

Water transport strike disrupted supply chain

DWAIPAYAN BARUA, Chattogram

Inland water transport is still one of the major modes of cargo transportation in Bangladesh, a country crisscrossed by hundreds of rivers.

Take the instance of transportation of cargo imported through the country's premier seaport of Chattogram.

Over 60 percent of the 10 crore tonnes of cargo annually imported through this port is unloaded from large ships at sea.

Those are then transported by smaller lighter vessels through inland water routes to over 50 destinations or river points across the country.

Over 80 percent of cargo imported in bulk is delivered at sea and transported through waterways.

According to Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority (BIWTA), overall cargo transported annually through the inland water routes reached 15 crore tonnes in fiscal year 2023-24.

It was merely 1.78 crore tonnes in fiscal year 2013-14.

So, a single day of service suspension in the sector can take a very heavy toll on the country's daily trade, businesses and economy as a whole by manifold.

This is in terms of disruptions to

supply chains and market stability and the hampering of industrial production.

Businesses felt this recently.

A two-day work abstention enforced by water transport workers ending on Saturday night brought cargo unloading at sea and river landing points as well as transportation over inland water routes to a standstill.



ANALYSIS

At least 20 mother vessels passed idle times with 4.50 lakh tonnes of imported cargo at Kutubdia and the outer anchorage of the Chattogram port.

As each of these vessels had to count \$20,000 on an average in demurrages for each day passed idle, the demurrage over these two days totalled to not less than \$8,00,000.

According to the businesses, such demurrages would ultimately be added to the import cost.

Another 10.50 lakh tonnes of goods got stuck in 773 lighter vessels, according to Bangladesh Water

Transport Coordination Cell (BWTCC), a private organisation that allocated these lighter vessels.

These vessels were either unloading those goods at 60 different destinations across the country or on way to those destinations.

These goods include mostly commodity items like wheat, sugar, lentil, yellow peas, salt, edible oil, coal, stone, industrial raw materials like cement clinker, slag, fertiliser and others.

Around 1,700 lighter vessels—1,200 owned by individuals and 500 owned by industrial units—are engaged in transporting these goods from Chattogram to the river landing points.

Parvez Ahmed, a leader of the Inland Vessel Owners Association of Chattogram (IVOAC), said importers usually hire these lighter vessels on condition of completing the transportation and unloading within a timeframe.

They have to pay Tk 2,000 to the vessel owner for use of the vessel for each additional day, he said.

Any disruption in the supply chain can lead to volatility in the commodity market, which fluctuates very frequently, and this is not acceptable when people are suffering from high

inflation, he said.

The service suspension also affected transportation of goods to industrial units, hampering production schedules, he said.

Satyajit Das Barman, head of business (grains and logistics) at TK Group, said the impact of a day of service suspension in waterway transportation was manifold.

Two vessels carrying around 77,000 tonnes of wheat imported by TK Group from Canada and Russia arrived on Thursday and had to pass idle times since yesterday morning.

If there was no service disruption, they could have started getting the cargo since Friday night and they had made promises to clients based on that assumption, said Barman.

Now they would have to wait till Tuesday to get the cargo, he said.

“Our vessel arrived at a time when there was no other vessel with fine quality wheat from Canada, which has strong market demand. If we got the cargo timely, we could have gained from the market a bit,” he added.

“Production in our flour factories got hampered for failing to avail the cargo while production in the bakeries we supply flour to also was hampered,” he said.

READ FULL STORY ONLINE

Harness expertise of NRBs to thrive globally: adviser

STAR BUSINESS REPORT



Bangladesh should enhance the quality of its workforce, embrace innovation, upskill the labour force and harness the expertise of non-resident Bangladeshis (NRBs) to thrive globally, Foreign Affairs Adviser Md Touhid Hossain said yesterday.

With improved ICT infrastructure and strategic rebranding, Bangladesh can position itself as a hub for investment, technology and partnerships while getting ready to compete in a digital future, he said.

The adviser made the comments as the chief guest of a daylong NRB Conclave 2024 organised at Foreign Service Academy in Dhaka with the theme “Transforming Bangladesh through knowledge remittance”.

The event aimed to create a formal framework for involving NRBs as catalysts for national transformation, according to Bangladesh Brand Forum (BBF), the organiser.

The BBF organised the event with cooperation of Prime Bank PLC, bKash Limited and Team Group BD.

The conclave highlights the power of expertise and innovation of the non-resident Bangladeshis, Foreign Affairs Secretary Jashim Uddin said.

Beyond remittances, migrant Bangladeshis have the potential to revolutionise sectors like investment, technology, skill development, and nation branding, positioning Bangladesh as a competitive player at the global stage, he said.

China to see stable growth in coming years: experts

ANN/CHINA DAILY

China will continue to see stable GDP growth in the coming years as the world's second-largest economy shows strong resilience boosted by its technological and innovative capability and more supportive government policies to drive domestic demand and high-quality development, experts said on Friday.

New quality productive forces and new technologies are now being applied on a larger scale, providing a strong driving force and growth momentum for many new industrial sectors, said Wang Peng, a deputy researcher of the Beijing Academy of Social Sciences.

Wang said the booming new energy sector advances the process of green transformation, with a trend toward sustainable economic development.

China's economy is expected to enhance growth momentum through innovation and optimizing the industrial structure to achieve sustainable development.

Wang's comments came as China published the results of its fifth national economic census on Thursday, which showed that the country's economy had a solid foundation, strong resilience and enormous potential over the past five years.

“Compared to the previous results

of the economic census, China's economy shows characteristics of structural optimization and high-quality development with the strong momentum of enterprise innovation, rapid development of high-tech and new energy sectors,” Wang said.

The decline of total profits of industrial enterprises continued to narrow in November, showing that the Chinese economy is continuing its trend of recovery. Data released on Friday by the National Bureau of Statistics show that total profits of industrial enterprises above designated size across the country realized a total profit of 6.667 trillion yuan (\$913.40 billion) in the first 11

months, a year-on-year decline of 4.7 percent.

In November, total profits of enterprises declined by 7.3 percent year-on-year, compared with 10 percent in October.

Strong policy support including existing policy tools and the recent launch of a package of incremental policies has led to steady growth in industrial production and a corporate revenue turnaround from decline to increase in November. The government support has also pushed the transformation of the manufacturing industry into high-end, intelligent and green development, said Yu Weining, a statistician of NBS on Friday.

Sergel nearing Tk 1,000cr annual sales

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same molecular formula, but some gained popularity on gaining people's confidence. And this confidence passes from person to person, he said.

There are 31 generic drugs that sell for over Tk 100 crore. The data showed that sales of 79 generic medicine were above Tk 50 crore.

The data indicates that although the sales of individual brands of products of some companies may not be high, but the brand value of the companies themselves ensures high sales of all their medicines.

Jubayer Alam, company secretary of Renata PLC, said most people over 18 years of age take gastrological medicine as there is no discipline when it comes to food intake and habits.

Due to this, many people suffer from ailments affecting the digestive system, he said.

Demand is growing for rosuvastatin drugs, which lowers cholesterol, as many people are dying of heart attacks, he added.

Even in developed countries, demand for such medicine is growing, so it also may see a good growth in the country, he added.

“We are really happy that we can serve a huge number of patients to overcome ulcer, gastroesophageal reflux disease and hyperacidity related problems with Maxpro,” Alam said.

“All Maxpro formulations are manufactured in USFDA, UKMHRA and Anvisa approved facilities so that patients get the best esomeprazole of the country,” he added.

Can apparel industry weather any storm?

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slogans for pay hikes and increments, disrupting the already struggling local apparel manufacturing.

Due to unrest, vandalism and fires, factories in major industrial belts like Gazipur, Savar, Ashulia, Zirani and Zirabo were shut down for several months.

In September, factory owners, labour leaders and workers agreed on a resolution for their 18 point demand.

The minimum wage board increased the annual increment for garment workers to 9 percent from previous 5 -- one of the key labour demands in the 18 point.

The new increment took effect in December and the other demands, except for the amendment of the labour law, have been met too. The government has promised to amend the law by March next year.

For many, the resolution after the unrest meant production resumption, but for a few, it was worse.

For instance, Beximco Group laid off over 40,000 workers from its 16

textile and garment units.

The outgoing year involved correcting export data, as export earnings were previously overstated due to incorrect calculations.

In a final calculation, the central bank said that the garment sector's earnings in fiscal 2023-2024 were \$36 billion, rather than the \$47 billion calculated by the state-owned Export Promotion Bureau (EPB).

The outgoing year was challenging but also a time for business recovery as work orders rebounded with political stability, said Faruque Hassan, a former president of the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA).

Hassan said international retailers and brands are now returning with work orders as sales in the USA and the EU have grown with the rebounding of retail sales.

According to BDL Group's Managing Director Jabbar, 2024 was one of the highest-exporting years, as they received massive work orders from international clothing retailers and brands.

“Now we really need to do more for

better growth of the sector,” Jabbar told The Daily Star over the phone.

He recommended establishing a dedicated EPB-like institution for the garment sector and ramping up investment in man-made fibre and sportswear segments to capture more global markets.

Meanwhile, Rizwan Rahman, a former president of the Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry (DCCI), called for political stability for business growth.

He said the law and order situation has not improved to the expected level and is still affecting the business environment.

According to former BGMEA president Hassan, apart from political and labour unrest, the perennial power and energy crisis severely impacted investment inflow into the sector. As a result, many jobs could not be created in the sector this year.

Hassan also suggested investing more in man-made fibre to get better prices and increase exports, as the demand for specialised garments is increasing worldwide.

Financial services sector

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services sector may eventually be brought to the brink of destruction if the interests of depositors and investors are not properly protected.

Regarding opportunities in the banking industry, he said it could increase contributions towards addressing both new and existing challenges through initiatives to finance sustainable and environmental projects.

Mansur informed that while all the banks have predetermined goals in terms of investing in various sectors, most bank officials do not know how the money will actually be spent.

“Therefore, the BIBM can work to increase the understanding of bank officials on these issues,” he said, adding that innovative ideas like green bonds should also be brought forward.

The Bangladesh Bank governor further said small and medium

enterprises as well as emerging and unconventional industries, such as those focusing green and climate finance, are not well suited for availing financing from banks.

“Funds are being given to numerous sectors, but they are not being transferred. The people in charge of banks and other financial institutions are either not very excited about these industries or are not willing to take chances,” he said.

“Here, we must adopt a new perspective,” Mansur added, conveying his hope that the country's financial institutions will play a stronger role in funding the non-conventional and new sectors.

Mansur, also chairman of the BIBM governing board, urged for addressing new challenges in the banking sector, such as that involving climate financing, green financing, developments in financial services and technological innovations.

Noting that such institutions are much needed for developing the

banking industry, he said the BIBM has been able to play an important role in building human resources for this segment.

Furthermore, Mansur asked the BIBM to focus on attracting foreign students and spreading its name in the international arena.

Masrur Arefin, vice chairman of the Association of Bankers Bangladesh, said the banking industry must move forward with the times.

“We need to increase our understanding on various topics, such as artificial intelligence, machine learning and blockchain,” he added.

Arefin, also the managing director of City Bank, further said the country's digital banking services have reached a certain threshold, as every bank now provides digital support to their customers.

He expressed hope that Bangladesh Bank will look into the extent of digital lending services provided by banks.

Trading Corporation of Bangladesh (TCB)				
TCB Bhaban, Kawran Bazar, Dhaka-1215				
www.tcb.gov.bd				
Commercial Section				
Invitation For Tender (National) for Purchase of				
(a) 2,20,00,000 Litre Refined Soyabean Oil, (b) 1,10,00,000 Litre Refined Rice Bran Oil (c) 2,20,00,000 Litre Refined Palm Olein, (d) 10,00 M. Ton Whole Husked (Without Husk) Red Lentil.				
1	Ministry/Division	Ministry of Commerce.		
2	Agency	Trading Corporation of Bangladesh (TCB)		
3	Procuring Entity Name	Additional Director (Commercial), TCB, Dhaka.		
4	Procuring Entity Code	Not applicable.		
5	Procuring Entity District	Dhaka.		
6	Invitation for	a) Refined Soyabean Oil b) Refined Rice Bran Oil c) Refined Palm Olein d) Whole Husked (Without Husk) Red Lentil.		
7	Invitation Ref. No.	a) 26.05.0000.016.08.497.24.4005, b) 26.05.0000.016.08.497.24.4006, c) 26.05.0000.016.08.497.24.4007, d) 26.05.0000.016.08.497.24.4008		
8	Date	29-12-2024		
KEY INFORMATION				
9	Procurement Method	Open Tendering Method (OTM) (National)		
FUNDING INFORMATION				
10	Budget and Source of Funds	TCB's Own Fund.		
PARTICULAR INFORMATION				
11	Tender Package No.	a) TCB/Imp-114/ Soyabean Oil/ 2024-25, b) TCB/Imp-114/ Rice bran oil/ 2024-25, c) TCB/Imp-114/ Palm Olein/ 2024-25, d) TCB/Imp-114/ Red Lentil/ 2024-25		
12	Tender Package Name	a) Refined Soyabean Oil, b) Refined Rice Bran Oil, c) Refined Palm Olein, d) Whole Husked (Without Husk) Red Lentil.		
13	Tender Invitation/ Publication Date	30-12-2024		
14	Tender Documents Last Selling Date and Time	Date	Time	
15	Tender Closing Date and Time	12-01-2025	17:00 P.M	
16	Tender Opening Date and Time	13-01-2025	12:00 P.M	
17	Name & Address of the office(s)	Address		
Selling Tender Document of each item can be purchased from the banks & offices as mentioned in right column.				
(1) Sonali Bank Ltd. Kawran Bazar Branch, TCB Bhaban, Dhaka. (2) Trust Bank Ltd. Kawran Bazar Branch, and (3) Accounts & Finance Division, TCB's Principal Office at Dhaka.				
Receiving Tender Document				
In front of TCB's reception (2 nd floor), TCB Bhaban, 1, Kawran Bazar, Dhaka.				
Opening Tender Document				
Board Room, TCB.				
INFORMATION FOR TENDERER				
18	Brief Eligibility of Tenderer	Bonafide Suppliers. Details conditions have been mentioned in the Tender documents.		
19	Brief Description of goods	a) 2,20,00,000 (Two Crore Twenty Lac) Litre Refined Soyabean Oil Packed in 02 (Two) Litre Food Grade PET Bottle. b) 1,10,00,000 (One Crore Ten Lac) Litre Refined Rice Bran Oil Packed in 02 (Two) Litre Food Grade PET Bottle. c) 2,20,00,000 (Two Crore Twenty Lac) Litre Refined Palm Olein Packed in 02 (Two) Litre Food Grade PET Bottle d) 10,000 (Ten Thousand) M.Tons Whole Husked (Without Husk) Red Lentil packed in 50 kg bag.		
20	Price of Tender Document	Price of (a) Refined Soyabean Oil tender document is Taka 5,000 (Five Thousand), (b) Refined Rice Bran Oil tender document is Taka 5,000 (Five Thousand), (c) Refined Palm Olein tender document is Taka 5,000 (Five Thousand) & (d) Whole Husked (Without Husk) Red Lentil tender document is Taka 5,000 (Five Thousand).		
Lot No	Identification of Lot	Location	Tender Security Amount (BDT)	
21	1. a) Refined Soyabean Oil b) Refined Rice Bran Oil c) Refined Palm Olein d) Whole Husked (Without Husk) Red Lentil.	Offers are to be made on TCB's Godowns of Dhaka, Chittogram, Khulna, Rajshahi, Rangpur, Barisal, Moulvibazar, Mymensingh, Cumilla, Madaripur, Jhenaidah, Bogura, Dinajpur, Gazipur/District's godown/Upazila's godown.	Tender is to be submitted along with Tender Security amounting to: a) BDT 7,60,00,000 (BDT Seven Crore Sixty Lac) Only. (In case of partial quantity tender security will be proportionate). b) BDT 4,41,00,000 (BDT Four Crore Forty One Lac) Only. (In case of partial quantity tender security will be proportionate). c) BDT 7,95,00,000 (BDT Seven Crore Ninety Five Lac) Only. (In case of partial quantity tender security will be proportionate). d) BDT 2,15,00,000 (BDT Two Crore Fifteen Lac) Only. (In case of partial quantity tender security will be proportionate). in the form of Pay-Order/ Bank Draft/ Bank Guarantee must be issued from any scheduled Bank of Bangladesh. After issuing NOA, the awardee is to submit 5% (Five Percent) Performance Security in the similar form of Pay-Order/Bank Draft/Bank Guarantee.	
Entire quantity of Goods is to be supplied within (a) 28-04-2025 (b) 28-04-2025 (c) 28-04-2025 (d) 28-04-2025				
PROCURING ENTITY DETAILS				
22	Name of Official Inviting Tender	Md. Golam Khorshed		
23	Designation of Official Inviting Tender	Additional Director, Commercial (Substitute), TCB Kawran Bazar, Dhaka.		
24	Address of Official Inviting Tender	Principal Office, Trading Corporation of Bangladesh (TCB) 1, Kawran Bazar, Dhaka.		
25	Contact details of Official Inviting Tender	Telephone No. 55014273	Telephone No. 55014273	E-mail: tcb@tcb.gov.bd, tcbimp@tcb.gov.bd
26	Special Instruction a) All terms and conditions related to the tender and product details are mentioned in the tender document. b) The authority reserves the right to accept or reject any tender in whole/in part without assigning any reason.			
GD- 1295				