

'Lankan tea industry about to collapse'

COLOMBO, Feb 12: Sri Lanka's tea manufacturers today warned that the country's main export earning sector was about to collapse due to state regulations compounding a sharp fall in international prices, reports AFP.

Factory owners, facing a huge cash crisis, held an emergency meeting Friday to demand subsidies to pay 500,000 tea growers who are known as "small holders" but account for nearly two thirds of the total tea industry.

"If the government does not intervene within a week we won't have money to pay half a million families who earn a living by selling tea leaves to us," said Malinda Gunaratne of the private tea factory owners

association. "We want the government to appreciate the enormity of the problem."

He said the government was regulating the factory owners by insisting on a formula to pay the growers but the system was unrealistic. The factory owners wanted free market forces to determine prices.

The influential Colombo Tea Traders' Association agree that the country's most important export commodity was facing a serious crisis and that state regulation was making it worse.

Prices at the weekly Colombo tea auctions, the world's largest tea sale, began dropping from September last year and continue to fall.

Pakistan to allow repatriation of foreign portfolio proceeds

KARACHI, Feb 12: Pakistan's central bank has agreed to allow foreign portfolio investors to repatriate sale proceeds, reversing a ban it clamped after the country's nuclear tests in May, bankers said today, reports AFP.

The State Bank of Pakistan imposed the ban as part of foreign exchange restrictions imposed amid fears of capital flight following the tests. The bank also froze foreign currency accounts.

A senior executive at a foreign bank said the central bank

had told custodian banks to re-submit their claims for the remittance of sales proceeds, profits and dividends with its foreign exchange department.

He said the long-awaited decision would help clear a backlog of applications for repatriation of foreign portfolio proceeds estimated at 80 to 100 million dollars.

An SBF official said the exact amount would only be known after custodian banks re-submit their claims.

"The central bank will scru-

tinise these remittance claims and reassess the actual amount to be allowed for repatriation," he said.

Arif Habib, a leading stock broker, said foreign investment of about 350 million dollars was still in the stock market, mostly invested in state-run Pakistan Telecommunication Corporation Limited (PTCL) and British-run Hub Power Company (HUBCO) and other leading firms.

"I think about 300 million dollars are invested in the shares of PTCL and HUBCO

while 50 million dollars are in other 25 companies which are paying very handsome returns on investment," Habib said.

Analyst Osama Bin Shoaib said the permission for repatriation might trigger one-time selling pressure at the Karachi Stock Exchange, but future prospects were bright.

"I think foreign fund managers will try to capitalise this opportunity to exit from weak shares. But in July, Pakistan might witness inflow of new funds from world over in its stock market," he said.

\$76b siphoned off Russia in 7 years

MOSCOW, Feb 12: Almost 76 billion dollars has been siphoned out of Russia in illegal capital flight over the past seven years, Interior Minister Sergei Stepashin said yesterday, the Interfax news agency reported, says AFP.

Forty per cent of export revenues of Russian companies—an estimated 35 billion dollars—accumulated abroad in the two years 1992-93, he told a government meeting.

That compared to the 40 billion dollars in export revenues repatriated to Russia from 1994-1998 the agency quoted Stepashin as saying.

Under Russian law, exporters are supposed to repatri-

ate their foreign currency earnings and sell 75 per cent of them to the central bank at special trading sessions set up in a bid to defend the ailing rouble.

Analysts say firms routinely side-step the controls.

The huge sums compare with Russia's willing foreign currency and gold reserves, currently standing at 1.16 billion dollars compared to 20 billion before the Asian financial crisis wrecked the country's financial system.

The tiny official reserves make it virtually impossible for the central bank to maintain the rate of 21.5 roubles to the dollar written into this year's budget.

Weekly Currency Roundup

During the major part of last week (Feb 7-11), the local forex market was paralysed due to a 60-hour hartal called by the opposition parties. Demand for dollar spurred up during the first two working days of the week. Demand for dollar was still high although the interbank forex market was quiet during the strike. The greenback traded in a high range of BDT 48.68 to BDT 48.6950. This phenomenally strong demand for dollar can be linked to increased import liabilities by different banks and thin inward remittances. In the kerb market, dollar demand was steady and a unit of cash dollar traded between BDT 48.60 and BDT 48.80.

Bangladesh Bank accepted Treasury bills worth of BDT 6,065 million for 28 days at an average yield of 7.59 per cent, BDT 1,500 million for 91 days at 8.60 per cent, BDT 160 million for 182 days at 9.20 per cent, BDT 850 million for 364 days at 9.65 per cent and BDT 240 million for 2 years at the rate of 210.44 per cent. The call money rate increased a little and ranged between 7.5 and 9 per cent.

The international markets witnessed a downtrend in euro, falling gradually and steadily against dollar since its fanfare launch on January 4. Euro is under pressure against dollar mainly on market consensus that European interest rates are likely to decline soon coupled with indications of a growing gap between strong US and weak European economic growth. Yen also fell against dollar and euro on speculation that the Bank of Japan (BOJ) would have to find a way to curb rise in its long-term interest rates. A possibility of underwriting Japanese government bonds by BOJ and the likely announcement of the inflation target also pulled yen down. Sterling was also a big loser when the latest Bank of England inflation data bolstered speculation that interest rates would come down again.

Following are the highs and lows of major currencies during the last week:

Currency	High	Low
Euro	1.1325	1.1209
Pound Sterling	1.6432	1.6186
Japanese Yen	112.68	115.47

The euro fluctuated by about 1.03 per cent, Pound Sterling about 1.51 per cent and Yen by about 2.47 per cent against dollar.

— Standard Chartered Bank



MONTEGO BAY (Jamaica): Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez (L) applauds while his Sri Lankan counterpart Chandrika Kumaratunga looks on during the inauguration ceremony of the IX Group of 15 trade summit at the Half Moon Conference Centre in Montego Bay Jamaica, Wednesday.

G-15 grapples with ways to survive in global economy

MONTEGO BAY, Jamaica, Feb 12: Leaders from cash-poor, mineral-rich developing nations went into seclusion Thursday to grapple with way to help their economies survive in the global economy, says AP.

One suggestion at the Group of 15 summit came from Mexican Foreign Minister Rosario Green, who proposed that the G-15 act as a representative for developing countries before the industrialised world. Her suggestion late Wednesday was seconded by Sri Lanka.

The Group of 15 has grown to 17 member states and includes Algeria, Argentina, Chile, India, Kenya, Nigeria, Peru, Senegal and Zimbabwe.

G-15 states account for 30 per cent of the world's population and produce \$ 2 trillion in goods, or nearly 40 per cent of the gross domestic product of all developing nations.

Commonly accepted

panaceas of fiscal austerity and open economies, many here say, are only bringing more turmoil. But the idea of negotiating better terms of trade and aid as a bloc will trigger opposition from international lending and trade institutions, delegates say.

"There will be in-built resistance to opening the (international) decision-making process" to poorer countries, said Jamaican roving Ambassador Anthony Hill.

Some G-15 members, including Egypt, a major US aid recipient, viewed as confrontational an appeal by Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez for solidarity and regional cooperation. Hill said.

Egyptian delegates wanted to ensure that a communiqué to be released at the end of the summit Friday use "non-confrontational language," Hill said.

The G-15 wants to slow the race to globalization and curb reckless currency speculation in emerging markets by international financiers they blame in part for their woes.

Jamaican Prime Minister P. J. Patterson backed a proposal by Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad for a worldwide system to regulate financial markets, particularly speculators in short-term capital.

"The pace of globalization... has outstripped the capacity of governments to provide the necessary framework to ensure stability," Patterson said.

Mahathir wanted strong language in the communiqué on regulating markets. Hill said. But not all countries agree. Brazil and Mexico, for example, saw opportunities from investments by short-term speculators.

Leaders hoped to resolve those differences by Friday, Hill said.

"We may not sing in harmony, but we at least want to be singing from the same hymn sheet," he said.

BCIC International Tender Notice

বিসিআইসি'র পণ্য শিল্পায়নে জাতীয় অগ্রগতির প্রতীক

Managing Director, Chhatak Cement Co Ltd, Chhatak, Sunamganj hereby invites sealed quotation on C&F (C) Chittagong basis for supply of 12000 pcs High Alumina Bricks against Tender Enquiry No PD/F/CCCL/10/98-99 dt 23.1.99. The tenders accompanied with 1% (one per cent) earnest money/bid and also money receipt evidencing purchase of tender documents will be received up to 10-00 AM on 14.3.99 and be opened immediately thereafter the same day both the places i.e. in Purchase Division, BCIC Head Office, Dhaka & at Purchase Deptt, Chhatak Cement Co Ltd on payment of Tk 750.00 in cash (Non-refundable). The tender documents will be available from the office of the (1) The Controller of Accounts, BCIC Head Office, 30-31, Dilkusha C/A, Dhaka, (2) BCIC Branch Office, 6, Agrabad C/A, Chittagong and (3) Chhatak Cement Co Ltd except the opening day of the tenders.

BCIC-115/4/2/99
DFP-2377-7/2/99
G-253

Md Aminul Islam
Manager (Pur)
For Managing Director

Bangladesh Railway INVITATION FOR BIDS

Date: 9th February, 1999

Loan No: BAN 32501

Tender No: CDS/SBB/ADB/DFRP/98

1. The People's Republic of Bangladesh has received a loan from the Asian Development Bank (ADB) towards the cost of the Flood Damage Rehabilitation Project and it is intended that part of the proceeds of this loan will be applied to eligible payments under the contract for the supply of ballast and boulder (the "goods") as described below:

- 20,500 m³ stone ballast at Hili
- 17,000 m³ stone ballast at Amnura
- 12,871 m³ stone ballast at Dinajpur
- 30,095 m³ stone ballast at Jamalpur
- 29,418 m³ stone ballast at Bhairab Bazarghat
- 29,221 m³ stone ballast at Sylhet
- 2,832 m³ stone boulder at Bhairab Bazar
- 2,832 m³ stone boulder at Santahar

2. The Bangladesh Railway intend to invite sealed bids from eligible bidders from member countries of ADB for the supply of the goods for the purposes of the project. Bidders shall have the option of submitting a proposal on any or all items.

3. Interested eligible bidders may obtain further information on the bid form and inspect the bidding documents within 21 days during office hours (9th to 17th from Sunday to Thursday) at the offices of either:

Controller of Stores/Project
Bangladesh Railway
Central Railway Building
Chittagong, Bangladesh.
Telephone: 880 31 725797 (Office) Telephone: 880 2 409 369
880 31 502535 (Rest House)

Executive Engineer/Project
Bangladesh Railway
Kamalapur
Dhaka, Bangladesh.
Telephone: 880 2 409 369

Fax: 880 2 956 3413 Attn. Controller of Stores/Project, Chittagong.

4. A complete set of bidding documents may be purchased by any interested eligible bidder on the submission of a written application to either address and upon cash payment of a non-refundable fee of seven hundred fifty (750) taka.

5. All bids accompanied by a bid security of two per cent (2%) of total bid price, must be delivered in accordance with the instructions to bidders on or before 11 hr on 9th March, 1999 and will be publicly opened immediately thereafter.

6. The Bangladesh Railway will not be responsible for any costs or expenses incurred by bidders in connection with the preparation or delivery of bids.

7. In the comparison on bids, ADB's Domestic Preference Scheme will be applied in accordance with the provisions stipulated in the instructions to bidders.

M Abdullah
Controller of Stores/Project
Bangladesh Railway
Chittagong, Bangladesh.

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Women main victims of African poverty but hold key to change

THE HAGUE, Feb 12: Women are the main victims of underdevelopment in Africa but their low status in society is crippling African nations and contributing to endless cycles of poverty, reports AFP.

"Far from decreasing poverty is actually on the increase in Africa. Poverty is at the centre of problems contributing to the position of the African woman," Nana Rawlings, wife of Ghana's President Jerry Rawlings, said at the UN population conference currently being held in The Hague.

A founding member and president of the 31st December Women's Movement, Rawlings has made a name for herself in campaigning for women's rights and she is convinced that women are vital to a nation's success.

"One of the obstacles to improving the status of women is the fact that they don't have the same educational opportunities as men," Rawlings said.

"Education of girls is the key to improving the situation of women. It is not only for the women, it is for their children,

their family and ultimately for the whole nation," Rawlings insisted.

Ghana recently raised the minimum age for marriage from 12 to 18 to prevent girls from dropping out of school in order to wed.

Rawlings' movement has tried to teach women to budget and save so as to break the cycle of poverty that plagues African women.

Uganda also acknowledged the need to improve the economic fortunes of women who are the poorest members of the east African nation.

"Forty-seven per cent of our people live below the poverty line and this is largely because of women," the Ugandan delegate admitted.

It is also essential that women play a greater role in politics, on local and national levels, to bring in practical changes that will transform women's lives.

Conflicts also contribute to women's plight, hitting countries not only in economic terms but striking at the heart of families and societies.

"Women and children form a disproportionate share of today's war victims, the wars that were started by men," Rawlings lamented.

"It is pointless to talk about family planning issues or reproductive health when women are in situations of conflict and genocide, where rape and other forms of sexual abuse and bondage are used as weapons of war and where unwanted pregnancies and sexually transmitted diseases, particularly HIV/AIDS, are often the tragic consequences."

HK 1999 business outlook gloomy

HONG KONG, Feb 12: Hong Kong's manufacturers are anticipating a general decrease in volume of orders in 1999 compared with 1998, yet the downward pressure is expected to lessen somewhat in the second half of the year, a government survey showed Friday, reports AFP.

All manufacturers in the fabricated metal products industry surveyed and about three-fifths of those in the textiles industry anticipate some decreases in the volume of orders in the first half of 1999, a recent half-yearly business prospects survey by the Census and Statistics Department revealed.

By comparison, the proportion of manufacturers in these

two industries expecting a decline in orders in the second half of the year is smaller, both at around one-third.

Likewise, manufacturers in the printing industry and in the electronic and electrical products and electrical machinery industry generally expect some improvement in orders in the second half of 1999 from the first half.

By contrast, manufacturers in the apparel industry generally anticipate the volume of orders will still register some growth in the first half of 1999, but will slow somewhat in the second half.

In general, manufacturers expect capacity utilisation to remain largely stable in 1999

Bangladesh Gas Fields Company Limited (A Company of Petrobangla) PO Box No-8, Court Road, Brahmanbaria Short-Tender Notice

No. CD/HO/3(05)/99

Dated: 11/02/99

1. Bangladesh Gas Fields Company Limited (BGFCL) hereby invites sealed tender in prescribed forms from the enlisted contractors of Public Works Department (PWD)/Roads & Highway Department (RHD)/Public Health Engineering Department (PHED)/Housing & Settlement Directorate (H&SD)/Bangladesh Railway (BR)/Military Engineering Services (MES)/Rajdhani Unnayan Kartipakha (RAJUK) and Petrobangla & its companies for the following works:

Sl. No.	Name of the works	Estimated cost	Completion time (days)	Cost of tender document (non-refundable)	Minimum qualification of bidders
A)	Construction of plant foundation and other ancillary work at location of well No-8, Habiganj Gas Field, Habiganj.	Tk. 7,75,500.00	75 days	Tk. 1,000/-	1st Class

2. Intending firms may obtain tender schedule from the following offices from 18/02/99 to 28/02/99 during cash transaction hours on cash payment: Finance Department, Court Road, Brahmanbaria and Liaison Office, 97, Purana Paltan (Bijoynagar), Dhaka of Bangladesh Gas Fields Co. Ltd.

3. Tender shall be received in the tender box kept in Civil Engineering Department, Court Road, Brahmanbaria and Liaison Office, 97, Purana Paltan (Bijoynagar), Dhaka-1000 up to 11 AM on 01/03/99 and simultaneously be opened at 11.15 AM on the same day in presence of bidders, if any.

4. Tenderers must submit earnest money equivalent to 2.5% of their quoted amount along with tender. If the quoted amount is less than the estimate beyond 5%, the tender must accompany additional earnest money equivalent to 10% of the quoted amount and item-wise detail rate analysis for the work. The earnest money in favour of Bangladesh Gas Fields Co. Ltd, Brahmanbaria will be in the form of Pay Order/Bank Draft from any scheduled bank of Bangladesh.

5. Tender must also accompany the followings:

- Copy of work order of technically similar works completed in a single work-order with own supply of materials in the last 5 (five) years amounting not less than estimated amount shown in the tender notice along with completion certificate issued by an officer not below the rank of Executive Engineer.
 - Current bank solvency certificate telling that the firm is capable to invest 40% of the estimated cost of the work at a time for execution of the work.
 - Income Tax clearance certificate up to 1997-98 with Tax Identification Number (TIN), VAT registration certificate, up-to-date trade licence & enlistment certificates.
6. All the certificates to be submitted along with the tender must be in original or duly attested by a Gazetted Officer. Original certificates and papers must be produced on demand against the attested copies which will be returned after verification or any certificate(s) submitted along with the tender may be checked on direct contact with the issuing authority.
7. The authority reserves the right to accept any or reject any or all the tenders without showing any reason without accepting any liability.

PRS-9/010 (Civil)/99

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Dy General Manager (Civil Engineering)