

Decision on GSP unlikely before June

## Knitwear exporters seek Tk 47 cr compensation from govt

By Mizan Ali and S Ashfaqul Haque

The Bangladesh Knitwear Manufacturers Exporters Association (BKMEA) had urged the Ministry of Commerce to provide Tk 47 crore as compensation following imposition of strict restrictions on the rules of origin for issuance of Generalised System of Preference (GSP) certificate by the European Community (EC), according sources concerned.

According to the president of the BKMEA the compensation had been sought by the manufacturers who were now working on products for which LCs were opened till January 23.

Sources said that the prayer

**Biman says**

Some association members create obstacles to vegetable export

Biman Bangladesh Airlines yesterday said it has reasons to believe that some self-interested members of the Vegetable Exporters Association are creating obstacles in the way of export of vegetables and other perishables from Bangladesh.

They are creating these obstacles in the name of objecting to new tariff for these items fixed by Biman. It may be mentioned here that the new tariff to Jeddah has simply been equated with Riyadh fare though Jeddah is further away.

Biman officials met with Jeddah importers before fixing the new tariff and the importers accepted the new rates. Export Promotion Bureau was also duly intimated regarding the new rates.

A good number of vegetables exporters want to export their fresh fruits and vegetables through Biman but are being obstructed by the vested interest group. In the meantime Biman has continued to carry Bangladeshi finished products and Bangladeshi dry cargo which also generate more revenue.

If the situation continues Biman will be left with no alternative but to give priority to bookings for finished and traditional goods which is more financially viable.

**Padma Textile earns Tk 201m profit**

The Padma Textile Mills Ltd. earned a profit of Tk. 201.26 million in 1996. This profit figure was based on provisional (unaudited) accounts, which was disclosed in a meeting of the Board of Directors of the company yesterday at the company's head office in the city, says a press release.

Presided over by A S F Rahman, Chairman of Beximco Group, the meeting was attended by Marc G L Rachman, C M Alam, M A Qasem, A B Siddiqu Rahman, Meer Tabarrak Husain and M Lutfar Rahman, Sr. General Manager, Padma Textile Mills Ltd.

**When 'home' turns into hell**

By Shehab Ahmed

It was like leaping from fire into a frying pan from power-rationed Jeddore for the 30-minute flight to Dhaka on Sunday evening aboard the Bangladesh Biman's celebrated ATP aircraft without its air-conditioning working.

The airhostess welcomed all abroad with her cosmetic smile. But life inside the aircraft for passengers was something different than 'Home in the Sky', promised by Biman's bill boards. It was like an oven inside the narrow hold of the latest example of avionics in its inventory, added during Ershad era for which the General still faces a corruption case.

Some coughing and sweating passengers, who paid extra fares from Sunday as the airline quietly hiked its toll without public announcement, looked around. Some tinkered with its air passage controlling knobs on the overhead bunk. "Cool down, take it easy, the air-conditioning will soon start working when we are airborne darling," a mother comforted her young daughter after she had thrown away. Using her fancy hand fan the helpless mother tried to comfort her gasping daughter.

Nearby a baby forgot to cry, so stunned she was that she did not even respond to the tiny hand fan her mother desperately tried to cool her with.

Those who forgot to carry their fans found it suitable to use the newspapers.

of compensation made by the BKMEA had already been forwarded to the Ministry of Finance for possible consideration.

The organisation had sought the government assistance as the EC countries had imposed strict restrictions on the rules of origin for issuance of GSP certificate by the European Community (EC), according sources concerned.

According to the rules of origin, only three-stage products (yarn-fabric-apparel) will be entitled to enjoy the benefit of preferential treatment.

Since November last year the EC has restricted its liberal

approach towards Bangladeshi knitwear, citing gross irregularities in issuing GSP for the knit products.

A high powered EC probe body following their investigation in Bangladesh submitted its report in October last year in which they reportedly advocated for not allowing GSP certificates to the two-stage products after accusing Export Promotion Bureau (EPB) of issuing GSP to ineligible suppliers.

The government sources said the EC delegation in Dhaka sent a proposal to Brussels favouring Bangladesh, but

they were reluctant to elaborate. Officials said that they were expecting a decision for derogation on the rules of origin which is likely to be announced in June this year. Five Least Developed Countries (LDCs)—Bangladesh, Nepal, Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam—enjoy the preferential treatment of the European countries.

If the verdict goes in favour of two-stage derogation it is likely to be conditional, sources said adding, numerous buyers have been hesitating to place their orders here now as they are yet to know the criteria for pricing of goods.

## National auditing, accounting training academy soon

Finance Minister Shah A M S Kibria has said here that a national auditing and accounting training academy for government officials would be established soon for better management of public finance, reports BSS.

He was inaugurating a three-day seminar-cum-workshop on "Improving management of public finance" yesterday. It was organised jointly by the office of the Comptroller and Auditor General of Bangladesh and Finance Division of the Ministry.

The proposal for establishing the training academy is now lying with the Planning Ministry but it has been approved in

principle," the minister said.

The inaugural session of the workshop was also addressed by Finance Secretary Dr Akbar Ali Khan, Comptroller and Auditor General of Bangladesh M Hafiz Uddin Khan, team leader of "Reforms in Budgeting and Expenditure Control" Project (RIBEC), Mike Frazier, and RIBEC Project Director B A M A Sattar.

The Finance Minister said the government wants to transform the present age-old accounting and auditing system in the country into a modern one by following the management and performance auditing perspectives practised by the United Nations.

Coming AGMs					
Company	Book Closure	AGM/EGM	Date	Venue & Time	Dividend Proposed
Chittagong Cement	01/03/97-25/03/97	AGM	20/03/97	Hotel Agrabad Clg 10 am	18.2 20 (R12P6 & Tk 1000)
National tube	01/03/97-25/03/97	AGM	25/03/97	Factory Premises 11 am	18.2 15
Eastern Cables	01/03/97-30/03/97	AGM	10/04/97	—	10
BD Luggage (dab)	16/02/97-04/03/97	(Half yearly Interest)	—	—	35
Eastern Lubricant	13/03/97-19/03/97	AGM	19/03/97	—	—
Ctg Vegetables	20/03/97-28/03/97	AGM	—	—	3R1 (Pre: Tk 50)
Bengal Biscuit	15/03/97-28/03/97	AGM	28/03/97	Hotel Sonargaon,	18.5
Beximco (Dab)	25/03/97-10/04/97	(Interest for 12th Installment)	—	—	2R1 (Pre: Tk 150)
Uromex Glass	02/03/97-21/03/97	AGM	21/03/97	Reg. Office 10:30 AM	25
Savar Refraction	20/03/97-21/03/97	AGM	27/03/97	Hotel Sonargaon 11:30 AM	—
Singer BD	27/03/97-16/04/97	AGM	16/04/97	Hotel Sonargaon	75 18.2
Padma Oil	23/03/97-28/03/97	AGM	29/03/97	Head Office, House No. 98, Road 9A (New) Dharmapur 12 Noon	15
Jute Spinners	24/03/97-30/03/97	AGM	30/03/97	Jalalabad Hotel Putna 4 PM	—
Wata Chemical	01/04/97-09/04/97	AGM	09/04/97	60, Motijheel C/A, BRTC Auditorium 10 AM	25
Pharmaco Int.	17/03/97-30/03/97	AGM	30/03/97	—	30
BTC	03/04/97-28/04/97	AGM	27/03/97	Parly Center Dharmapuri	—
Anwer Galva	20/03/97-27/03/97	AGM	27/03/97	Hotel Sonargaon, 3 pm	22
ULC	02/04/97-29/04/97	AGM	29/04/97	—	—
IDLC	05/04/97-13/04/97	AGM	13/04/97	Hotel Sonargaon, 10 am	35 18.1
IDLC	19/04/97-06/05/97	AGM	06/05/97	—	35

### Peregrine's market comment

The PBI pummeled 6.5 per cent for the day to close at 639.11. Market sentiment turned extremely negative as all the traded issues declined. Six issues topped more than 90 per cent including Shine Pukur, Beximco, ULC, BOC, IDLC, and Tripti Industries were also amongst the notable losers as they dropped 8.03 per cent, 8.03 per cent and 8.42 per cent respectively. All other issues suffered losses between 1.7 per cent and 8.0 per cent.

### Exchange Rates

The following are the Janata Bank's dealing rates (BD Tk for one unit of Foreign Currency) to public as on 18/03/97.					
Selling	Buying				
Name of	T.T. &	B.C.	T.T.	O.D. Sight	O.D. Transfer
Currency	O.D.	O.D.	Clean	Export Bills	Transfer
US Dollar	42.9120	42.9650	42.6200	42.4550	42.3438
GB Pound	68.3588	68.4382	67.3471	67.0703	66.8945
D. Mark	25.4741	25.5036	25.0399	24.9369	24.8716
F. Franc	7.5523	7.5611	7.4254	7.3949	7.3755
JP Yen	0.3516	0.3520	0.3435	0.3421	0.3421
C. Dollar	31.4768	31.5132	30.9472	30.8200	30.7392
S. Franc	29.5161	29.5523	29.0122	28.8929	28.8172
Janata Bank's selling and buying rates in cash currency for public:					
US DLR	GBP	S RIYAL	UAE DH	KU DINAR	
SELLING	43.0000	67.1088	11.7000	11.6500	141.0000
BUYING	42.5000	65.1088	11.3500	11.1500	135.5000

### Jalalabad Gas posts Tk 18.33cr net profit

Jalalabad Gas Transmission and Distribution Systems Limited, a subsidiary of the Petrobangla, posted a net profit of Taka 18.33 crore in 1995-96 fiscal, reports UNB.

This was disclosed at the annual general meeting (AGM) of the company held here with Petrobangla Chairman Syed Sajedul Karim in the chair yesterday.

During the fiscal, the company marketed 607 million cubic-metre natural gas and deposited Taka 18.79 crore to the government exchequer.

**SIA enhances service**

Singapore Airlines has introduced another service enhancement to attract passengers to use Singapore as a hub for flight transfers, says a press release.

Passengers waiting in transit before catching their onward flights can now have a choice of meals, courtesy of the selling station.

Since January 15, a 'sushi and 'maki' meal has been available to SIA passengers who are in transit between two and six hours in Changi Airport before boarding their next flight. This service is in addition to the breakfast and combo set meals from the A & W fastfood restaurant introduced in March 1996.

The meal will be catered from the Genki Sushi restaurant in the departure/transit hall of the airport's Terminal 2 and is available daily.



**Mannan takes over as Chairman of T&T Board**

M A Mannan Chowdhury has taken over as Chairman of Bangladesh T&T Board yesterday, says a press release.

Chowdhury obtained B Sc

Engineering (Electrical) degree in 1963 from BUET and subsequently Master of Engineering and post-graduate diploma degrees in Communication System from Victoria University of Australia.

He started his career as a member of erstwhile Pakistan Central TES (now BCS Telecom) in 1964 in the post of Assistant Divisional Engineer. He held different important posts including Divisional Engineer, Director and General Manager of T&T.

In July 1986, he was appointed Joint Secretary to the government of Bangladesh and served in the Ministry of Shipping, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and Ministry of Water Resources. Before taking over current responsibilities of Chairman, he was Member (P&D) of BTB.

### INDEPENDENT UNIVERSITY, BANGLADESH Extension and Continuing Education Centre (ECEC)

and  
Language Centre  
Offer

### Business English Course

23 March - 12 April 1997

A course covering a wide range of business English skills.

### Effective Business Correspondence