

Group economic activities help the poor to realise better social life

Oliar Rahman is only 30 but he is already father of five children from two wives. Desperately poor, Oliar inherited only half an acre of land including the homestead from his father Nurul Hoque who is also a poor, near-landless farmer. Medium height, with a lean body, and pale complexion, Oliar has a face where all the world's worries are written in clear wrinkles.

When Oliar first married, he was 20 and his wife Rahima, hardly 15. Rahima died soon after her second child's birth, leaving a two-year-old son and an eleven-day old daughter. Seemingly, she had been suffering from acute anaemia and other complications which are all too common among poor rural women in Bangladesh.

Three months after Rahima's death, Oliar married for the second time. His second wife Rizia gave birth to three children in the following seven years. With a growing family and limited land and capital resources, Oliar was steadily becoming poorer.

Oliar then joined a landless group organised by Rangpur Dinajpur Rural Service (RDRS), a large Non-Government Organisation (NGO) engaged in rural development in northern Bangladesh. In the group RDRS helped Oliar and his fellow villagers to understand better their social and economic position and the measures they could take, individually or jointly, to improve their lives.

The group members gradually came to understand and appreciate the benefits of organisation through the group. They took up small-scale on-farm and off-farm economic activities jointly as well as individually, and subsequently began to take up larger projects in bigger groups. As a result, in 1991 two neighbouring groups — the Bamanpara group and the Shingpara group with 15 and 16 members respectively — formed a larger body called the Bamanpara-Shingpara Joint Association and started new income earning activities including crop and fish farming.

Oliar Rahman is the President and Abdus Sattar, aged 27, is the Secretary of this joint group which now has 31 members. Situated in Hafizabad village, 10 kilometre northeast of Panchagarh district town in northern Bangladesh, the Bamanpara-Shingpara Joint Association has prospered gradually.

It is now 10 in the morning and some of the group members are working in the banana plantation around their fish pond which was re-excavated in 1991 as a food-for-work project with wheat assistance from the World Food Programme (WFP). The group members participated in the excavation work and received wheat as payment for their labour. The RDRS Rural Works Project coordinated the partnership deal with WFP and prepared the engineering design for the new pond. The RDRS Comprehensive Project supervised and managed the excavation and wheat distribution.

The newly excavated pond covers an area of one acre. The group invested Taka 5,000 (143 US dollar) and stocked the pond with rui, katla and mrigel (carp variety) fish. They raised the money to buy the fish fingerlings by selling the wheat which they had received during the excavation work.

The group members take care of the pond in turn and hope to harvest after one year. If things go well, they will sell the catch for Taka 25,000 (714 US dollar), giving them a net profit of about Taka 20,000 (571 US dollar). This would give each household an income of about Taka 645 (18 US dollar). However, instead of dividing the profit among themselves, they will re-invest it in either fish farming or some other profitable joint project. The group also expects to earn over Taka 2,000 (60 US dollar) from their vegetable and chicken farms.

On eight decimals of land around the embankment of the pond, the group has raised banana suckers, pigeon pea, and lady's finger crops. Nearby in one group member's house, there is also a joint poultry farm with 44 chickens, a mix of local and improved varieties. RDRS recommends local and locally-improved birds as these are more disease-resistant and suited to the local environmental conditions than the exotic varieties.

Group member Nurul Hoque's wife, Sakhina, who has been trained as a livestock field worker, vaccinates the chickens and keeps them disease-free. Sakhina collects the vaccines from the local government livestock office and uses the tools and equipment including a cool box which she has bought with credit from RDRS. She earns an income by vaccinating the poultry birds of the group as well as of other villagers.

The group has two rickshaw-vans which they have bought with their savings and credit from RDRS. Two group members operate the vans and carry goods and materials of local traders to and from market. They repay Taka 13 (0.37 US dollar) per van per day to the group fund.

In addition to joint projects, group members also have individual income generating activities. For example, Sakhina's husband Nurul Hoque has raised a tree nursery after receiving training from RDRS. He earns a good profit by selling jackfruit seedlings in the local market and in the village.

The group meets regularly under a thatched roof, which they have erected on a newly-acquired piece of government land. They discuss project matters and issues relating to the group's development. The RDRS field staff including a female trainer, Altafunnahar, visit them regularly to give encouragement and advice.

RDRS has for many years organised groups of landless and near-landless people (owning up to one acre of land). The groups are the basis for people to discuss the social and economic problems confronting them, and what steps they can take to improve their situation. Social organisation and income generation are the start point for beginning the escape from chronic poverty. RDRS organises groups of men and women from similar economic and social backgrounds and motivates them to engage in profitable economic activities. At September 1, 1991, RDRS had organised 7,504 groups with 1,09,706 members all over its working area of 28 upazilas (subdistricts). Of these 2,172 (42 per cent) were female groups with 44,316 members. RDRS sees increased organisation, enabling larger-scale income generating activities as an important path out of poverty for poor people in Bangladesh.

— RDRS feature

ATHENS, Aug 21: Greece on Friday suspended all fuel exports through its northern border, to silence critics who claimed that it was breaking the UN embargo on Serbia and Montenegro, reports AP.

"To put an end to the unjustified accusations against our country, which it cannot accept under any circumstances, we decided that from today we are suspending temporarily the passage of petroleum products to the north," Prime Minister Constantine Mitsotakis said after a Cabinet meeting.

He said that supplies to the former Yugoslav republics of Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia and Macedonia, and countries north of them, would resume only after the European Community found a way to monitor the embargo.

"We will participate in this effort, so that in future, with safety and without giving anyone the right to accuse us, we will reopen the passage of fuel products to the north," Mitsotakis said.

Greek refineries are major suppliers of petroleum products in the Balkans. In recent days, some European news media and politicians claimed that Greece was breaking the embargo on Serbia and Montenegro, the only states left in the Yugoslav federation.

"Japan-Russia joint projects in space tech likely"

TOKYO, Aug 21: Japan will consider cooperation with Russia in space technology and will likely sign an agreement laying a foundation for possible future joint projects, the head of Japan's space agency said Friday, reports Reuters.

"The former Soviet Union is one of the most advanced countries in terms of space development," Masato Yamano, President of the National Space Development Agency of Japan (NASDA) told a news conference.

"Obviously we are much interested in knowing whether there is anything we can learn from the former Soviet Union, or what we can cooperate with in this field," he added.

"But let me be frank — we have no idea what is going on inside the former Soviet Union now."

Russia and Japan are likely to sign a space agreement when Russian President Boris Yeltsin visits here in mid-September.

Yamano said that if such an agreement were signed, it would probably cover only very general areas, serving as a basis for further and more detailed cooperation. He did not mention any specific areas.

A joint government-private research mission visited the former Soviet Union in July to look into possible cooperation in space technology.



HARD TIMES: In a world where technology application is mostly productive, use of such method of ploughing is still continued in rural areas of the country.

Staging an industry — a nightmare

by Shahabuddin Mahtab

The present government has stressed that the rate of domestic savings in the country is extremely low, and also that a large number of borrowers, have not cared to pay the interest, to the banks and the financial institutions. If the defaulters were the real entrepreneurs, this situation could not have occurred on such a large scale. A genuine industrialist wants to run his factories continuously, and for this he has to come to the banks time and again. He is quite happy to earn a booming profit which keeps him in business, and ensures employment and revenues.

A pseudo industrialist does not establish a viable and profit making plant. The initial kick back are so great, that he has the urge to siphon almost the whole of the borrowed capital. The collateral that the pseudo industrialist provides, proves to be of little value. An industry cannot be built up with a strong foundation, when the whole process has been corrupted and politicised in trade and industry. East Asian or the South East Asian economic giants had one thing in common and a clear imperative, that the economy has to be run in the most efficient way and to do this the government, the labour and the industry had to work together. The regulatory machinery in Bangladesh is not geared to expedite industrial output, or its establishment, but to create bottlenecks at each stage. The putting up of an industrial unit, in this country for the real entrepreneur is a nightmare.

Even the top industrial countries of the world provide subsidies to the agricultural sector and tariff protection for the industrial goods. Our motto for the nascent industries in Bangladesh should be "nurture the baby, protect the child and free the adult". In other words protection has to be for a limited period, so that the inefficient industries may be weeded out.

The growth and consolidation of the industries need a stable political situation. The very running of the factories is dependent on industrial and social peace. If the safety and security of the life and property of the citizens are not ensured, there can hardly be any production, or a productive climate, not to speak of domestic investment and direct foreign investment.



Industries Minister, Shamsul Islam Khan addressing the 16th Annual conference of Bangladesh Chemical Industries Corporation (BCIC) as chief guest in the city August 19. Dr Ekramul Hossain, Industries Secretary, was also present as special guest on the occasion. —PID photo

Shipping Intelligence

CHITTAGONG PORT

Berth position and performance of vessels as on 19-08-92

Berth No	Name of Vessel	Cargo	L. Port	Local Agent	Date of Arrival	Leaving
J/2	Al Reza	Repair	Mong	BSC	17/8	22/8
J/6	Seyang Ace	GI	Hong	Prog	15/8	20/8
J/7	Gourab	Urea	Mong	BSC	10/8	29/8
J/10	Samudra Raj	Idle	Kara	SSL	15/7	21/8
J/11	Al Mohammed	Urea	Mong	KSL	10/8	22/8
J/12	Nen Jiang	GI (SPL)	China	BDShip	18/8	22/8
J/13	Bervalla	Cont	Mong	RSL	17/8	19/8
MPB/1	NGS Ranger	Cont	Sing	BDShip	17/8	20/8
MPB/2	Andrian	Cont	Sing	CT	16/8	19/8
CCJ	Goncharov	Cont	Sing	CT	16/8	19/8
CSJ	IRA	Repair	Col	SSL	1/7	25/8
TSP	Banglar Aaha	Repair	Calif	Aqua	16/8	20/8
RM/5	Artemis-1	Cement	Alada	BSC	9/8	22/8
DDJ/1	Endurance	Sea	Repair	Bright	10/8	23/8
DDJ/2	Banglar Barri	Repair	Apaba	EOSL	25/1	30/8
RM/9	Sempad	Repair	BSC	R/A	R/A	25/8
CUFJ	Lok Vivek	Repair	Hald	BSC	R/A	21/8

VESSELS DUE AT OUTER ANCHORAGE

Name of Vessels	Date of Arrival	Last Port	Local Agent	Cargo	Loading
Oryx	20/8	Mong	Aqua	GL	Doula
Alzahra	20/8	Mad	MMI	GL	Suez
Qing He Cheng	20/8	S Hai	BDShip	GI	
Mizoram	21/8	Cal	SSL	GI/GL	Fe E. Japa
New Genlord	21/8	Sing	BDShip	Cong	Sing
Selbulk	22/8	Para	Lama	Ultra Sea	
Ultra Sea	22/8	New Orle	Lama	Wheat	
Banglar Shobha	22/8	Pena	BSC	GI	
Optima	22/8	Strig	RSL	Cont	Strig
A. Megacarrier	22/8	Strig	BDShip	Cont	Strig
Two	22/8	Strig	BDShip	Cont	Strig
Ivyverett	22/8	Strig	BDShip	Cont	Strig
Vishva Pallav	22/8	Strig	BDShip	Cont	Strig
Flying Dragon	23/8	Strig	BDShip	Cont	Strig
Mariamara	23/8	Mong	KSL	GL	Sudan
I Yamburenko	23/8	Strig	BDShip	Cont	Strig
Ever Cheer	24/8	Strig	BDShip	Cont	Strig
Diamond Star	24/8	Strig	BDShip	Cont	Strig
Hafez	25/8	Mong	SSL	E/L	Abbas
Mehedinti	25/8	Col	BSC	GI	
Fong Shin	25/8	Strig	BDShip	Cont	Strig
Petr Starostin	26/8	Strig	BDShip	Cont	Strig
Kota Buana	26/8	Strig	BDShip	Cont	Strig
Andromache	26/8	Col	BDShip	Cont	Strig
Caravos Explorer	28/8	Stork	ASL	Wheat	Mong
Safina-Haider	28/8	Kara	ASL	GI/GL	Karachi
Fong Yun	29/8	Strig	BDShip	Cont	Strig

TANKER DUE

Name of Vessels	Date of Arrival	Last Port	Local Agent	Cargo	Loading
Jamarc	19/8	Repair	SEACOM	CDSO	
Neptune Arles	19/8	Strig	MSPL	HSO	
Kashee	19/8	Jebal	DSLL	C Oil	

MOVEMENT OF VESSELS FOR 20/8/92

Outgoing	Incoming	Shifting
J/6	NGS Ranger	DOJ
MPB/1	IRA	DOJ
GSJ	IRA	DOJ
	Q H Cheng	RM/5 Artemis-1 to GSJ/RM/8
	Banglar Jyoti	
	Neptune Arles	
	Alzahra	

VESSELS AT KUTUBDIA

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

VESSELS AT OUTER ANCHORAGE

Name of Vessels	Cargo	Last Port	Local Agent	Date of Arrival
Arktis Star	GI	V Patn	BSC	18/8
Kota Eagle (Cont)	Cont	Strig	CTS	17/8

VESSELS NOT READY

Name of Vessels	Cargo	Last Port	Local Agent	Date of Arrival
Yao Sheng	Cement	Strig	Bright	17/8
Al Tabith				

VESSELS AWAITING INSTRUCTION

Name of Vessels	Cargo	Last Port	Local Agent	Date of Arrival
Iryvaskyt Mashinostrotel			TSLL	R/A (14/8)
Banglar Shourabh			BSC	R/A (18/8)
Banglar Jyoti			BSC	R/A (18/8)

VESSELS NOT ENTERING

Name of Vessels	Cargo	Last Port	Local Agent	Date of Arrival
Albyn	Cement	Strig	Alamin	R/A (18/8)
Nehaj	Scraping	Col	UMAL	10/8
Kwan Mo Bong	Urea	AL	Seacom	R/A (15/8)
Al Tabith	R Sulp	AL	BSC	18/8

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

Price Index

August 18

Essentials

Commodity	Unit	Price
RICE	(Taka per kg)	
Aman/line	16.00-17.00	
Payam	13.50-14.50	
VEGETABLES	(Taka per kg)	
Onion (local)	11.00-12.00	
Brinjal	8.00-12.00	
Karola	12.00-13.00	
Lalshak	6.00-8.00	
Papya	3.00-4.00	
Green Banana (Four Pieces)	4.00-6.00	
OTHER FOODSTUFF	(Taka per kg)	
Flour	13.00-14.00	
Atto	11.00-11.50	
FISH	(Taka per kg)	
Rui (big)	170.00-180.00	
Katla (big)	110.00-130.00	
Hilsa	50.00-52.00	
Pomago	140.00-150.00	
Shrimp (big)	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	
CHEESEN		
Large	60.00-62.00	
Medium	64.00-66.00	
Small	68.00-70.00	
TEA		
Dust (Plain)	70.00-80.00	
EGG	(4 pcs)	
Hen	12.00-12.50	
Duck	12.00-13.00	
Firm	12.00-12.50	
PULSES	(Taka per kg)	
Moth	28.00-30.00	
Moong	30.00-32.00	
Chick	22.00-23.00	
Khesari	14.00-15.00	
FRUITS		
Green Coconut (Small)	6.00-7.00	
Coconut (Large)	8.00-10.00	
Pineapple	8.00-14.00	
Jackfruit	NA	
Banana	(4 pieces)	
Sagar (Large)	12.00-15.00	
Champa	3.00-4.00	
Dates	(Taka per kg)	
OIL	(Taka per litre)	
Mustard	52.00-54.00	
Soybean	38.00-39.00	
Coconut (Colombo)	85.00-95.00	
Vegetable Ghee (1kg)	48.00-52.00	
SPICES	(Taka per kg)	
Onion (local)	9.00-11.00	
Garlic (local)	20.00-26.00	
Chillies (local)	30.00-40.00	
Turmeric (Local)	45.00-50.00	
Green chillies	8.00-10.00	
Ginger	22.00-24.00	
Cinnamon (10gm)	7.00-8.00	
Castanum (10gm) (small)	3.00-3.50	
Milk (Two kg)		
Dust	308.00-310.00	
Red Cow	316.00-317.00	
MISCELLANEOUS	(Taka per kg)	
Salt	230.00-240.00	
Ghee	7.00-8.00	
Sugar	26.50-27.00	

Gold & Silver

Commodity	Price
Gold (Gutina)	6200.00
Silver	200.00

Source: Department of Agriculture marketing

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 August 21 and 22.

Currency	Selling B. C.	T. T. (C)	Buying O.D. Transfer
US Dollar	39.1326	38.9087	38.6339
Pound sterling	75.6639	75.3075	74.8144
DM	26.9286	26.7653	26.5762
FF	7.9328	7.8794	7.8238
S Riyal	10.4641	10.4042	10.3307
D Guilders	23.8934	23.7422	23.5745
S Kroner	7.3870	7.3378	7.2890
Singapore Dollar	24.3286	24.1894	24.0196
UAE Dirham	10.6911	10.6299	10.5848
Kuwait Dinar	134.3853	133.6164	132.6727
Indian Rupee (AMU)	1.5104	1.5036	1.4961
Pak Rupee (AMU)	1.5623	1.5451	1.5374

Authorized dealers will apply T clean buying rate for purchase of remittances of Bangladeshis working abroad. Note: AMU — Asian Monetary Unit.

Dhaka Stock Prices

Weekly review: At the close of tradings on August 13 and August 19, 1992

Company	FV/ML*	1991-92			
		August 13	August 19	High	Low
BANKS (10)					
Al Baraka Bank	1000/1	1115.00	100.00	1200.00	760.00
A.B Bank	100/5	200.00	400.00		