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DHAKA MONDAY, JULY 31, 1995

Country's export earnings cross mark of previous fiscal year

By Rafiq Hasan

Country's export earnings, in the first ten months of the last fiscal year that ended in June this year, have already crossed the mark of the previous fiscal year.

According to the Export Promotion Bureau (EPB), during the period from July '94 to April '95, the country earned 2912.14 million US dollar which is 378.24 million dollar more than the total 2533.90 million dollar export earnings in the previous '93-94 fiscal year.

The export earning has been increased at the rate of 35.13 per cent during the period, compared to the previous fiscal.

The figure also crossed the target which was fixed at 2583.33 million dollars for the period by 12.73 per cent.

The export amount of the first ten months of the last fiscal is 757.08 million dollars more than the earnings during the same period of

the previous fiscal year. In the previous fiscal year, the earning was 2155.06 million dollar during the same period.

After observing the major sectors of the export earnings, the export bulletin of the EPB published two months later said during the first ten months of the last fiscal year, the export target was not fulfilled in agricultural goods, goods under crash programme, engineering goods, petroleum by-products, handicrafts and in other primary goods.

The export target was, however, achieved in frozen foods, raw jute, tea, chemical goods, leather, jute goods, garments, knitwear, and in other industrial products.

In comparison with the previous fiscal year the export earnings have declined in tea, petroleum by-products, handicrafts, agricultural goods, and in other primary

goods.

Export earning has been increased in most of other sectors, such as frozen foods, leather, raw jute, jute goods, knitwear and garments.

Garments

During the period, the country earned 1540.73 million dollars by exporting different garments items. The figure is 12.05 per cent more than the target which was fixed at 1375.00 million for the period.

The share of this sector to the total export earnings now stands at 52.91 per cent.

During the same period in previous fiscal year, the export amount from this sector was 1128.72 million dollars.

Jute goods

The export earnings from jute goods, the second largest export earner of the country, stand at 275.1 mil-

lion dollars which is 4.82 per cent more than the target. The volume of export is 465.88 thousand tons.

During the same period in the last fiscal year, the earning from this sector was 240.43 million dollars.

Frozen food

During the period, the earnings from frozen food sector stood at 263.21 million dollars. The amount of the export was 68.56 million pounds.

Of them, the share of frozen shrimp was 49.79 million pounds fetching 222.48 million dollars.

The figure is 55.53 per cent more than the earnings of the previous fiscal year. During the same period in the previous fiscal year, the export earning from this sector was recorded at 169.20 million dollars by exporting 46.20 million pounds of frozen foods.

Women Entrepreneurs

Women are prone to be dominated without solvency

My own business allows me more freedom, says Selina Rahman

by Rashda Khan

"Our religion says women should have complete freedom to move about," says Selina Rahman (Shelly), 35, owner of Shelion Poultry at 23/A, Indira Road.

As such, Selina has been wearing burkhas (veil) since she was in class eight. Today one can see her running around to different offices and farms for her business, wearing her burkha. The only thing that has changed is the design of her burkha.

"Before they used to have veils covering the whole face but now they are designed to reveal the eyes. So, now I see better," she says matter of factly. "I think burkhas help women to get around. It seems, people at different places are more helpful and respect me more because I am wearing a burkha and running a business at the same time."

She says because of the worsening economic situation, increasing population and the regular affliction of natural disasters, one income families have become impossible in Bangladesh. As a result, both spouses have to work.

Rahman also believes that all women should have some thing of their own. "Financial solvency is their strength, otherwise they are weak, more prone to be dominated," she says.

Rahman started her business in 1990. "I decided to go into business instead of a job. I was a housewife and I always wanted to do some thing, but I didn't want to work outside. I have small children and I didn't want to leave them for long hours," she says.

Aspects also, I have taken marketing, management and organisation courses at places like BSCIC and BASC. All the time wearing my burkha," she adds smiling.

"I couldn't have done it without my husband's help," she says. Her husband, Kazi Latifur Rahman, manager at an agricultural farm helped her out in action, by taking sick chickens to the vet at Mohakhali or going and collecting chicks from different farms. And in words, "He's always encouraging me. He jokes that when my business becomes big, I should give him a job there."

Because she started small,

supervisory role. "Poultry business is such that it needs 24 hour care. I also do the marketing, financing and public relations aspects of the business," she says. Rahman's biggest asset is her phone. She usually contacts her clients by phone and they come and pick up the eggs and chicken from her home.

Helping her out in the more basic aspects of the business are two employees and a nephew, Noyon. "In fact the name of the poultry 'Shelion' is a mixture of my nickname and his (nephew's) name," explains Rahman.

Rahman, a Bachelor of Arts degree holder from



Selina Rahman

the income from the business was small too. Rahman decided she wanted to expand. Her husband read in a local paper about MIDAS giving out loans to women without collateral and told her about it.

Rahman says that this system of loans is very good for Bangladeshi women. "Many women in this country do not have property. Even if they have some, it is usually controlled by the husband, father or brother," she says.

Her father-in-law, Kazi Abdur Gaffur, is religious person and did not want her to take the loan. He is a retired army engineer, who built Calcutta's Dum Dum airport and the Pongu Hospital in Dhaka, has very strong principles.

"But I reasoned with him. I told him this is something I have to do, because it would be on my head. After that he didn't say anything else," recalls Rahman.

With the loan she expanded her business to include 250 chickens and more cages to house them in. "When I first started, I wouldn't even get 30 eggs per week now I get 200 to 250 eggs daily."

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Kushtia Girls' College (her home town being Kushtia), has also spent from 1991 to 1993 researching a special chicken feed. She saw a segment of 'Mati o Manush' where they showed cattle being fed a special feed which fattened them up and that inspired her.

"I thought the same thing can be done for poultry too. So, I started experimenting. Now, chicken have very sensitive stomachs, if the right proportion isn't achieved there can be adverse effects. For example, my entire second experimental batch died, but my third batch was successful," says Rahman.

She chose to experiment on cockerel chicks because these were the most cost effective. These cost about Tk 3 to 5 each and grow up to a maximum of 800 grams. With her feed these become 1-1/2 to 2 kgs in 12 weeks. On the other hand boilers become 2 kg in 6 weeks without any special feed. However, they eat much more and cost about Tk 16 to 14 per chick, explains Rahman.

Rahman calls this the Rupal project and started it with a loan from a friend. Now she has moved into the second phase of the project. Rahman has provided chicks and feed to two poor women.

"They will raise the chicks for me and then I'll market them. Whatever profit is made of those chicken, I'll share half-half with the women. This way I am also covering my costs and they are also earning," she says.

Her experiment has won two certificates of recognition at two different exhibits arranged by the National Science Museum. She is hopeful that some government agency, NGO or interested person is going to hear about this and help fund this project.

"With more funds, I could further develop the feed and then we could achieve mass distribution of it. I believe it would help countless poor people who are looking for a way of earning income," she hopes.

Rahman commends the government on making poultry farming tax free till the year 2000 as this is an incentive for people to come into the business. However, she feels that the government should take steps to make feed and medicine available at a cheaper price.

"Feed price is especially high during the monsoon season. Also, wheat and corn, two main feed ingredients are imported. If we produced this at home it would be much cheaper. And sometimes one packet of medicine has cost me Tk 250," exclaims Rahman.

She says that poultry business has a very low loss factor. Hens lay eggs for 1 1/2 years after that they have to be changed. At that time they can be sold at Tk 60 per kg at least. Cockerels bought at Tk 3 or 5 can be sold for Tk 60 and up when fully grown.

The only problem is keeping them alive, because chicks are very fragile. However, with proper training and medical care even that can be taken care off. Thus, she says, the government should invest more in the poultry business.

Rahman still keeps her chicken in cages. She hopes to be able to expand to the litter system, which is better. Litter system means keeping the chicken in a big room, with saw dust or wheat husks on the floor. "It gives the chicken more space to move about and so keeps them healthier and easier to manage," she says.

She is planning to open a bigger farm in the litter system at Savar. "There are already many farms in the Savar area, so the different supplies are all available nearby and at a cheaper cost. You even get credit facilities if your farm is nearby, now I have to pay full cash. I am waiting for my brother to return (he is a marine engineer on a ship) and we'll both start the farm together."

BSB accords farewell to 18 retired personnel

Bangladesh Shilpa Bank (BSB) accorded a farewell reception on Saturday to its 18 officers and employees who have just retired and went on LPR, reports UNB.

Presided over by BSB Managing Director Mohammad Akmal Hossain, the function was addressed by BSB Chairman ATM Alamgir, MP, General Secretary of BSB Officers' Association Wahidur Rahman and President of BSB Employees' Association Siddiqur Rahman.

Speaking on the occasion, they recalled the contribution of the retired officers and employees and hoped that they would devote themselves in social welfare activities.



Dhaka Sheraton Hotel, on behalf of Board of Airlines Representatives, accorded a farewell to the outgoing General Manager of Thai International Airways Khun Anon Juangphanich recently. Ross Larsen, General Manager of the hotel, and Mrs Anon are also seen in the picture.

ICB declares dividend

Investment Corporation of Bangladesh (ICB) has declared dividend on its six mutual funds and unit fund, reports BSS.

The rate of dividend are First Mutual Fund 50 per cent, Second Mutual Fund 40 per cent, Third Mutual Fund 27 per cent, Fourth Mutual Fund 41 per cent, Fifth Mutual Fund 28 per cent, Sixth Mutual Fund 18 per cent and Tk. 17.50 per unit on ICB Unit Fund for the year ended on June 30, 1995, an ICB press release said yesterday.

The dividends were approved at a meeting of the Board of Directors of the corporation held yesterday with Sardar Sakhawat Hussain Bakul, MP, chairman of the board in the chair.

The corporation in the previous year had declared dividend at the rate of Tk. 45, 27, 22, 40, 25 and 16

Liaison body meet on shipping of SCB held

A meeting of the liaison committee on shipping of Shippers' Council of Bangladesh was held in the conference room of the Chittagong Port Authority in Chittagong on July 27, says a press release.

M R Ali, Chairman of the council, presided over the meeting. Md Rezaul Karim, Senior Vice-Chairman, SCB, M Mohsin Sarker, Director (Traffic), CPA and representatives of shippers, Steamer Agents Association, different shipping lines/agents, railways also attended the meeting.

The meeting discussed the cargo forecasts for major commodities like raw jute, jute goods, jute yarn, frozen foods, garments and leather etc, availability of required shipping space on various routes, arrival and sailing schedules of vessels for the month of July and August, 1995, and onward, and also the problem of shortage of container feeder vessels at Mongla Port.

The representatives of different shipping lines present at the meeting assured the chairman of the council that they will provide adequate container feeder vessels at the ports so that the export cargoes are not held up for lack of shipping space.

Dhaka to take part in Lanka software contest

A six-member Bangladesh team of young software programmers will participate in the international software competition to be held in Sri Lanka from September 5 to 10, reports BSS.

Thirteen countries will participate in the young software programme competition, a Bangladesh Computer Society press release said here yesterday.

Weekly stocks rose by 500 tonnes to 15,710.

COCOA: Fall. Prices initially fell to 855 pounds per tonne, depressed by the subdued level of trading, weak seasonal summer demand and the large West African harvest.

According to one trader, the main harvest from the Ivory Coast — the world's largest producer — could reach 825,000 tonnes in 1995-96.

COFFEE: Feverish. Prices climbed by nearly 200 dollars after world coffee producing countries agreed to limit world exports.

The reference price reached nearly 2,800 dollars per tonne, a high since early June, boosted by the announcement.

Members of the ACPC, which groups together the vast majority of world producers, agreed late Tuesday in New York to reduce worldwide exports to 60.4 million sacks for the 12 months to June 1996. Each sack weights 60 kilograms.

SUGAR: Higher. Prices for delivery in December climbed by over 10 dollars to 305 dollars per tonne because of a continued lack of demand and a higher level of buying, particularly by Turkey

Commodity market: Prices of sugar, lead, tin higher while tea mixed

LONDON, July 30: The summer period in the northern hemisphere failed to offer any respite to the coffee market this week, which was enflamed by a new worldwide plan to limit exports, reports AFP.

After the announcement of the plan of action by the main producing countries, prices shot up over fears of new supply shortages in an already very tight market, they then plunged back again on speculative selling.

Less wildly, the oil market also witnessed some action. Prices jumped in response to a fall in US stocks and then fell back over fears that OPEC countries might push up production.

GOLD: Weak. Prices fell by around three dollars under the pressure of speculative selling on the New York market, to reach 383 dollars per ounce.

But UBS analyst Andy Smith said that after August the price of gold should recover on the back of speculative buying, and stay around 390 dollars per ounce in the last three months of 1995.

SILVER: Feeble. The price of silver declined because of heavy selling by US investment funds, to reach 5.07 dollars per ounce.

PLATINUM: Fall. The

metal fell by several dollars to 430 dollars per ounce, dragged down by gold's decline.

COPPER: Recovery. Copper prices for three month delivery ended the week over 50 dollars higher at around 2895 dollars per tonne, staging a partial recovery after last week's spectacular crash.

But gains were limited at the end of the week by disappointing LME stocks drawdown of 750 tonnes taking the total stocks to 154,075 tonnes, 175 tonnes down on the week.

LEAD: Higher. Lead ended the week over 10 dollars higher at around 640 dollar per tonne, cheered by the generally positive tone in the base metals market.

Lead stocks fell by 1,425 tonnes to 234, 625.

ZINC: Lower. Zinc ended the week over 20 dollars higher at around 1,055 dollars per tonne, lifted by the prospect of lower Japanese production and high consumption growth reported for the first half of the year.

The announcement by Nippon mining and metals of Japan that it would stop zinc ore smelting operations at its Nikko zinc unit at the end of October was blamed by analysts on the high yen, high

wage costs and social factors.

ALUMINIUM: Steady. Aluminium ended the week nearly unchanged at around 1,915 dollars per tonne after earlier gains.

The market remained unconvinced by assurances from a top Russian aluminium official that the worldwide export limit plan would run its full course until March 1, 1996.

Last week a senior Russian government official said the agreement was effectively no longer valid, which the market interpreted as meaning the country would increase exports in the second half of the year.

The accord, signed by Russia, the US, the EU, Norway, Canada and Australia in February 1994, was designed to reduce world over-supply.

NICKEL: Higher. Nickel ended the week over 350 dollars higher at around 8,920 dollars per tonne, in a market sustained by continued worldwide demand for stainless steel.

Weekly stocks on the LME declined by 4,044 tonnes to 74,982.

TIN: Higher. Tin ended the week over 350 dollars higher at around 6,700 dollars per tonne, supported by commission house short-cov-

ering.

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and Russia.

Trading house Czarnikow said in the latest monthly report that the market is still affected by the "limited quantities of sugar available for immediate delivery", ahead of the sugar beet harvest in Europe.

Also, higher Turkish and Russian buying pushed prices up, Czarnikow said.

Elsewhere, the Indian crop promises to fulfill predictions of a sharp rise in India's production, the trading house said.

VEGETABLE OILS: Decline. The price of vegetable oils generally declined in Rotterdam, depressed by the fall in soya prices in Chicago due to better weather forecasts for the US harvest.

Soya fell by two florins to 96 florins per 100 kilograms, influenced by heavy selling by investment funds in Chicago after several weeks of gains.

PALM OIL: Prices fell by five dollars per tonne after initial gains on the back of higher export figures from Malaysia, the world's number one producer. India in particular is due to increase its imports of palm oil to satisfy a continuous rise in domestic consumption.

OIL: Recover. The reference price for Brent crude

north sea oil was boosted by a sharp fall in US crude stocks, lifting it above the 16 dollar barrier, which is still, however, a low level.

According to figures of the American Petroleum Institute (API), US crude oil stocks fell by over seven million barrels in the space of a week. Traders saw the figures as holding out the prospect of higher imports by US refineries.

The recovery in the oil market at one point looked vulnerable after a comment published in the OPEC review suggesting that the organisation had nearly lost patience with the growth in exports by non-OPEC countries.

Dealers interpreted the comment as signalling a future rise in OPEC's production ceiling. Another negative development for the market was the announcement by South Africa of the sale of 20 million barrels from its strategic stocks built up during apartheid.

Sentiment in the market was mixed as a result, but the threat of strike by Brazilian oil workers from September 1, if confirmed, could lift prices, dealers said.

RUBBER: Continued fall. Prices fell by over 20 dollars to 847 dollars per tonne, a low since July 1994, because

of continued high production in South-East Asia.

At the same time, Tyre Manufacturers, which have accumulated large stocks since the beginning of the year, are still holding back from buying.

GRAINS: Higher. Prices for wheat and barley remained high, although slightly below last week's level, at 112 and 107 pounds per tonne respectively.

The European market was subdued, with traders awaiting the first harvests of the year. In Chicago, prices fluctuated, mainly because of contradictory weather forecasts, but remained on an upward curve.

Poor harvests in Argentina, Brazil, China, Kazakhstan, and in the US will depress the world output of wheat in 1995-96 further still, according to the International Grains Council (IGC).

The IGC predicted that the world crop would total 535 million tonnes, 5 million tonnes below the previous month's forecast. This would represent the second disappointing harvest after the very low crop of 528 million tonnes in 1994-95.

TEA: Undecided. The London auctions ended in higher prices for high-quality

teas from Africa, and in slightly lower prices for medium-quality teas from Sri Lanka, which fell three pence to 102 pence a kilogram.

The announcement of a fall in Indian production failed to affect the market so far. According to the Indian National Tea Office, production fell by 18 per cent in the first five months of the year, which is a good development considering the size and poor quality of the existing surplus.

COTTON: Weaker. The benchmark cotton outlook price indicator remained at a weak level at 0.90 dollars a pound, still at the lowest point since December, depressed by the prospect of a very good US harvest.

Prices also were depressed by a US report which suggested that the current high level of prices compared to the early 1990's could affect world consumption.

WOOL: Unchanged. The reference price in Bradford, northern England, remained at 500 pence a kilogram, still a low since February. The first auctions of the season, which began in July, on the Australian market — the largest in the world ended in lower prices because of reduced Chinese buying.