

STOCKS		COMMODITIES		ASIAN MARKETS				CURRENCIES			
DSEX	CSCX	Gold	Oil	MUMBAI	TOKYO	SINGAPORE	SHANGHAI	USD	EUR	GBP	CNY
▲ 0.96%	▲ 0.67%	\$1,926.10	\$46.00	▲ 0.59%	▼ 0.03%	▼ 0.66%	▼ 1.30%	83.95	98.17	109.32	11.95
4,827.57	8,297.86	(per ounce)	(per barrel)	39,073.92	23,290.86	2,542.08	3,329.74	BUY TK	SELL TK	84.95	101.97
								113.12	12.57		

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Star BUSINESS

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US seeks list of apparel brands that cancelled orders

REFAYET ULLAH MIRDHA

The US Trade Representative (USTR), the chief trade negotiator for the Trump administration, has sought a list of retailers that cancelled work orders with Bangladeshi firms due to the ongoing coronavirus pandemic.

After securing the list, the US government is expected to urge the retailers to accept their shipments of previously cancelled work orders.

A senior official of the USTR expressed his organisation's willingness to carry out this initiative during a virtual meeting of the Trade and Investment Cooperation Forum Agreement (TICFA) Council with Bangladesh's representatives on Tuesday.

The fifth round of meeting under TICFA, which was signed in November 2013 in a bid to create a platform for two countries to negotiate trade and investment, was held in Dhaka in March.

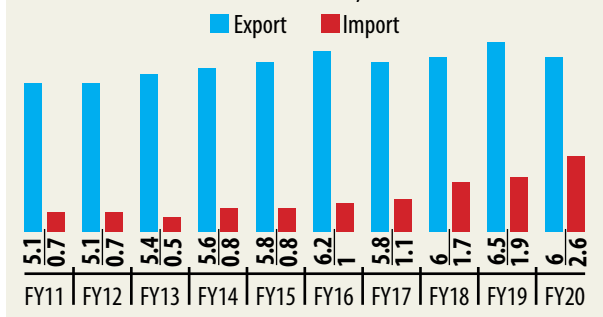
Construction on the country's first metro rail project has resumed in full swing. Most physical work of all projects under Dhaka Mass Transit Company, which is responsible for building and maintaining the metro rail network in Dhaka and its adjacent areas, had remained halted since March 26 when the government declared a general shutdown for the pandemic. At that time, physical work of MRT-6, running from Uttara Third Phase to Motijheel, was ongoing. The photo was taken at Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue yesterday.



SK ENAMUL HAQ

Bangladesh's exports to and imports from the US over the decade (in \$b)

SOURCE: US EMBASSY IN DHAKA, US CENSUS AND EPB



A considerable number of work orders for garment items totalling \$3.2 billion have either been cancelled, deferred or withheld at various seaports as retailers in the US are reluctant to accept deliveries amid the current economic uncertainty, according to the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA).

However, the international buyers who did not cancel or defer their work orders are demanding unusual payment terms.

For instance, most of the retailers complete payment within 90 days after placing an order as per the contract outlined in the letter of credit. Now, buyers have asked for up to 180-210 days to complete their payment.

Since many local garment manufacturers are giving in to these demands in a bid to keep their operations afloat amid the economic maelstrom, the sector has run into a liquidity shortage and numerous workers have lost their jobs in the process.

During the meeting, Bangladesh said that US investors could help set up manufacturing plants for coronavirus vaccines as it would make the highly sought-after drug more affordable and available for the country.

"We need a lot more foreign direct investment to spur on our country's development," said Commerce Secretary Md Jafar Uddin, who led the Bangladesh delegation.

Christopher Wilson, an assistant USTR representative for South and Central Asia, led the US delegation.

Entrepreneurs from the US are the largest investors in Bangladesh, with the heaviest investments being made in the country's energy sector.

But now, Bangladesh is seeking more American investment in the pharmaceutical sector, which has grown rapidly over the years.

READ MORE ON B3



AHSAN HABIB

Rani Marka Dheutin (corrugated iron sheets) once ruled the roost in rural Bangladesh.

Now, in a puzzling turn of events, its producer Appollo Ispat Complex is on the verge of closure after a sponsor director

allegedly embezzled money while a senior employee passed secret information of the company to its competitor.

It has already become a junk stock on the Dhaka Stock Exchange (DSE) as it fell into losses. The situation is so bad that the company now plans to ask for a bailout from the government and relief from banks to stay afloat.

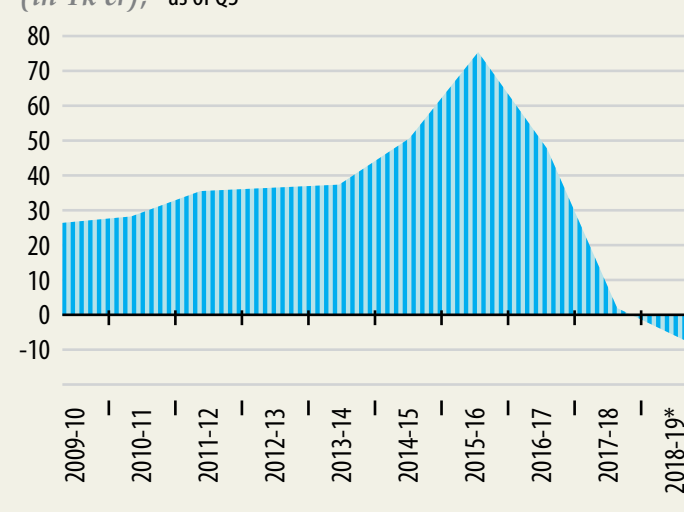
"If the government extends a bailout package and we get a relief from banks for a few years to pay back loans, the company might become a profitable concern again," said Evana F Mohammad, a director of the company.

The company has not asked the money from the government yet, she said.

Appollo Ispat, led by Deen

Appollo Ispat's profits cratered in recent years

(in Tk cr); *as of Q3



Mohammad, chairman of the company, was the pioneer in CI sheet business in Bangladesh.

Incorporated in 1994, it started the commercial journey by establishing a modern and sophisticated continuous galvanising line in 1997.

To meet growing demand, it set up another continuous galvanising line in 2002 and a cold-rolled manufacturing unit in 2005.

Appollo Ispat has a plant over 16.8 acres of land at Shimrail under Narayanganj district to manufacture CI sheets.

It also produces cold-rolled coil, galvanised plain sheet, corrugated galvanised iron and galvanising sheet from the imported hot-rolled coil.

READ MORE ON B3

Yet another round of low-cost funds on the cards for garment exporters

REJAUUL KARIM BYRON and REFAYET ULLAH MIRDHA

The government may consider another stimulus package for garment exporters such that they can pay workers' wages of August, said Finance Minister AHM Mustafa Kamal yesterday.

"I received a letter from the garment manufacturers and exporters for another stimulus package," the minister said at a meeting at his secretariat in Dhaka.

Kamal, however, said it was difficult

for him to take such a decision because the issue of giving the stimulus package to the exporters depends on the consent of the prime minister.

On the eve of Bangladesh embarking on a nationwide shutdown on 26 March, the government announced a Tk 5,000-crore special package to pay the wages and allowances of export-oriented industries' workers for three months starting from April.

As the fund was later found to be

inadequate, the government released another Tk 2,500 crore from the bailout package rolled out for the large industries affected by the pandemic.

Banks disbursed the amount directly to the workers' bank accounts or mobile financial service accounts. The interest-free loan carried a 2 per cent service charge.

Then on 22 June, the Bangladesh Garments Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA) and the Bangladesh Knitwear Manufacturers and

Exporters Association (BKMEA), whose members generate most of the export receipts, jointly wrote to Kamal seeking continuation of low-cost loans for three more months to September.

Garment factory owners are in deep worry about carrying out various activities, the future of the industry and how to pay wages to the workers, said the joint letter, which was also sent to the prime minister's principal secretary.

READ MORE ON B2

Kotha app spreads wings to Sri Lanka

MAHMUDUL HASAN

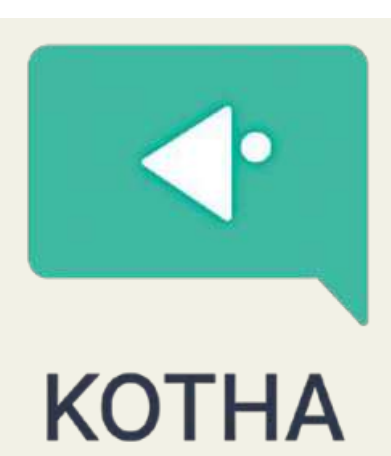
Kotha, Bangladesh's maiden social and lifestyle app, is set to embark on a glorious maiden voyage from the Bay of Bengal to Indian Ocean's island Sri Lanka as part of the company's ambitions to be a continental superpower as a social networking service provider.

It has finalised a deal with Sri Lankan Next Day Technologies to establish a joint venture company to run the app in the moniker of Kotha and the contract will be signed in September.

"This is a proud moment for Bangladesh as for the first time a homegrown social media and lifestyle app will now be available in another country," Mahboob Zaman, chairman of Kotha Technologies Limited, told The Daily Star yesterday.

Created by a team of Bangladeshi developers, software engineers and data scientists, Kotha has the mind-boggling capability to send messages, make voice calls, order grocery and food, stream music and movies and buy tickets, along with other functionalities.

It is similar to South Korea's



Kakaotalk, China's WeChat and the Philippines' Tantan.

The beta version of the Kotha app was rolled out on 12 February for both Android and iOS and has so far been downloaded about 1.5 lakh times.

"To me, Kotha is our Facebook, our PayPal, Netflix, Twitter and WhatsApp," said Zunaid Ahmed Palak, state minister for ICT, at the app's launch.

Another country has expressed interest in Kotha, according to Zaman. "So we want to spread our app to different countries, particularly in

Asia," he added.

Kotha will have the Sri Lankan languages and customised to suit local preference. Kotha Apps & Technologies, which was initiated in 2015, will provide the full technology support for the Sri Lankan tie-up.

"As it is a joint venture, it will not only brighten the image of the country but we will also get a share of the profit," said Tashfin Delwar, chief executive officer of Kotha Technologies.

The Sri Lankan company, for now, has an e-commerce business and has a partnership with Dialog Axiata, a telecom company with a subscriber base of about 14 million. It also has a partnership with a top Sri Lankan mobile financial service provider.

"So, thousands of Sri Lankan users will be benefited from the platform."

The server of the app will also be controlled by Kotha Technology.

Delwar said Kotha in Sri Lanka will have the same features that are in the app in Bangladesh: chat, post, feeds, free calls, stickers, lifestyle contents.

The joint venture latter will partner with different Sri Lankan entities to provide smooth service in payment and different lifestyle products and services.

READ MORE ON B3

Like banks, NBFIs can now maintain loan status until Sep

MD FAZLUR RAHMAN

The central bank has pushed back the deadline for loan status classification by non-bank financial institutions to 30 September, giving more breathing room to borrowers struggling to stay afloat because of the lengthy pandemic.

In March, taking into account the economic devastation triggered by the pandemic, the Bangladesh Bank eased rules on classifying loans, lease and

advances for both banks and NBFIs, ordering them not to downgrade any loans up to June.

The deadline for banks was later extended to 30 September as the central bank forecast the economy would be enshrouded by the coronavirus-induced gloom for longer than it had imagined earlier.

Yesterday, BB extended the deadline for the 34 NBFIs as well.

Because of the coronavirus, borrowers are not being able to run

their normal operations, the central bank said in a notice.

It ordered NBFIs to consider all instalments against long and short-term loans, leases and advances deferred between 1 January and 30 September.

The instalment size and numbers would have to be re-fixed in October, BB said.

The tenure of the loans would be rescheduled by pushing back the repayment period in line with the number of instalments that would remain unpaid until 30 September.

The central bank also ordered the NBFIs to refrain from charging any penalty or additional fees or commissions for the January-September period.

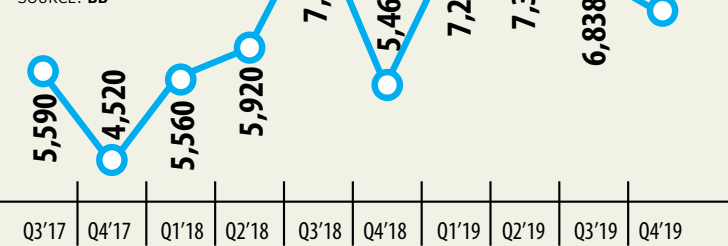
Banks and NBFIs will have to maintain the same credit status of a borrower as on 30 January until the new deadline.

"It is a positive move," said Arif Khan, chief executive officer of IDLC Finance, one of the top NBFIs in Bangladesh.

READ MORE ON B2

NBFIs' total default loans (in Tk cr)

SOURCE: BB



Banks in bonus balancing act as economies shrink but markets boom

REUTERS, London

Major international banks may still pay out big bonuses to high flyers this year even as the pandemic saps the global economy, as fears of losing talent to rivals during a trading boom trump worries of a big compensation bill.

While the likes of HSBC and Deutsche Bank are making redundancies to trim costs, other banks are taking a more relaxed approach to job, salary and bonus cuts across their workforces, remuneration consultants say.

A poll in June of 75 financial firms by Pearl Meyer, a global remuneration consultant, showed 63% have neither made nor contemplated changes to bonus structures in the face of the pandemic, even though 70% expect COVID-19 to have a moderately or slightly negative impact on their businesses.

Bonus plans also come despite a regulatory frown in Britain and elsewhere on bumper cash payouts in the early days of the pandemic, as banks were urged to conserve capital.

"These banks move broadly in lockstep, no one wants to cut anything first," said Simon Patterson, managing director at Pearl Meyer, which advises more than 1,000 companies on employee compensation structures annually.

Sources at two global banks said it was too early to speculate on bonus outcomes for specific units, though many traders will expect big payouts after a surge in revenue at market divisions propped up investment bank profits in the first half of the year.

Research from compensation consultant Johnson Associates this month suggested 2020 bonuses for fixed-income traders for instance could rise by more than 30% from last year.

But that will need to be balanced against performances in other units, with low interest rates and an expected rise in defaults set to hit earnings in retail and corporate banking.

"Financial markets are cyclical but what we face is so unprecedented, no one truly knows whether next year is a feast or famine," Patterson said.

Britain's Prudential Regulation Authority (PRA) banned bonus payments to top management and material risk takers at the UK's biggest deposit-taking banks when Europe's COVID-19 crisis escalated in March, meaning some top

The PRA said it will reassess firms' distribution plans beyond 2020 in the fourth quarter.

Its assessment will be based on the current and projected capital positions of the banks and will take into account the level of economic uncertainty and market conditions at that time.

The European Central Bank said last month that EU-regulated firms must "adopt extreme moderation with regard to variable remuneration payments until 1 January 2021", though this restriction ends before most EU lenders set bonuses for 2020.

Longer-term, it encouraged

keep costs in check and avoid a backlash over huge payouts during a recession.

Some are reducing the amount paid to new hires. Data from recruitment consultant Morgan McKinley showed the average salary rise for those moving from one UK finance job to another dropped to 15% in the first half of 2020 compared with 19.8% a year before.

In the United States, some banks including Popular Inc and Associated Banc Corp have already said they will pay front-line employees more money in the form of "hazard bonuses" during the pandemic.

Other banks are offering non-financial rewards like extra holiday leave and other benefits to make staff feel both valued and wealthier, at little or no impact to their bottom lines, the remuneration consultants said.

Justine Woolf, director of consulting at UK-based Innetto Reward Consulting, said banks were also looking to increase bonuses to staff who helped them hit certain environmental, social and governance goals, so that payouts were more aligned with good corporate behaviour.

"Banks want to be seen to be doing the right thing," Woolf said. "That includes increasing diversity and creating a better gender profile, and bonus plans are being tweaked to incentivise managers to achieve this".

But top risk-takers and executives were less willing to surrender the chance to take home big bonuses, she said, leading some employers to consider awarding restricted stock to appease those who could yet miss out because of regulation.

"Bankers know the score," said Pearl Meyer's Patterson. "Some years they are overpaid, some years they are underpaid. It's never like Goldilock's porridge."



traders could miss out.

Some senior managers at Barclays, Lloyds Banking Group and NatWest Group waived scheduled pay rises and took voluntary salary cuts.

But the PRA has not made clear how long the ban will stay in place and some banks are already planning for future payouts, the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) noted last month, though it urged them to align payouts with long-term business plans.

banks to consider whether a larger part of variable pay could be deferred for longer or paid in other instruments rather than cash.

A source at a major global bank said firms were reluctant to dismantle bonus structures, because doing so could deter bright graduates from applying for entry-level roles and demotivate existing staff needed to power the business through tough times.

There may however be pressure to adapt their models, in a bid to

No funds available: Depositors at India's PMC Bank survive on loans, charity

REUTERS, Mumbai

In February, 82-year-old Kishan Lal appealed to India's finance minister for help, saying in a Twitter message he was ready to donate his kidney and eyes if someone could help arrange funds to treat his daughter, who had a brain tumour.

The Lals had enough savings to tide over the medical crisis - more than 2.5 million rupees (\$33,450) in Punjab & Maharashtra Co-operative (PMC) Bank. But withdrawals were capped at 50,000 rupees from each account at the time because authorities were investigating fraud at PMC.

The withdrawal cap is now at 100,000 rupees per depositor.

"I just borrowed money from wherever I could, I had to save my daughter," said Lal. "If I had access to my own money, I'd not have been ashamed." The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) took control of PMC last September after it was accused of fraud and concealing non-performing loans. PMC's top officials and the owners of a realty company that received the bulk of the loans were arrested.

were "discriminated against" compared to those from commercial lender Yes Bank.

In March, the RBI imposed a cap of 50,000 rupees on withdrawals from Yes Bank, then India's fifth-largest bank in terms of assets, after its finances deteriorated.

But less than 24 hours later, the finance minister announced that India's top state-run bank, SBI, would infuse funds into Yes Bank and the withdrawal curbs were subsequently lifted.

The finance ministry told the court the government had not infused any funds in Yes Bank but it was investors and the SBI who came to its rescue, according to court documents. SBI is 57% government owned.

The judge wasn't convinced.

Noting PMC depositors were in a "dire state", the court said the RBI and the finance ministry played a crucial role in rescuing Yes Bank and asked them both to "delve

The withdrawal cap has left many of PMC's over 900,000 depositors in deep difficulty. Some say they are struggling to clear loans or pay their children's school fees, while others say they depend on friends for their groceries.

The situation at PMC has also amplified concerns about the health of India's tens of thousands of co-operative banks, which often serve communities in the rural interior and have assets worth around \$220 billion, about 11% of India's total banking sector assets.

These banks, many of which are tiny, are subject to less stringent regulation than commercial banks and currently, more than two dozen of them are facing lending or withdrawal restrictions by the RBI because of financial irregularities.

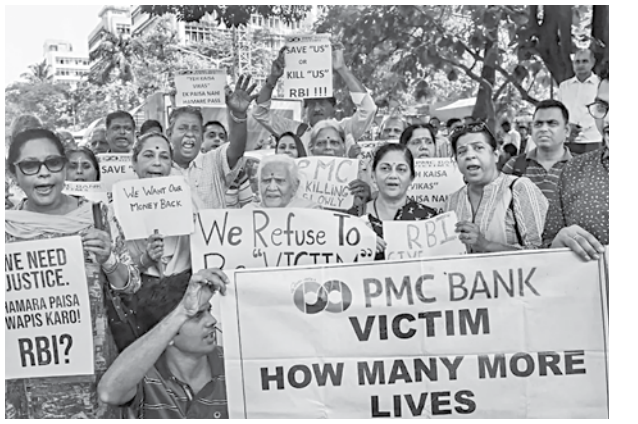
The coronavirus has hit the broader banking sector hard, raising concerns about soaring bad loans as household and corporate debt rise. Liquidity risks have increased for non-bank financial companies and the state banking system needs to be recapitalised.

But some analysts are concerned that the pandemic is likely to have a more pronounced effect on the fragile co-operative banks.

"They lend to riskier borrowers who have higher chances of defaulting due to the pandemic," said Jignesh Shial, a banking analyst at brokerage Emkay Global.

Asked about the delay in resolving PMC's problems, Jai Bhagwan Bhoria, an administrator appointed by the RBI to revive the bank, told Reuters: "The recovery is an ongoing process and it takes time in actual realisations due to legal steps and hurdles faced."

The PMC crisis has also sparked courtroom battles. In one of them, Sandeep Bhalla, whose parents have nearly 10 million rupees blocked in PMC, has told the Delhi High Court that depositors of PMC



COLLECTED
PMC Bank depositors are seen protesting in Mumbai.

into the aspect" of why PMC depositors were differently treated.

The RBI told the court the two lenders were "fundamentally different," including the different regulations governing them. It also said with PMC's "really precarious financials", no investors were willing to bail it out.

The finance ministry submitted that the RBI had rescued Yes Bank as it found it necessary in the public and depositors' interest, but the central bank had not proposed any such rescue for PMC.

The court is next set to hear the case in mid-September, just ahead of the first anniversary of PMC's collapse.

Asked for further comment, the finance ministry referred Reuters questions to the RBI, which did not respond.

Set up in 1984, PMC is a regional lender with 137 branches across six states and by last year it had deposits of \$1.5 billion. Yes Bank is far bigger with more than 1,000 branches across India.

Many depositors said they were unaware of the differing regulatory structures for banks, and believed PMC was like any other commercial lender.

"If it was not safe, why did you name it a bank?" asked Pooja Chaudhary, 26, who said she had to struggle for hours last month to get custody of her father's body after a hospital refused to release it until she cleared medical bills.

"My father died, and I couldn't even cry," said Chaudhary, whose said her savings of 1.5 million rupees were blocked in PMC.

Yet another round of low-cost funds on the cards for garment exporters

FROM PAGE B1

"As a result, it would not be possible for most garment factory owners to pay wages to workers for July, August and September," the letter said, adding that the initial stimulus package had helped the garment sector withstand the crisis brought on by the global coronavirus pandemic.

Garment factories in Bangladesh faced order cancellations or suspensions worth more than \$3 billion since the pandemic took form.

Subsequently, earnings from apparel shipments in the immediate past fiscal year fell to its lowest in a decade of \$27.8 billion. The amount is 18.5 per cent lower than in fiscal 2018-19.

It may take up to eight months to get the payment for the shipments already made. But

the workers have to be paid to keep factories up and running to execute the current shipments and make the delivery for the orders coming in, the two trade bodies said.

In response, the government in July gave yet another stimulus package worth Tk 3,000 crore for the export-oriented industries to help them provide wages and salaries to their workers for the month.

Borrowers will have to pay 4.5 per cent interest rate to avail the fund while banks will get 9 per cent interest as the government will give the rest as subsidy.

Banks will be permitted to take up 50 per cent fund from the central bank's refinance scheme to provide the credit to the export-oriented industries smoothly.

Borrowers will have to pay the loans within

two years including a grace period of six months.

Now, the exporters are seeking another round of low-cost funds to pay the wages of August, although shipments are on the rise.

Garment shipments raked in \$3.2 billion in July, which is 14.1 per cent more than the target set by the commerce ministry for July. In July last year, apparel exports stood at \$3.3 billion.

"We have asked for soft loans like before to pay the wages of August," said Md Shehab Udduza Chowdhury, a director of BGMEA.

The garment exporters need the loans as many of them are struggling to hold out against the economic onslaught of the pandemic, he said.

"We also sent a letter to the finance minister seeking loans at a 2 per cent service charge," said Mohammad Hatem, vice-president of BKMEA.

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Like banks, NBFIs can now maintain loan status until Sep

FROM PAGE B1

The clients who could not repay instalments because of the pandemic are not wilful defaulters. Rather, their businesses have come to a standstill because of one of the worst crises in a century.

"If we label their loans classified, they would not be able to borrow from the financial sector."

Khan said it was wise to give additional time to borrowers so that they can keep businesses up and running and pay wages and salaries to employees.

"All of us would have to give time to our clients this year. Otherwise, clients would not survive," Khan added.

Mominul Islam, chief executive officer of IPDC Finance, another top NBFIs, echoed the same.

"Customers need concessions at this critical time. This deferral would particularly be helpful for small and medium enterprises."

If customers are classified, they would not be able to secure funds from the government's stimulus packages, Islam said.

Some customers may still not be able to make a comeback despite the concessions, particularly those who had been weak even before the pandemic.

"So, financial institutions should take the necessary precautions and set aside additional money in provisioning instead of showing profits."

IPDC Finance has set aside about Tk 30 crore, which is about half of the profits it made in the first half of 2020, for expected loan losses.

"We have done it keeping in mind the relaxation in loan classification because there would not be relaxation in the future and some customers may default on their instalment payments," Islam added.

BSEC slaps fines, approves 2 bonds, an IPO

FROM PAGE B4

The face value of each bond is Tk 1 crore.

With the proceeds, the lender will improve its additional Tier-1 capital base.

The other approval was for the fully redeemable, non-convertible, unsecured, non-listed and zero-coupon bond of Standard Bank to raise Tk 850 crore.

The discount rate of the bond is 4 to 5 per cent. The face value of each bond is Tk 10 lakh which would be issued to institutional and eligible investors. With the proceeds, the bank will meet ongoing financing requirements.

Dominage Steel Building Systems got the nod to issue 3 crore shares at face value.

It would construct a building and purchase machinery with the IPO proceeds of Tk 30 crore.

As per its financial report of the year ending on 30 June 2019, the company's earnings per share was Tk 1.5.

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Runner brings Bangladesh's first 165cc motorcycles

FROM PAGE B4

However, the motorcycle makers' association continues to demand an 81 per cent cut in bike registration fees in next fiscal year's budget as the purchasing power of the general mass has seen a sharp fall due to the pandemic.

The registration cost of a motorcycle, including registration fees, road tax, supplementary duties and other charges, is about Tk 22,000 on an average, which is about 25 per cent of the price of a 100cc motorcycle, the best-selling engine capacity.

The association wants the fee to be fixed at Tk 4,000.

Moreover, motorcycle makers have urged the government to continue exempting VAT on sales of locally-made parts until 2027 to keep prices low as the purchasing power of people has seen a sharp fall due to Covid-19 pandemic.

The exemption provided by the Motorcycle Industry Development Policy 2018 is set to expire in the outgoing fiscal year. At least 30 per cent of the components used in building motorcycles are manufactured locally.

Kedar Lele elected chairman of Unilever Bangladesh

FROM PAGE B4

He succeeds Kamran Bakar, who served as chairman of Unilever Bangladesh since 2012.

Lele joined Unilever Bangladesh as its chief operating officer on 1 June 2017 and subsequently was appointed as its MD on 1 January 2018.

He will continue to be both the chairman and MD of the company.

ইস্টার্ন রিফাইনারী লিমিটেড
Eastern Refinery Limited
(A Subsidiary of Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation, North Patenga, Chattogram-4000)

Invitation for Tender

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh	
1	Ministry/Division Energy and Mineral Resource Division.
2	Agency Eastern Refinery Limited on behalf of Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation.
3	Purchaser name Eastern Refinery Limited.
4	Purchaser code Not used at present.
5	Purchaser district <Chattogram>
6	Invitation for <CTFM> V <select> V <select>
7	Invitation Ref. No. <ER/CTFM-01/2020>
8	Date <26-08-2020>
KEY INFORMATION	
9	Procurement method <OTM single stage 2 envelop>
FUNDING INFORMATION	
10	Budget and source of funds <BPC own fund>
11	Development partners (if applicable) <Not applicable>
PARTICULAR INFORMATION	
12	Project/programme code (if applicable) <Not applicable>
13	Project/programme name (if applicable) <Custody Transfer Flow Meter with Supervisory Control at ERL Tank Farm>
14	Tender package No. <ER/CTFM-01/2020>
15	Tender package name <Single lot turnkey basis>
16	Tender publication date <27-08-2020>
17	Tender last selling date <30-09-2020>
18	Tender closing date and time <09-10-2020>
19	Tender opening date and time <09-10-2020>
20	Name & address of the office(s) <Address <Manager Accounts, Eastern Refinery Limited> <AGM(DLO) 2nd Floor, Dhaka Liaison Office, YMCA Building, Paltan, Dhaka>
No conditions apply for sale, purchase or distribution of tender documents	
21	-Receiving tender document <DGM (SCP), Room No. 217, Training Center, 1st Floor> -Opening tender document <BPC Board Room; Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation; BSC Bhaban; Saltgola Road, Chattogram.> Pre-tender meeting place/date/time <26-09-2020>/10.00am.
INFORMATION FOR TENDERER	
22	Eligibility of tenderer <Relevant experience>
23	Brief description of plant & equipment <Design, Supply, Installation, Testing and Commissioning of Custody Transfer Flow Meter With Supervisory Control at ERL Tank Farm>
24	Brief description of services <Fiscal Metering and ERL Tank Inventory Management>
25	Price of tender document (Tk) <5,000.00>
26	Lot No. Identification of lot Location Tender security amount (Tk) Completion time in weeks/months
1	<Custody Transfer Flow Meter & Tank Terminal Automation> <Chattogram> <75,00,000> seventy-five lac <17 months>
PURCHASER DETAILS	
30	Name of official inviting tender <Muhammad Jamil Al Mamun>
31	Designation of official inviting tender <DGM SCP>
32	Address of official inviting tender <North Patenga, Chattogram, Eastern Refinery Limited>
33	Contact details of official inviting tender <Tel. No.> <Fax No.> <e-mail> 031-2501261 Ext:160 031-2501269 md-office@erl.com.bd
34	The purchaser reserves the right to reject all tenders or annul the tender proceedings.



Chairman of MIDAS Financing Mohammed Nasir Uddin Choudhury presides over the 24th annual general meeting of the company organised through a digital platform on August 25. Members of the Board Rokia A Rahman, M Hafizuddin Khan, Abdul Karim, Nazneen Sultana, Ali Imam Majumder, Md Shahedul Alam, Md Shamsul Alam, Ghulam Rahman, AKM Kamruzzaman, Managing Director Mustafizur Rahman and General Manager Tanvir Hasan took also took part in the event. The company announced 2.5 per cent stock and 2.5 per cent cash dividends for 2019.

Kanti Kumar Saha, new CEO of Lankan Alliance Finance

STAR BUSINESS DESK

Kanti Kumar Saha has recently been appointed as the new chief executive officer of Lankan Alliance Finance with effect from August 12.

He replaced Romesh Elapata, the financial institution said in a statement yesterday.

"Lankan Alliance is set now to deliver customised financial solutions and new products under the leadership of the new CEO Kanti Kumar Saha," said Jowher Rizvi, chairman of Lankan Alliance Finance.

Saha is bringing in his valuable experience in corporate and investment banking and the best practices from global financial institutions, Rizvi said.

Before joining Lankan Alliance Finance, Saha in his 29-year-long career has represented the board in the capacity of managing director and CEO of NDB Capital, the investment banking arm of National Development Bank PLC of Sri Lanka.

Saha was the director and head of global corporate banking at Citibank NA Bangladesh, senior relationship manager for corporate banking at Standard Chartered and also served Prime Bank as deputy managing director and chief business officer.

He completed his Bachelor's and Master's in economics from Dhaka University and also earned a postgraduate management degree from Nottingham Trent University, UK.

Established in 2018, Lankan Alliance Finance is a joint venture non-banking financial institution (NBFI) with multinational collaboration, licensed by Bangladesh Bank.



Kanti Kumar Saha

Kotha app spreads wings to Sri Lanka

FROM PAGE B1
Despite its designs to spread its wings, Kotha's main focus remains in targeting the Bangladeshi population.

"Indian government has banned many Chinese apps, including TikTok, and they now want to build a local app to replace them. In many countries around the world, people are preferring local tech platforms," Delwar said.

Kotha is constantly reviewing the recommendation of the users and able to provide more customised service for local mobile tech giants like Facebook and others.

"We are a local entity and we know best what the people of this country want," he added.

For instance, Kotha on 14 April launched a virtual hospital -- HelloDoc -- where patients can consult doctors through video conferencing and have certain medical tests done at home to

help the country fight coronavirus. It also added a feature where users can see hospital information such as the availability of ICU beds in a hospital.

Bangladeshi customers are generating a lot of data now by using different digital services and this will soon turn into a minefield, said Zaman, a renowned technology entrepreneur and managing director of DataSoft Systems Bangladesh.

Every year, different social media platforms like Facebook and Google are earning thousands of crores of taka from Bangladesh through users' data and that helps the brands connect with their customers as well, Delwar said.

If a locally developed platform gets the popularity, the data will be protected and save thousands of crores taka from flying out of the country. "Certainly, data will be the next

currency and if we have access to the data, people will experience a drastic change in their lives," said Zaman, also a former president of Bangladesh Association of Software and Information Services.

On data protection, Delwar said protecting user data is vital and so far, Kotha has handled it dextrously.

Kotha is also planning to introduce a new feature where a business account can be opened and it will help build local professional networking and selling products.

Small and medium entrepreneurs can sell their products through the app, he added.

Besides, there will be a digital marketplace in the app where content creators can sell their digital products and services.

To facilitate the service, Kotha is signing a deal with local mobile financial service provider bKash over payment integrating next week.

US seeks list of apparel brands that cancelled orders

FROM PAGE B1
"If US investors set up vaccine manufacturing plants in Bangladesh, it might be a timely decision because the demand for it is very high right now," Uddin said after the meeting.

The Bangladesh team also demanded more American investment in non-coronavirus-related pharmaceutical industries.

"We told the US to invest in contract-manufacturing of medicine so that they can produce various pharmaceutical products here and later ship some back home," Uddin added.

Investing in Bangladesh's pharmaceutical industry could indeed be lucrative for foreign investors as the country is eligible to produce patented drugs cheaply without securing a licence until 1 January 2033.

This is due to a decision made by the World Trade Organisation under the Trade-Related Intellectual Property Rights (TRIP) agreement.

Thanks to this facility, the local pharmaceutical industry has thrived, meeting 98 per cent of the domestic demand.

As a result, many local drug makers are now exporting their products to nearly 150 destinations, including the US, Canada, the UK and the EU.

In fiscal 2019-20, Bangladesh's pharmaceutical exports grew by 4.5 per cent year-on-year to \$136 million, according to data from the Export Promotion Bureau (EPB).

Bangladesh could also be a prime location for American companies to relocate to as many Japanese and Chinese firms are moving to the country due to its trade privileges and competitive production costs.

In a virtual presentation during the meeting, the Bangladesh Investment Development Authority detailed the country's initiative to launch One-Stop Service centres that would help both

local and international investors.

The issue of reinstating the Generalised System of Preferences (GSP) for certain Bangladeshi products bound for US markets was also raised.

Under the facility, Bangladeshi goods such as dry fish, tobacco and ceramics would enjoy duty-free access.

Before the country's GSP status was suspended, Bangladesh shipped products worth \$24 million to the US each year under the preferential trade treatment.

The current GSP scheme's tenure will come to an end in December either way, the US delegation said.

Therefore, Bangladesh could apply to the USTR for renewal of its GSP status when the next phase comes, according to a statement from the commerce ministry yesterday.

The US government suspended Bangladesh's GSP status back in June 2013, citing poor labour rights and working conditions following the nation's deadliest industrial accident, the collapse of Rana Plaza, in April that year.

About 1,138 workers in the commercial complex were killed while 2,500 were left severely injured.

After that, the US government outlined 16 terms and conditions to be fulfilled by its Bangladeshi counterparts before the country could regain its GSP facility.

Bangladesh has achieved the conditions, which mainly relate to improving labour rights, workplace safety and remediation of garment factories by the Accord and the Alliance.

The country has since applied twice for the reinstatement of its GSP status but the USTR is yet to give the all-clear as a lot more improvements to the country's labour laws need to be made.

"Nonetheless, we are hopeful that the US will consider our appeal items

this time as Bangladesh has already fulfilled all the conditions," Uddin said.

Locally made apparel items should also be given duty-free access to the US even though it does not provide this scope for any other country other than a few African nations under the African Growth and Opportunity Act.

Bangladesh imports tonnes of cotton from the US each year and so, these garment products should get the duty-free facility, he added.

During the meeting, the US delegation demanded cotton imported from the US be not fumigated upon arrival as it had already gone through the process before being shipped.

Double fumigation deteriorates the cotton's quality and also causes a delay in the manufacturing process.

The double fumigation method was introduced in the 1950s, during Ayub Khan's tenure as leader of East Pakistan, now known as Bangladesh, to prevent bollworm attacks.

The US is Bangladesh's single largest export destination but about 95 per cent of all exports to the nation are garment products.

As many as 97 per cent of the goods of Bangladeshi origin had enjoyed duty-free access to US markets due to the country's classification as an LDC.

Under the LDC category, Bangladesh products still get tax-free entry to several other destinations, as per the decision taken during the Hong Kong Ministerial Meeting of the WTO in 2005.

However, the country's main export item, garment, was not included in the 97 per cent package even back then.

Garment exports account for 95 per cent of Bangladesh's overall shipments to the US.

With the existing regulations, Bangladeshi apparel items are subject to 15.6 per cent upon arrival in the US.

Wage growth drops further though economy reopens

FROM PAGE B4
Inflation was 5.53 per cent in July and price spikes hit construction workers and fishermen hard as their wage growth was way below the rate of inflation.

Growth of income of construction workers slowed to 4.12 per cent in July from 4.24 per cent in the previous month as builders and contractors were slowly resuming their activities.

For fishermen, wages grew 4.87 per cent in July, one basis point lower than that in the previous month.

However, income of workers in the

manufacturing sector did not drop much compared to the construction workers and fishermen, according to the WRI.

The BBS said wages of manufacturing and farm labourers grew at a slower pace in July than in June but the rate of growth was higher than inflation.

Production workers' wage increased 7.09 per cent in July, down from 7.23 per cent a month ago. In July, wage growth of farm workers slowed to 6.15 per cent from 6.18 per cent in June, showed BBS data.

The state agency paints the grim picture of wage growth at a time when independent research organisations estimate that the coronavirus-induced crisis pushed a large number of people into poverty.

A recently survey by the Power and Participation Research Centre and BRAC Institute for Governance and Development showed that income of the poor remained 42 per cent below the pre-pandemic levels although the economy reopened in June. And 17 per cent of the poor households were still out of work in June, it said.

Once a high-flyer, Appollo Ispat is now standing on cliff's edge

FROM PAGE B1
As the company was logging higher profits, it went public in 2013 to raise Tk 220 crore at a premium of Tk 12.

A premium on stocks is defined as the number of extra money investors are ready to pay for the purchase of shares over the par value.

Appollo Ispat raised the funds to repay bank loans amounting to Tk 153 crore and establish a new galvanising plant with the rest of the money.

It introduced 60,000-tonne capacity advanced radiant tube furnace technology-based galvanising plant in April 2018 and the plant was expected to fetch half of the sales volume.

In Bangladesh, CI sheet and galvanised plain sheets are used for 81 per cent roofing and 42 per cent fencing in households in rural and semi-urban areas.

Thanks to higher demand, Appollo Ispat booked higher profits and a better rate of return and turnover until the 2015-16 financial year.

Evana blamed the wrongdoing of one director, Md Sirajul Haque, also a sponsor, for the fall of the company.

"He sold our land without informing the company. He sold 13 truck-loaded finished goods and ran away with the money."

Haque shifted Tk 250 crore out of the company, she said, adding that they had filed a case against the person, who has fled to Canada.

A top official of Appollo Ispat passed the company's confidential information to a major competitor as he was a relative of the company's chairman, Evana said. "We fell behind in competition," she

said.

The company has short-term loans of Tk 235 crore and Tk 70 crore in long-term loans as on 30 June 30 2018, according to DSE data.

Deen Mohammad lent Tk 152 crore in a personal loan to Appollo Ispat so that it does not become a loan defaulter.

Evana also sold more than 90,000 shares of City Bank to reschedule loans.

Every company has its ups and downs but it does not mean that the company has no potential, she said. "Don't we deserve a chance to revive the company?"

The company, which got listed in 2013, needs Tk 700 crore to Tk 800 crore to make a comeback, according to Evana.

Deen Mohammad's family had planned to wind up the business because of the trouble. "But my father loves it like a child and doesn't want to close it," she added.

Appollo Ispat's factory and raw materials are now being used by Jalalabad Steel to manufacture its products.

The Credit Rating Agency of Bangladesh has assigned the BBB3 rating to Appollo Ispat based on audited financial statements of the company up to 2019.

Companies rated in this category have adequate capacity to meet financial commitments but are more susceptible to adverse economic conditions or changing circumstances, according to a top official of a credit rating agency.

Stock investors are still puzzled how the well-performing, popular company became a loss-making venture.

Appollo Ispat's shares closed at Tk 5.50 on the Dhaka bourse yesterday, up 7.8 per cent from the previous day.

34pc garment workers sole earners of households

FROM PAGE B4
Twenty-six per cent of women said that they were the only household earner compared to 60 per cent of their male counterparts.

Of the 66 per cent that reported having some form of financial assistance at home, 91 per cent said they had one other earner while 9 per cent reported having two and just 1 per cent had three or more.

As for the additional earners, 73 per cent of the female respondents said that the other wage earner was their spouse while the figure was 57 per cent in the case of male respondents.

The surveys being conducted by the Sanem and the MFO are part of a project titled Garment Worker Diaries, which collect regular, credible data on the work hours, income, expenses, and financial tool use of workers in the global apparel and textile supply chain in producing countries.

The project began in 2016 when Microfinance Opportunities, a global non-profit, in collaboration with local research firms in Bangladesh, India and Cambodia, collected data from 180 women in each country.

The goal of the project is to collect and disseminate Diaries data in five producing countries by 2021. It is expected that the data will result in a major improvement in the transparency of global supply chains.

The respondents were asked about the wages and work hours of other earners in the household in July.

The findings in July saw a continued drop in unemployment, increased work hours, and a narrowing of earning gap between women and men.

According to the findings, 96 per cent of other household earners went to work.

The median work hours for other household earners was 239. The median salary of the other household earners was Tk 10,000, up from Tk 9,000 in June.

The median salary for women was Tk 10,000 compared to Tk 9,000 for men, according to the press release.

Food office to assess stock of rice, paddy to tame rising prices

FROM PAGE B4
The food office is yet to find anyone holding a large stock of grain, Khanum said.

"We also want to see if large companies are packaging rice in larger quantity and reducing supply in the market. We are analysing where we need to intervene," she said, adding that the government would import after analysing the situation and to bring in discipline in the market.

Millers and traders earlier said crop losses for cyclone Amphan, recurrent floods and apprehensions over low yields of aman paddy for late plantation and food shortages for the coronavirus pandemic are fuelling rumours among growers, traders and millers that the supply of the food grain will become tight in the coming months.

And these factors are encouraging paddy to be stocked up and released slowly, said millers and traders.

Agriculture ministry recently estimated that flood damaged 32,000 hectares of Aus paddy crop and nearly 71,000 hectares of Aman paddy.

Farmers were harvesting paddy during the current Aus harvesting season. The decision on the amount of import will be taken based on the prospect of Aman, Khanum said.

As part of the preparation, the food ministry also asked its field office to furnish information on the requirement for rice for distribution among poor people under the social safety net and other public food distribution programme between

September and November this year. Khanum said they need nearly 900,000 tonnes of rice for distribution for three months.

She said the government might consider allowing the private sector to import rice if needed.

KM Layek Ali, general secretary of the Bangladesh Auto, Major and Husking Mills Association, welcomed the government move to assess the stock of foodgrains.

"We millers do not have that much stock. If there is a surplus, it is necessary to see who is holding that. The point is that the quality of grains deteriorated because of bad weather during the harvesting season except for the haor region."

This stock assessment is necessary to see whether there is any surplus or shortage, he added.

A section of traders increase the prices whenever the stock of food grain at public warehouses decline, said Ghulam Rahman, president of the Consumers Association of Bangladesh.

The government should be increasing public stock by reducing import duty and increasing supply in the market through open market sales and other social safety net schemes.

At the same time, it should ensure punishment to wrongdoers.

"The spike in prices is not expected at this time when many people have lost jobs and seen reduced income. Many self-employed have become jobless," he added.

Food office to assess stock of rice, paddy to tame rising prices

SOHEL PARVEZ

With the soaring prices of rice affecting the poor, the food ministry has taken steps to assess the stock of food grain at millers and traders end.

Accordingly, the Directorate General of Food has asked its field offices to send reports on the stock of paddy, rice, wheat and flour at the end of millers and traders within five days, according to a notice issued on 24 August.

The initiative comes against the backdrop of two contradicting scenarios: rice prices are spiralling at a time when the agriculture ministry is saying production was good in the last Boro season and there would be no shortage of the food.

The Bangladesh Rice Research Institute (BRRI) estimates that farmers produced more than 2 crore tonnes of rice from Boro harvested in the April-June period and that there would be more than 55 lakh tonnes of rice in surplus at the end of November after meeting the domestic requirement.

BRRI found in its study that farmers held a higher stock of paddy.

"We want to understand the reasons behind the price spike," Food Secretary Mosammat Nazmanara Khanum told The Daily Star over the phone



SHEIKH NASIR

With prolonged floods mounting to the pandemic woes this year, fresh harvests of hybrid paddy cultivated on higher grounds bring some relief to farmers in Nazir Gaon in Tukur Bazar union of Sylhet sadar. Bangladesh Rice Research Institute estimates a surplus of over 55 lakh tonnes of rice on meeting domestic demand at November's end while the food ministry is preparing to import the staple to keep public stocks intact. The present stock of 12.5 lakh tonnes of rice and wheat is set to be exhausted by December owing to the government's food distribution and other social safety net programmes.

The prices began increasing nearly a week ago in Dhaka city, according to retail data compiled by the state-run Trading Corporation of Bangladesh (TCB).

For example, traders asked Tk 54-Tk 64 for each kilogram of fine grains sold as miniket or nazirshail, which is 5 per cent higher from a month earlier. Coarse rice price increased

8 per cent to Tk 44-48 each kilogram yesterday from Tk 40-Tk 45 a month before, showed TCB data. The prices of paddy and rice had been higher during the harvesting

season because of millers' rush to buy the grain following government's declaration of purchasing 800,000 tonnes of paddy and slow release of paddy by farmers, Khanum said.

The government could attain one-fourth of its target of buying paddy during the procurement season, which is set to end next week.

The prices are going up at a time when the public warehouses had 10.7 lakh tonnes of food on 24 August, down 32 per cent from a year earlier.

Khanum went on to cite the agriculture ministry's estimate of adequate production and ample supply of the grain in the market and said there has been no shortage of rice.

"We have no shortage of rice based on the estimate and our observation. Even after that, the prices are increasing. There is a grey area. It may be that farmers, millers do not have stock as much as we are assuming. There might be a gap somewhere," she added.

In its notice issued to the district food office, the food ministry said Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina ordered the officials concerned to get reports on the stock of paddy, rice and wheat held by millers and traders to take a policy decision.

READ MORE ON B3

BSEC slaps fines, approves 2 bonds, an IPO

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

The stock market regulator has fined a stock investor, two brokers and two issuers for breaching securities rules.

It also approved bonds for two listed banks and an initial public offering of Dominance Steel Building Systems to raise funds from the stock market.

The decisions came yesterday in a commission meeting chaired by Shibli Rubayat Ul Islam, chairman of the Bangladesh Securities and Exchange Commission (BSEC).

BSEC fined stock investor Soleyman Rubel Tk 10 lakh for executing series transaction of stocks of Ifad Autos, which caused the turnover of the stocks to rise but no change in ownership, said the regulator in a press release.

Such transactions influence share prices, so it is illegal according to a securities rule.

The regulator also fined International Securities, a stockbroker of Chittagong Stock Exchange, Tk 5 lakh on finding through an investigation that it had traded stocks amounting to Tk 35.9 crore of investor Ferdousi Rahman without her approval.

It also slapped a Tk 5 lakh fine on Kamruzzaman Rumman, an authorised representative of the brokerage house, for misappropriating Tk 36.3 lakh of the investor.

Rumman will remain suspended from the post until he returns the investor her money, BSEC said.

The stock market regulator also fined Gateway Equity, a stockbroker of Dhaka Stock Exchange, Tk 1 lakh.

It was found to have broken securities rules by giving netting advantage in trading of junk stocks, lending money to relatives of the company's officials and not entering into any loan agreement with account holders.

BSEC also fined every director, except independent ones, of Lexco and Tung Hai Knitting Tk 1 lakh each for breaching securities rules.

Meanwhile, the approval for the fully redeemable, non-convertible, unsecured, non-listed and coupon-bearing perpetual bond of NCC Bank would enable raising a fund of Tk 500 crore.

The coupon rate of the bond is 9.5 per cent to 12.5 per cent. The bonds would be issued to institutional investors, banks, and other eligible investors.

READ MORE ON B2

Wage growth drops further though economy reopens

SOHEL PARVEZ

Workers in the agriculture, industries and services sectors witnessed a further drop in wage growth in July as they were shut of income opportunities due to the economic headwinds brought about by the Covid-19 pandemic.

General wages grew 5.82 per cent in July, the lowest in recent months, as economic activities did not pick up as expected to create adequate job and income prospects although the government-announced holiday to contain the spread of the virus ended at the beginning of June.

Workers saw their wages grow 5.90 per cent in June, only one basis point higher than the previous month, according to Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics' Wage Rate Index (WRI), an indicator of trends in aggregate wages.

The WRI tracks the movement of nominal wages of low-paid skilled and unskilled labourers over time in different sectors of the economy, the BBS said. The index is also used to measure changes in real wages.

The agency estimated average monthly wage rate of low-paid skilled and unskilled labourers in 44 occupations -- 11 in agriculture, 22 in industries and 11 in the services sector.

The BBS said workers in the services sector were worst-hit in July followed by industrial and agricultural workers.

The services sector, which accounts for more than half the country's gross domestic product (GDP), represents people working in tens of thousands of retail stores, wholesale businesses, hotels and restaurants, transport, education and a host of other sectors.

In July, wage growth of workers in the services sector declined to 5.52 per cent from 5.78 per cent in June, only depicting that a large part of the economy is yet to return to normal from the havoc caused by the pandemic.

The BBS data also showed that the overall wellbeing of people working in the services sector eroded in July, as inflation, a measure of average changes in the prices of goods and services, was higher than their wage growth.

READ MORE ON B3

Runner brings Bangladesh's first 165cc motorcycles

JAGARAN CHAKMA

Runner Automobiles seems to be on a roll. Hot on the heels of its announcement of bringing the famed off-road motorcycles of KTM to Bangladesh, it has now come up with a new two-wheeler with the highest engine displacement the country has seen yet.

Called BOLT 165 R, the motorcycle has a race-tuned 165cc engine, dual disc braking system, LED lights, inverted suspensions and digital speedometer, all under a Tk 169,000 price tag.

Launched in different outlets of the capital on Tuesday, the motorcycle comes with a Tk 14,000 discount if the payment is made in full, either in cash or through credit card.

Besides, customers can also enjoy a 24 months' equal instalment facility at just 1 per cent interest rate, the lowest in the industry.

BOLT 165 R joins Runner's stable of motorcycles, whose engine capacity range from 80cc to 150cc. It also markets American brand UM and Italian brands Vespa and Aprilia.

Runner Automobiles, whose shares closed yesterday 2.63 per cent higher at Tk 50.2, started producing motorcycles of 165cc



to 500cc in late 2018 using a combination of imported parts and raw materials.

With a target to diversify the export volume, the company set about selling these motorcycles in Bhutan, Myanmar, India's northeastern states, Africa and the Middle East.

The Bangladeshi brand, which got listed in the stock exchange in 2019, has already gained popularity in Nepal within a very

short period.

Just two years ago, Bangladesh was dependent on imports to meet 95 per cent of its demand for motorcycles.

But the situation has completely reversed: today, about 96 per cent of the two-wheelers plying on the roads are either locally manufactured or assembled, according to the industry people.

Seven firms -- Japanese brands Honda, Suzuki and Yamaha,

India's Bajaj, TVS and Hero, and Runner Automobiles of Bangladesh -- have made the country almost self-sufficient in motorcycle manufacturing or assembly in the fast-growing market.

Operators now predict that the market would grow manifold in the next two-three years because of rising income, the steady growth of the economy and favourable policy and tariff structure despite the pandemic hampering production in the last four months.

With its offer of cost efficiency and travel convenience through traffic-congested streets, the motorcycle market has been witnessing double-digit growth for the past several years.

The introduction of ride-sharing services in Dhaka, Chattogram, Sylhet and Cox's Bazar in recent years has also contributed to a rise in demand for motorbikes.

The market began to expand fast from fiscal 2016-17 when the government slashed the supplementary duty by 25 percentage points to 20 per cent on the import of the two-wheeler's components to encourage domestic manufacturing.

To boost the industry's growth further, the government has formulated the Motorcycle

Industry Development Policy 2018.

It aims to take motorcycle production up to one million units by 2027 with half of them coming from local manufacturing and supply quality motorcycles to domestic and overseas markets at competitive prices.

Market insiders said about 5 lakh motorcycles were sold in fiscal 2018-19, up 25 per cent from 4 lakh a year earlier. It means nearly 1,500 motorcycles are being purchased every day.

Assuming the price of a motorbike is Tk 100,000 on average, total sales figure in monetary terms would be about Tk 5,000 crore, which is almost equivalent to the market size of four-wheelers.

"Continuation of concessionary duties on import of raw materials is helping the sector grow rapidly," Hafizur Rahman Khan, chairman of Runner Automobiles, the first local company that began manufacturing motorbikes in the country more than a decade ago, told The Daily Star earlier.

This high demand has encouraged market players to set up either manufacturing facilities or assembling plants to reduce prices and have a bigger share of the growing market.

READ MORE ON B2

34pc garment workers sole earners of households

Finds Sanem-Microfinance Opportunities survey

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

A third of garment workers in Bangladesh are the sole earners of their households, meaning they are susceptible to shocks such as the coronavirus pandemic that could completely wipe out their livelihoods and render them poor overnight, a new survey found.

Around 1,272 individuals employed by garment factories in Dhaka, Gazipur, Narayanganj, Savar and Chattogram participated in the survey of the South Asian Network on Economic Modeling (Sanem) and Microfinance Opportunities (MFO).

The survey is part of an ongoing assessment of the Covid-19 fallout on garment workers and aimed to assess how they and their dependents are faring amid

the pandemic.

Among the workers interviewed, 34 per cent reported that they were the only household earner. It found 66 per cent of the respondents have at least one other earner living in their house.

These statistics from July are very similar to the results found in the same sector in March through June, the Sanem said in a press release.

READ MORE ON B3

OEL Hind finally sets sail from Ctg port

DWAIPAYAN BARUA, from Chattogram

The container ship that missed its scheduled departure from Chattogram port on Sunday morning after it was found to be listing to the starboard side, at last, left the port yesterday afternoon.

The Panama-flagged vessel, OEL Hind, began the voyage at 4:42 pm

yesterday as the mercantile marine department of the government

gave the no-objection certificate for setting sail after two days of survey, said Md Omar Faruk, secretary of the Chittagong Port Authority (CPA).

The feeder vessel is bound for Singapore carrying 1,194 TEUs (twenty feet equivalent units) of

containers, including 1,089 TEUs of export goods.

The vessel steadied after the removal of 66 TEUs of containers on Sunday but the CPA did not allow its departure as it wanted to check whether the ship had any technical problems, said Muntasir Rubayat, head of operations of the ship's local agent, GBX Logistics.

Uneven cargo arrangement, thanks to misdeclaration of container weight by the private off-docks where the containers are weighed on board, was the reason behind the vessel's listing, he said.

After the removal of 66 TEUs of container equivalent to 33 containers on Sunday night, CPA found that those 33 containers had actual weights far in excess of the declared weights, said sources.

The actual weight of the 33 containers was 416 tonnes while their declared weight was 368.9 tonnes, Rubayat said.

Now, the ship may fail to connect with the designated mother vessel in Singapore on time, said Nasir Uddin Chowdhury, chairman of the standing committee on port and shipping of Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association.

So, there is uncertainty over the timely shipment of the goods to their destinations in Europe and the US. Many of these cargoes may need air shipment from Singapore if the respective buyers do not wait for the next mother vessel and in that case, the exporters would have to bear extra expenditure.

He called for steps to eliminate such malpractices at the port.



Kedar Lele elected chairman of Unilever Bangladesh

STAR BUSINESS DESK

Kedar Lele, chief executive officer and managing director of Unilever Bangladesh, has been appointed as the new chairman of the local arm of the multinational fast-moving consumer goods company.

Lele, also the also the vice-president of the Foreign Investors' Chamber of Commerce & Industry (FICCI), was unanimously elected the chairman at the 180th meeting of the board of directors of Unilever Bangladesh that was held on 25 August.

READ MORE ON B2