

# DThe Paily Star DUSINESS

HYUNDAI

CARS THAT MAKE SENSE.

## Foreign cos cutting into viability of country's fragile shipping sector

by M Anwarul Haq

Foreign companies are reportedly cutting into the viability of the country's fragile shipping sector without mak-

ing any significant investment. Although the government allows opening of outfits or offices to foreign shipping companies owning or operating vessels, some overseas firms are engaged in setting branch offices under the country's open market economic policy. These firms are trying to set up the offices without having any proven track record in the shipping business, nor do they have any operating vessels.

Instead of bringing in foreign investment to further bolster the shipping fleet of Bangladesh, the foreign companies are mainly interested in raking profits from commissions through "shipping agency" business which nets in around five per cent from vessels operating in this region.

Shipping circles feel that the government should examine whether the local sources of income are being utilised by the foreign shipping companies for meeting normal expenses which according to Bangladesh Bank regulations are to be reimbursed by them either from the freight or by

remittances from abroad.

Recently a Karachi based shipping company "Inshipping" has opened of-

firm which does not have any ship, can neither deliver something innovative in technology nor offer large employment or investment in foreign exchange. "They will only take away five per cent commission payable by ship owners to the agent on net freight."

when asked to comment about granting of shipping license to a foreign firm without having any ship said, "The policy to permit shipping offices is a government decision. When issuing NBR permission we normally see if the applicant meets the requisite criteria."

When the Shipping Minister's attention was drawn he said, "There is a complaint It is directly related with the industrial policy. "Without elaborating he also added that necessary advice had been

given to the Industries

Ministry. Shipping Secretary Waliur Rahman said the shipping sector is now deregulated and no permission was required for setting up business. He also informed that earlier government permission was required for purchasing ships, but now

However, there is widespread apprehension in the shipping trade that there was undue haste in allowing a foreign shipping agent to operate in Bangladesh without having realistic study of the local shipping scene. In this particular case, the Karachibased firm first applied for registration as a trading house and later applied for shipping agency license. The license to the foreign firm was issued without inordinate delay while for Bangladeshi entrepreneurs it takes a long period of time.

Local shipping agents also fear that other foreign agents who do not have any vessels would also feel encouraged to apply for commission business.

They also apprehend that foreign companies who are mainly agents will never take the initiative to have sound roots to invest in this country.

Shipping experts also feel that in the name of opening up the economy the authorities should not open the door to shipping agents, particularly to those who do not have any ships to transact shipping agency work. This is a sphere in which Bangladeshi entrepreneurs already have the requisite expertise and are, with considerable ability managing such business since the independence of the coun-

Over the recent years many Bangladeshi firms which were having a réasonable cash flow came to own their ships bolstering the strength of the country's home shipping fleet Besides. Bangladeshi agents earn as much as 10 to 15 million US dollars every year by handling the foreign shipping lines, substantial earning of which was ploughed back into areas of national development benefitting both local en trepreneurs and employing a large number of local people besides enabling them to purchase vessels.

Mentionably not a single Bangladeshi shipping company has been able to obtain license to open offices in India. Pakistan and Sri Lanka.



M Haider Chowdhury, Chairman, National Credit and Commerce Bank Limited, addressing the branch managers' conference at the NCCBL head office in the city yesterday. Chowdhury Abdul Quayum, Managing Director, and Mohammed Ali, Executive Vice President and Secretary of the bank, are also seen in the picture.

## Industrial waste — a threat to fish species

When soaring price is putting common buyers in a fix in the city's fish markets. Abdul Karim volunteers his service to those who are looking for cheaper fares, according to BSS.

"Sir, my fish is fresh and affordable to you. Please, buy and have a good meal at home," he often shouts at the top of his hoarse voice to attract buyers.

But Karim's voice soon fades into despair when most of the buyers turn away their faces seeing the fish with a sort of ugly red spots. He still-tries to lure some of the customers with his talks.

He says these wounds are nothing but spots caused by rubbing of a fish against another put in a same container.

"Even if it is any disease, there's no cause of fear. You can eat it safely as heat destroys all germs during cook ing," he tells the customers in his usual style everyday.

Forty-year old fish trader from Brahmanbaria has been in this business for over 15 years. He said there were many others like him selling diseased fish in various markets of the city.

As he exposed his fish with red spots on open aluminium plates for sale in the busy Kawran Bazar kitchen market. Karim said such fish were being sighted in markets during the last seven to eight years.

Unscrupulous fish traders try to hide such spots by using, what they say, a kind of substance but ultimately cannot befool the buyers. Sometimes they put blood from cows of goats into the ears of rotten fish so that they appear to be

This correspondent visited several markets of the city during the past one week and saw such fish being sold at

People with low income have no option but to buy such

tal to buy fresh fish and sell them in markets.

Varieties of small fish including puti, meni, koi, pabda, taki, magur and shingi and bigger ones like shole, gajar boal and species of carps are attacked by this disease.

Fisheries experts identified the disease as "epizotic ulcerative syndrome" caused by a kind of bacteria and some viruses in open waterbodies during the dry seasons.

They say environmental pollution is one of the main reasons for the disease which is also largely responsible for the sharp decline in fish production in Bangladesh

The disease, which breaks

continues up to the advent of the rainy season, is now a regular phenomenon in most areas of Bangladesh, particularly in the northern region.

out in the late autumn and

Fisheries experts believe that decrease in oxygen, chloride and other necessary fertilisers and increase in salinity and acidity in water are major reasons for outbreak of such

The syndrome, which kills a fish within seven to 14 days' time, spreads swiftly from one place to another.

However, available reports said rotten fish along with fish skeletons were now being caught into the nets of fisher-

Officials of the fisheries directorate are constantly giving advice on preventive measures against the syndrome. They are also conducting orientation courses for fishermen as well

as fish culturists as to how to

keep their waterbodies free

from any environmental con-

men in open water bodies in

various places of the country.

People in many areas stopped

using water of ponds and

rivers affected by the syn-

tamination. Environmentalists do not rule out the possibility that this syndrome is being caused by industrial and municipal waste which is released into

They say the waste carrying dangerous elements is polluting open water and destroying fish species in a large number all over the country:

nearby rivers everyday.

Deputy Director of the Directorate of Environment Abdus Sobhan said industrial belts including Dhaka, Chittagong, Narayangani and those in North Bengal were releasing hundreds of tonnes of waste everyday into nearby rivers. The flow of water is carrying the waste to other parts of the country.

"Each of the tanneries in Hazaribagh of Dhaka city releases at least 2,500 gallons of toxic waste everyday into the river Buriganga," he said, adding, the situation is almost equally precarious in Tongi and other belts along the river Shitalakkhya.

Sobhan said the Bay of Bengal receives at least 45,500 kgs of dangerous waste from industries close to its coast. The waste is contributing towards outbreak of diseases in marine fisheries.

Chandpur Fisheries Research Institute sources said use of pesticides and insecticides in agriculture lands were also destroying fish and their breeding in floodplains during rainy seasons.

## Asia evokes impressive images of economies

chasm between Asia's fastgrowing nations and its laggard economies is creating a regional landscape that is starting to mirror global North South disparities, reports IPS.

Asia evokes impressive images of economies growing at breakneck speed. It is home to Japan, whose per capita income ranks third in the world. and tiger economies whose living standards rival those of European nations. But the world's fastest-

growing region is also home to some of the world's poorest nations, whose per capita incomes fall below us 200 dollar and have no place in slick investor briefs on Asia.

Bangladesh, Cambodia. Nepal, and Bhutan are near the bottom of the United Nations' human development index. Half of the world's 1.3 billion

poor live in South Asia, and India alone has 27 per cent of the global figure. Seven of 10 developing

countries with the most number of poor are in Asia — India. Bangladesh. Indonesia Vietnam, The Philippines, Pakistan and China. Nine per cent of China's population lives

South' gap.

said East Asia, whose poor fell from 35 per cent of the populace in 1970 to 10 per cent in 1990, may well be "the first developing region to overcome the poverty problem."

But along with income differences within Asia's poorer

among Asian countries, said the Asian Development Bank's (ASDB) 1994 annual report:

major problem in the region and wide disparities existed both within and among coun-

South Asia's 5.1 per cent growth in 1994 was the best in four years, but is still behind South-East Asia's 7.5 per cent. It will continue to trail behind East and South-East Asia, says the bank's 'annual development outlook 1995 and 1996.

ASDB Assistant Economist J Malcolm Dowling said, due to differences in economic reform and investments and savings rates.

Mainly agrarian transitional economies like Cambodia, Laos, Burma and Vietnam, the central Asian republics and the Pacific Island economies have yet to share in richer Asia's

replaced the Middle East as

recent years. Nationals from Bangladesh

migrants' main destination in

Sri Lanka, The Philippines, Thailand and Burma take their chances in richer nations like Japan, Taiwan and Korea or labour-short Malaysia Singapore and Brunei.

As in the global North South gap, critics are pointing out not just intra-Asian disparities but what they say is richer nations' exploitation of poorer ones just opening up to the world.

## BIBM seminar on career planning

A one-day seminar on "Career Planning in Banks" begins at seminar hall of Bangladesh

Secretary of Finance Mi nistry A T M Shamsul Huda will inaugurate the seminar as chief guest.

Director General of BIBM AHM Nurul Islam Choudhury and Faculty Member ATM Abdus Shahid will addressed the seminar organised by BI-

PLATINUM: Slipping. Pla

tinum fell by around 20 dollars

to 440 dollars per ounce. Hit

by gold's decline and the

dollar's recovery, although it

lifted to around 450 dollars

per ounce at the end of the

ended the week 84.5 dollars

lower at 2.761 dollars per

tonne, slumping 96 dollars on

Tuesday, before recovering

slightly. Most of the rest of the

LME warehouse stock figures

showing only a 200-tonne net

drawdown in copper stocks.

which the market interpreted

as heralding the end of cop-

Dealers also noted that

comex warehouse stocks in

the US appeared to be

recovering from the low point

However, Angus MacMillan,

analyst at billion, said he felt

that copper's fundamentals

remained constructive even if

"Up until today the stock

the technical outlook is cur-

drawdowns have been rela-

tively supportive and I think

there is still physical tightness

in the market, said Mac-

possible explosion at Sweden's

Boliden copper smelter halted

copper's slide, although offi-

cials explained there had been

no explosion but that a leak of

molten metal had lead to the

closure of the smelter for

4,025 tonnes to 204,750, co-

mpared with a fall of 18,050

·Weekly stocks fell only

three days.

On Wednesday, talk of

rently "less than positive."

per's supply deficit.

of their cycle.

Midweek, copper was hit by

complex moved lower in line.

COPPER: Lower. Copper

fresh

#### Mahbub Jamil, Chairman and Managing Director of Singer Bangladesh Limited, inaugurated Singer Show Room-cum-Sales Centre at Press Club Complex in Mymensingh yesterday. This show room cum-sales centre has been shifted from Station Road, Mymensingh to C K Ghosh Road.

## Commodity market: Prices of oil higher, sugar down, tea stable

#### LONDON, Apr 29: The price of Brent Crude North Sea Oil climbed to its highest level since August 1994 this week. lifting through the key 19 dollars a barrel level on Thursday on expectations of production cuts, reports AFP.

Several platforms in the North Sea are expected to cut production in order to carry out maintenance work. One London analyst predicted production in the North Sea would fall from 5.6 million barrels per day in April to 4.9

million in June. · Elsewhere on the commodity markets, trading was generally calm, with a slight decline in the prices of the precious metals and in the base metals, which followed copper lower.

Sugar was also down, as was cotton, while the grains and coffee slipped slightly. GOLD: Easing. Gold fell

around five dollars midweek to 386 dollars an ounce as dealers took profits after strong rises the previous week. Gold was also hit by the

surprise rise in the dollar after the G-7 meeting and market speculation that the period of currency turbulence could be drawing to a close. But at the end of the week,

a sharp rise in silver pushed gold higher to around 389 dollars per ounce on Friday. Gold was also supported by IMF's decision to abandon plans to sell part of its gold reserves to help poorer countries.

SILVER: Higher. After beginning the week cautiously. prices then jumped to 5.70 dollars per ounce after buying

had climbed to over six dollars - its highest level since 1989 - after buying by Salomon and as silver stocks fell on the New York market.

1.116 dollars per tonne, on firmer demand and as the fundamentals for the metal appeared increasingly positive.

GNI estimated that Indian supplies will fall short of demand by around 40,000 tonnes in 1995-1996, which will need to be filled by secondary, production or imports. Elsewhere, Chinese exports

remained strong, despite extreme concentrate shortages, posting a 75.8 per cent increase in the first quarter compared with the same period in 1994, at 89,438

Weekly stocks fell by 12,450 tonnes to 966,700. ALUMINIUM: Easing. Aluminium slipped 49 dollars during the week to end at around 1,823 dollars per tonne,

easing in line with copper and on weaker stocks figures. British analyst Tony Bird of Anthony Bird Associates predicted the primary aluminium market was likely to remain in deficit and that stocks of metal

would continue to fall, between now and 1997. Writing in his April report, Bird said there is very little room for further growth in consumption in 1995 and 1996 after massive gains in 1994. when consumption grew by 11

He predicted the aluminium market would record a deficit of 388,000 tonnes in 1995, compared with a deficit of 490,000 tonnes in 1994, the deficit will narrow to 201,000 tonnes in 1996 but widen again to 561,000 tonnes in 1997.

per cent.

Weekly stocks fell by 51,950 tonnes to 1,009,125 tonnes.

run at about 25 to 30 per cent

mained firm on a cut in supply

American producers agreed a series of products cuts.

SUGAR: Bumpy. The referthe market.

Dealers at GNI said that Thailand could produce up to ing countries.

VEGETABLE OILS: Higher. Sunflower, rapeseed, palm and soya oil all lifted on the Rotterdam market after falling the previous week, boosted by a drop in sales of Argentinian soya compared to the same

Soya prices were hit later in the week on the Chicago market as the sale of the large Brazilian harvest continued to

OIL: Higher. The Brent Crude reference price climbed by half a dollar to around 19.10 dollars a barrel on speculative buying and firmer demand for

Peter Gignoux, a dealer

duction in order to carry out maintenance work. The Royal Bank of Scotland (RBS) said British oil production had fallen by 1.5 per cent in March 1995 compared to February, with average produc-

tion of 2.65 million barrels a

of some platforms. The market was also supported by a strong rise in petrol prices on the New York market, particularly on rumours of a technical problems

WOOL: Lower The Bradford, northern England, refe

rence fell by 15 pence to 510 pence per kilo - its lowest level since February as demand eased off in line with currency turbulence.

## Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh Office of the Executive Engineer (R&H)

## **Tender Invitation Notice**

Estimated cost Earnest money

Time for completion of work

Offices where tender will be sold

Offices where tender will be received

Last date of selling Date & time of receiving tender

10. Prescribed date & time of opening tender 11. Date & time of holding lottery

12 Eligibility of contractor DFP-10300-24/4

in poverty, compared to India's 40 per cent. There may well be two Asias, rich and poor. The North-South gap has come to the east, creating an "East-

In 1993 the World Bank

nations, large gaps remain

Maddhapara Hard Rock **Mining Project** 

(A Project of Petrobangla) Petrocentre, 3, Kawran Bazar C/A, Dhaka-1215, Bangladesh.

Corrigendum International Tender No. MHMP/INS/01/95 for Appointment of Pre-shipment and Post-landing Inspection.

2. (a) Time & date for submission of Bids will be 11.00 Hrs (BST) of 16 May Time & date for opening of Bids will be 11.30 Hrs (BST) of 16 May 1995. 3. Value of Earnest Money will be Tk 1,00,000.00 or US \$ 2479.00 instead of 2.5%

The "Terms & Conditions" of subject Tender is being amended as under:

Closing date for sale of Bidding documents extended up to 15 May 1995.

of the quoted value. All other terms & conditions of the tender will remain unchanged.

General Manager/Project Manager

### Road Division, Moulvi Bazar Phone: 2245

96 (ninety-six)/EE (R&H), Road Division, Moulvi Tender Notice No Tender for the work of repair to bridge & culvert Name of work approaches with carpeting & seal coat at

1994-95 financial year. Tk 5,39,860/00 Tk 10,797/00

25 (twenty-five) days from the date of issuing work order. 1) Executive Engineer (R&H), Road Division

different kms of Mouly: Bazar-Shamsernagar

Road under Moulvi Bazar Road Division during

Moulvi Bazar/Habigani/ Sylhet/ Sunamgani/ Planning & Drawing Division, Comilla/ Planning Road & Bridge), Dhaka. 2) Sub-Divisional Engineer (R&H), Road Sub-Division, Moulvi Bazar/ Kulaura/Sri

Mangal/Mechanical Sub-Division, Moulvi Bazar. Additional Chief Engineer (R&H), Comilla Zone, Comilla. Superintending Engineer (R&H), Sylhet

Superintending Engineer (R&H), Monitoring

Executive Engineer (R&H), Road Division, Moulvi Bazarl. 6-5-95 (23-01-1402 BS) up to office hours.

& Evaluation Circle, Dhaka.

Road Circle, Sylhet.

7-5-95 (24-01-1402 BS) up to 12-30 PM. 8-5-95 (25-01-1402 BS) at 12-45 PM.

R&H Dte enlisted 'A' to 'D' general class contractors.

Executive Engineer (R&H) Road Division, Moulvi Bazar

fices in Dhaka and Chittagong. It is learnt that both the Ministry of Industries and the National Board of Revenue instructed the Chittagong Customs House to issue license this has also been waived. to the foreign firm.

Shipping circles said, the

The Chairman of the NBR

"Poverty continued to be a

"The growth experience of east and south east has diverged substantially during the past two and a half decades," Chief

A clear sign of poverty and inequality within Asia is crossborder migration that is rising as affluent nations try to control it. There are now millions of intra-Asian migrants as Asia

begins today

Institute of Bank Management (BIBM) here at 10 am today (Sunday), reports UNB.

random. fish as fresh ones are out of their reach due to exorbitant prices. Karim and others like

him have also not enough capi-

of the island's 70,000 tonnes capacity (21,000 to 24,500

tonnes) but a new mine should double that figure, dealers at GNI reported. Weekly stocks fell by 1,392

tonnes to 114,390. TIN: Higher. Tin lifted around 35 dollars to 5,960 dollars per tonne in mainly technical trading, although in touched 6,040 dollars per

tonne - its highest point since January, midweek. GNI said workers at two Bolivian mines had gone back to work following a government decree ending a dispute originally called to show sym-

pathy with striking teachers. "But strike leaders are adamant that the issue has not been solved, and we would therefore expect further disruptions through out the year," GNI said.

705 tonnes to 19.355.

Weekly tin stocks fell by

COCOA: Indecisive. Cocoa

prices moved lower after

profit-taking early in the week, before rising to 990 pounds per tonne. Dealers at GNI said prices rose on firmer demand in Japan, the US, Germany and Holland and that they could

Another positive factor was that Ghana had already sold this season's cocoa harvest, although dealers noted that the Ivory Coast harvest was sufficiently large to avoid any shortages. COFFEE: Easing. Coffee prices feil around 50 dollars to

around 3.120 dollars per

tonne after sales by the Ivory

soar to 1,010 pounds per

Coast and some other Asian producers.

after Colombia and central

ence price rose to 313 dollars per tonne in technical trading ahead of the expiry of the May contract, but prices then fell to 303 dollars as large harvest from Brazil and Thailand hit

5.5 million tonnes of sugar - a harvest which would place it in the world's top three export-

period in 1994.

weigh on the market. North Sea oil from refineries.

with Trx futures, said the higher prices were also due to a predicted cut in British pro-

The RBS said the production drop was due to "seasonal factors" and technical problems affecting the production

in a US refinery

RUBBER: Weaker Rubber

prices fell by around 30 pounds to 1,150 pounds per tohne as western tyre manufacturers slowed their buying.

> January and March and were now holding off. GRAINS: Lower. The prices of wheat and barley fell by between one and two pounds to respectively 119 and 111 pounds per tonne, after an extremely calm week on Euro-

pean markets with few ex-

One British trader indi-

cated that the manufacturers

had stocked up between

ports. The Chicago futures market was more active with prices initially boosted by speculative buying after frost in the plains, but prices then eased as it became apparent the cold snap had caused no damage.

Elsewhere, the interna-

tional Wheat Council dicted that the world wheat harvest would be lower than expected in 1995-1996 (July to June) at only 550 milliontonnes after reduced production from Russia and Australia. TEA: Regular. The average price of tea on the London auc-

Indian harvest. A lack of rain during the first four months of 1995 is expected result in the Indian harvest being less than the 133 million kilos gathered ast year.

COTTON: Erratic. Cotton

prices on the New York futures

market were hit by nervous

tion market remained stable at

107 pence per kilo, despite an

announcement of a drop in the

speculative selling midweek. but the cotton outlook reference price in London rose to 1.18 dollars per pound - its highest ever level

tonnes last week. by the US Investment Found 9-5-95 (26-01-1402 BS) at 11-30 AM at the office LEAD: Lower. Ended the .The market was also hit by NICKEL: Down. Nickel Manager Phibro Salomon. week 12 dollars lower at 628 of the undersigned prospects of the sale in May of eased 60 dollars to 7.470 The previous week, silver dollars per tonne, following Brazilian stocks of green cofdollars per tonne, slipping in copper's lead. line with the complex. Stocks fell by 6,075 tonnes Md Abdul Khaleque Mia In Cuba, an official said that The market, however, reto 280,350. nickel output would probably

ZINC: Lifting. Zinc ended

the week 22 dollars highest at