

Strong knitwear exports to exceed govt targets

REFAYET ULLAH MIRDHA

Knitwear exports in the 2007-08 fiscal year are likely to exceed the government's target due to a strong performance in the US market and the increasing flexibility given by the use of local yarn.

In the six months to the end of December 2007, local knit manufacturers exported \$2.550 billion according to the Export Promotion Bureau (EPB), just short of the government's target.

However industry sources said strong order intake mean the annual target of US\$5.465 billion should be reached.

President of BKMEA (Bangladesh Knitwear Manufacturers and Exporters Association) Fazlul Hoque said if the current rate of knit export continues the target will be exceeded this year.

"On an average at present 15 new knit factories are coming into operation every month in Bangladesh which shows that the sector is growing," he said.

Behind the success has been the increased backward inte-

gration of the industry, with local yarn now accounting for around 90 per cent of the yarn used in Bangladeshi knitwear production. This allows local knit exporters to reduce lead-time significantly, exporters said.

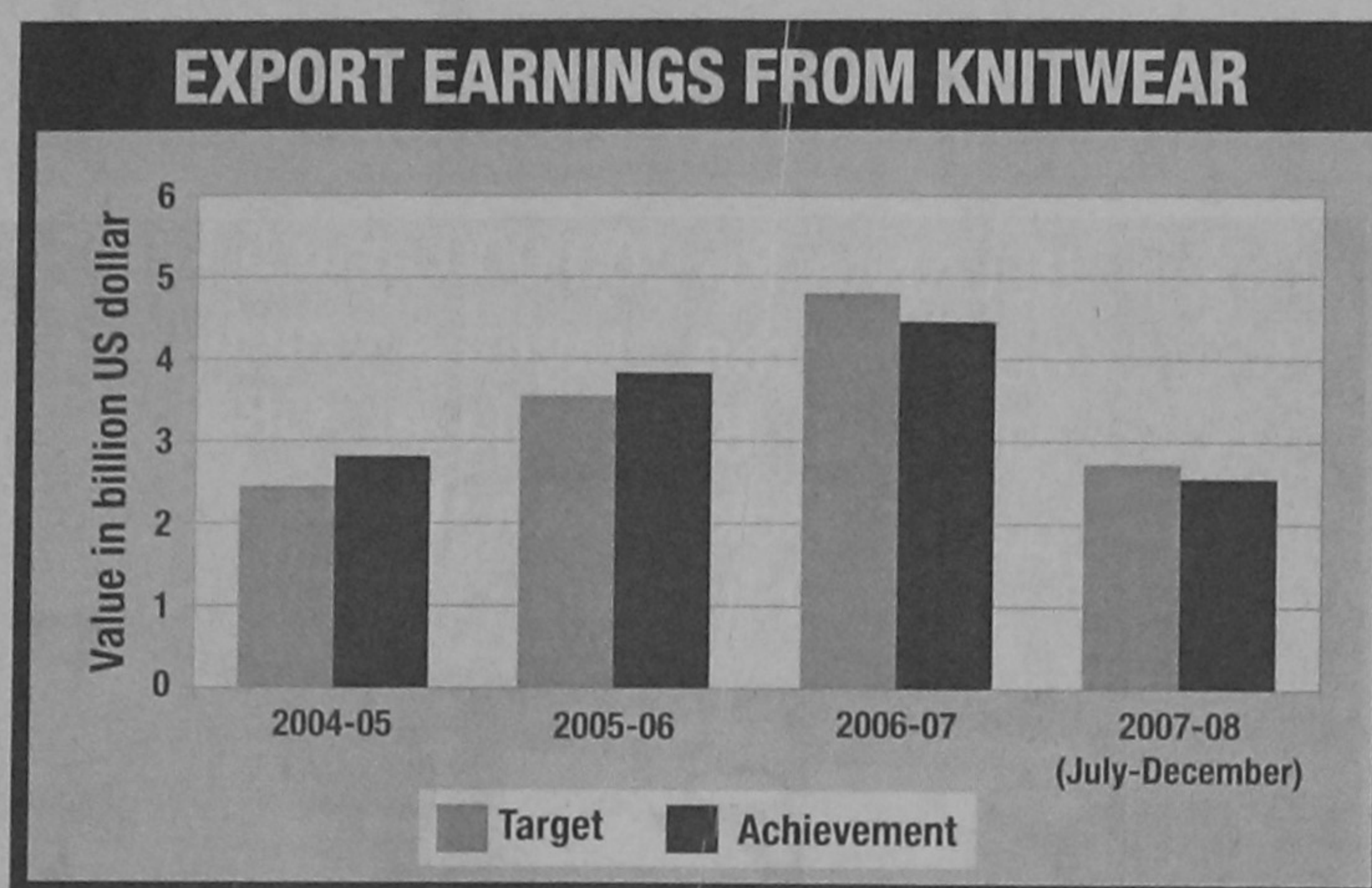
Late last year knitwear exports for the first time overtook woven items as the country's single largest export item and it seems this trend is set to continue.

In 2006-07 Bangladesh exported knit items worth \$4.55 billion against its target of \$4.88 billion, with the industry hit by continuous labour and political unrest, and bad weather conditions in the EU.

Previously, in 2005-06 and 2004-05 fiscal the knit export exceeded the target.

BKMEA officials said although the government increased the export target at 20 percent for the knit sector in 2007-08 the exporters are confident of hitting the target.

Another plus for the knitwear sector has been the expansion of sales to the US. This has come despite economic weakness in the sector's



second largest market after the EU.

Import data from the United States International Trade and Commerce (USITC) showed that in 2007 calendar year Bangladesh exported knit items worth \$815 million, up 11.2 percent on the \$733 mil-

lion in 2006 calendar.

Bangladesh was positioned at 14th in knit export to the US in 2007.

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continues the target will be exceeded this year.

"On an average at present 15 new knit factories are coming into operation every month in Bangladesh which shows that the sector is growing up to hold the world export market," he said.

Peoples Jute Mills to go under private management

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Peoples Jute Mills Limited is to go under private management.

Kazi Farms Limited has emerged as the highest bidder to take over the state-run mill under Bangladesh Jute Mills Corporation (BJMC).

According to the BJMC, Kazi Farms will pay Tk 6.13 crore a year to the government.

Peoples Jute Mills was shut down August 1 last year on the grounds of severe financial losses. More than 4,000 workers lost their jobs following the closure.

Outlook bright for Thai job market

ANN/The Nation

Business is booming for recruiting firms in Thailand as companies start hiring again.

Most companies that had initiated a hiring freeze in November and December last year are signing up new employees again, Simon Matthews, manager of Manpower, Thailand's largest recruitment company, said.

The number of job placement orders that the firm received has gone up by 30 per cent to 40 per cent year on year during the first two months of 2008, he said.

Reform measures slow down economy: DCCI

Golden jubilee celebration programme announced

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

The reform initiatives by the present caretaker government have slowed down Bangladesh economy, as the Dhaka chamber chief observed.

"For the reform measures many business men are now out of business and many scared of further investment, which resulted in a low investment in recent times," said Hossain Khaled at a press conference in Dhaka yesterday

where a year-long programme was announced to celebrate the golden jubilee of DCCI (Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry) and four hundred years of Dhaka as the capital city.

The programme starts on March 22.

The DCCI president, however, favoured continuation of the anti-corruption drive.

Stressing the need for reinventing Bangladesh in the era

of globalisation, he also disclosed a DCCI initiative to brand the country's business, the first of its kind.

Khaled said the Brand Bangladesh Business programme aims to accelerate the promotion of products in the international market.

"We have to redefine the needs and strength of the country to develop the idea of branding Bangladesh," he said.

DCCI also announced to unveil a book 'Commercial History of Dhaka City' in April and arrange some traditional programmes like kite flying competition and rickshaw race.

DCCI was established on March 8, 1958.

This trade body helps the government to formulate and implement of policies on investment, banking, insurance, fiscal measures, annual budget and import and export.



Parjatan corp gets new chairman

Shafique Alam Mehdi has joined Bangladesh Parjatan Corporation (BPC), the national tourism organisation, as its chairman with effect from March 5, 2008.

Prior to joining the BPC, he was joint secretary to communications ministry, says a press release.

Shafique Alam joined Bangladesh Civil Service Administration Cadre in 1982. During his service tenure he held different key positions in the government including upazila nirbahi officer, additional deputy commissioner, cantonment executive officer and military estates officer.

Gulf-India gas pipeline feasible: Expert

PTI, Dubai

A deepwater pipeline designed to transport large quantities of natural gas 'economically' from the Gulf region to India, straight across the Indian Ocean is now feasible, an expert has said.

The economics of SAGE deepwater pipeline system are attractive and the risks are now demonstrably low", Peter Roberts, technical director of South Asia Gas Enterprise (SAGE), said at the 13th Annual Middle East Gas Summit in Doha Thursday.

The depth of the Indian Ocean along this route was beyond the economic pipe-lay limit until the mid-1990s, when the enabling technology was developed and a deepwater Code of Design Practice was issued to the industry. Roberts who was quoted by the Peninsula Daily, said.

Every year since then, pipe has been laid into deeper and deeper water, past 2000 metres depth and now up to around 3000m, following the progress of the oil and gas industry into new areas further offshore, Roberts said.

Barapukuria coalmine output drops as local miners on strike

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

Coal production in Barapukuria mine has declined by 1,000 tonnes a day against usual production of 3,300 tonnes since Thursday after local miners went on a strike demanding fair recruitment procedures.

Mine sources said the immediate rift emerged between the local miners and coal extraction authorities-- XMC (Xuxu Machineries Company) and CMC (China Machineries

Company) -- after what the local miners said authorities on March 4 forced 64 new miners to sign on blank job forms before allowing them to work.

CMC and XMC officials could not be contacted for their comments.

The agitating miners said the March 4 incident took place in violation of the agreement reached on 11 February between miners, Barapukuria Coal Mining Company Ltd, and CMC and XMC.

When contacted, MA Aziz Khan, managing director of Barapukuria Coal Mining Company, said negotiations are on to end the deadlock.

Some 700 Bangladeshi and 300 Chinese miners work in the mine on permanent basis, while around 1,000 locals work on temporary basis.

The surface and underground miners of Barapukuria Coalmine Company have been calling for realization of their 7-point demand since October

last year. The demands include rise in monthly salary, festival bonus and introduction of off-days.

Earlier, the Barapukuria Coal Mining Company initiated negotiations when miners staged demonstration on February 6 for realization of their demands.

Md Rabiul Islam, convener of Barapukuria Underground Miners' Association, said the coal extraction authorities are not 'paying fair wages' to workers.

Bad days for fast food shops; bird flu takes its toll

UNB, Dhaka

Sales in the city's fast food shops have marked a sharp fall as customers continued to ignore chicken items out of bird flu fear, hitting hard the booming fast-food business.

"We're passing through a very critical time as our sales have dropped by 50 percent. Even our regular customers hardly visit our shops and those who come are scared of taking chicken items," said Sohel Rana, supervisor of 'Chicken King', a popular fast food shop in Dhanmondi area.

While visiting different first food shops in Gulshan, Dhanmondi, Motijheel, New Market, Mouchak and Bailey Road areas, it was seen that customers were mainly taking beef, mutton and vegetable items ignoring chicken ones.

Even if someone wants to go for chicken, she or he is discouraged by others. The only reason: bird flu. But experts say there is nothing to be scared in taking chicken items as the bird flu virus, H5N1, cannot survive in food that is cooked in 70 degrees Celsius temperature.

"I was a regular customer of 'Helvetia', but I had not been there for the last few months as most of its items are of chicken," Faria Hossain, a private university student, said while taking beef burger at another fast food shop, 'Harvest Home', a posh shopping mall at Rifle Squares in the city.

"I like fried chicken too much but I've stopped taking it since I saw reports on chicken culling because I'm a very

health conscious person," Kazi Rafiqul Islam, a businessman, told the news agency while having a fish burger at KFC fast food shop in Gulshan.

When reminded about the prescription of experts that bird flu virus cannot survive in the food that is cooked in over 70 degrees Celsius temperature, Islam said, "I know that but I don't trust these experts. I'll take chicken only when the government will officially declare that there is no bird flu in the country."

Farzana Ahmed, a housewife who went to Bamboo Castle fast food shop on Bailey Road along with her minor daughter, said her daughter likes chicken items most but she preferred beef items for them because of the bird flu fear. She is even unwilling to buy chicken and egg for her family lest bird flu virus spreads during the processing of those for cooking.

Delwar, a regular customer of Golden Food, said, "I'm here to have my favourite fast food item fried chicken." Asked about bird flu scare, he said, "I'm not at all scared because I know the virus is completely destroyed during cooking."

However, the staffs of the fast food shops are not ready to allow their valued customers to go away. They have also invented their own strategies to persuade them. Waiters and managers in most of the fast food shops were found trying to manage customers showing doctor's certificate that their chicken are bird flu free.

When contacted, manager of Helvetia, Mohsin, said, "We've directed our waiters in

our six outlets in the city to convince the customers in every way. We've asked them to show the customers a GrammenPhone message in favour of taking chicken and show doctor's certificate and opinions of the experts. And we also tell them we cook our items in over 300 degree Celsius temperature."

Recognizing a sharp fall in consumption of chicken items at his shops, Mohsin said, "We're working hard to tackle the situation, but we alone can't overcome it, we need government help."

He said the government should take more effective measures to remove the bird flu fear from public mind through media.

Sohel Rana, supervisor of 'Chicken King', said they have added new items of fish, beef and vegetable to their menu apart from continuing the advocacy like Helvetia.

He also blamed the media for spreading the bird flu panic among the people. "Watching chicken culling on television and reading those in newspapers, people get panicked."

Chinese restaurants, popular among the urban middle-class people, have also reduced serving chicken and egg items. Besides, many other regular restaurants have taken chicken off their menus, replacing it with various beef and vegetable items.

The avian influenza, also known as bird flu, was first detected in Bangladesh on February 22 last year. It has now reached an epidemic form, hitting the poultry industry that accounts for over 1.6 percent of GDP.

DHL introduces 'green' service in Asia Pacific

AFP, Singapore

Express delivery and logistics giant DHL said Friday it has launched an Asia Pacific service allowing clients to offset the carbon emissions generated by transporting their shipments.

DHL said in a statement from its regional headquarters in Singapore that customers who want to use the firm's new DHL GOGREEN EXPRESS service are asked to pay a 3.0 percent "green premium" on top of the standard charges.

The company then calculates the carbon emissions generated as a result of transporting the parcel and offset these by reinvesting in environmentally friendly projects such as fuel vehicle technology, solar panels and reforestation.

DHL said customers can choose to send all or just a selection of their shipments under the carbon-offsetting scheme which aims to help reduce the amount of carbon dioxide released into the atmosphere.

Switzerland-based Societe Generale de Surveillance, an independent certifying body, will verify the programme annually to ensure accountability and transparency, DHL said.

Customers will also receive a certificate from DHL yearly stating the total amount of carbon dioxide offset on their behalf. The certificate can be useful for companies reporting how they are cutting their carbon emissions.

"As a first-in-the-industry, DHL GOGREEN EXPRESS is an easy-to-use carbon neutral service that aims to directly address the climate change challenge," said Dan McHugh, the firm's chief executive for the Asia Pacific.



Hossain Khaled, president of Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry (DCCI) unveils a new logo of the chamber at a function organised to mark the announcement of the year-long celebration of the chamber's 50th founding anniversary in Dhaka yesterday. Founding member and the third president of the DCCI Yahya Bawany and other members of the chamber are also seen.

Important Information For All Owners / Operators of :

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3. Hotels/Restaurants/Food Retailers
4. Farmers and Fertilizer Manufacturers
5. Personnel in Food Administration
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১৬ তম চট্টগ্রাম আন্তর্জাতিক বাণিজ্য মেলা ২০০৮

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স্থান : রেলওয়ে পলোথ্রাউন্ড

আপনাকে স্বাগতম

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