

# BLTC's Giant Leap

by Staff Correspondent

Bangladesh Leaf Tobacco Co Ltd (BLTC) was floated in 1979, started exporting tobacco in 1981 and bagged the president's third class trophy for excellence in export in 1986-87. That's the short-cut way of describing BLT's story of success.



Agha Yusuf

We also hope to fetch the trophy for 1991-92 because our export earning for that year was the highest for tobacco, Agha Yusuf, Chairman of BLTC said. "The earning was about Taka 16 crore." Our first export was to China; last year we exported tobacco to USA, UK, Laos, Russia, Germany and Belgium, Yusuf said describing the expansion of BLTC's market.

Export of tobacco has a very bright future for Bangladesh, Yusuf said, if given the right encouragement, the mental pollution. "Export of tobacco has a very bright future for Bangladesh, Yusuf said, if given the right encouragement, the mental pollution. Yusuf may sound too optimistic, but considering the fact that tobacco production has declined sharply due to high labour cost in Thailand and South Korea, the figure fit in comfortably.

## Messrs Popular Jute Exchange Ltd, Narayanganj

Popular Jute Exchange Ltd was able to play a leading role in exporting raw jute during the fiscal 1988-87. This company exported 2.09 lakh bales of jute worth Tk 57.28 crore in 1984-85, 2.54 lakh bales of jute worth Tk 42.75 crore in 1985-86 and 3.44 lakh bales worth Tk 48.59 crore in 1986-87.

for traditional goods category in 1986-87. Though its export figures show that the earning declined in 1986-87 than those of previous years, its volume increased during the time. Popular also contributed to 15 per cent of the total export earning in the traditional goods category. It also showed significant success in expanding the market abroad.

## Bangladesh Export Import Company Ltd

Bangladesh Export Import Company Ltd, trading in the non-traditional goods exported 21 lakh kg of frozen foods worth Tk 37.97 crore in 1986-87. The amount was the highest for the non-traditional category. For this extraordinary success, the company was awarded the first class President's Export Trophy in the

non-traditional category for 1986-87. During the previous years of 1984-85 and 1985-86, it exported 23.36 lakh kg worth Tk 26.43 crore and 18.49 lakh kg worth Tk 28.91 crore respectively. This shows that although the company exported less in volume in 1985-86, it earned more foreign exchange.

## Bengal Leather Industries Ltd

Bengal Leather Industries is one of the few industries which have undergone a modernisation scheme for high value-added export. It exported 75.76 thousand square feet of finished leather worth Tk 24.46 crore during 1986-87 and topped the list of

finished leather exporters. It also received a 1986-87 second class President's Export Trophy for its role in market and export of non-traditional items. Bengal Leather also exported finished leather of Tk 14.50 crore and Tk 14.82 crore during 1984-85 and 1985-86 respectively.

## Messrs Friends International

Friends International was awarded a second class President's Export Trophy in non-traditional category for its pioneering role in exporting hosiery goods in 1986-87. Hosiery products are a new addition to readymade garments export.

During 1984-85, Friends International exported 54000 dozens of hosiery items and earned Tk 1.25 crore. In the following years, its earning shot up by many folds. In 1985-86, the earning reached Tk 3.53 crore from where it went up to Tk 11.17 crore in 1986-87.

## Messrs Bangladesh Exports Ltd

Handicrafts were generally neglected as an export earning sector, but Bangladesh Exports Ltd came forward vigorously in this sector and showed brilliant results. In 1984-85, it exported handicraft goods worth Tk 46.47 lakh. The figure was Tk 1.64 crore in 1985-86 and Tk 2.13 crore in 1986-87.

It topped all the handicrafts exporting enterprises, it got the President's Export Trophy third class for 1986-87 for non-traditional items. The figures also show that Bangladesh Exports Ltd contributed to 17.66 per cent of the total earning from handicrafts export.

## Messrs Export Trade International

Export Trade International exported Tk 48.09 crore worth of jute goods during 1986-87 and topped the list of jute goods exporters. During this period, its volume of export was 35,000 metric tons. This company earned Tk 45.33 crore the previous year, 1985-86, contributing to six

per cent of the total earning from jute goods. Export Trade International has been lauded for its endeavour in market expansion. It received President's Export Trophy (third class) for 1986-87 for non-traditional items.

## Monno Ceramic Industries Ltd

Monno Ceramic Industries has earned its fame in the international market for its ceramic and porcelain products. The international ceramic

market is highly competitive one. Despite that Monno Ceramic earned Tk 1.08 crore by exporting its products in 1986-87.

# Award Gives Incentive to Export

by Staff Correspondent

WITH the distribution of the President's Trophy and Certificates by Prime Minister Khaleda Zia on March 3 among 32 exporting houses for the years 1986-87, 1987-88, 1988-89 and 1989-90, the country's exporters have reasons to feel quite encouraged and inspired.

The President's Export Trophy was introduced in 1978 to give recognition to the exporting houses which will be able to make valuable contribution to the national economy through exporting Bangladesh goods. The trophy aimed at creating enthusiasm and fair competition among the exporters, industrialists and businessmen at national level provides two first class, two second class and four third class awards. The first class trophy is given, one for the export of traditional items and another for non-traditional items. The classification of the trophy was done after analysing a number of factors. The export growth rate of the exporting organisations has been compared with the overall and sectoral growth rate for the years for which trophies were given. Each company's growth rate has also been compared with its previous two years' growth. Other major factors include expansion of market and tapping new markets.

The recipients of the trophy were: Messrs Popular Jute Exchange, first class, 1986-87; Messrs Bangladesh Export Import Co Ltd, first class, 1986-87; Messrs Bengal Leather Industries Ltd, second class, 1986-87; Messrs Friends International, second class, 1986-87; Messrs Bangladesh Exports Ltd, third class, 1986-87; Messrs Monno Ceramic Industries, third class, 1986-87; Messrs James Finlay PLC first class, 1987-88; Messrs Meghna Sea Foods Ltd, first class, 1987-88; Messrs Apex Tannery Ltd, second class, 1987-88; Messrs Transcom Ltd, second class, 1987-88; Messrs KDS Garments Ltd, third class, 1987-88; Messrs Nur Mohammad and Co Ltd, third class, 1987-88; Messrs Dhaka Dying and Manufacturing Company Ltd, third class, 1987-88; Messrs Liberty Impex, third class, 1987-88; Messrs M M Ispahani, first class, 1988-89; Messrs Apex Foods Ltd, first class, 1988-89; Messrs Friends International Ltd, third class, 1988-89; Messrs Bangladesh Export Import Company, second class, 1988-89; Messrs Saleh Carpet Mills Ltd, third class, 1988-89; Messrs Monno Ceramic Industries, third class, 1988-89; Messrs Envoys Group, third class, 1988-89; Messrs Core the Jute Works, third class, 1988-89; Messrs Popular Jute Exchange Ltd, first class, 1989-90; Bangladesh Export Import Company Ltd, first class, 1989-90; Messrs KDS Garments Industries, second class, 1989-90; Messrs Apex Tannery, second class, 1989-90; Messrs Laxoro Ltd, third class, 1989-90; Messrs Conexpo, third class, 1989-90; Messrs N R Knitting Mills, third class, 1989-90; Messrs Karim Leathers Ltd, third class, 1989-90.

# An Interview with DGM, James Finlay

Interviewed by Nurul Alam

"A sense of professionalism, competitive outlook and vision of market diversification helped our company to earn laurels", said the Deputy General Manager of British-owned company James Finlay PLC, Qamrul Islam Chowdhury who received on his company's behalf the "President's Export Trophy" recently for its commendable tea export performance in 1987-88.

In an exclusive interview with The Daily Star, Qamrul Islam Chowdhury confidently claimed his company's success in producing and exporting good liquoring tea having a natural flavour.

"Finlay does not give much emphasis on appearance rather than on flavour because tea is meant for drinking", said Qamrul with a beam adding that "we want to make Assam medium-type tea which helps prepare a good and flavoured beverage".

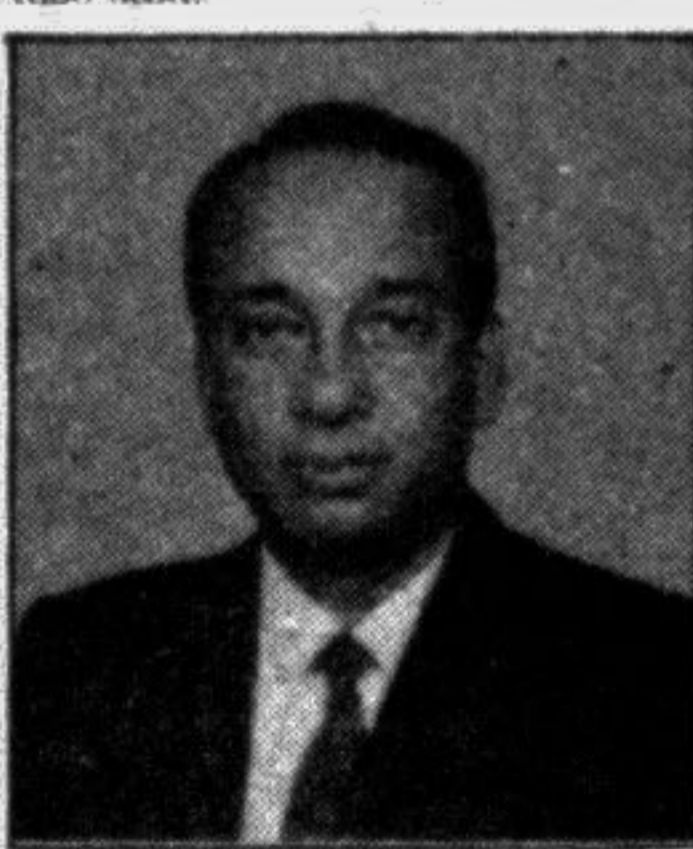
"We are competing with other traditionally known companies of the country to sell our tea both at home and

abroad", he also said. James Finlay known as a hundred per cent sterling company earned Tk. 102.4 million in 1987-88 fiscal year, almost 9 per cent of the country's total export earning from tea, by exporting 25,70,457 kgs of tea. Above 80 per cent of Finlay's exported tea went to UK markets, Qamrul informed.

Besides, James Finlay exported its tea to Pakistan, China, Australia, New Zealand, Oman, Qatar, UAE, Saudi Arabia, The Netherlands, Malaysia and Japan, he also informed saying that "now we are trying to enter more foreign markets particularly in Poland, Russia and Iran".

Finlay made all the exports in cash but not on barter system, he added. Turning to market diversification the DGM said, Finlay had started supplying packet tea which is straight packed from the garden to keep the freshness. Finlay installed on November, 92, a timber treatment plant which operates commercially

in addition to its project of rubber plantations over two thousand hectares of land at Sri Mongal, Sylhet, the DGM also said.



Qamrul Islam Chowdhury

Apart from these, James Finlay set up a plant to manufacture 'instant tea' by utilising the waste tea which were used to be destroyed earlier, he added. First of its kind in the country the high-tech plant built at a cost of Taka three

crore with an installed capacity of one lakh kgs of tea, went into production in August, '91 to meet the exclusive markets of 'instant tea' in USA and UK, he also added.

James Finlay, which owns at least 20 tea gardens in Bangladesh producing about 21 per cent of the country's total production, undertook some programmes to modernise its factories as well as to replace the aging gardens to reduce the cost of production. Qamrul said, adding that the gardens now are with an average yield 1516 kgs. per hectare. But the plants yielding less than 1000 kgs. on an average will be replaced in phases within 1997 as the company is expecting the yield at 2000 kgs. per hectare, Qamrul informed. When asked about receipt of the 'President's Export Trophy' by his company, Qamrul said, "the move is really encouraging for a genuine exporter to get more inspired with the infusion of dynamism into the business".



Bangladesh leather has great demand abroad



Jute industry on decline, but not everything is lost

## Messrs Transcom Ltd

Messrs Transcom Ltd has been playing a leading role in exporting jute goods. In 1985-86, this company exported jute goods worth Tk 16.80 crore. Its export figure in 1986-87 stood at Tk 75.41 crore.

During 1987-88, Transcom exported jute goods worth Tk 72.18 crore. Its 1987-88 earning constituted nine per cent of the total export earning from export of jute goods.

## Messrs Apex Tannery

Messrs Apex Tannery plays a major role in exporting finished leather for more value addition. This company exported leather worth Tk 21.35 crore in 1985-86, Tk 22.76 crore in 1986-87 and Tk

35.17 crore in 1987-88. It added eight per cent of the total export earning from leather. It got the 1987-88 President's Trophy, second class, for export excellence in non-traditional items.

## Messrs KDS Garments Ltd

Messrs KDS Garments Industries has always been playing a leading role in the export of readymade garments. It has been able to keep its export rising since 1985-86 when its export earning was Tk 22.71 crore. In 1986-87, its earning rose to Tk 31.44 crore from which it further rose to Tk 39.54 crore in

1987-88. Its 1987-88 performance shows that KDS Garments Ltd contributed to three per cent of the total earning from export of garments. For its quick expansion of trade, KDS Garments Ltd received the 1987-88 President's Trophy (third class), for non-traditional items.

## Messrs Nur Mohammad and Company Ltd

Nur Mohammad and Company Ltd showed its excellence by exporting an item like salted and dehydrated fish.

1987-88 and stood at Tk 2.86 crore. For its outstanding performance in dehydrated and salted fish export, Nur Mohammad and Company was awarded the 1987-88 President's Trophy third class for non-traditional items.

In 1985-86, this company exported the item worth Tk 1.48 crore. The earning increased almost by two folds in

# Apex Tannery Journey to Success

by Inam Ahmed

APPEX tannery that started its journey in 1975 with the disinvested unit, Orient Tannery, has now achieved a key position in leather business.

ment, we had to reduce wet blue leather." Then in 1982 a taka six crore modernisation programme with Shilpa bank loan was taken for production of crushed leather.

As a recognition to its indefatigable endeavour, the Apex

It was also at that time that the company was made a public limited company. At that time the paid-up capital of the company was Tk 1.81 crore.



Manzur Elahi

Tannery was awarded the President's Trophy for 1990-91 and 1989-90.

The chairman of the tannery, Syed Manzur Elahi in an interview with The Daily Star said Apex Tannery (AT), with a two-year technological lead over its local rivals, has built up a 16 per cent share of the country's 130 million US dollar leather export business per year.

Later, in 1986, AT underwent another modernisation programme for conversion to finished leather at the cost of Tk four crore. This time the total cost was realised from the public by issuing 17 per cent convertible participatory debentures each at par of Tk 2000.

"Our nearest rival controls only 1.4 per cent of the export", Elahi said.

This is the first time that such convertible debentures had been floated by any company in Bangladesh", Elahi said, "options were there that those who want to convert their debentures into shares could do it in 1990." So when the time came, almost all debentures holders converted them to shares adding another Tk two crore to the paid-up capital thereby pushing it up to Tk 3.81 crore. "To accumulate more capital and to avoid short-term debt, the company offered 1:1 rights issue and raised its paid-up capital to Tk 7.62 crore in 1992," Elahi said.

"We are now going finished leather goods production", said Elahi who is also a former president of the Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

Elahi projects that AT will benefit from lower debt in 1993 while the margins will grow with more top grade leather sales in 1993 and 1994.

By combining superior technology with cheap local hide, AT has become the country's highest value-added finished leather exporter.

It is estimated that the profit after tax payment of the company will be Tk 58 million in 1992-93 from Tk 28 million in 1991-92.

Over the past 15 years, it has successfully allied itself with leather specialists from Italy.

"Leather export has a tremendous future for expansion," Elahi said, "government must encourage the tanners to go for more value-added products. Government should also concentrate on developing livestock in the country for both production and leather supply to the industries", he added.

"But in the beginning, the journey was not as smooth as it is now", Elahi said, "as the tannery had backdated equip-

## Messrs Dhaka Dying and Manufacturing Company Ltd

Dhaka Dying and Manufacturing company had played a key role in exporting specialized textiles products. Its export proceeds showed a steep rise since 1985-86 when its earning was Tk 32.47 lakh. In 1986-87, the figure rose to Tk 1.67 crore and in 1987-88, it was Tk 1.75 crore. It has

achieved significant success in securing good price per unit of exports and also witnessed the market for Bangladesh fabrics.

For its pioneering role in the field, Dhaka Dying and Manufacturing was awarded the President's Award third class, for 1987-88 for non-traditional items.

## Messrs Liberty Impex

Liberty Impex has achieved significant progress in the export of fresh vegetables. During 1987-88, it has exported vegetables worth Tk 1.49 crore. This achievement was possible when there was a slump in both the production and export of vegetables.

Not only that, Liberty Impex has been successful to bag a higher price for each unit of exports.

It has been awarded the 1987-88 President's trophy, third class, for exporting an item that is both promising and non-traditional.

## (a) President's Export Trophy for the year 1988-89

1) First grade trophy for traditional items:

(a) MM Ispahani Ltd, Chittagong

Ispahani Limited has got the President's Export Trophy, first class for the year 1988-89 for its outstanding contribution to the export of tea. It has earned foreign currency worth Taka 11.82 crore, 15.62 crore and 20.42 crore by exporting tea in 1986-87, 1987-88 and 1988-89 respectively. The growth rate in export was, however, 32 per cent in 1987-88 and 39 per cent in 1988-89.

The growth was not only in export earning, but also export quantity. It exported 20.06 lakh kg in 1986-87, 35.39 lakh kg in 87-88 and 39.58 lakh kg in 88-89 fiscal year. The growth rate was, however, 8.1 per cent in 87-88 and 9 per cent in 88-89.

Ispahani Ltd earned 13.47 per cent of the total export earnings by the tea sector in 1988-89.

(b) For non-traditional items:

## Apex Foods Ltd, Chittagong

The Apex Foods Ltd has got the President's Export Trophy of class one for the year 1988-89 for its success in exporting frozen foods. It earned foreign currency worth Taka 43.17 crore in the said year by exporting 15 lakh kg frozen foods. The earnings

were Taka 22.41 crore and 40.11 crore in 86-87 and 87-88 fiscal years for exporting 10.74 and 16.41 lakh kg frozen foods. Although the quantity of export reduced in 1988-89, the export earnings of the company showed an increase.

## (2) Second grade trophy (a) Friends International Limited, Dhaka

Friends International Ltd got the President's Export Trophy of second class for the year 1988-89 for its success in exporting hosiery items.

It received President's Export Trophy (third class) for 1986-87 for non-traditional items. Friends International Ltd earned 13.47 per cent of the total export earnings by the tea sector in 1988-89.

## (b) Bangladesh Export Import Company Limited, Dhaka

Bangladesh Export Import Company Ltd took the top position by exporting jute and twine worth Tk 35.42 crore in 1988-89.

The amount of export and its growth was, however, 14,404 metric tons during the period. The amount of export and its growth was, however, 14,404 metric tons during the period. The amount of export and its growth was, however, 14,404 metric tons during the period.