

Round-table confce on 'Bangladesh Portfolio Evaluation' ends

IFAD-funded projects should be based on demand-driven goods, services

The income-generating and agricultural development projects funded by the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) should be based on demand-driven goods and services to achieve the objective of poverty alleviation, reports UNB.

This was recommended by the two-day round-table conference on "Bangladesh Portfolio Evaluation" that ended here yesterday. Agriculture Secretary M Akhtar Ali presided over the concluding session.

It also recommended that project designs should be able to create enhanced savings or assets to sustain the target groups together. Involvement of local-level planning and programmes should be ensured. Beneficiaries should own the projects and remain committed for sustainability.

Unhealthy competition among the participating agencies, including NGOs, should be discouraged. NGOs should be involved as facilitators in ensuring participatory project designs and appropriate mechanism for effective government-NGO coordination at the local level should be devised.

Guidelines for people's participation in harmonizing the activities of NGOs and local government institutions should be ensured, recommended the conference, jointly organised by the Economic Relations Division and the IFAD.

Government officials, representative of IFAD, donor agencies and NGOs participated in it.

Bangladesh, one of the largest recipients of IFAD's concessional loan, has received

assistance worth 210 million US dollar to date for 13 projects, 8 of which have already been completed.

A new project under the name and style of employment generation for the rural poor has been recently approved by IFAD Executive Board, the estimated cost of which is more than 14 million US dollar. Four more projects are also in the pipeline.

IFAD programmes aims at combating hunger and rural poverty in low-income region of the world through increase of agricultural productivity and

generation of employment.

The conference further recommended that appropriate lending agencies and the social and institutional organizations should be identified. Their respective roles should be spelt out clearly in resolving relevant issues such as interest spreads, risk coverage during project formulation.

The credit projects should emphasize and ensure loan supervision arrangements at borrowers level by NGOs/banks and adopt participatory approach of all project partners. Beneficiaries should be en-

couraged to build up reserve funds.

While determining the interest rate it should be so fixed that at least covers the cost of fund including administrative cost. After completion of the project, credit institutions should progressively move towards market-determined interest rate.

For fostering participation and inculcating a spirit of ownership of projects, financial institutions should also contribute their own funds to augment donor-aided funds, it recommended.



David T Kaveny, General Manager (extreme right) and Mirza Ejaz Ahmed, Director of Marketing & Treasurer of American Express Bank, seen visiting ICDDR,B hospital where the nurses are being trained.

American Express grant for nurses' training

Every year diarrhoea kills an estimated 3.3 million children under the age of five in the world's developing nations. Sadly, most of these deaths are unnecessary. They are the result of a lack of knowledge about a simple and inexpensive oral rehydration treatment that can prevent death from severe dehydration associated with cholera and other diarrhoeal diseases, says a press release.

In order to help spread knowledge of the treatment, a 75,000 US dollar grant from the American Express Foundation—made on behalf of American Express Bank—is funding the course designed to train nurses to teach other healthcare workers in the use of Oral Rehydration. The contribution, made to the Child Health Foundation in recognition of American Express Bank's 75th anniversary, is being used at the International Centre for Diarrhoeal Disease Research, Bangladesh (ICDDR,B) where a two-week 'train-the-trainer' workshop is being held for nurses from India, Indonesia, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Bangladesh.

The workshop began on May 15 at ICDDR,B's hospital in Dhaka. In addition to teaching participants how to train healthcare workers in their

home countries, the workshop will provide the nurses documentation and training material to support the programme back home.

Participants from Bangladesh are: Musammil Sabina Yasmin, Ms Munira Akhter and Ms Safia Khatun.

During the first half of the two-week programme, the nurses will receive instruction in the prevention, control and surveillance of epidemics of diarrhoeal disease as well as the effective use of Oral Rehydration Therapy. The second half of the programme is designed to impact the skills they will need to develop training programmes of their own. Both portions of the programme will involve classroom work and hands-on experience at the Centre's hospital.

"In commemoration of the Bank's 75th anniversary, we are pleased that the American Express Foundation is funding a programme that will make a

real difference in the lives of so many young people," commented Lach Hough, Managing Director Asia/Pacific, Subcontinent for American Express Bank. "We selected this particular programme in response to input from our employees who wanted the Company to direct its philanthropy to a programme that would address children's health issues in countries where the Bank has a strong presence."

American Express Bank, a subsidiary of American Express Company, operates in 37 countries around the world, and has been doing business in Asia for almost its entire history.

"Since the nurses we are training today will go back to their home countries and train others, the American Express Foundation grant will have an impact for many years to come," said Charlene Dale, Executive Director of the Child Health Foundation. "We call this an 'endowment in health' because it meets our goals of maximizing impact in saving lives at the lowest possible cost."

The Columbia, Maryland-based Child Health Foundation coordinates and helps fund a number of health and medical programmes around the world including those at the ICDDR,B.

Tk 28 cr invested in 31 industrial projects in N-dists

NATORE, May 21: About Tk 28 crore has so far been invested in 31 different industrial projects in the northern part of the country in the last four years (March 91 to March 95). Rajshahi Divisional Board of Investment (BOI) office sources said, reports UNB.

According to BOI officials, out of 31 units, 18 projects involving an amount of Tk 20.38 crore have gone into commercial production while 8 units involving Tk 4.27 crore are under different stages of implementation.

Rest three units involving Tk 3 crore were shut down immediately after the commencement of commercial production, officials added.

Rajshahi BOI office could not furnish any information regarding the reasons of shut down.

The units in commercial production include four cold storages, three construction industries, two soap and detergent factories and one each in edible oil, dairy farm, copra processing, watch and clock, gas appliances and fittings, agro-based industry and flour mills.

Among the under implementation units five are: match industries and one each in dyeing and finishing, non-edible oil and cold storage.

BUDGET '95-96: Business leaders speak out

Banglacraft President tells The Daily Star

Interest rate on export credit should be reduced to 5 pc

Frequent hartals, *aborodh* (blockades) and strikes are creating an uncertain situation in the country's trade sector. This has been observed by **S U Haider**, president of Banglacraft—the central body of the handicraft manufacturers and exporters.

In an interview with The Daily Star, he said transport of raw materials to production centres, finished goods to exporters godown, despatch of goods by truck and container to ports always become uncertain and delayed.

As a result, the L/C period expires—which is detrimental both to the exporters and buyers, he mentioned.

Rafiq Hasan interviewed him. Following is the text of his interview:

The Daily Star (DS): What is your sector's expectation for the next budget? Were the priorities in the last budget properly implemented?

S U Haider (SUH): We expect reduction of interest rate on export credit to 5 per cent from 10 per cent now, and fixation of export credit duration at 270 days. These are some of the main expectations of the sector.

DS: What is the recent trend in your sector? Is it growing or declining? Why?

SUH: The recent trend in handicraft sector is declining.

DS: What kind of problem did your sector face with the fiscal policies adopted in the last budget. VAT, tax struc-

ture and tariff duties?

SUH: The handicraft sector like other sector is affected by the frequent political disturbances and uncertain situation.

Among the major problems facing the handicraft industries are: (a) Lack of access to capital (b) Inadequate infrastructural facilities (C) Tariff and non-Tariff barriers abroad

to compete with China, India and the Philippines.

DS: Skill development training programme has to be initiated on regular basis for product development and diversification.

SUH: Absence of capital and export credit facilities from banks make the industries sick.

DS: What are your views on the on-going economic reforms and what particular impact did it have on your sector?

SUH: The economic reforms have not yet been targeted for increasing handicraft export and for development of handicraft sector.

DS: Have you any suggestions for any major policy changes to bolster the economy?

SUH: A number of steps should be taken for the development of handicraft sector. These are: (a) Interest rate on export credit should be 5 per cent from 10 per cent. (b) The duration of export credit should be 270 days. (C) General waiver required for handicraft exports. (d) More participation in international trade fairs (e) A central training centre for product development and display centres should be opened in major countries.

DS: What is your opinion about the current political situation? How is it affecting the economy?

SUH: Frequent calling of hartals, *aborodh* sabha and

nichit (rally and procession) are creating an uncertain situation and uncertainty in trade promotion. Transport of raw materials to production centres, finished goods to exporters godowns despatch of goods by truck, container to the ports become uncertain and delayed. As a result, the L/C period expires—which is detrimental both to the exporters and buyers.

The *chandabazee* (toll collection) and *santrasties* (terrorism) also disturb the flow of transport carrying exportables to Chittagong, Khulna or air ports.

DS: How do you view the overall economic scenario and what are your suggestions to improve it?

SUH: The over-all economic scenario of the country is hopeful even with disturbances and subversive activities, high price level of food-grains and black marketing of fertilizer.

DS: How many members are there in your association? When was it formed?

SUH: The Bangladesh Handicraft Manufacturers and Exporters' Association (Banglacraft) was formed in 1980. It has two types of membership—ordinary and associate. The number of ordinary member is 114 while associate-member 21.

(Readers are invited to send their views on the next budget along with passport size photographs.)



S U Haider

(d) Lack of proper training and research facilities and high rate of freight.

DS: If there is any sick industry in your sector, did the situation improve? If not why?

SUH: The position of industry depends on order for export from foreign buyers and foreign demands. Demand also depends on quality and design of products and on competitive price rates—because we are

Demand for diesel up by 28.99 pc this season

The demand for diesel during the current dry season has increased a record 28.99 per cent as farming drew heavily on irrigation because of a lingering drought, reports UNB.

In the sun-baked northern region, the demand shot up by 46.82 per cent.

An official handout yesterday attributed this 'abnormal' rise in the requirement of diesel to the prolongation of irrigation season this year due to the drought.

Duration of irrigation season is usually from December to March. But irrigation continued till April this year because of rainlessness.

The government, however, has been able to meet the additional demand, the handout claimed.

The demand for the fuel oil during the last irrigation season had increased as 3.56 per cent over the previous year. For the northern region-exclusively, demand had risen by 7.88 per cent.

The Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation through its three subsidiaries—the Jamuna Oil Company, Meghna Petroleum and Padma Oil Company—sold 6.42 lakh metric tons of diesel in current irrigation season.

Of the volume, 2.03 lakh tons were sold in the northern districts.

Dr Yunus named as first winner of RCMD

By Staff Correspondent

The Rotary Club of Metropolitan Dhaka (RCMD) Foundation has introduced an annual award for original and outstanding contribution in the fields of science, education and economic development from this year.

Dr Muhammad Yunus has been named for the 'RCMD Foundation Award' for the year 1995. The award carries a prize-money of Taka one lakh, a gold medal and a citation.

Announcing this at a press briefing in a city hotel yesterday the members of the RCMD Foundation Trustee Board said, beginning this year the award would be an annual event and one or more such awards would be given annually to eligible suitable nominees.

Explaining the objective of the award, Dr Muhammad Ansan, Vice Chairman of the Board of Trustees, said the goal was to recognize individual's work that benefited the nation.

Dwelling on the selection procedures, Dr Ahsan, also the past president of RCMD, said for the selection of an awardee, the RCMD Foundation first invited nominations from 20 eminent citizens of the country representing various professions. Later, the awardee was chosen by the

Board of Trustees from among the nominations received, he added.

Announcing the name of the maiden recipient of the award, AKM Shamsuddin, a member of the Board of Trustees said the RCMD Foundation honoured Dr Yunus for his concept of Grameen Bank which provides loans to millions of poor people. The award would soon be formally handed over to Dr Muhammad Yunus through a function, he added.

Trustee Board's secretary Farid Hossain, treasurer Fazle Rabbi and members Kazi Kamaluddin Ekram, Dr Anwar Hossain, Akhter Matin Chaudhury, M A Matin and Khalid Hasan were also present at the briefing.

Since its inception in 1982, the Rotary Club of Metropolitan Dhaka has been engaged in a number of projects targeting economic development, education, health, child care, safe drinking water, sanitation, tree plantation, irrigation and others—mainly in rural areas. One of the most successful ventures of the Club is its income generating projects in the microeconomic development in the '15-village-complex' in and around Kaultia in Gazipur district.

Potato growers of Mymensingh being deprived of fair prices

NETRAKONA, May 21: Potato growers of Netrakona, Kishoreganj and Mymensingh districts have been deprived of fair price of their products due to the lack of preserving facilities, reports UNB.

About 15,000 hectares of land were brought under potato cultivation and the production has exceeded the target, official sources said.

The farmers said due to abundant supply in the market the crop is being sold at throw away prices below the production cost in the absence of storage facilities.

Most of the farmers of these districts are burdened with bank loans as they could not repay the bank credit due to crop loss and the lower prices of crops like potato and jute.

On the other hand, high prices of seeds and other agricultural inputs like fertiliser and pesticides have increased the production cost. As there is no cold storage in Netrakona a large quantity of potatoes are being damaged every year.

Norway to help build Bangladesh economy

Norway will continue to assist Bangladesh in its socio-economic development and support its effort to strengthen the hard-earned democracy, reports UNB.

"We will continue to support Bangladesh in its struggle to improve the very young democracy," assured Norwegian Minister for Development Cooperation Kari Nordheim Larsen who arrived here Sunday afternoon on a 5-day visit.

State Minister for Finance Mujibur Rahman received the Norwegian Minister at the Zia International Airport. Senior officials of the Economic Relations Division were present. A tiny lot greeted the visiting Minister with a bouquet.

During her stay here, Larsen will discuss cooperation in development for the next four years with Bangladesh leaders, including Foreign Minister ASM Mostafizur Rahman, Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman and State Minister for Planning Dr A Moyeen Khan.

She will also call on Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia. Kari N. Larsen's itinerary includes visits to different parts of the country to see for herself the progress of Norwegian-aided projects in Bangladesh.



State Minister for Finance Mujibur Rahman received the Norwegian Minister for Development Cooperation Kari Nordheim-Larsen at Zia International Airport in the city yesterday. —PID photo

Tender Notice

No. 42-13/Ehgg Dated: 20/5/1995
UNIVERSITY OF DHAKA: Sealed tenders in Dhaka University Form "Tender for works" are hereby invited from the enlisted contractors (Civil) of Dhaka University for the undermentioned works and will be received by the undersigned up to 12 Noon on the dates mentioned against each work and opened on the same day at 12.15 p.m in presence of the contractors who may remain present. Contractors will have to deposit as earnest money a sum of taka as stated below in Demand Draft or Pay Order from any scheduled bank of Bangladesh. Specification and other particulars may be had from office of the undersigned on all working days except on the date fixed for submitting the tender after depositing the cost of tender forms and schedule as stated below against each work to the Janata Bank, T.S.C branch (non-refundable) after showing the necessary enlistment papers endorsed by the undersigned. Contractors should write the name of the works and their firms name on the envelope clearly.

Sl No	Name of works	Estimated cost	Earnest money	Price of tender form	Time allowed	Opening date
1	Providing Revolving Gate in the Science Library Bldg main door, DU.	Tk 12,670/-	Tk 255/-	Tk 20/-	7 days	28th May, 1995
2	Re-placing door shutter & necessary repairing works in the Deptt of Sociology (Room No 104), Arts Bldg, DU.	Tk 10,979/26	Tk 220/-	Tk 20/-	7 days	29th May, 1995
3	Re-construction of boundary wall at the west side of ISWR, D.U.	Tk 2,31,678/54	Tk 4635/-	Tk 100/-	45 days	29th May, 1995
4	White washing & distempereing works to the UOTC Bldg DU.	Tk 15,280/-	Tk 310/-	Tk 20/-	7 days	28th May, 1995

Matilal Sarker
Executive Engineer
University of Dhaka