

Fund crisis hits timber extraction

KAPTAI (Rangamati), Feb 23: Extraction of timbers worth crores of taka by the Karnaphuli Timber Extraction Unit (KTEU) here is being seriously hampered due to acute fund constraints, reports UNB.

Officials said it started the timber extraction after an impasse of four years late last year and was now facing problems in extracting timbers as well as supplying processed timber to various organisations because of the lack of working capital.

KTEU, the only extraction unit of Bangladesh Forest Industries Development Corporation (BFIDC), is to cater to the wood based requirement of government, semi-government, autonomous

and private bodies alongside supply of timbers as raw materials to its 11 sister concerns in the country.

It has extracted about one lakh cft of timbers worth over Taka five crore from Baghatat dense forest and Cox's Bazar reserved forest and felled and logged another two lakh cft timbers worth about Taka 10 crore in Baghatat forest, which are awaiting transportation to its Kaptai depot.

But, the officials said, the KTEU will have to abandon the timber extraction again if necessary working capital is not available.

After meeting the inter-projects and government requirement, officials suggested that extracted timbers be sold out to private traders on open

and private bodies alongside supply of timbers as raw materials to its 11 sister concerns in the country.

They said if the excess timbers are disposed of to private parties, the rate of timbers in the market will be stable and the timbers will be utilised in nation building activities in the private sector.

KTEU supplies mechanically treated electric poles, cross-arms, anchor-logs, stabilizer-logs and railway sleepers to Rural Electrification Board, Power Development Board and Bangladesh Railway. It also supplies treated picking-arms, lay-blocks etc to jute and cotton mills and cable drums to cable factories.

The unit earned foreign currency equivalent to Taka 9.47 crore in 1986-87 and

Taka 6.36 crore in 1987-88 by supplying treated electric poles, anchor-logs, stabilizer-logs and cross-arms. The extraction of timber was suspended for four years from 1989 mainly due to mismanagement, irregularities and prevailing insurgency causing an annual loss of Taka six crore to BFIDC.

Officials said there was almost no production in KTEU's 11 sister concerns while heavy equipment and machineries worth over Taka 15 crore were being damaged and more than 550 officers and employees had no work to do during the period.

KTEU has now fixed a annual production target of 11 lakh cft timbers.

DG of IFAC due on Thursday



The Director General of the International Federation of Accountants (IFAC), John W. Gruner will arrive in Dhaka on Thursday, on a two-day visit, says a press release.

During his brief stay in the capital, Gruner will attend a discussion meeting on 'harmonisation of international accounting and auditing practices - the role of IFAC'.

Organised by the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Bangladesh (ICAB), the meeting will be participated by council members, past presidents and senior members of the institute.

The discussion will be followed by an iftar-cum-dinner reception thrown in honour of the visiting IFAC personality.

Gruner will leave Dhaka for New Delhi on the 26th instant. The IFAC, the world accounting body with headquarters in New York, is made up of 105 accounting organisations spanning 78 countries of the world. The ICAB is an active member of this world body.



Shafiqul Islam Kamal, Vice Chairman of Islam Group speaking at the selling agents' conference of Goodyear Tyres (Navana Ltd) held at a local hotel recently.

Construction work of bridges nearing fast completion

Works of 12 bridges nearing fast completion at a cost of about Taka 34 crore on Dhaka-Khulna via Mawa highway with the Bangladesh-British joint financing, reports BSS.

The bridges are being constructed at Baghoir, Abdullahpur, Kuchlamora, Hashera and Domipara in Dhaka-Mawa portion while Banglabazar, Bakharkandi, Panch Char, Sarilida, Bamunkanda, Bogail and Bhangra in Mawa-Bhanga portion of the high way linking the capital city with the divisional headquarters of Khulna. Besides two bridges at Hasidemdikhal and Noukhola are being constructed with totally local financing.

After completion of these

14 bridges there will be four ferries at Mawa, Dhaleshwari, Aarial Khan and Modhumoti.

With the completion of the bridges the distance between Dhaka and Khulna will be reduced to half and the travelling time will be five and a half hours instead of 10 hours at present.

Communications Minister Oli Ahmed visited different sites of the bridges and gave directives to the construction engineers to complete the construction work by August. Mayor of Khulna City Corporation Sheikh Taibur Rahman was also with the Communications Minister during the visit.

The very important project was conceived by late presi-

dent Ziaur Rahman but during the nine years of autocracy the implementation works did not progress as it was expected. With the present government of Begum Khaleda Zia assuming power, the construction works have been vigorously started on an emergent basis.

The highway was opened to traffic on December 1, 1992 while it was opened for the light vehicles one year earlier.

About 2.5 crore people of the districts of greater Dhaka, greater Faridpur, greater Barisal and part of Jessore will be directly benefitted from the highway. As it will be extended to the port of Mongla, it will help generate economic activities in the southern part of the country.

Commentary

We should start seeking comparative advantage in non-traditional sectors

Abu Ahmed
Guest Columnist

Raw jute and jute goods were the traditional areas for years where Bangladesh had comparative advantage, and we earned an enormous amount of foreign exchange by utilising this advantage. But that golden time, which was especially true during Pakistan period, now seems to have gone. Bangladesh is now struggling to save its jute sector by pumping in hundreds of crores taka into the sector as subsidy.

With jute our tradition, and, to an extent, emotion is related. That's why every government leaves this sector aside when the withdrawal of subsidy from the economy is contemplated.

When a sector continuously receives subsidy, no one can say that sector has comparative advantage over others. A large commercial sector which once brought us the much needed foreign exchange now lost its competitiveness for some reasons we also do not know. Jute, when it was under the public sector, was used to sell political expediency, and hard economic rules were not applied. Over-employment was a common feature in the jute industry.

In the beginning of eighties some jute mills were privatised, but that too did not bring desired result. Efficiency in the privatized jute mills increased, but they too did not give-up the old habits of asking for more government subsidy. There are two reasons behind this. First, the government did not realise all the money at a time when selling off the public jute mills. So the buyers found it easy to delay the payment and forced the government to forgo the further claims of the agreed-upon sum by asking subsidy to run the sold-out mills. Second, some jute mills were too old to run further and only could be made viable with additional subsidy.

When an enterprise, or even a sector of an economy, cannot run on its own, there is no rule in economics to make it run by injecting subsidy.

It is not wise to develop comparative cost advantage among sectors of an economy. The best is to have comparative cost advantage of a particular sector to that of outside economies.

The theory of comparative cost advantage originally enunciated by David Ricardo of England in the beginning of last century formed the fundamental premise for international trade among nations. The theory simply states a country having advantage in cost in a particular line of production to that in other countries should concentrate to produce only in that line. If a country has more than one area with comparative cost advantage, it should not consider all as the producing fields. Rather it should choose the one which offers the best advantage.

Theoretically, the theory is perfectly alright, and gives maximum benefits to a country producing goods based on this theory. But practically no one country specialises only in one line of production, but specialises at least in a few. At the other extreme of this concept is that of self-sufficiency, which says a country should strive to produce all vital commodities, so that it does not need to depend trade. The concept self-sufficiency is a self-defeating one—in the context of rules of economics. If economic rules stand for gathering profits and further expansion of business, then self-sufficiency concept leads to nowhere and bounces to slow down the economy.

Fortunately, the concept of self-sufficiency was discarded by most of the nations and they embarked on market-oriented economies. Bangladesh also pronouncedly adopted market economy long ago, and the private sector is increasingly assuming a bigger role over time. In this

context, the question of subsidising a particular commercial sector does not arise. However, the temptation to appeal for subsidy will remain there so long sources of easy money are there.

Once our jute sector fetched sixty per cent, or even more, of our foreign exchanges. New jute mills sprang up overnight. They had tremendous advantage over competitors from India and other countries. After independence, we took them under public control as a policy of matter. And it instantly began to develop all the inefficiency a public sector normally breeds in any country. Consequently we lost in competition to others.

However, if not true that India and other competitors maintained their comparative advantage in jute. They too lost but they lost slowly and had time to readjust their economies. Jute was also a very small segment in Indian economy, so India was not much hurt when it lost the advantage there.

One relevant question is who took over when India and other jute supplying countries too lost the advantage? It was not taken over by some other producers but by substitutes for jute. Various synthetic-fibres were developed which became serious competitors to jute and jute goods. The synthetic substitutes were cheaper, easy to handle and attractive looking.

Bangladesh as the major jute goods supplier was also responsible for the down fall of jute and jute goods. It could not assure the recipients of continuous supply of the commodity at a steady price. Importing countries gradually turned to others and reduced their dependence on Bangladesh. Jute in Bangladesh turned into just another sector along side other export-oriented sectors.

At present Bangladesh earns highest foreign exchange by exporting readymade garments though the net value addition in it is questionable. Man-power export earnings occupy the next position and though there is no study, per unit value addition is likely to be more in this sector.

Whatever value addition we get from jute products probably exists only in papers. In reality the value addition here will be much less, once the subsidy portion is deducted.

The exact areas for comparative advantage needs to be explored by the producers and in this case, the government and researchers can extend a helping hand. The comparative cost advantage in a particular production line does not exist for ever. It changes over time depending on change in technology and what others are doing. New discovery and development divert the comparative cost advantage from one area to another. So Bangladesh must keep an eye on changes around the world.

When Ricardo enunciated his theory of comparative cost advantage, he had the natural resource endowments in mind, which he opted should form the basis for the advantage. The world has changed much since Ricardo's days. Technology has now appeared as one of the great challengers to natural resources to form foundation for comparative cost advantage. Japan is probably the best example in this context.

Bangladesh must give up its traditional way of thinking and we must know how to shun our losing sectors. Man-power and ready-made garments exports seem to be favourable areas at this moment, but these two are not sufficient to push the economy to the take-off stage. Other areas must be developed to remain competitive with the outside world and these other areas can be developed only by allowing market forces to work and not by obstructing them.

Shipping Intelligence

CHITTAGONG PORT

Berth Position and Performance of Vessels as on 23.02.93

Berth No	Name of Vessels	Cargo	L Port call	Local agent	Date of arrival	Leaving
J/1	State of Tripura	GI	Mad	SSL	22/02	26/02
J/2	Safina-E-Najam	GI/GL	Kara	ASL	22/02	03/03
J/3	Asian Express	GI	Cal	B Bay	22/02	24/02
J/5	Sidi Bishr	Repair	Pena	MMI	25/01	26/02
J/6	Banglar Robi	Cont	Stng	BSC	21/02	24/02
J/7	Trans America	Repair	BKK	BOAL	08/01	24/02
J/8	J Sister	Urea	S Hai	Seacom	05/02	06/02
J/9	Horn	GI	Busan	Prog	13/02	25/02
J/10	Endurance Sea	Repair	Urea	EOSL	25/01	28/02
J/11	Optima	Cont	Stng	RSL	20/02	24/02
J/12	Al Selma	Urea	Pena	ASL	09/02	26/02
J/13	Knud Jespersen	Cont	Stng	CT	20/02	24/02
MPB/1	Shenton	Cont	Stng	OMNI	19/02	23/02
MPB/2	Fong Yun	Cont	Stng	BDSHP	20/02	24/02
COJ	Thai Binh	C Clink	AKBA	UMAL	15/02	27/02
GSJ	Vinia	Wheat(G)	Apaba	R/A		
RM/4	Tarbela	Cement(P)	Stng	BSC	11/02	04/03
RM/6	Esoo Bayonne	HSD/JP-1	Stng	MSPIL	20/02	24/02
DOJ	Banglar Shourabh	C Oil	Stng	BSC	R/A	23/02
DDJ/1	Barge: Labroy-90	GI	Stng	ILA	31/01	28/02
DDJ/2	Banglar Aaha	Repair	Stng	BSC	R/A	28/02

VESSELS DUE AT OUTER ANCHORAGE

Name of Vessels	Date of arrival	Last Port call	Local agent	Cargo	Loading port
Qing he Cheng	23/02	S Hai	BDSHP	GI	
Norbulk Namir	23/02	Jake	Boal	Cement	
Vector	23/02	Mong	Royal	Scraping	
Olga-1	24/02	Mong	USTC	Bunkering	
Ingenuty 15/2	24/02	Stng	BSC	Cont	Stng
Banglar Shobha	24/02	S Hai	BSC	GI	
Andrian Goncharov					
14/2	24/02	Stng	CT	Cont	Stng
Saigon-1	24/02	Tuti	USTC	Cement	
Marine Three	25/02	Tuti	BML	Cement	
Continent-1(24)					
17/2	25/02	Mong	CLA		Stng Sura
Gold Future(48)					
18/2	25/02	Mong	AML	CL Mom Mapu	
Banglar Kiron	25/02	Mong	BSC	CL Apaba	
Yun Teng	25/02		Bright	Cement	
Blue Ocean	26/02	Kara	Boal	GI Cal Yangon	
Fong Shin 14/2	26/02	Stng	BDSHP	Cont	Stng
NGS Express					
16/2	26/02	Mong	BDSHP	Cont	Stng
Samudra Raj	26/02	Peng	SSL	GI	
Gafu(48)22/2	26/02	Stng	EBPL	GI	
Kota Buana 17/2	26/02	Stng	CTS	Cont	Stng
Orsha	26/02	Longpu	USTC	Cement	
Dancing Sister	26/02	Rost	Royal	R Seeds	
Stonewall					
Jackson	26/02		Karna	GI New York	
Vishva Aaha	27/02	Mong	SSL	GI/GL Russ Ports	
Arktis Breze	28/02	Stng	PSL	Copra	
Mukachevo	28/02		USTC	Cement	
Mytsichti	28/02		USTC	Cement	
Bervalla 22/2	28/02	Stng	ULA	Cont Uja F East	
NGS Ranger					
22/2	02/03	Stng	BDSHP	Cont	Stng
Chandias	04/03		SSL	GI/GL	UK Cont
Tiger Force					
17/2	05/03	Col	RSL	Cont	Col

TANKER DUE:

Esoo Bangkok	24/02	Stng	MSPIL	HSD
Global Ceres	25/02		TSL	C P Oil

VESSELS AT KUTUBDIA

Name of vessels	Cargo	Last port call	Local agent	Date of arrival
Safina-E-ismail-2	GI/GL	Kara	ASL	23/02
Al Tajwar	Wheat(G)		Aqua	R/A(12/02)
Freedom Venture	Urea		RUSA	R/A(21/02)

VESSELS AT OUTER ANCHORAGE:

READY ON:

Safina-E-ismail-2	GI/GL	Kara	ASL	23/02
Al Tajwar	Wheat(G)		Aqua	R/A(12/02)
Freedom Venture	Urea		RUSA	R/A(21/02)

VESSELS NOT READY:

Arti	GTSP(P)	Ind	H & SL	16/01
Lise	Cement	Sing	Paragon	17/02
Arhon	Gtsp(P)	Sing	H & SL	24/12
Al Tabith	Cement	S Sun	Bright	18/02
Andreas-V	Cement	L Chiri	Khansons	19/02
Xiang He	Cement	Hong	Khansons	21/02

VESSELS AWAITING INSTRUCTION:

Banglar Jyoti		BSC	R/A(21/02)
---------------	--	-----	------------

VESSELS NOT ENTERING:

Mertiga	Scraping	Viza	Umal	01/01
Trans Asia		Sing	Boal	04/02
Sea Progress	Cement	Pada	AML	15/02
Al Sempurna	W Poles	Pana	OTL	20/02
Samudra Rani			SSL	R/A(20/02)
Alam Tenang	Cement	Sing	H & H	R/A(22/02)
Yom Iun Jui	Cement	Benk	Bright	09/02

MOVEMENT OF VESSELS FOR 24/02/93:

OUTGOING	INCOMING	SHIFTING			
J/3	Asian Express	J/8	Banglar Shourabh	J/8	J Sister to J/11
J/7	Trans America	J/13	A Goncharov		
J/11	Optima	J/3	Saigon-1		
J/13	K Jespersen				
MPB/1	Banglar Robi				
MPB/2	Fong Yun				
RM/6	Esoo Bayonne				

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

Price Index

Essentials	OTHER FOODGRAIN	(Taka per kg)
RICE	Flour	12.50-13.00
Amari(fine)	Atta	10.50-11.00
Paman	FISH	(Taka per kg)
VEGETABLES	Rubi(big)	17.00-19.00
Potato (local)	Kandi(big)	13.00-15.00
Brinjal	Pengas	12.00-14.00
Karolla	Shrimp(big)	12.00-14.00
Lalchak	Ka	13.00-15.00
Tomato	MEAT	
Cauliflower	Beef	NA
Gourd	Source: Department of Agriculture marketing	

Exchange Rates

The following are the Commercial Banks' BC selling and TT (C), OD transfer buying rates for some selected foreign currencies effective on February 24, 1993.

Currency	Selling B.C.	T.T. (C)	Buying OD Transfers
US Dollar	39.1326	38.9087	38.6339
Pound Sterling	67.0019	56.6933	56.3119
DM	24.0920	23.9438	23.7747
FFY	7.1325	7.0904	7.0403
S Riyal	10.4641	10.4042	10.3307
D Guilders	21.4073	21.2825	21.1322
S Kroner	5.1670	5.1307	5.0945
Singapore Dollar	23.8555	23.7190	23.5515
UAE Dirham	10.6911	10.6299	10.5548
Kuwait Dinar	128.2180	127.4844	126.5840
Indian Rupee (AMU)	1.4925	1.4858	1.4783
Pak Rupee (AMU)	1.4860	1.4793	1.4719

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

Dhaka Stock Prices

At the close of trading on February 23, 1993

Decline in index, prices

Trading performance at Dhaka Stock Exchange (DSE) further deteriorated as figures showed negative signs. Transactions in terms of value further declined having lost 85.95 per cent of prices against Monday's finish. It closed at Tk 672,194.50 from Monday's Tk 478,449.50. However, shares rose moving ahead to 25,928 issues from Monday's 16,817 issues, showing a rise of 54.17 per cent.

Participation of stocks remained poor. Only 28 stocks traded on the day as against 31 on Monday.

Losers dominated over gainers by a small margin of 11 to seven. Ten stocks traded at unchanged rates. Notable changes appeared in Ambee Pharma's price closure. It traded 20,500 issues losing 17.76 per cent of its price against its previous rate.

The Composite Index slightly fell from Monday's 370,540.1 to finish at 370,058.1, shedding 0.481 point.

TUESDAY'S TRADING AT A GLANCE

DSE Share Price Index	370,058.1
Market Capitalisation (Tk)	10,578,101,288.00
Turnover in Volume	25928
Turnover in Value (Tk)	672,194.50

Company	Previous
---------	----------