ronjoy Choomie	21/12/91	Kand	BDSHIP	BDSHIP
Qing He Cheng	21/12/91	NA	BDSHIP	BDSHIP
Fong Shan	22/12/91	Singapore	BDSHIP	BDSHIP
Ramdas	22/12/91	NA	SS	SS
Seabulk Hope	22/12/91	NA	BSA	BSA
Samsudra Samrat	23/12/91	NA	SS	SS
Optima	23/12/91	NA	RSL	RSL
Kabirverette	23/12/91	NA	EBPL	EBPL
Eastern Mars	24/12/91	NA	PROG	PROG
Anting	24/12/91	Kand	TMIL	TMIL
Robert E-Lee	25/12/91	Cal	ULA	ULA
Eastern Pearl	25/12/91	NA	BSA	BSA
Safina-E-Najam	25/12/91	NA	ASLL	ASLL
Sea Glory	25/12/91	NA	ASSL	ASSL
Al Salma	25/12/91	NA	BSA	BSA
Stefan Czarniecki	26/12/91	Mad	EBPL	EBPL
Johnverette	27/12/91	NA	JF	JF
Banglar Kakoli	28/12/91	Singapore	JF	JF
Ocean Brave	29/12/91	Singapore	JF	JF

Mongla Port

Name of Vessels	Berth	ETA	ETD	L Port	L Agent
Cenclick	15/12		25/12	Chittagong	BSC
Safina-E-Najam		20/12	27/12	Chittagong	ATLAS
Safina-E-Ismail	05/12		15/12	Chittagong	ATLAS