

## Parasite hits pulpwood plantation

RANGAMATI, May 15: Pulpwood plantation over an area of 30,000 acres in Kaptai is being hampered due to the attack of parasite 'Laurenthus' that damages trees, reports UNB.

Roots of 'Laurenthus' cover the stems and branches of trees, suck their juice and obstruct their growth. Officials said the attack of the parasite is threatening the forest damaging its trees worth hundreds of acres of taka. It is spreading over all the 10 forest ranges of the division, they added.

"Most new trees of the plantations are also being affected by the parasite of old trees", said M Nuruzzaman, Divisional Forest Officer of Kaptai Pulpwood Plantation Division.

He said that the forest could only be saved by extracting the matured and affected trees.

The plantation division was created in 1970s to supply pulpwood to the Karanaphuli Paper Mills Ltd., one of the biggest paper manufacturing plants in Asia. Alongside bamboo it consumes pulpwood.

The plantation of pulpwood began over an area of 10,000 acres of land in the first phase, which is now matured enough to be extracted. But, trees are not being extracted due to KMP's reluctance to purchase those from the forest department.

The KMP procures miscellaneous firewood from private suppliers as raw materials to make pulp for manufacturing paper. But, experts said, the pulpwood planted by the forest department is economical and profitable to a very high extent.

Officials said the forest department could supply pulpwood to KMP at half of the price demanded by the private suppliers.

## Hyundai head to run for presidency

SEOUL, May 15: Chung Ju-yung, the rags-to-riches founder of South Korea's mighty Hyundai industrial empire, was Friday formally declared the presidential candidate of the party he formed earlier this year, reports Reuters.

South Korea is due to hold presidential elections by the end of 1992.

The tycoon-turned-politician, a long time critic of the administration of President Roh Tae-woo, was the sole contender in the race for the Unification National Party (UNP) presidential nomination.

Only seven of the 1,727 UNP members in attendance voted against the 76-year-old former businessman, four abstained.

"We will be sure to win this forthcoming (presidential) election. Thus we will complete our national historic tasks — overcoming a national division and creating an advanced economy," Chung told a cheering crowd.

Roh is due to step down next February when his five-year term expires. The constitution limits presidents to a single term.

The UNP is the first mainstream party to declare a presidential candidate.

## House okays bill for \$800m more for LA rebuilding

WASHINGTON, May 15: The House of Representatives approved a bill Thursday giving more than \$800 million dollar in grants and loans to Los Angeles to rebuild after three days of rioting, reports AFP.

"We must rebuild the businesses, but we must also invest in the community," said Representative Ic Fazio, a California Democrat who was one of many in his party who called for more aid to all of the nation's inner cities.

"The money we provide will help us rebuild the face of Los Angeles. It's now up to this Congress and this President to also start healing its heart," he said.

## Hinduja's son traced

BOMBAY May 15: The son of a wealthy London-based Indian industrialist was missing and believed kidnapped, police said Thursday, but later reported that he flew to Mauritius, reports AP.

Police said Dharam Hinduja, 21, son of Srishank Hinduja, left his home Wednesday, apparently for early morning prayers, and disappeared. His car was later found partially burned.

## DESA no answer to system loss

Commentary

By Abu Ahmed  
Guest Columnist

People's hope for a reduced system loss in the electricity supply by the Power Development Board (PDB) through the formation of another but more accountable organization named the Dhaka Electric Supply Authority (DESA) has now been dashed as it (DESA) has been turned into just a decentralised unit of PDB with only a separate board of directors.

The managers, technicians and even the administrators are all the same people who worked under the Power Development Board until the formation of DESA. The new authority for electricity supply in the greater Dhaka area came into being in March 1990 through an ordinance but could not go into actual operation in the face of stiff opposition from the PDB's trade unions.

Three trade unions of the PDB feared loss of their power and benefits hitherto they were enjoying with the formation of the new organization, and used all types of coercive methods to delay its launching. But ironically, they had got eventually what they wanted, even more. In September, 1991 the forced a tripartite agreement among themselves, the PDB, and the Ministry of Energy with conditions overwhelmingly favouring them.

Among the conditions, the fatal ones are: DESA shall never be handed over to private hands, or be converted into a company, and all the service rules of the PDB shall remain intact for the DESA employees also. Furthermore, DESA will not sack any employees on any ground different from that of the PDB.

With all these conditions imposed by the unions DESA has started functioning since October of 1991. The government hurriedly started the organization as the aid agencies like the World Bank were pressing on for the move. The main objective of the World Bank's pressure was that it wanted the colossal system loss reduced through an organization which would be differently constituted and made accountable compared to the PDB.

But alas! The World Bank's objective is far from fulfilled as the DESA has turned out to be working just like PDB. There is no way seen that DESA can hope to reduce the system loss in electricity supply which is about 40 per cent under the present set up. The organization is headed by a chairman and a three-member Board of Directors, all nominated by the government and none has any stake in terms of money.

The sources of fund for DESA are sales proceeds and loans from the government. There is every likelihood that this organization too will soon look for fund from the public exchequer as it will not be able to manage its expenditures within its earnings.

By nature, utility organizations like PDB and DESA are monopolies. They will fix up the price for power on their own terms by being outside a competitive atmosphere. All the costs of inefficiency and corruption are thrown on to the consumers in the form of price hike for what they produce and sell in this case the electricity.

The present price per unit of electricity is not the actual price of it; it is much higher due to a huge system loss and inefficiency in the structure of PDB. As the consumers are paying the price for corruption and inefficiency in

PDB on the one hand, the government is not also receiving the revenue what it should receive on the other. The average system loss in the neighbouring countries is lower than 20 per cent but here it is more than double their rate, already mentioned. The PDB in the past tried many alternatives to reduce the system loss in the face of public criticism but failed to achieve the target. In the backdrop of the failure DESA came into being.

But what can DESA do about it? Practically, as seen so far nothing. The whole objective of the formation of DESA is now frustrated with the acquiescence to the unjust demands of the PDB employees as well as its creation in the public sector.

DESA is still in the formative stage and wanting to recruit personnel for it though the old PDB's staff are already with it including the union activists. Already it is under heavy pressure from the unions to follow the way they want.

In this situation, even not a fool will believe that DESA will be able to reduce the much talked-about system loss. May be, it can earn more revenue, but only by putting more stringent conditions on the electricity consumers, and also by taking recourse to different accounting systems.

There is every chance that very soon DESA will turn into another white elephant in the public sector. Managing DESA also will not be an easy task. It is to purchase electricity from PDB which solely produces and distributes it in other areas of the country.

DESA may not get the electricity in the volume and at the price it may be wanting, for the controlling organization is PDB with an absolute right to electricity production in the country.

Why should we not allow few other organizations to produce electricity, especially, in the private sector? This point was talked about recently by the Minister for Energy. We welcome the idea and also a speedy implementation of it.

We have now acute shortage of power in the country. The way to overcome the shortage is not to allow more money to flow from the donor agencies to PDB for the purpose. Rather, the government should allow or encourage the private sector to participate in the production of power. With so much trumpeting about DESA, now it people see it as just another organization around the corner which could not have done much to reduce the system loss what would be the result?

DESA should have been formed as a company with private participation. The present state of affairs is DESA will simply expose our inability to cope with a problem like system loss. Yes, one can say that DESA will be more efficient that PDB as it is smaller in size and its functions are decentralized. These arguments are not sufficient to convince those who have already seen organizations to start small, then grow large and at the end beyond a size which is not compatible with its administrative efficiency and earning capacity.

How much extra cost was involved in creating DESA in the state sector? Who will bear this cost? All these questions must haunt a mind in the coming days, which will in all likelihood see no end to the problem of system loss through the operation of DESA.



A M M Nasrullah Khan (Speaking), Chairman of Bangladesh Parjatan Corporation (BPC), inaugurated the second batch training course of 1992 at Hotel and Tourism Training Institute at Hotel Abakash, Mahakhali, Dhaka on May 14. Warner K Blenk, Director, ILO, was present.

## Road-block, drought push up vegetable, fish prices in city

By Staff Correspondent

The road-block on Dhaka-Archa Highway by transport workers during the past several days has pushed up prices in the city market.

Wholesale traders said supplies of commodities have dropped as a result of the road-block. However, some quantities of commodities were shipped into the city through special arrangements on Wednesday night, which has slightly improved the supply situation, the wholesale traders, said.

The vegetable prices have marked significant increase meanwhile. Potato now sells at Taka 11 a kg, in the previous fortnight it sold at Taka five a kg.

Brinjal now sells at Taka 12 a kg, korolia at Taka 10 a kg and chichinga at Taka eight a kg while papaya at Taka eight a kg. All these prices rose by Taka two to Taka four compared to the earlier fortnight.

Wholesale traders said the current drought has also contributed to the rise in prices. They said a huge quantity of vegetable are rotting on way to capital due to the road-block. However, the supply from the northern region is now being transported through the Sirajganj Ghat.

The fish market has also hit the buyers. Fish traders said with the setting in of the summer days, supply of fishes has become lower. As a result, there has been about 30 per cent rise in prices of fishes.

The spices market has also witness a rise in the prices.

**Dried chillies may become again very hot**

By Inam Ahmed

Dried chillies are highly likely to become much hotter again as the government plans, according to sources, to reimpose duties on the import of the item.

At present dried chillies sell at between Taka 50 and 60 a kg. But with the reimposition of duties, the price may go as high as Taka one hundred a kg.

Previously there was 30 per cent import duty on the item. But this was withdrawn a few months back to ease the soaring price of the item. The price earlier reached as high as Taka 110 a kg.

With the withdrawal of duty, in view of buyers' sorry plight, dried chillies price had gone down substantially and became as low as Taka 45 a kg. The government now views that the duty should be reimposed as the price has settled at a comfortable level.

The government may reimpose the duty from the next budget.

Prices of all most all the spices showed significant rise.

Onion now sells at Taka 12 a kg. Earlier it cost Taka 10 a kg. Garlic costs Taka 48 a kg compared to its earlier price of Taka 40 a kg. Ginger sells at Taka 20 a kg while turmeric costs Taka 55 a kg. Prices of all these items showed a rise by Taka six, on an average.

The rice market, however, has eased noticeably. Irrigated variety sells at between Taka 340 and Taka 390 a maund in the retail market while a kg of coarse rice at Taka 11.

On the other hand, fine rice now sell at between Taka 450 and 500 a maund. In the retail market, it sells at Taka 13 a kg.

Traders said the rice supply is now good and the price may come down further.

## R & H fails to recover lands

KISHOREANJ, May 14: The Roads and Highways Department has failed to recover lands and ponds from illegal possession throughout the district, reports UNB. The Sub-Divisional Engineer at Kishoreganj said that they submitted a list of the unauthorised occupants and repeatedly requested the district administration to evict the illegal occupants.

## First accords to export 60000 tonnes Jamuna Factory-produced urea

Granular urea, produced by newly established Jamuna Fertilizer Factory, will be exported for the first time by two private sector companies under contracts signed Thursday, reports UNB.

The total export value of the consignment of 60,000 metric tons is around 8.4 million US dollars.

According to trading sources, two Bangladesh companies signed contracts with Bangladesh Chemical Industries Corporation (BCIC) Thursday for export of the urea produced by Jamuna Fertilizer Company an enterprise of BCIC.

The two companies -- Summit Industrial and Mercantile Corporation (PVT) Ltd. and Dosh Trading Corporation -- will export 30,000 metric tons each.

Of the total quantity, 30,000 metric tons will be exported to the Philippines. The shipment is likely to be completed by mid-July, the sources said.

About 3,500 railway wagons will be used to carry the consignment from Jamuna Fertilizer Factory at Tarakandi in Jamalpur at Chittagong Port, about 200 miles from the factory.

## Shipping Intelligence

### Chittagong Port

Berth position and performance of vessels as on 14.5.92

Berth No.	Name of vessels	Cargo	Last port call	Local agent	Date of arrival	Leave-vice
J/2	Eastern Mars	GI	Hong Kong	Prog	11/5	14/5
J/3	Shezan	R Cott	Juba	Aqua	13/4	18/5
J/4	Safar	GI	Sing	Asail	5/5	19/5
J/5	Hua Yin	Salt (Pvt)	Kand	Alamin	26/4	14/5
J/6	Orsha	Cement	Siro	MSA	7/5	18/5
J/7	Banglar Asha	Wheat	-	ISC	R/A	15/5
J/8	Loyal Bird	GI/Fert	Lara	OWSL	1/5	14/5
J/9	Kamaleveret	GI	Sing	EBPL	9/5	16/5
J/11	Banglar Sampad	Wheat	-	ISC	R/A	19/5
J/12	Banglar Mamata	Wheat	-	LAMS	R/A	16/5
J/13	Fong Shin	Cont	Sing	BDSHIP	12/5	16/5
MB/1	Tanary Star	Cement	Vina	HL	10/5	17/5
MB/2	Petr Starostin	Cont	Sing	GT	10/5	14/5
	Khanak					
GJ	Al Sampad (Ebb)	C Clink	Kara	UMAL	6/5	17/5
CSJ	Hyundai-20	Wheat	Darb	BSL	10/5	16/5
TSP	AFJ Anand	Idle	Sing	Nihat	31/3	15/5
RM/4	Pya-1	Cement	Vina	PSAL	5/5	27/5
RM/5	Banglar Shourab	C Oil	-	ISC	R/A	14/5
RM/6	Banglar Jyoti	Repair	-	ISC	R/A	15/5
DDJ/1	Endurance Sea	Repair	Aqba	EOSL	25/1	20/5
RM/8	Eastern Breeze	Repair	Mong	RRSA	14/4	16/5
RM/9	Banglar Bari	Cont	Dubai	ISC	6/5	16/5
GFJ	Al Tabith	Urea	Mong	RRSA	2/5	15/5

### Vessels Due at Outer Anchorage

Name of Vessels	Date of arrival	Last port call	Local agent	Cargo	Loading port
Richway 2400	14/5/92	-	BSA	Wheat	-
Nikoa-N 0700	15/5/92	-	BSL	Wheat	-
Morgan 0600	15/5/92	Col	SW	SPL Cargo	-
Optima 4/5 0700	15/5/92	Sing	RSI	Cont	Sing
Unity 1600	15/5/92	Arrna	TSLI	R Phon	-
Mariner 1400	15/5/92	Fran	OWSL	Wheat	-
Kanaga-II	15/5/92	Sing	MHL	GI	-
Silver Sea 1530	15/5/92	Mong	PRSA	-	-
Banglar Shobha 0700	15/5/92	Fena	ISC	-	-
Golden Fish	18/5/92	Mong	Agua	-	Dakar
Amittie	19/5/92	Mong	Aqua	-	UK Cont
Mild Win	16/5/92	-	H&H	-	-
Apil	17/5/92	Sing	Bright	-	-
Western Greeting AM	16/5/92	-	BSL	Wheat	-
Fong Yun 5/5 pm	17/5/92	Sing	BDSHIP	Cont	Sing
Hang Cheong	17/5/92	Sing	H&H	Cement	-
I Yamburenko 29/4	22/5/92	Sing	CT	Cont	Sing
NGS Ranger 5/5 PM	17/5/92	Sing	BDSHIP	Cont	Sing
Ronjay Chomic	18/5/92	Indo	MSA	Cement	-
Vishva Parimal(E/L)228/4	24/5/92	-	SSL	-	UK Cont
Safina-e-Jemali-2	25/5/92	Pak	ASLL	GI/GL	Karachi
Safina-e-Nigam	22/5/92	Kara	ASLL	C Clinker	-
Sold Future	18/5/92	Ed	AML	GI	Mom. Mapu
Samudra Raj (48)13/5	18/5/92	Id	-	-	Pakistan
Kota Eagle 9/5	25/5/92	Sing	CTS	Cont	Sing
Andrian Goncharov 3/5	19/5/92	Sing	CTS	Cont	Sing
Alam Teguh	19/5/92	Cara	CT	Dynamic R seeds	-
Great Harvest	19/5/92	-	BSL	Wheat	-
Safina-E-Rehmat	30/5/92	Pak	ASLL	GI/GL	Karachi
Ahlers-BreachtConti	6/5 20/5/92	Col	RSI	Cont	-
Olga-1	20/5/92	-	USTC	Cement	-
Guan He Kou	20/5/92	-	BDSHIP	GI	-
UCKA	19/5/92	Kara	OWSL	GI	-
Kota Buana 12/5	21/5/92	Sing	CTS	Cont	Sing
CGM Bretagne 12/5	21/5/92	Sing	BDSHIP	CIBT	Sing
Karabivret	22/5/92	-	REL	GI	-
Jiang Cheng	22/5/92	Chin	BDSHIP	GI	-
New Genford 12/5	24/5/92	Sing	BDSHIP	Cont	Sing
Chong Chon Gang	25/5/92	Arrna	TSLI	R Phon	-

### Vessels At Kutubdia

Name of Vessels	Cargo	Last Port call	Local agent	Date of arrival
I.T Energy	C Oil	Col	NNI	27/4

### Vessels At Outer Anchorage

Name of Vessels	Date of arrival	Last port call	Local agent	Cargo
Ready On				
Mandiri	Cont	Sing	RSI	13/5
Strong Texan	GI	Sing	JF	13/5
Continent-1	GI	Sing	CLA	14/5
Nodar Dambadze	CEEO	Argen	Royal	9/5
Vessels Not Ready				
Ebelle-IV	Wheat	D Mark	JF	10/5
Banglar Kiran	Wheat	-	ISC	R/A (12/5)

### Vessels Not Entering

Alyn	Cement	Sing	Alamin	R/A (18/9)
Red Deer	-	Sing	OTL	R/A (26/11)
Sea Tradition	Cement	Pada	AME	10/5
Maria-C	Scraping	Sing	H&Sange	10/5

### Tanker Due

Name of Vessels	Date of arrival	Last port call	Local agent	Cargo
Glactra	15/5	Sing	MSPIL	HSD
Alpha Sun	15/5	Jebel	DSLL	M Crude Oil
Tbilisi	18/5	-	Seacom	CEEO

The above were the Thursday's (14.05.92) shipping position and performance of vessels of Chittagong Port as per berthing sheet of CPA supplied by HRC Group, Dhaka.

## Exchange Rates

The following are the Commercial Bank's BC selling and TT (C), OD transfer buying rates for some selected foreign currencies effective on May 15, 16 and 17.

Currency	SELLING	(Figures in Taka)	BUYING
US dollar	39.1326		38.9087
Poundsterling	71.4152		71.6814
DM	24.3211		24.1744
FF	7.2454		7.2000
S Riyal	10.4641		10.4042
D Guilders	21.6130		21.4775
S Kroner	6.7616		6.7171
Singapore Dollar	23.8672		23.7306