

Sick steel, engineering industries

# Protection thru' changes in import policy, duty structure needed

By Sohail Manzoor

The body on sick industries has suggested for bringing changes in the import policy and duty structure of the country to salvage the sick units of the steel and engineering sector.

It felt that the existing import policy and duty structure were not favourable to the industrial development of the country.

The body said, the government should protect at least some units even under its free trade policy to revive the sick industries.

The Sick Industries Revival and Rehabilitation Cell headed by Industries Secretary, Dr Ekram Hossain found that the banks and financing institutions approved a number of non-viable projects which in reality become sick.

It, however, suggested that the banks and financing institutions should prepare 'investment profile' for the

entrepreneurs of various industrial sectors after examining the viability of the projects.

The government should also allocate fund for the banks and financing institutions under its Annual Development Programme (ADP) for this purpose, the cell added.

It also said that the government should ensure technical assistance to the entrepreneurs after surveying the market and testing the feasibility of the technology.

The body identified a number of causes behind the sickness of the industries of the sector which include, delay in providing working capital to the industries, delay in providing machineries, unhealthy relationship between the financing institutions and the entrepreneurs, lack of working capital, crisis in marketing the products, illegal import of foreign products at low price, lack of necessary knowledge

about the industrial project and misuse of loan, natural disasters and lack of proper monitoring of the project by the financing institutions.

The cell, however, recommended for exemption of the interest on the loans taken by the entrepreneurs of the sick industries and providing working capital for the revival of the projects.

It also suggested for amending the existing law to ensure prompt action against the defaulters and identifying the responsibility of the financing institutions as well.

The cell felt that a new law on the bankruptcy of the entrepreneurs may be enacted to protect the interest of both the entrepreneurs and the financing institutions. It also said that the financing institutions should be more cautious in selecting the entrepreneurs for providing loans.

A total of 424 en-

trepreneurs of sick industries of the steel and engineering sector applied to the cell for the rehabilitation of their projects. But the cell identified 335 industries as genuine sick of which 156 units have already been closed.

The cell estimated that a total of Taka 295.40 lakh would be required to rehabilitate 335 sick units of which Taka 292.90 would be required as working capital and the rest for purchasing machineries.

It found that the banks and financing institutions were responsible for the sickness of 38 projects, the entrepreneurs were responsible for 14 units and 219 units became sick for other reasons.

The amount of overdue loans of the entrepreneurs to the financing institutions is Taka 292 crore 37 lakh and 18 thousand.

## Proper use of water resource stressed

Agriculture and Irrigation Water Development and Flood Control Minister Major General (Retd) M Majid-ul Ilaq Tuesday stressed the need for correct and effective planning and appropriate technology for maximum utilisation of country's water resources, reports BSS.

He was presiding over the first meeting of the board of governors meeting of Water Resources Planning Organization (WARPO) in Member (Irrigation) Planning Commission, secretaries of irrigation, agriculture, LGRD, planning, shipping, forest and environment ministry and other high officials of WARPO were present in the meeting.

The government recently formed the board under the water resources rule of 1992 to prepare a master plan for proper utilisation of water resources of the country, consult and suggest other sister organisations, evaluate water development projects, arrange workshop, seminar-symposium, collect and discuss relating information about water resource etc.

## Tk 80 cr project Work on Ctg City Protection Embankment begins

CHITTAGONG, Aug 18: The work of 22.15 km long Chittagong city protection embankment has started, reports BSS.

Additional Secretary of the Ministry of Irrigation, Water Development and Flood Control Syed Rezaul Hayat said this when he visited the Patenga coastal site Sunday an official handout said today. The Taka 80 crore project for the permanent coastal embankment is being implemented by assistance from the Japan government.

The work is being carried out by three separate international contractors and is expected to be completed by June, 1993, the handout said.

Later, the additional secretary visited the proposed site of Water Development Board zonal office at South Kathali near Chittagong divisional stadium here. WDB executive engineer M Obaidul Islam apprised him of the proposed design of the zonal office to be constructed on 14 acres.

## Architects urge PM to appoint consultants on merit basis

A delegation of Bangladesh Sthapati (Architect) Institute Tuesday urged Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia to appoint consultants on the basis of merit and skill, reports AP.

The delegation consisting of executive committee members of the institute led by its President Babul Husain met with the Prime Minister at her office to place before her their demands.

They submitted a five-point memorandum in support of their demands and discussed professional difficulties facing the architects.

The members urged the government to appoint architects in different government, semi-government and autonomous organisations and adopt the architects' registration act by endorsing it as a bill in parliament.

## Bankers asked to help exporters to boost earnings

Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman on Tuesday called upon the bankers to play positive, responsive and responsible role to help exporters boost export earnings for accelerating the pace of development in the country, reports BSS.

Rahman urged them to act promptly with some sort of participatory involvement for making the export-led growth strategy a success for the sake

of national progress and prosperity.

He was addressing as the chief guest the inaugural session of a day-long seminar on Export Development Fund (EDF) jointly organised in Dhaka at a city hotel by Bangladesh Bank, USAID and World Bank. Finance Secretary Nasim Uddin Ahmed, Bangladesh Bank Governor S B Chowdhury, USAID Director Mary C Kilgour, World Bank

President Representative Christopher Willoughby and USAID Project Coordinator Dr Kabir U Ahmed also spoke on the occasion.

The Finance Minister underlined the need for raising the productivity of both the labour and capital and improving the labour-management relationship to attract investment, create entrepreneurship class and make success the export-led strategy.



M Saifur Rahman, Minister for Finance, inaugurates the one-day seminar on Export Development Fund held at a local hotel on Tuesday. Dr Mary C Kilgour, Director USAID, Christopher Willoughby, Chief of WB, Dhaka, S B Chowdhury, Governor, Bangladesh Bank, Nasimuddin Ahmed, Secretary, Finance, attended the seminar.

### Commentary

## Finance market requires further reforms

Abu Ahmed

Guest Columnist

Financial market, which consists broadly of two markets—the money market and the capital market, is very important, especially when the financing of short-term loan-capital is considered. There was a shift in our financial market management from the one we had before the middle of the last decade. Since then many elements of reforms towards competitiveness of this market were introduced.

The important elements introduced so far as a part of an overall financial market reform programme were the flexible interest rate in place of a previously pre-fixed and directed interest rate, discount rate as one of the important monetary instruments to direct monetary policy, and 91-day Bangladesh Bank Bill to siphon excess liquidity from the market.

All these measures were aimed at a qualitative monetary policy which also implied an indirect money supply and contraction policy. This liberalisation in monetary sector came along with the similar programmes in other sectors like investment, exports and imports.

In the newly liberalised economies, the financial liberalisation tends to be misused, especially in offering advances and using of public deposits with the private banks. That is why, as a follow up policy, the regulatory mechanisms such as provisions for advances by scheduled banks and maintenance of a predetermined deposit-equity ratio was also strengthened. All these were done to protect the depositors' money and keep people's confidence on banking system intact.

Two years back, Bangladesh Bank issued BCD (Banking Control Department) Circular No 34 outlining the provisioning measures against advances made by the country's commercial banks. For a while this put both public and private commercial banks in a bad shape. They exhausted all their

profits to maintain the provisioned amount. Some even asked for extra time to conform to this directive, which was granted quite liberally.

Though the circular seems to have put stringent conditions on commercial banks as far as loan classification and provisioning for them were concerned. It was, however, absolutely necessary in the then-prevailing condition. Had such a circular come further late, a huge amount of bad debt would have stockpiled by now, which would have threatened the very existence of the commercial banks of the country.

Bangladesh Bank's 91-Day Bill does not carry any fixed rate of interest unlike its treasury bills. The interest rate depends on the demand for the Bill. During the last one year, the Bill was purchased by commercial banks at as low as seven to eight per cent interest per annum. This shows that a vast amount of investible money lies idle with the banks. Paradoxically, the banks by and large did not lower their interest rates on advances though they were free to do so. This shows the inefficient nature of our bank-money management.

Recently some banks have started to lower their interest rates on advances. Banks should always adjust interest rates depending on demand for and supply of their funds.

Flexible interest rate is ideal for a market economy where the opportunity cost of money should be reflected through the interest rate. In Bangladesh this notion does not seem to be working. The banks do not make their interest rates flexible, rather they feel comfortable to keep them fixed, at least, over a few months.

It was supposed that Bangladesh Bank Bill would have a secondary market, i.e. the holder, in this case both financial institutions and individuals, would be able to buy this Bill from and sell it in the

secondary market at a competitive rate. Unfortunately this is not happening. All the purchased Bills are returned to Bangladesh Bank on maturity and then customers buy the new Bills if they want to.

We do not have ideal condition or even opportunity in Bangladesh to transact bills or any other monetary instruments in secondary markets. But why is it so? The answer to this question is that this part of the reform was neglected by the policy makers from the very beginning.

Some roles and instruments were adopted as monetary sector reform programme, and that was all. Short-term monetary instruments like commercial papers, certificate of deposits, promissory notes etc were never introduced. Even Bangladesh Bank Bills were introduced with the help of foreign experts.

When the instruments do not have secondary markets, the use of these instruments is reduced, which in turn hampers the circulation of money in different economic activities. In such a situation, money's function of generating a dynamic process in the economy is not attained.

It is not hard to have a secondary market for monetary instruments where they will be bought and sold at premium or discount rates. The only thing is that it will have to be organised.

Capital market instruments like stocks and bonds go through the stock exchange, which is for them a secondary market, for price determination. Similarly, money market instruments like commercial papers, certificate of deposits and other bills can go through money market for their prices to be fixed up.

Bangladesh Bank can best explain why such a market has not yet been organised. But without such a formal secondary money market, the financial sector reform programme will remain incomplete.

## Shipping Intelligence

### CHITTAGONG PORT

Berth position and performance of vessels as on: 18/08/92

Berth No	Name of Vessels	Cargo	L. Port Call	Local Agent	Date of Leaving Arrival
J/2	Al Reza	Repair	Mong	BSL	17/8 21/8
J/5	Vishva Abha	CL	Mong	SSL	14/8 18/8
J/6	Seyang Ace	GI	Mong	Prog	15/8 21/8
J/7	Banglar Gourab	Urea	Mong	BSC	10/8 29/8
J/10	Samudra Raj	Idle	Kara	SSL	15/7 20/8
J/11	Al Mohammed	Urea	Mong	KSL	10/8 22/8
J/13	Bervalla	Cont	Mong	RSL	17/8 19/8
MPB/1	Fong Yun	Cont	Mong	BDSHIP	16/8 18/8
MPB/2	Andrian Goncharov	Cont	Sing	CT	16/8 19/8
CCJ	Samudra Samrat	Repair	Col	SSL	1/7 20/8
GSJ	Tra	Wheat	Califia	Aqua	16/8 20/8
TSP	Banglar Aaha	Repair	-	BSC	9/8 20/8
RM/4	Hang Shing	Cement	Sing	H & H	22/7 18/8
RM/8	Banglar Jyoti	Repair	-	BSC	R/A 20/8
RM/9	Banglar Sampad	Repair	-	BSC	R/A 20/8
DDJ	Banglar Shourabh	Repair	-	BSC	R/A 18/8
DDJ/1	Endurance Sea	Repair	Aqiba	EOSL	25/1 20/8
DDJ/2	Banglar Baari	Repair	-	BSC	R/A 20/8
CUFJ:	Lok Vivek	Urea	Hald	Alamin	16/8 20/8

### VESSELS DUE AT OUTER ANCHORAGE

Name of Vessels	Date of Last Port Arrival	Last Port Call	Local Agent	Cargo	Loading Port
Arklis star	18/8	V Patt	BSL	GI	-
Nen Jiang	18/8	G Hou	BDSHIP	CL	-
Al Tabith	18/8	Fuan	BSL	Sulphur	-
Mizoram	20/8	Cal	SSL	GI/GL	Japa
Oryx	20/8	Mong	Aqua	GL	Doula
Alzahraa	20/8	-	MMI	-	Suez
Solbulak	20/8	Para	Lams	P/L	-
Qing He Cheng	20/8	S Hai	BDSHIP	GI	-
Flying Dragon	21/8	-	USTC	Cement	-
New Genlord	21/8	Sing	BDSHIP	Cont	Sing
Banglar Shobha	21/8	Pena	BSL	GI	-
Optima	21/8	Sing	RSL	Cont	Sing
Ultra Sea	21/8	New Orle	Lams	Wheat	-
Miramir	22/8	Mong	KSL	GL	Sudan
A Megacarrer Two	22/8	Sing	BDSHIP	Cont	Sing
Ivyeverett	22/8	-	EIPL	GI	Japa
Vishva Pallav	22/8	-	SSL	GI	Dundee Ant
Evercheer	23/8	Sing	BDSHIP	Cont	Cal
I Yamburenko	23/8	-	CT	Cont	Sing
Hafza	24/8	Mong	SSL	E/L	B Abbas
Diamond Star	24/8	Sing	BSC	Steel	-
Mehedint	25/8	Col	BSL	GI	-
Fong Shin	25/8	Sing	BDSHIP	Cont	Sing
Petr Starostin	26/8	-	CT	Cont	Sing
Kota Buana	26/8	Sing	CTS	Cont	Sing
Andromache	26/8	Col	RSL	Cont	Mong
Caravos Explorer	28/8	Stork	Alamin	Wheat	-
Safina-c-Haider	28/8	Kara	ASL	GI/GL	Karachi

### TANKER DUE

Name of Vessels	Date of Last Port Arrival	Last Port Call	Local Agent	Cargo
Jamac	19/8	-	Seacom	-
Neptune Arics	19/8	Sing	MSPL	-
Kashce	19/8	Jebel	DSLJ	-

### VESSELS AT KULUBIA

Name of Vessels	Cargo	Last Port Call	Local Agent	Date of Arrival
T T Energy	C Oil	Col	NNL	27/4

### VESSELS AT OUTER ANCHORAGE

Ready On:				
Ngs Ranger	Cont	Sing	BDSHIP	17/8
Kota Eagle	Cont	Sing	CTS	17/8

### VESSELS NOT READY:

Artemis-1	Cement	Alada	Bright	10/8
Yao Sheng	Cement	Sing	Bright	17/8

### VESSELS AWAITING INSTRUCTION:

Dryanskyi				
Mashinostrotel		TSL	R/A	14/8

### VESSELS NOT ENTERING

Alyn	Cement	Sing	Alamin	R/A (18/9)
Nehaj	Scraping	Col	UMAL	10/6
Kwan Mo Bong	Urea	-	Seacom	R/A (15/8)
Armas	GL	-	OWSL	R/A (16/8)
Banglar Kiron	Repair	-	BSC	R/A (7/8)

The above were the Tuesday's Shipping position and performance of vessels of Chittagong Port as per berthing sheet of CPA supplied by IIRC Group, Dhaka.

## Price Index

August 18

Essentials	Price (per kg)	Change
RICE	(Taka per kg)	
Amari(fine)	16.00-17.00	
Pujan	13.50-14.50	
VEGETABLES	(Taka per kg)	
Potato (local)	11.00-12.00	
Brinjal	8.00-12.00	
Karolla	12.00-13.00	
Lalshak	5.00-6.00	
Papsa	6.00-8.00	
Green Banana (Four Pieces)	4.00-6.00	
OTHER FOODGRAN	(Taka per kg)	
Flour	13.50-14.00	
Atta	11.00-11.50	
FRESH	(Taka per kg)	
Raw(hig)	170.00-180.00	
Kat(hig)	110.00-130.00	
Hilba	50.00-52.00	
Pungo	140.00-150.00	
Shrimp(hig)	90.00-100.00	
Sing	110.00-120.00	
Koi	120.00-130.00	
MEAT		
Beef	60.00-62.00	
Mutton	85.00-90.00	
CHICKEN		
Large	60.00-62.00	
Moderate	64.00-66.00	
Small	68.00-70.00	
TEA		
Dust (Plain)	70.00-80.00	
EOG	(4 pos)	
Duck	12.00-13.00	
Han	12.00-13.00	
Firm	12.00-12.50	
PULSES	(Taka per kg)	
Mashur	28.00-30.00	
Mough	30.00-32.00	

Source: Department of Agriculture marketing

## Exchange Rates

The following are the Commercial Banks' selling and buying rates for some selected foreign currencies effective on August 19.

Currency	Selling B.C.	T.T.(C)	Buying O.D. Transfer
US Dollar	39.1326	38.9087	38.6339
Poundsterling	75.2734	74.9180	74.4272
DM	26.7263	26.5525	26.3749
S.F.F.	7.8896	7.8366	7.7812
S Riyal	10.4641	10.4042	NA
D Ouldiers	23.7282	23.5782	NA
S Kroner	7.3454	7.2905	NA
Singapore Dollar	24.2969	24.1579	NA
UAE Dirham	13.6511	10.6299	NA
Kuwait Dirham	134.3853	133.6164	NA
Indian Rupee (AMU)	1.5104	NA	NA
Pak Rupee (AMU)	1.5523	NA	NA

Authorised dealers will apply T T clean buying rate for purchase of remittances of Bangladeshis working abroad.

Note: AMU—Asian Monetary Union.

## Dhaka Stock Prices

At the close of trading on August 18, 1992

Star Economic Report

### Surprising progress in DSE Index

Business remarkably improved at Dhaka Stock Exchange (DSE) on Tuesday. The main transactions indicator, DSE Composite Index, jumped to 366.3734 from Monday's close of 347.9057, a surprising 18.468 points rise. The market capitalisation also scored better against Monday's finish. It gained Taka 534,695,022.00 and stood at Taka 10,474,990,413.

Both the turnovers turned out quite firm against Monday's finish. Value rose by 105.9 per cent from Taka 967239.00 to 1991572.50. Volume finished at 14875 from Monday's 11916, a gain of 24.83 per cent.

On the floor the gainers enjoyed their leadership