

Garments manufacturers trying to make good losses due to political unrest

By Govinda Shil

The garments sector, which was rocked by the country's political turmoil, will require at least three years of hard work to recover from the shock and to recoup losses for losing international market, according to owners.

The garments manufacturers are trying to make good their losses incurred by the political unrest by beginning to explore new international markets besides renewing the old ones.

A number of garments exporters estimated that 40 per cent of the export target of readymade garments could not be achieved this financial year (1995-96) due to political turmoil. The projected export from garments and apparels have been determined at 2,000 million US dollars.

A manufacturer said, the total recovery of losses incurred during the last three months is almost impossible. But we are trying our best to endure the burdens.

"Our efforts to revive the normal trading is getting fresh complicity despite the foreign ships have begun to sail in and out of Chittagong Sea Port as

another congestion has become inevitable now," said Redwan Ahmed, President of Bangladesh Garments Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA).

Shippers Council of Bangladesh told The Daily Star that presently some 70 ships were waiting at the outer anchorage and 20 berthing at the port of Chittagong. The number is likely to inflate if the port fails to clear the vessels at berthing level which will result in a huge congestion.

M R Ali, Chairman of SCB said the international shipping lines have decided to levy 200 US dollars as surcharge on a 40 feet container from April 8. This will increase the cost of production of readymade garments and other industrial products minimising the profit margins, he noted.

Managing Director of the Voyager Garments, Farid Uddin Ahmed, said, "no buyer is trusting us for timely shipment of our wares."

Major buyers like Wall-Mart, K-Mart, Sears, Capital Mercury are still skeptical about the longevity of the normal situation in the country, he added.

The Chairman of the Voyager Garments, Shahadat Hossain, said his organisation has incurred a loss of Taka 2 crore since the election of February, 15. He said, a work order of 1.5 million US dollars placed to Voyager Garments by Korean Company Daewoo, has been shifted to Myanmar.

Atiqul Islam, an executive member of the BGMEA said, due to disorderly location of ships at the bay, the particular ships carrying fabrics could not be identified. "We do not know when we will get our fabrics," Islam said adding a round-the-clock operation of port can only ease the situation.

Garments owners said Bangladesh has already lost "fall" market and "spring" market as the overseas traders have not yet restored confidence in the politics of the country.

They said the buyers are looking for new and emerging markets like Vietnam, Laos, Myanmar, Nepal and old market like Sri Lanka.

According to an estimate of the BGMEA, a medium sized factory has incurred a loss of

Taka 42.5 lakh during the last two years' political impasse. The loss estimated by BGMEA units would not be less than Taka 1,000 crore.

The garments company owners demanded that Bangladesh diplomatic missions abroad should immediately convince the overseas traders that the country's political situation has become quite normal. They also demanded that the government should carry out propaganda through the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) and the Cable News Network (CNN) about the normalcy in the country.

The entrepreneurs told this correspondent that immediate measures should be taken to give credit facilities to them as acute liquidity crisis was prevailing in the money market.

"Many of us could not release our fabrics from the port as we had no cash in our hands," said Shaiful Islam, Managing Director of a composite unit of Islam Garments.

Manufacturers said executive members of BGMEA, Uzair Afzal, has gone to USA while Anisur Rahman to Hong Kong

for market-hunting. Others would soon leave the country to sell their products.

Meanwhile, BGMEA President asked the government for allowing credits at a nominal interest to BGMEA units to use as operating capital that would be repaid within three years.

The BGMEA leader said some 1,000 apparel factories have been shut down and 5 lakh workers have lost their jobs due to political unrest.

Redwan Ahmed has demanded rescheduling of the outstanding loans as per request of the loanees and exemption of taxes from the export earnings. He also demanded that manufacturers be freed from import liabilities due to inoperation of Chittagong Port.

Ahmed has requested the authorities to send all the feeder container liners to Kamalapur Inland Container Depot (ICD) for customs clearances as Chittagong Port is congested with containers.

BGMEA has also demanded cancellation of royalty levied by the Ministry of Civil Aviation and Tourism recently.



A Q Siddiqui, Managing Director, Agrani Bank, inaugurating conference of zonal heads and heads of corporate branches of Dhaka division at the bank head office yesterday. Among others general managers of the bank Md. Helaluddin, Habibur Rahman, A.S. Ashrafuddin Ahmed and Mr. Yousof Ali Molla are also seen.

Major differences remain with UN on oil-for-food talks: Iraq

UNITED NATIONS, Apr 5: Iraq's deputy prime minister was quoted Thursday as saying "very important" differences remain over the UN oil-for-food plan, raising doubt whether

a deal can be struck when talks resume here next week, reports AP.

UN and Iraqi officials began a third round of negotiations Monday on a Security Council offer to allow Iraq to sell 1 billion dollar of oil over 90 days to buy food and medicine.

supplies directly to the Kurds to ensure they receive their fair share.

Aziz said the United Nations recognises the Kurdish regions as part of Iraq "the agreement must reflect this reality".

Agrani Bank holds confce

A Q Siddiqui, Managing Director of Agrani Bank, inaugurated a conference of zonal heads and heads of corporate branches Dhaka division at Agrani Bank head office yesterday, says a bank press release.

The conference was also attended by general managers of the bank Md. Helaluddin, Habibur Rahman, A.S. Ashrafuddin Ahmed and Yousof Ali Molla.

Siddiqui in his speech urged the employees of all status to discharge their duties with utmost sincerity.

"We have to achieve the desired target through constituting service-oriented mentality and integrity," he said.

Md Helaluddin, General Manager of the bank, emphasised strengthening customer-banker relationship and cited the importance of the role of field-level staff in attaining the desired goal of the bank.

A.S. Ashrafuddin Ahmed stressed the need for reorganising the collective programme in the light of previous performance.

Ctg port delivers 512 containers daily

CHITTAGONG, Apr 5: Chittagong port has increased handling of containers from 750 TEU (total equivalent units) to 816 TEU daily with full resumption of activities since April 1, reports BSS.

The port is also delivering 512 containers daily when on a normal day 280 containers were delivered.

The port is functioning almost twenty-four hours to avoid congestion. More ships are entering the port from the outer anchorage, said a port press release today.

Meanwhile, Chittagong Port Authority has called upon the shipping lines to withdraw newly imposed surcharge for congestion.

Toyota's car sales up in March

DETROIT, Apr 5: March car sales rose 4.3 per cent from a year ago, helped by Toyota's surprising 34.4 per cent sales jump for the month, says AP.

Ford reported Wednesday that its March sales of cars and light trucks were up 2.2 per cent from last year's March rate. Earlier this week, Honda posted a 29.9 per cent increase and Chrysler said sales were up 8.1 per cent.

Of the top six companies in US auto sales, only General Motors and Nissan reported declines. GM was down about 1.8 per cent while Nissan's sales were of 4.5 per cent from a year ago.

John Hanson, product news manager for Toyota Motor Sales USA, said the month's results far exceeded the Company's projections. Toyota set a March record with Camry sales and its combined sport-utility vehicle sales were up 150 per cent.

"We had a really big (advertising) campaign on, but the incentive money was not that large, comparatively speaking, over last year," Hanson said.

Automakers' general sales performance in the year's first quarter is prompting some analysts to boost their estimates of how many cars and light trucks US consumers will buy this year. Most had forecast 1996 totals about even with 1995.

"Consumers are definitely shopping the deal, but they're also ready to buy," TMS executive vice president Yale Gieszal said in the Toyota report.



Ms Renee Veyret, Ambassador of France in Bangladesh, paid a courtesy call on Salman F Rahman, President of the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry at the FBCCI office in the city on Thursday. They reviewed existing commercial and economic cooperation and discussed various issues for expansion of bilateral trade between the two countries.

Interest in vegetarianism rises in UK

LONDON, Apr 5: Britons who are afraid to eat beef because of mad cow disease are flooding the Vegetarian Society with calls. Those who aren't are flooding into supermarkets to buy it at cut price, reports AP.

The London based Vegetarian Society, an independent consumers group which advises on what to eat in place of meat, normally gets up to 200 calls a day from people who want stop eating animals. They think it will be better for their health or disapprove of the way animals are treated under modern factory farming methods.

But since the start of the beef scare last month the society says the number of calls has doubled. "The mad cow scare was the last straw for many people," the society's spokesman Steve Connor said Monday. "The past week has been frantic. At times all eight telephone lines have been completely blocked."

Haldane Foods Ltd., one of Britain's leading manufacturers of meat-free products, also reported a sharp rise in interest.

"I have been in the food business 20 years and I have never seen anything like this," said company spokesman Gra-

ham Keen. "Vege-Mince is our best selling product and in the first three days of last week we took the same volume of orders that we recorded for the whole of February."

The beef scare has also brought vegetarian cookery books to the literary forefront. Waterstone's Booksellers Ltd., which has a chain of British bookstores, reported a five-fold increase in sales of books

China-Alumax \$ 70 m jt venture

NORCROSS, Georgia, Apr 5: Alumax International Co. announced that it is involved in a 70 million dollar joint venture producing up to 10,000 tons of light-gauge aluminum foil a year in China's Yunnan province, reports AP.

This joint venture in China is a major step forward in our strategy to achieve growth by partnering with others in promising regions of the world," said Allen Born, Alumax chairman and chief executive officer.

Akumax said Tuesday it is joining with the Yunnan Aluminum processing factory to create a plant under Alumax's direction that will produce foil for China's packaging market.

about vegetarianism since the start of beef scare.

Meanwhile, thousands of people unworried by the scare have been flooding into supermarkets to buy beef at cut price.

J Sainsbury PLC, one of Britain's two biggest supermarket chains, said that on Saturday all its 363 stores around the country sold out of fresh beef when it slashed the price to reduce stocks.

Bob Cooper, the company's trading director, reported Saturday. "Over the last 12 hours we have sold more British beef than during the whole of the last 12 days combined."

One Sainsbury shopper, Martin Crawley, 51, said: "I have not stopped eating British beef because there is nothing wrong with it." Another, Rebecca Jestic, 24, said: "I am going to stock up on it at this price." The chain's cut price offer ends next week.

Sainsbury's main rival, Tesco Stores Ltd., has refused to cut beef prices but says it will adhere to its policy of removing all British beef products from its shelves.

But this week, the smaller Asda and Somerfields supermarket chains cut British beef prices by up to 30 per cent.

Japan suspects DPRK's involvement in US dollar forgery

TOKYO, Apr 5: Japanese authorities suspect North Korea, is involved in the counterfeiting of US 100 bills, dollar news reports said Thursday. Police refused comment, says AP.

Speculation about a possible North Korean link to counterfeit bills has grown in the past week after a suspected Japanese terrorist who had lived in North Korea was arrested in Cambodia on suspicion of being part of a forgery group.

The newspaper Asahi reported Thursday that thousands of fake bills similar to those allegedly used by the Japanese suspect, Yoshimi Tanaka, have been found in Japan over the past several years.

The counterfeit bills, known as "Super K," are described as highly sophisticated, containing the same microscopic letters printed on real bills to deter forgers.

Kyodo News and Nihon TV said the fakes fool even counterfeit detecting machines and can be distinguished only by experts.

North Korea said last week that it has "nothing to do" with forgery of US big money.

The Japanese reports said police believe the "Super K" forgery operation is large and well-organized. It also has improved the quality of its counterfeit bills with time.

Last year, an executive of a Japanese trading company deposited 54 bills 100 bills in a Tokyo bank that were later discovered to be forgeries of the "Super K" type, the Japanese reports said, citing the National Police Agency.

Police reportedly found that the executive had obtained the bills in North Korea, where his company was dealing in used cars.

"Police believe that North Korea may be involved in Super K" in some form, and they are investigating in cooperation with the US Treasury Department and Thai authorities," Kyodo said.

There were conflicting accounts of the number of fake bills found in Japan: the Asahi said 1,201 bills were found between 1993 and 1995, while Kyodo said nearly 500 bills were found between 1990 and 1995.

New MD of Federal Insurance

AKM Sarwardy Chowdhury has been promoted to the rank of Managing Director of Federal Insurance Company Limited, says a press release.

Chowdhury, a career insurance man, has been serving the industry for last 24 years. He held various positions in the then Eastern Insurance Company Ltd, Sadharan Bima Corporation and Green Delta Insurance Company Ltd.

Prior to promotion, he was the Deputy Managing Director & Acting Chief Executive of the Company.

praised in Brazil, his death was front-page news because of his role in pushing a 1.4 billion dollar jungle radar system by US Raytheon Co. a deal now mired in a kickback scandal.

Brown "acted decisively to promote the image" of Raytheon, said the newspaper Folha de Sao Paulo.

But India's prime minister, PV Narasimha Rao, said he was impressed by Brown's "warm personality, his hopes for the future of US-India commercial ties and his determination to get things done."

Australian Foreign Minister Alexander Downer called Brown's death "a tragic loss," adding Brown "played a substantial role in promoting international trade and investment."

Bosnian President Alija Izetbegovic, recuperating from a heart ailment, sent his condolences to President Clinton.

"Our people will never forget that brave American citizens lost their lives in the noble mission of peace in Bosnia-Herzegovina," he said in a letter.

During Brown's tenure, the United States and China have often quarreled over human rights, Taiwan, copyright piracy and US access to Chinese markets.

Mark Michaelson, Chairman of the American Chamber of Commerce in Hong Kong, said Brown seemed to have "a special relationship" with Chinese President Jiang Zemin and Trade Minister Wu Yi and was a "calming voice in times of tension."

In China, Foreign Ministry spokesman Shen Guofang expressed "our condolences to the people aboard" and said Brown wasn't always

Brown praised for pushing trade as peace weapon

PARIS, Apr 5: Killed on his latest peace mission, US Commerce Secretary Ron Brown was remembered by world leaders Thursday as a driven campaigner for trade as a means of preventing conflict, reports AP.

In the Palestinian territories, South Africa, and Northern Ireland, Brown pushed US investment as a tool to keep guns quiet and make peace plans stick.

Brown was promoting investment in ex-Yugoslavia when his plane crashed Wednesday, killing him and 32 other aides and business leaders.

"It is especially poignant that Secretary Brown and the business executives traveling with him perished on a mission of peace," said Javier Solana, Secretary General of NATO, which is running the Bosnian peacekeeping mission.

He said their deaths "only underline the absolute necessity for the Bosnian people to match the international community's commitment with their own commitment to

achieve true national reconciliation."

"He was a real mover and shaker — he was just so committed to Northern Ireland," Baroness Denton, the economics minister of the strifetorn country where Brown was the first US Cabinet chief to go in 1994.

Denton said she and other officials had to "kick on doors" in America before Ron Brown had taken an interest. "Afterwards doors were opened to us, people picked up the telephone."

Brown was committed to ensure democracy will work in South Africa," Trevor Manuel, finance minister of the new black majority government, told a news conference.

"If you look around the world for an individual who showed so much interest in this country, sitting in a powerful position such as Ron Brown has been, you're not going to find anybody," he said.

Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Peres grieved "the loss of a true friend of Israel, a man who contributed much ... to the Middle East peace process."

In sending his condolences, Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat noted now Brown "visited us several times and helped us," according to Ahmed Qureia, speaker of the Palestinian legislative council.

Germany's economics minister, Guenter Rexrodt, said Brown, "made a decisive contribution to the success" of world free-trade talks.

"The US government has lost a brilliant politician and a successful trade minister and we lost a reliable partner and friend," said Rexrodt.

Even France, which has clashed with Washington over free-trade issues, praised Brown's delegation participation at this week's jobs summit by the Group of Seven industrialized nations in Lille, France.

French President Jacques Chirac called Brown "one of the most eminent members" of the Clinton administration who led a G-7 delegation "that contributed decisively to the success of the conference."

Their eyes red with emo-

tion, US Ambassador Pamela Harriman and her aides in Paris remembered working with Brown during the conference and in years past.

"It is a very sad moment for us and for our country," Harriman told a news conference, though his death "could bring perhaps a new dimension to the peace effort by attracting interest in the investment effort."

Leaders and businessmen in Asia said they would miss Brown's, conciliatory voice in trade disputes.

Japanese Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto, who was trade minister before he became prime minister in January, told reporters: "I have good memories of him as my counterpart in trade talks." "We always had good discussions."

A senior Japanese Foreign Ministry official, speaking on condition of anonymity, was quoted as saying there was concern about how Brown's death might affected trade relations.

The official said Brown at times had acted as an inter-

mediary between Japanese trade officials and US Trade Representative Mickey Kantor, who usually takes a tough line toward Japan.

Brown's role as conciliator was also cited in Hong Kong, where world of the plane crash was front-page news. The colony is hypersensitive to anything concerning commerce between China and the United States, its two biggest trading partners.

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Notice of RHD Inviting Tender

1. Tender Notice No	: 113 BRD of 1995-96.
2. Name of work	: Construction of RCC Box Culvert at 12th and 25th km of Barisal-Bhughata road under Barisal Road Division during 1995-96.
3. Estimated amount	: Tk 35,75,888/-.
4. Earnest money	: Tk 71,518/-.
5. Time allowed	: 60 (Sixty) days.
6. Eligibility of contractor	: "A" to "C" class enlisted contractors under special category of the Roads & Highways Department and "D" class enlisted contractor under special category of Barisal Road Circle, Barisal.
7. Name of office where tender documents will be available	: Office of the Executive Engineer, RHD, Road Division, Barisal/Patuakhali/Bhola/Perojpur/Planning Division (P&D) Sarak Bhaban Ramna, Dhaka/Sub-Divisional Engineer, RHD, Road Sub-Division, Barisal/Jhalakati/ 1st Line Workshop Sub-Division Barisal during office hours on all working days. No tender form will be sold on the opening date of tender.
8. Last date of selling of tender	: Up to 5:00 PM on 3-1-1403 B/16-4-96E.
9. Name of offices where tender bids will be received in sealed cover	: Additional Chief Engineer, RHD, Barisal Zone, Barisal/Superintending Engineer, RHD, Road Circle, Barisal/Superintending Engineer, RHD, Monitoring & Evaluation Circle, Sarak Bhaban, Ramna, Dhaka/ Executive Engineer, RHD, Road Division, Barisal/Patuakhali/Bhola/Projoipur.
10. Last date & time of receiving of tender bids in sealed cover	: Up to 12-30 PM on 4-1-1403B/17-4-96E.
11. Date & time of recording tender bids in sealed cover	: At 12-45 PM on 4-1-1403B/17-4-96E.
12. Date, time & name of offices where tender will be opened	: At 11-00 AM on 8-1-1403B/21-4-96E at the office of the Executive Engineer, RHD, Road Division, Barisal.
13. Lottery date & time	: At 11-00 AM on 10-1-1403B/23-4-96E.