

STOCKS		COMMODITIES		ASIAN MARKETS				CURRENCIES			
DSEX	CSCX	Gold	Oil	MUMBAI	TOKYO	SINGAPORE	SHANGHAI	USD	EUR	GBP	CNY
0.83%	0.96%	\$1,906.84	\$41.52	0.79%	Closed	0.9%	1.29%	83.95	97.72	106.65	12.15
4970.10	8,514.28	(per ounce)	(per barrel)	37,734.08		2,463.29	3,274.30	BUY TK	SELL TK	84.95	101.52

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Planning ministry against holding back low-priority projects

Ecneec okays 5 projects including Tk 246cr for hilsa

REJAUL KARIM BYRON and JAGARAN CHAKMA

The planning ministry has expressed dissatisfaction over a decision to put on hold implementation of low-priority projects.

"It would delay the implementation of the projects and the cost of the projects will increase," said Md Ashadul Islam, senior secretary to the planning division.

The implementing ministries and divisions also opposed the move and expressed disappointment, he said.

Islam made the comments while briefing reporters after the meeting of the Executive Committee of National Economic Council (Ecneec) yesterday.

"It is not clear on what basis the finance division categorised the low priority projects," he said.

The implementing ministries and divisions are facing problem as they cannot pay bills to contractors since the finance ministry is not disbursing funds against the projects, said Islam.

The finance ministry is, however, disbursing the salaries and allowances for the officials of the projects, he said.

In July, the finance ministry decided to put on hold the implementation of low-priority development projects involving Tk 40,000 crore to free up funds for the productive sectors.

The amount accounts for about 20 per cent of the Tk 205,145 crore annual development programme for the current fiscal year.

PROJECTS THAT GOT THE NOD

NAME	I COSTS
Establishment of 40 technical training centres in 40 upazilas and one marine tech institute in Chattogram (1st revision)	Tk1667.07cr (Original Tk 1,331.29cr)
Hilsa resource development and management	Tk 246.28cr
Establishment of 8 old-age homes	Tk 73.98cr
Construction of 73 BGB composite/ modern border observation posts in border areas	Tk 233.52cr
Upgradation of Dipgati-Sarishabari-Tarakandi road in Jamalpur district	Tk 376.55cr

The government is being forced to delay the execution of the low-priority projects amid the drastic fall in revenue collection caused by the coronavirus pandemic and as part of its belt-tightening measures.

The finance division has formulated the criteria for the ministries to identify the low-priority projects.

The criteria would render a project to be of low-priority if it is slow-moving, has completion deadline of six to seven years and is construction-related. The argument is that if the projects are pushed back by six months or a year, it would not cause much of a problem for the country.

The projects under the ADP have been categorised as high, medium and low-priority to ensure the best use of limited resources, the finance division said in a circular in July.

If the use of funds for a medium-priority project is deemed very necessary, the ministries and division would spend money under their consideration. However, avoidable expenses must be identified, it said.

A finance ministry official said the arrangement was temporary and was brought in due to the shortfall in revenue collection. The decision will be reviewed within a short time.

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Chinese loan deals for four projects hopefully this year

REJAUL KARIM BYRON and JAGARAN CHAKMA

With development projects losing steam for the ongoing pandemic and several months of shutdown, the Economic Relations Division (ERD) hopes to get four back on track by getting loan agreements signed with China this fiscal year.

Sources at the ERD said talks were underway for availing \$2.4 billion in loan for the four, including one on constructing an elevated expressway connecting Dhaka and Ashulia.

A point to note, the final decision is still out there as negotiations on the details are yet to begin.

The four are among 27 projects for which China assured providing a loan of \$20 billion as per a memorandum of understanding styled "Strengthening and Production Capacity Cooperation" signed during Chinese President Xi Jinping's visit to Dhaka in

October 2016.

Till date, the deal has been sealed for seven of them involving a loan of \$6.65 billion, of which \$1.54 billion has been disbursed.

The latest two had been signed by the ERD last fiscal year, one bringing \$1,402.93 million for an "Expansion and Strengthening of Power System Network" project under Dhaka Power Distribution Company.

The other brought over \$970.02 million for a "Power Grid Network Strengthening Project" under the Power Grid Company of Bangladesh.

The agreement for the Dhaka-Ashulia expressway project was supposed to be signed in the second half of last fiscal year but because of the onset of the pandemic in China, it did not materialise, ERD officials said.

About the four in the pipeline, Md Shahriar Kader Siddiky, joint secretary to the Asia Wing of the ERD, said the loan proposal for



PROJECTS WITH CHINESE ASSISTANCE

Dhaka-Ashulia elevated expressway	\$1,155.18 million
Establishing digital connectivity	\$837 million
Rajshahi WASA surface water treatment plant	\$276.25 million
Establishing 6 TV stations for BTV	\$125.12 million
Total assistance	\$2,393.55 million

the expressway, which would turn out to be very effective, has attained preliminary approval from the Chinese authorities.

Once this approval was available in writing, official formalities would begin, including vetting and final negotiations, he said, reminding that it took time for such official formalities to be carried out by both sides in finalising loan agreements.

Speaking of which, this loan application was sent to the

Chinese authorities on October 25, 2018.

The Tk 16,901 crore expressway project first got approval from the Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (Ecneec) in 2017, with 65 per cent of the cost expected to be borne from a Chinese loan.

The project documents say the work was supposed to have begun in 2019 and finish in June 2022.

In tune, a contract was signed on the construction's design

review and supervision in June 2019 between Bangladesh Bridge Authority and a joint venture of three companies from Spain, South Korea and Bangladesh.

Once completed, the 24-kilometre expressway will connect Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport to Abdullahpur, Ashulia, Dhaka Export Processing Zone and Chandra on a highway which connects the northern part of the country.

It will also act as an extension of a 26-kilometre Dhaka elevated expressway linking the airport to the Dhaka-Chittagong highway near Shanir Akhra.

Of the remaining three projects, the "Establishing Digital Connectivity" one, approved by the cabinet committee on economic affairs, has had a preliminary loan application sent to the Chinese embassy on December 27, 2018 seeking a \$837 million loan.

The project involves, among other things, bringing two lakh small institutions, including educational institutions, health centres, post offices and agriculture offices, under digital connectivity to boost trade and economic activity in remote areas.

It also plans to set up 10,000 "points of presence" at business growth centres across the country to expand digital financial services and e-commerce.

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Three local banks' names come out in suspicious cross-border transactions

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Three Bangladeshi banks were allegedly involved in suspicious cross-border transactions between 2014 and 2016, according to a report released by the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists (ICIJ).

The lenders - Islami Bank Bangladesh Ltd (IBBL), Social Islami Bank Ltd and Rupali Bank - transacted \$832,917 through three foreign banks as they sent \$495,204 and received \$337,733 in eight transactions.

The leaked documents, known as the FinCEN Files, include more than 2,100 suspicious activity reports filed by banks and other financial firms with the US Department of Treasury's Financial Crimes Enforcement Network.

The FinCEN is an intelligence unit at the heart of the global system to fight money laundering.

American news website BuzzFeed News obtained the records and shared them with the ICIJ. The consortium organised a team of more than 400 journalists from 110 news organisations in 88 countries to investigate the world of banks and money laundering.

Australia and New Zealand Banking Group (ANZ) sent \$336,113 to IBBL between August 23 and September 1, 2016 in three transactions, according to the ICIJ website.

State-run Rupali Bank sent \$495,204 to Deutsche Bank AG of Germany through four separate transactions in September 2016.

Regionala Investiciju Banka in Latvia sent \$1,600 to Social Islami

BANKS IN CROSS-BORDER SUSPICIOUS TRANSACTIONS

Figure in \$; SOURCE: ICIJ

BANKS	TRANSACTIONS
Islami Bank Bangladesh	336,113 (Inflow)
Social Islami	1,600 (Inflow)
Rupali	495,204 (Outflow)

Bank on April 14, 2014.

These transactions were processed via two US-based banks, which filed suspicious activity reports with the FinCEN.

The Bank of New York Mellon Corp received \$336,133 in three transactions, while Standard Chartered Plc sent \$495,204 and

received \$1,600 in a total of five transactions. The central bank will look into the matter, said an official of the Bangladesh Financial Intelligence Unit.

"We will take punitive measures if any illegal transactions are found," he said.

In all, an ICIJ analysis found,

the documents identify more than \$2 trillion in transactions between 1999 and 2017 that were flagged by financial institutions' internal compliance officers as possible money laundering or other criminal activity.

Suspicious activity reports reflect the concerns of watchdogs within banks and are not necessarily evidence of criminal conduct or other wrongdoings, the ICIJ said.

The records show that five global banks - JPMorgan, HSBC, Standard Chartered Bank, Deutsche Bank and Bank of New York Mellon - kept profiting from powerful and dangerous players even after US authorities fined these financial institutions for earlier failures to stem flows of dirty money.

Bangladesh should aim to join Asean

Says BGMEA chief as experts discuss logistics in cross-border trade

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Bangladesh needs to join the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) in order to boost the country's trade as this single market will become the world's fourth largest economy by 2030 following the US, China and EU, according to Rubana Huq, president of the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA).

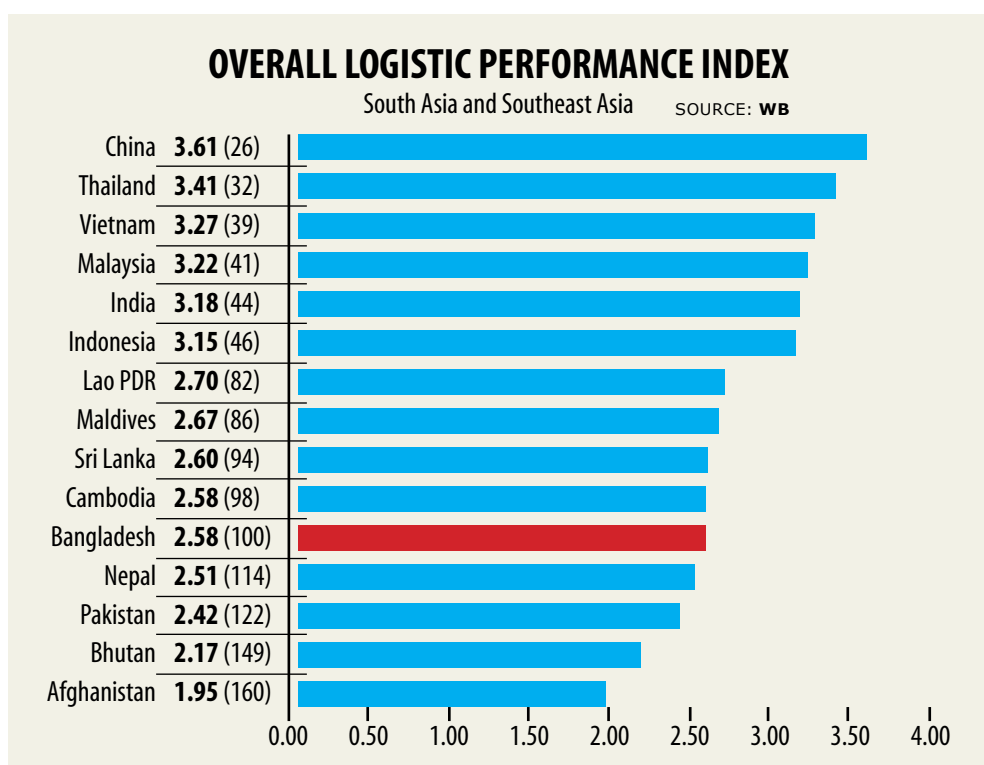
"Our trade will grow significantly if we join the Asean," Huq said yesterday while speaking at a virtual discussion on the 'logistics issues and challenges in cross border trade of Bangladesh', organised by the Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry (DCCI).

Various government officials, exporters, researchers, trade body and business association representatives participated in the meeting.

In Bangladesh's context, joining the Asean would be greatly beneficial as a number of its member nations have turned into good destinations for raw materials sent to and from the country, she added.

Petrapole, the Indian side of the Petrapole-Benapole land port and Bangladesh's largest and most active border crossing, is a very important aspect of the country's trade, the BGMEA chief also said.

For instance, hundreds of trucks laden with goods were stranded at the Petrapole end for three days earlier this week, causing untold sufferings to the local businessmen



as shipment delays caused the products to deteriorate in quality over time.

And so, port activities need to be expedited a lot to improve trade, Huq said, adding

that certain initiatives have been taken to improve the ease of doing business and overall port performance but those measures do not get enough publicity either locally or

internationally.

Therefore, strong inter-ministerial coordination among the finance, commerce, National Board of Revenue (NBR), port authorities and other related ministries is crucial to improve logistics services, Huq said.

While discussing the poor state of logistic support for trade growth, Masrur Reaz, chairman of the Policy Exchange, said the port charge for a single consignment in Bangladesh is \$408 while the rate in Vietnam is \$290 and \$211 in Indonesia.

Besides, these rates are declining in both Vietnam and Indonesia, he added.

It takes 168 hours to secure port clearance for a consignment in Bangladesh but in Vietnam, it takes just 55 hours, said Masrur, a former economist for the International Finance Corporation (IFC).

Meanwhile, the combined storage space of all warehouses across Bangladesh is currently about 4.2 million square feet, which is set to increase to around 6.7 million square feet by 2022. Due to a lack of formal warehousing facilities in the country, most importers and exporters take it upon themselves to store their products, usually inside their own factories or other private property.

In other countries though, there are third party warehousing facilities, which provide a secured environment and a number of other services to maintain product quality.

These inefficiencies in the country's warehousing and logistics services are the

root cause of increased operation costs and extended lead times, which badly impacts a business's competitiveness, Masrur said.

Echoing the sentiment, Zaidi Sattar, chairman of the Policy Research Institute (PRI), said Bangladesh needs to expedite the development of logistics services.

Modernising the country's port customs services is also needed to facilitate trade growth but not as a means to solely increase revenue, he added. The PRI chief also said Bangladesh ships 1,400 various goods abroad each year while 100 new products are added to the export list annually.

"However, 80 different products are excluded from the export list as they cannot compete in the business. So, we need to incentivise the exporters of those goods so that they can sustain their businesses," Sattar said.

Of the country's total export basket, only 290 different products have a yearly export value of above \$1 million.

But the remaining goods are still very valuable for the economy and so, the government should facilitate their growth, he added.

Mahbubul Alam, president of the Chittagong Chamber of Commerce and Industry, said nearly 10,000 goods laden trucks from Dhaka enter Chattogram each day to offload export-oriented products.

However, since there is no truck terminal in the port city, mile-long tailbacks on the roads and highways of Chattogram always hamper the trade.

READ MORE ON B3

TikTok's promise of 25,000 new US jobs sets lofty goal

REUTERS

Even as dealmakers bicker over who will actually own TikTok Global, another question emerged after President Donald Trump agreed over the weekend to keep the wildly popular video-sharing app running in the United States for another week: how can they possibly create 25,000 new jobs in the United States?

That vow, repeated by the president on Saturday at a campaign rally in North Carolina, was part of a concession that dealmakers offered to convince Trump to green-light a transaction in which a new board comprised of US citizens would oversee a new US-based company and co-owned by Oracle Corp and Walmart Inc.

But the lofty hiring target will be tough to justify, experts said. Such a high number suggests an expectation for massive revenue growth at a time when TikTok faces unprecedented global challenges.

If TikTok operated at anywhere near the efficiency of other internet companies such as Twitter, TikTok would need to generate up to 19

times more revenue over the next few years.

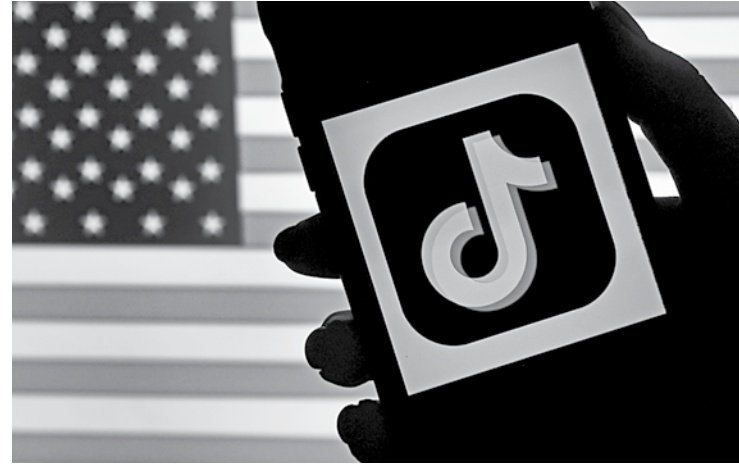
TikTok is expected to generate about a billion dollars in revenue by the end of 2020, Reuters previously reported.

Many of the new American jobs will likely be in engineering, content moderation and security roles, given the US government's intense focus on the app's data privacy policies, said Dan Ives, a technology analyst at Wedbush Securities.

"From a security and infrastructure perspective, they're going to have to hire a few thousand alone to focus on that issue...given the sensitivity," he said.

TikTok recently announced a \$1 billion creator fund that will pay popular TikTok influencers for making videos. Counting those content creators would help TikTok reach 25,000 jobs, said Brian Wieser, global president of business intelligence at ad agency GroupM.

Beyond that, it gets harder to justify a bigger staff. Because ByteDance will still own the algorithm that runs TikTok and



REUTERS

The logo of TikTok is displayed on the screen of an iPhone on a US flag as the background in Arlington, Virginia.

license it to the new US-based company, the new company will not need to hire large teams that work on artificial intelligence.

Those types of jobs account for a large chunk of Facebook Inc FB.O and Twitter's headcount, said Abishur Prakash, a geopolitical futurist at the Center for Innovating the Future, a technology and geopolitics

consulting firm, raising questions about what job roles TikTok could hire for.

Oracle and Walmart could also create divisions within their companies to serve TikTok that could contribute to the job count, he added.

A source familiar with the deal discussions said the 25,000-job figure was based on similarly

sized organizations that serve as many users as TikTok, without offering details. The source added that the job figure was actually conservative in an effort to under-promise and over-deliver.

Another tech company, Taiwanese electronics manufacturer Foxconn, promised in 2017 to bring 13,000 new jobs to Wisconsin. The deal to create a new factory in the United States was praised by Trump as the "eighth wonder of the world" and as proof of his ability to bring jobs back to America.

A filing with the Wisconsin state economic development division showed Foxconn employed about 600 people in 2019 in the region, according to a CNBC report.

The ambition of TikTok's hiring goals can better be understood by comparing it against the revenue that workers make for other internet companies.

On average, Twitter's 4,800 workers each generated close to \$720,000 or total annual revenue of \$3.5 billion in 2019. Snap Inc's SNAP.N 3,195 workers each generated about \$537,000, for a 2019 annual sum of \$1.7 billion.

German economy's Covid-19 hit may be smaller than feared

REUTERS, Berlin

Germany may weather its pandemic-induced recession better than expected, private sector indicators suggested on Tuesday, in a hopeful sign for the economy that traditionally serves as Europe's driver of growth.

With much economic activity still constrained by COVID-19, Germany's government moved swiftly to boost spending and that cash, along with another shot in the arm from the European Central Bank, appears to have cushioned the pandemic's impact.

Gross domestic product is now only seen shrinking by 5.2 per cent this year, the Ifo institute projected, more optimistic than its previous estimate for a 6.7 per cent drop and the Bundesbank's 7.1 per cent forecast.

"The decline in the second quarter and the recovery are currently developing more favourably than we had expected," Ifo chief economist Timo Wollmershaeuser said.

For 2021 it cut its growth forecast to 5.1 per cent from 6.4 per cent, but even that indicates that Germany's economy could be close to its pre-crisis level by the end of next year. The ECB still expects the euro zone as a whole to need a further year to make up the decline.

Part of the forecast improvement is unexpectedly resilient consumption, and the HDE retail association said it expects nominal retail sales to grow by 1.5 per cent this year, a sharp upward revision from its previous estimate for a 4 per cent drop.

However, both it and the Ifo pointed to unusual uncertainty in their projections, with a second wave of infections and potential government restrictions seen as risk factors.

China's property developers seek to dodge new rules with shift of debt

REUTERS, Hong Kong

China is tackling unbridled borrowing in the real estate development sector anew with caps for debt ratios. But sources at developers say a rush to get around the rules by moving more debt off balance sheets is on.

Dubbed "the three red lines", Chinese regulators outlined caps for debt-to-cash, debt-to-assets and debt-to-equity ratios last month at a meeting with 12 major property developers in Beijing. Though not yet officially announced, developers expect the rules to be applied sector-wide as soon as Jan. 1, 2021.

The move has sent shock waves through the industry, sources at four Chinese property developers told Reuters. "Every company is worried... so everyone is using their own methods, and it's all about off balance sheet: off balance sheet projects and off balance sheet debts," an executive at a mid-sized developer told Reuters.

"Liquidity is still abundant, both onshore and offshore, you just need more innovation in fund raising," Moving debt off books by setting up ventures with other developers to purchase land is already common practice and will intensify, said the sources, declining to be identified due to the sensitivity of the matter.

Other methods that effectively disguise debt as equity - such as investing in a project with a financial entity which gets guaranteed returns



REUTERS/FILE

People play with ice floats at a pond in the compound of an apartment complex in Zhengzhou, Henan province, China.

and an agreement for their stake to be bought back - will continue to gain in popularity, the sources added.

But regulators have been loud and clear in their messaging and will likely step up countermeasures to rein in projects aimed at hiding debt, analysts and economists say.

Regulators have since 2016 sought to limit lending to the sector, including by trust funds and other parts of China's shadow banking industry. They have also sent developers with many joint ventures questionnaires asking them to account for their business practices.

"I can't say this loophole has been completely sealed but for sure

the room to manoeuvre is not as big as before. The same applies to disguising debt as equity - so unless there are new methods that regulators are unaware of, it'll be hard to do in large volumes," said Rosealea Yao, China investment analyst at Gavekal Dragonomics.

China's property market was among the first to recover after the coronavirus-hit economy reopened this year, thanks to cheaper credit and the relaxation of urban residential curbs. Supported by robust sales, real estate investment in the country climbed 11.8 per cent in August, the fastest pace in 16 months.

Tesla traders bet on Musk battery pitch to spark rally

REUTERS

Fasten your seatbelt, because Tuesday is Tesla's "Battery Day", and some investors expect Chief Executive Elon Musk's pitch on the electric car maker's energy storage advances to re-energize its rally following a recent 21 per cent stock slump.

Tesla's stock has risen in recent sessions ahead of the event scheduled for Tuesday after the close of trading. Many analysts expect Musk to unveil battery improvements extending the Palo Alto, California automaker's lead over General Motors, Volkswagen and other rivals.

Tesla options are pricing in a stock move of around 17 per cent - up or

down - by Friday, said Christopher Murphy, co-head of derivatives strategy at Susquehanna Financial Group.

Tesla's stock has more than made up for a historic slump on Sept. 8 after it was unexpectedly left out of a group of companies joining the S&P 500, and it has surged over 400 per cent year to date. Still, Tesla remains below its Aug. 31 record high close.

Analysts, including those with neutral ratings on Tesla's stock, expect major advances from Musk.

"We (and the market) expect the announcements to be significant, cementing Tesla's cost and technology lead for several more years," UBS analyst Patrick Hummel wrote in a client note on Sept. 11, adding

he expects a new dry electrode cell technology to help speed manufacturing and lower costs.

Batteries make electric cars cost more than gasoline-powered ones, so the ability to produce low-cost, long-lasting batteries could put Tesla cars on a more equal footing and help usher in mainstream acceptance.

Musk in August suggested on Twitter that Tesla may be able to mass produce batteries with 50 per cent more energy density in three to four years, which could even enable electric airplanes.

A much hyped "Autonomy Investor Day" in April last year failed to stop a five-month decline in the company's stock.

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তারিখঃ ২০/০৯/২০২০
"দি পাবলিক প্রকিউরমেন্ট এক্ট/২০০৬ ও দি পাবলিক প্রকিউরমেন্ট বিধি/২০০৮ মোতাবেক ২০২০-২০২১ অর্থ বৎসরের জন্য ফরিদপুর জেলার নিম্নলিখিত কাজের জন্য বাংলাদেশের প্রকৃত ব্যবসায়ী/টিকাদার/সরবরাহকারীর নিকট হতে সীমাহীনকালের মধ্যে প্রতিযোগিতামূলক পুনঃ দরপত্র আহ্বান করা যাবে।"

১।	মন্ত্রণালয়/বিভাগ	স্বরাষ্ট্র মন্ত্রণালয়/জননিরাপত্তা বিভাগ।
২।	সংস্থা	বাংলাদেশ পুলিশ।
৩।	দরপত্র সম্পাদনকারী প্রধান	পুলিশ সুপার, ফরিদপুর।
৪।	দরপত্রের বিষয়	২০২০-২১ অর্থ বৎসরের মাইক্রোবাস ড্রাইভারসহ ভাড়ায় সরবরাহ।
৫।	দরপত্রের সূত্র নম্বর	স্মারক নং-৪১০৫/ই, তারিখঃ ২০-০৯-২০২০
৬।	দরপত্রের পদ্ধতি	উন্মুক্ত দরপত্র।
৭।	বাজেট ও অর্থনৈতিক বাত	জিওবি।
৮।	দরপত্র প্রকাশের তারিখ	০৩ দিনের মধ্যে।
৯।	দরপত্র সিডিউল সর্বশেষ প্রাক্তর তারিখ	০৪-১০-২০২০ সিডিউল নং ২.০০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত।
১০।	দরপত্র জমা প্রদানের সর্বশেষ তারিখ ও সময়	০৫-১০-২০২০ সিডিউল নং ১২.০০ ঘটিকা।
১১।	দরপত্র খোলার তারিখ ও সময়	০৫-১০-২০২০ সিডিউল নং ১২.৩০ ঘটিকায় দরপত্রদাতা বা মনোনীত প্রতিদ্বন্দ্বিতের উপস্থিতিতে (যদি থাকে)।
১২।	দরপত্র সম্পাদনকারী অফিস ও ঠিকানা	পুলিশ সুপার এর কার্যালয়, ফরিদপুর।
১৩।	দরপত্র প্রাপ্তির স্থান	পুলিশ সুপার এর কার্যালয়, ফরিদপুর।
১৪।	দরপত্র দাখিলের স্থান	পুলিশ সুপার এর কার্যালয়, ফরিদপুর।
১৫।	দরপত্র খোলার স্থান	পুলিশ সুপার এর কার্যালয়, ফরিদপুর।
১৬।	দরপত্র ফলাফলের তারিখ ও সময়	০৫-১০-২০২০ সিডিউল নং ১২.৩০ ঘটিকা।
১৭।	দরপত্রদাতার যোগ্যতা	দি পাবলিক প্রকিউরমেন্ট এক্ট/২০০৬ ও দি পাবলিক প্রকিউরমেন্ট বিধি/২০০৮ অনুযায়ী সর্বশেষ কাজের অভিজ্ঞতা থাকতে হবে। অন্যান্য যোগ্যতা যা টেন্ডার ডকুমেন্ট (PG-2) এ উল্লেখ আছে।

১৮। দরপত্রের সাথে যে সকল কাগজপত্র দাখিল করতে হবে

বিবরণ	জামানতের পরিমাণ	সিডিউলের মূল্য	কার্যকাল
পুলিশ বিভাগের সরকারি কাজে ০৯ আসন বিশিষ্ট মাইক্রোবাস ড্রাইভারসহ ভাড়ায় সরবরাহ (স্থাননির্ভর ব্যতীত)	৩৬,০০০/-	৭৫০/-	২০২০-২০২১ অর্থ বছর
পুলিশ বিভাগের সরকারি কাজে ১৪ আসন বিশিষ্ট মাইক্রোবাস ড্রাইভারসহ ভাড়ায় সরবরাহ (স্থাননির্ভর ব্যতীত)			

২০। বিশেষ জ্ঞাতব্যঃ
ক। বাজি বা প্রতিষ্ঠানের স্বত্বাধিকারী পুলিশ সুপার, ফরিদপুর এর কার্যালয় হতে নির্দিষ্ট সময় পর্যন্ত দরপত্র সংগ্রহ করতে পারবেন;
খ। দরপত্র সংক্রান্ত অন্যান্য তথ্যাবলী দরপত্র সংগ্রহকালে নিম্নলিখিত কার্যালয় হতে জানা যাবে;
গ। দরপত্র উল্লেখিত সময়ের মধ্যে কার্য সম্পাদন করতে হবে;
ঘ। দরপত্র আহ্বানকারী কর্তৃপক্ষ যে কোন কারণ দর্শানো ব্যতীত দরপত্র বাতিল/প্রত্যাহার ক্ষমতা সংরক্ষণ করেন।

মোঃ আশিফুজ্জামান, বিপিএম-সেবা
বিপি-৭৬০৩০২৭৮৪৪
পুলিশ সুপার, ফরিদপুর
ফোনঃ ০৬৩১-৬৩০৭৭, ফ্যাক্সঃ ৬৩০৮৯
E-mail: spfaridpur@police.gov.bd

জিডি-১৫০৩

Intel gets US licences to supply some products to Huawei

REUTERS, Shanghai

Intel Corp has received licences from US authorities to continue supplying certain products to Huawei Technologies, an Intel spokesman said on Tuesday.

With US-China ties at their worst in decades, Washington has been pushing governments around to world to squeeze out Huawei, arguing that the telecoms giant would hand data to the Chinese government for espionage.

From September 15, new curbs have barred US companies from supplying or servicing Huawei.

This week the state-backed China Securities Journal said Intel had received permission to supply Huawei.

Last week China's Semiconductor Manufacturing International Corporation confirmed it had also sought permission to continue servicing Huawei. SMIC uses US-origin equipment to make chips for Huawei and other companies.

South Korean chipmaker SK Hynix also applied for US licence for Huawei sales, but it has not gained approval, a person familiar with the matter said.

The person, declining to be identified as they were not authorised to speak to media, said non-US firms may not have a high chance of getting US approval, and chipmakers are drafting contingency plans to increase supplies to other customers.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Local Government Engineering Department
Office of the Executive Engineer
District: Bagerhat
www.lqed.gov.bd

Memo No. 46.02.0100.000.07.002.20-4536

e-Tender Notice: 08/2020-2021

e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for the procurement of following works, details are given below:

Sl No.	Tender ID	Package No.	Description of works	Last selling of document
1.	488065 (OSTETM)	KDRIDP/Bager/W-110(a)/2020-21	Improvement of Perikhal G.C - Bhojpatia U.P Office Road by BC Ch. 6054-9750m Road ID No. 201733005. Salvage cost 7163360.00 Tk under Rampal Upazila Dist - Bagerhat.	21-Oct-2020 17:00
2.	487953 (OSTETM)	KBS-RIDP/BAG/VR-62/18-19	Improvement of Kaligonj - Tekerchor Road Ch. 00m-1920m Road ID 201145007. Salvage cost 884975.00 Tk under Chitalmari Upazila Dist - Bagerhat.	21-Oct-2020 17:00

This is an online tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted.

To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required. The fees for downloading the e-Tender documents from the National e-GP System Portal have to be deposited online through any registered banks branches. **All other information is given in e-GP Notice.**

Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP helpdesk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).

G, M, Mujibor Rahman
Executive Engineer
Phone: 0468-63096
E-mail: xen.bagerhat@lqed.gov.bd

GD-1502

Date: 21-09-2020

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Office of the Additional Chief Engineer
Roads and Highways Department
Technical Services Wing
Alenbari, Tejgaon, Dhaka
Phone: 02-9114956, Fax: 02-9101467
E-mail: acets@rhd.gov.bd

Record Number
35.01.0000.005.64.012.20.997

e-Tender Notice

Following e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for the procurement of "Construction of Required Infrastructure and Supply to Establish a Rest Area having Modern Facilities for Vehicle Drivers on Dhaka-Khulna Highways (Road Circle Jessore)".

Sl No.	Tender/Proposal ID, Reference No.	Description	Field name	Date & time
1.	Tender ID-489154 E-gp-01/ACE/TSW/RHD/2020-21	Construction of Required Infrastructure and Supply to Establish a Rest Area having Modern Facilities for Vehicle Driving on Dhaka-Khulna Highways (Road Circle Jessore)	Document last selling date & time	21/10/2020 17:00
			Closing date & time	22/10/2020 12:00
			Opening date & time	22/10/2020 12:00
			Last date & time for tender/proposal security submission	21/10/2020 17:00

This is an online tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender registration in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required. The fees for downloading the e-Tender documents from the National e-GP System Portal have to be deposited online through any registered bank branches within mentioned time in Tender Notice. Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).

Dr. Md. Abdullah Al Mamun
Additional Chief Engineer, RHD
Technical Services Wing
Alenbari, Tejgaon, Dhaka and
Project Director

GD-1505

Why many farmers and politicians oppose Modi's farm laws

REUTERS, New Delhi/Mumbai

India's parliament has approved new farm bills that the government says will unshackle farmers from having to sell their produce only at regulated wholesale markets and make contract farming easier.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's cabinet had issued emergency executive orders in June to change the longstanding rules that govern the vast agriculture sector, which contributes nearly 15 per cent of the output of the \$2.9 trillion economy and employs around half of India's 1.3 billion people.

Opposition parties and farmers' organisations have criticised the government for rushing through the legislation by issuing the emergency orders and accused Modi's administration of getting parliamentary approval without proper debate, scrutiny and

consultation.

Under the Farmers' Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) Bill, 2020 - one of the laws approved by parliament - growers can directly sell their produce to institutional buyers such as big traders and retailers.

Many farmer organisations oppose this, saying it will leave small growers with little bargaining power.

Nearly 85 per cent of India's poor farmers own less than 2 hectares (5 acres) of land, and they find it difficult to directly negotiate with large buyers of farm goods.

Farmer leaders have said that wholesale markets, which play a crucial role in ensuring timely payments to small farmers, would lose their relevance and even gradually disappear if large buyers were allowed to buy directly from growers.

Without offering an alternative arrangement to small growers, such

as private markets or direct-purchase centres, the new rule does not make any sense, growers have said.

India's grain bowl states of Punjab and neighbouring Haryana also fear that if big institutions start purchasing directly from farmers, the state governments will lose out on the tax that these buyers have to pay at wholesale markets.

Under the Agriculture Produce Marketing Committee (APMC) Act, a law that dates back more than 55 years, it was compulsory for farmers to bring their products to more than 7,000 regulated wholesale markets where middlemen, or commission agents, helped growers sell harvests to either the state-run food procurement agency or private traders.

This was to protect farmers from being exploited by big institutional buyers.

The government now argues, however, that the middlemen of wholesale markets form an extra layer in the supply chain, and that their commission pushes up prices for consumers.

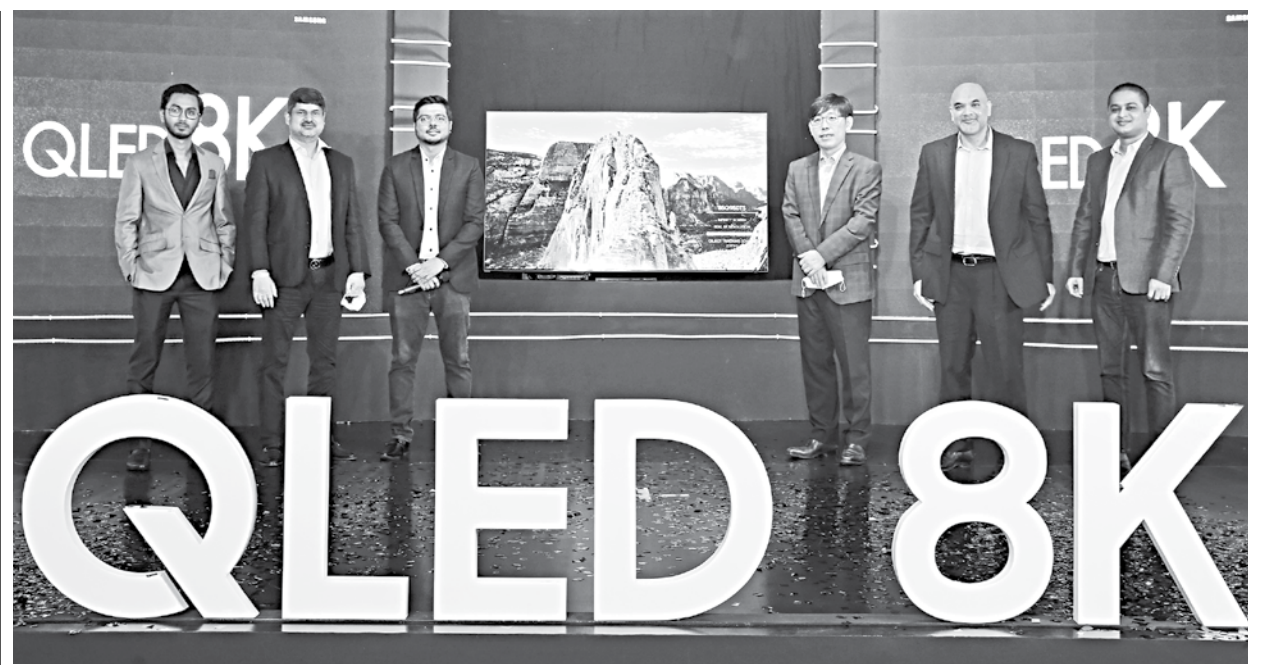
These markets are run by local bodies which ensure the price of farmers' produce, including fruit and vegetables, is determined by auctions.

For rice and wheat, however, there is no auction as the government buys at guaranteed prices.

Every year, the government raises the price at which the Food Corporation of India (FCI) - India's state grain stockpile and top buyer - buys rice and wheat from growers. Most farmers in Punjab and Haryana sell their rice and wheat to the FCI.

Some growers believe that, should wholesale markets start to lose relevance, private buyers could arm-twist farmers to sell at lower rates.

Commission agents help farmers grade, weigh, pack and sell their harvests to buyers. They also ensure timely payments to farmers.



Seungwon Youn, country manager at Samsung Bangladesh, and Shahriar Bin Lutfur, head of business for consumer electronics, attend the launch of its 2020 QLED television range under 'T Series' in three different categories, QLED, UHD, Smart, at an event in Dhaka recently.

Siemens sees market value of energy spin-off above \$20b

REUTERS, Zurich/Munich

Siemens expects Siemens Energy to reach a market value of significantly more than 17 billion euros (\$19.98 billion) when it floats on the Frankfurt stock exchange next week, a source close to the company said.

The consensus forecasts for the value of the business, which makes gas and wind turbines, is 21 billion to 22 billion euros, said the source. Based on the number of Siemens Energy shares, that would result in a share price of 28.90-30.28 euros apiece.

Siemens declined to comment. The success of the spin-off can only be estimated after two or three months, with high price volatility expected after the company makes its

stock market debut on Sept. 28, the person said.

Siemens Energy, which employs 91,000 people, makes products including combined cycle turbines, generators, transformers and compressors, and will also be involved in wind energy via its 67 per cent stake in Siemens Gamesa Renewable Energy.

Siemens is selling off the business, which has been hit by a collapse in demand and changing energy policies, to focus on smart buildings, mobility and factory automation.

It is giving 55 per cent of the shares in the unit to its shareholders at a ratio of one share for every share two Siemens share. Siemens' pension fund will get 9.9 per cent, while Siemens

AG will keep a direct stake of 35.1 per cent.

Siemens will reduce its stake over the next 12 to 18 months after the listing, but is in no hurry to exit completely. The pension fund is also likely to offload its stake.

Siemens, whose products range from trains to industrial software, will keep a stake of around 25 per cent in Siemens Energy, the person said, to allow a smooth transition and prevent interference from a third party.

Via a blocking minority, which usually refers to 25 per cent plus one share, shareholders can prevent key corporate decisions at general meetings. Such a stake could be kept for a minimum of five years, the source said.



Supporters of India's main opposition Congress party shout slogans during a protest against farm bills passed by India's parliament, in Kolkata on September 21.

'British-style' rules for banks after Brexit, says BoE

REUTERS, London

Britain will adopt tough but less bureaucratic financial rules after Brexit, starting with simpler regulation of small banks, Bank of England Deputy Governor Sam Woods said on Tuesday.

Britain will soon unveil new legislation for regulating the City of London, which for decades has complied with rules written in Brussels that end in December, when Brexit transition arrangements expire.

Leaving the European Union has raised hopes of a regulatory "Brexit dividend" that will help banks and insurers in Europe's biggest financial centre maintain global competitiveness.

"We should approach that in the spirit of, let's have high standards here in London and here in the UK, but let's get back to a more British way of doing that regulation -- things that can be tough but

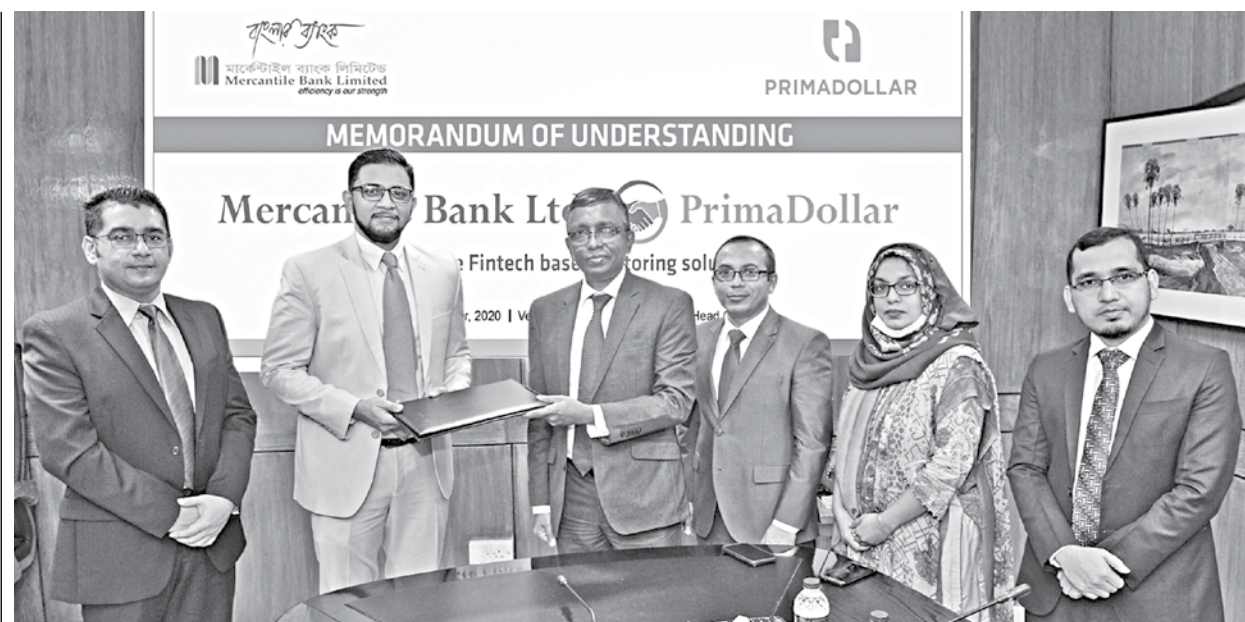
less bureaucratic," Woods told a City Week online event.

When Britain comes to applying remaining global bank capital rules known as Basel III, it will be "exactly in that format", he said, adding that the BoE would propose simpler rules for smaller lenders in a month or so.

"It would have been impossible to agree in the European context as one person's big bank is another person's small bank," Woods said.

Katharine Braddick, director general, financial services at Britain's finance ministry, said much thought had been given to what makes the City competitive.

"Openness is at the core of our competitive offering," Braddick said, adding this does not mean a "free for all". "It means we have a set of access regimes that are becoming more comprehensive and over which we have more control."



Shamim Ahmed, deputy managing director of Mercantile Bank, and Munawar Uddin, country manager of PrimaDollar, exchange documents after signing a deal at the bank's head office in Dhaka on Monday to facilitate fintech-based export factoring services to the bank's customers exporting under open account credit terms.

Stocks fall below 5,000-mark again after nine days

FROM PAGE B4

Nitol Insurance topped the gainers' list rising 9.86 per cent followed by Global Insurance, Paramount Insurance, Salvo Chemical and Federal Insurance.

BD Welding shed the most, falling 9.48 per cent followed by Golden Son, C&A Textile Familytex and Zahir Textile.

The port city bourse also witnessed corrections yesterday when the CSCX, the benchmark index of the Chattogram Stock Exchange, dropped 83 points, or 0.96 per cent, to 8,514.

Of the 281 stocks, 53 rose, 200 fell and 28 remained unchanged.

Bangladesh should aim to join Asean

FROM PAGE B1

Therefore, the government should build a large truck terminal in Chattogram to house those carriers while being offloaded, he said, while suggesting that the construction of a bay terminal at Chattogram Port and upgrading the Dhaka-Chattogram highway to eight lanes should be completed as soon as possible.

In 2019, the country's premier port handled three million container units, up from two million in the previous year, said Md Zafar Alam, a member of the Chittagong Port Authority.

By this one can understand that although the port's container handling capacity has risen significantly in a short span of time, the handling facilities themselves have not improved as much, he added.

The government has already implemented up to 45 changes to the customs regulations in a bid to better facilitate trade.

However, customs officials need to remain vigilant in order to protect the interests of domestic industries, Alam said.

While delivering his keynote paper, Selim Raihan, executive director of the South Asian Network on Economic Model (SANEM), said Bangladesh ranks 100th on the global logistics performance index, which is the lowest among all its peer countries.

Tariff and para-tariff in trade, border issues, non-automation and customs issues are mainly responsible for Bangladesh's poor ranking in the index, said Raihan, also an economics professor at the University of Dhaka.

DCCI President Shams Mahmud, who moderated the discussion, said his organisation's recent study on Covid-19's impact on international trade found that 42 per cent of all local businesses now need over 15 days from start to finish to deliver their products for export to the sea port.

Similarly, 62 per cent of all businesses wait around 15 days to receive import shipments from the port.

The study also identified that container congestion, port demurrage charges, delays in the customs clearance process, a lack of port

infrastructure, hinterland connectivity and high shipping costs are major bottlenecks for the import/export process, which end up increasing operation costs.

Goods shipments are 35 to 50 per cent slower than what they could be due to slow, expensive inland transportation, cumbersome customs and border management processes, inadequate consolidation of terminals, inland clearance depots, trade corridors and a lack of coordination among trade related agencies along the border, Mahmud said.

Abul Kasem Khan, chairperson of the Business Initiative Leading Development, proposed the formation of a separate ministry for logistics services as no particular government body is currently responsible for the industry's wellbeing.

Although, many international companies are trying to come to Bangladesh with investment proposals, they think about the lead time factor because of the poor logistics services available, said Sameer Sattar, a lawyer at the Supreme Court.

Grow crops like onion abundantly to cut import dependence

FROM PAGE B4

We need 0.8 million tonnes of onion in three months considering the shelf life of summer onion and the size of the domestic market is about Tk 4,000 crore considering Tk 50 per kg. To cultivate this amount, we need 28,000 hectares of land and 207 tonnes of seed. And the manpower requirement is 6.8 million.

Major source of this seed is India and the price of per kg seed is Tk 5,000-6,000. The production cost will be around Tk 900 crore. A detailed study is required in this case. The seed of summer variety onion needs to be available for production.

We are not in a crisis for garlic. But there is a shortage of large size garlic suitable for using. We are producing 0.5 million tonnes of garlic in 79,000 hectares of land. We import about 0.6 million to 0.7 million tonnes. Nowadays home-makers prefer large size garlic instead of the small local variety. That's why most of the import is needed. So, we need to focus on

research for producing large size garlic. Some 95,000 hectares of land are needed for garlic cultivation to minimise the import.

We don't have adequate storage facilities for onion, garlic or ginger. Bangladesh Agricultural Development Corporation (BADC) has a storage facility for onion but it has a capacity of storing only 200 tonnes. By tuning our existing cold storage or by building new cold storage, we can store onion, garlic and ginger, which will narrow the gap between imports and local consumption.

We may also reduce potato cultivation to a certain level. Bangladesh produces around 11 million tonnes of potatoes every year. If we look at the existing situation, potato consumption of the country has been relatively steady over the past few years whereas export has declined. However, production has been increasing. As a result, farmers are struggling to sell their surplus.

We are on our way to achieving

self-sufficiency in maize cultivation. Within five years, the production of maize has doubled because of proper planning and execution. We exported about Tk 146 crore worth of maize to Nepal in the last fiscal year. This is a great success in maize cultivation.

If we follow our success story in maize production and draw up a master plan for 3-5 years, we gain self-sufficiency. Today, farmers are connected digitally and information dissemination has become easier than before.

If we want to engage more people in agriculture then we must give priority to self-cultivation on imported spices such as onion, garlic and ginger. It will save a lot of foreign currency and cut external dependency. It will also create a good scope for the public-private partnership between the government and the private sector.

The writer is executive director of ACI Motors Ltd.

Planning ministry against holding back low-priority projects

FROM PAGE B1

The Ecnc yesterday approved five projects, including the first revision of a project to establish 40 technical training centres in 40 upazilas and one Institute of Marine Technology in Chattogram at a combined cost of Tk 2,597.40 crore.

The Bureau of Manpower Employment and Training (BMET) is implementing the project to create jobs for the unemployed by developing skills through training. The project will help increase the productivity of industries and

improve product quality.

According to the revised deadline, the project will be implemented by June 30, 2022. The cost of the project increased to Tk 1,667.07 crore from the Tk 1,331.29 crore initially set aside.

The implementing entity demanded additional funds as the land requirement was not included when the project was approved.

The cost of the project rose because of the delay in land selection and acquisition. The expenditure is increasing as

the Public Works Department estimated the construction work as per the rate of 2014 instead of 2017.

The Ecnc approved the "Hilsa Resource Development and Management" project involving Tk 246.28 crore to increase the production of the popular fish and protect mother hilsa and hilsa fries.

The project includes running and management of six sanctuaries, creating alternative jobs for 30,000 fishing families and providing valid nets to 10,000 fishermen. The Department of Fisheries will

implement the project.

The meeting approved incorporating 25 beds for the elderly in eight shelters for children involving Tk 73.98 crore. The facilities will accommodate neglected elderly people besides children.

The homes would be constructed in Tungipara of Gopalganj, Lalmonirhat Sadar, Shambhuganj in Mymensingh, Sunamganj Sadar, Majdee in Noakhali, Baya in Rajshahi, Maheshwarpasha in Khulna and Sagardi in Barishal.

The two other new projects are "Upgrading Dighpait-Sarishabari-Tarakandi Road of Jamalpur" involving Tk 376.56 crore and the construction of the Border Guard of Bangladesh's 73 modern observation posts in border areas for Tk 233.52 crore.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, Finance Minister AHM Mustafa Kamal and Planning Minister MA Mannan joined the meeting through videoconferencing from Gono Bhaban while other Ecnc members connected from the NEC auditorium.

Chinese loan deals for four projects hopefully this year

FROM PAGE B1

The embassy's update on it was that the loan has got preliminary approval and it has received the name of a Chinese contractor whom China wants to get the project contract.

On another application seeking a \$276.25 million loan for the construction of a "Rajshahi WASA Surface Water Treatment Plant" approved by the Ecnc, the embassy said the Chinese authorities were "evaluating" it.

The last Ecnc and cabinet committee on government purchase-approved project seeking a \$125.12 million loan for establishing six full-fledged stations for Bangladesh Television has got initial approval from China. Now the embassy was waiting to be informed by its government of the Chinese contractor nominated to get the contract.

Onion prices drop in Ctg Margin loan policy tuned to stock index

MOHAMMAD SUMAN, Chattogram

Onions became Tk 20-25 cheaper per kilogramme (kg) in the last three days thanks to declining prices at the Khatunganj wholesale hub and increased efforts from traders to import the kitchen staple from eight countries.

At various retail markets, onions were sold at Tk 60 to Tk 65 per kg yesterday, down from Tk 80 to as high as Tk 100 from three days back.

"In Khatunganj, the wholesale prices hovered between Tk 50-55 per kg yesterday against Tk 65-70 a few days back," Habibur Rahman, a retail trader of the Kazir Dewri kitchen market, told The Daily Star.

Prices skyrocketed when India stopped shipping onions to Bangladesh on September 14, pushing the wholesale price to Tk 80 per kg while it was Tk 90-95 per kg for retail.

An increasing number of letters of credit opened by traders to import onions from countries other than India helped tame the price, according to industry insiders.

As of yesterday, some 65 traders sought permission to import 118,727 tonnes of onion from China, Egypt, Pakistan, the Netherlands, Myanmar, Turkey, Thailand and New Zealand, as per data from the Plant Quarantine Centre at Chattogram Port.

The imports are scheduled to reach Chittagong Port by the first week of October, various traders said.

Since the Indian export ban, onion prices increased by around \$100-120 per tonne to hit \$350-360 at international markets, said Omar



Prices had skyrocketed when India stopped shipping onions to Bangladesh on September 14.

Faroque, an importer. Onions will cost around Tk 41-44 per kg to reach Chattogram port and an additional Tk 3-7 per kg will be needed to send those to the wholesale market, he added.

In the two-and-a-half-months lead up to the ban, around 100 importers brought in 122,000

tonnes of onion in 2,105 consignments from India, according to data from the National Board of Revenue.

The average price of the onions imported through the Hili, Sonamasjid, Bhomra and Benapole land ports was Tk 15.13 per kg back then.

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

The Bangladesh Securities and Exchange Commission (BSEC) has rearranged the margin loan policy in tune with index movements to give a boost to the market while it is in the low and reduce investment risks once it goes higher.

In an order issued on Monday, the stock market regulator said brokerage houses and merchant banks were allowed to provide margin loans on a 1:1 ratio once the DSEX, the benchmark index of the Dhaka Stock Exchange (DSE), crosses 4,000 points.

This means that investors will be able to get a loan equal to what they have deposited or invested. For example, if an investor invests Tk 100, then they can avail a loan of Tk 100 from a merchant bank.

The directive will come into effect from October 1.

For the period when the index remains between 4,001 to 5,000 points, the margin loan ratio would be 1:0.75. This implies that if investors deposit Tk 100, then the brokerage houses and merchant banks are allowed to provide them a loan of Tk 75.

In case of the index ranging between 5,001 and 6,000, the margin loan ratio would be 1:0.50. This means investors will get Tk 50 in loan against an investment of Tk 100. When the DSEX crosses 6,000 points, the ratio would be 1:0.25, meaning a Tk 25 loan against every Tk 100 invested.

The ratio had been kept at 1:0.5 for the past four or five years irrespective of the standing of the index.

"With this directive we wanted to reduce risks of investors in an upward market and at the same time, tried to attract them into making investments while the market remained at a lower position," said a top BSEC official.

MARGIN LOANS TO BE ALLOWED AGAINST INDEX VALUE

DSEX (in points)	Margin loan ratio
Less than 4,000	1:1
4,001-5,000	1:0.75
5,001-6,000	1:0.50
More than 6,000	1:0.25

In response to a query, he said the directive would be applicable for a few years, until or unless the market rises to new heights.

This is a good initiative of the BSEC as it will help give the market a boost while it remains in a lower position, said a stock broker.

On the other hand, it will reduce the risks of market intermediaries, he added.



Many of the vegetables available in Barishal city have their roots in villages four or five hours away. Here a transshipment, so to speak, is being made at Sharshi village of the Sadar upazila's Kashipur union, around an hour's drive from the city. The farmer brought his boatload of produce paddling some four hours from his Banaripara village. He will stay back for the day waiting for traders to make the sale before heading back with his share the next morning. The photo was taken last week.

TITU DAS

Stocks fall below 5,000-mark again after nine days

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Stocks continued to fall nosediving below the 5,000-mark yesterday after managing to stay above the level for nine days in a row.

The DSEX, the benchmark index of Dhaka Stock Exchange (DSE), plunged 42 points, or 0.83 per cent, to stand at 4,970.10.

The index went past the 5,000-mark on September 10 after around 54 weeks.

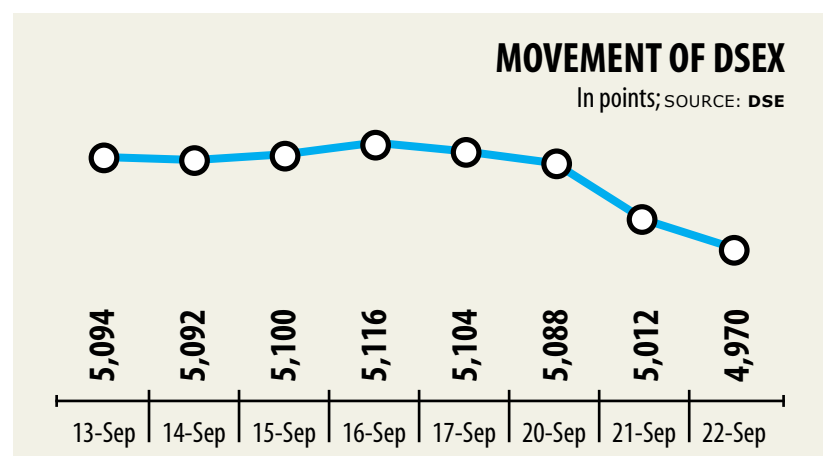
The stock market is going through a correction right now so there is nothing to fear from the fall of the index, said a stock broker.

Moreover, this is creating an opportunity for some investors to make investments, he said, adding that what was more concerning was the fact that trading on the bourses had reduced.

Turnover, one of the important indicators of the DSE, dropped 25 per cent to Tk 977.58 crore.

Of the total 356 stocks traded, 75 advanced, 252 declined and 29 remained unchanged.

The stock market is taking the shape of a wave, which means that investors



are taking in profits at the crest, when the index has risen, and buying stocks at the trough, when the index has fallen, said a merchant banker.

"This is a good sign for the market."

When investors take in profits, it gives them the confidence to make further investments, he said.

But some investors are doubtful of investing now apprehending that pouring money amidst the pandemic-induced economic downturn will lead to further losses,

the merchant banker added. "The health specialists fear that a second wave of Covid-19 infections may come in the upcoming winter season and it might be dreadful for the business situation of the country again."

The DSE's turnover list was topped by Beximco Pharmaceuticals which saw shares being traded worth Tk 30.48 crore followed by Brac Bank, Square Pharmaceuticals, Beximco and Rupali Insurance.

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Grow crops like onion abundantly to cut import dependence



SUBRATA RANJAN DAS

Bangladesh continues to be among the fastest-growing economies in the world. Agriculture plays a major role in the growth of the economy and providing employment. Despite being one of the densely populated economies in the world, Bangladesh has made admirable progress in achieving food security over the past decades.

The current Covid-19 situation has made us realise the significance of the agriculture sector in Bangladesh. All the news reports, talk shows and discussions indicated that there will be an increased emphasis in the development of the agriculture sector in Bangladesh post-Covid-19. Facilitating the extra population in the sector will not be a simple task. A short-, mid- and long-term plan is needed so that the extra force can be utilised properly.

Due to the pandemic, a huge number of labour forces will be forced to return to Bangladesh from the Middle East and other countries. Already at least 78,043 workers returned home from 26 countries since April, according to figures published by the Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment on August 23.

People are returning from Dhaka city to villages so it will not be a suitable choice for them to plant and harvest agricultural crops. In both cases, it is expensive and time-consuming. New technologies like harvesters and tractors are already getting popularity in this case.

We have to keep in mind that for domestic consumption, agricultural output will not increase that much and there maybe, in some cases, reduction a little bit. Each person consumes 367 grammes of rice daily, down 11 per cent from 416gm in 2010, according to the Household Income and Expenditure Survey 2016.

The Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS) also found that daily per capita consumption of wheat grain dropped 24 per cent to 19.83gm in 2016 from 26gm in 2010.

Exporting agricultural goods will not be simple because of phytotoxicity and other quality issues. Then how can agriculture provide extra employment or play a vital role in this situation? Now the option is to reduce



Farmers collect onion seedlings at a field of Piprul village in Naldanga upazila of Natore.

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dependency on our agricultural goods import. Largely we import wheat, maize, onion, garlic and ginger. The total import of these goods is huge in value. We grow all of these crops to some extent.

If we can cultivate these agricultural products, then the import cost can be saved by Tk 15,100 crore. To produce these agricultural crops, we need 1.71 million hectares of land.

We have 15.2 million hectares of cultivable

land whereas only 0.21 million hectares arable land is barren. On the other hand, we can engage a large amount of the labour force of about 95 million. Now the labour requirement seems very unusual because of current manual production practices. If we use a semi-manual process for production, then the requirement may drop down to 50 per cent.

In order to accumulate this production, we have to adopt proper cropping pattern management of production. We need 10 per cent diversification of our total cultivable land. For example, aman paddy takes short time to provide yield so we can use this aman field to produce onion and garlic after aman harvesting. Then farmer can cultivate late boro or ropa aush in the same field. By using modern technologies like harvesters and transplanters, crop loss can be reduced. Through the use of high yield variety, production will increase and land usage can be saved.

We need to focus on summer onion. Currently, we are producing 2.3 million tonnes of onion in 0.24 million hectares of land against the demand of 3.4 million tonnes. So, need another 0.104 million hectares of land to reduce the reliance on imports.

We don't cultivate the summer variety now because of seed scarcity in the season. But it can be a good source of onion during summer. This variety can give a yield of up to 30-32 tonnes per hectare within 2-3 months whereas we get 10-12 tonnes per hectare during winter onion. This variety has 2-3 months of shelf life.

Now the question is: where will we cultivate this crop? Many farmers in Munshiganj cultivate potato once a year and the area of cultivating potato is 38,500 hectares. The area faces floods for 4-5 months after harvesting of potato. But before flooding, they get 2-3 months. During this time farmers can cultivate this summer onion. By cultivating this variety, we may get around 1 million to 1.1 million tonnes of onion which can reduce the necessity of imports entirely.

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CONSUMPTION OF FARM PRODUCTS AND IMPORTS

Crops	Total consumption (In tonnes)	Import (In tonnes)	Import value (In crore taka)
Wheat	6.9	5.5	8,500
Onion	3.4	1.1	6,545
Garlic	1.2	0.7	9,770
Ginger	0.275	0.075	765
Total			25,580

PRODUCTION COST AND OTHER REQUIREMENTS

Crops	Production cost (In crore taka)	Land required (In million hectares)	Labour requirement (In million)
Wheat	5,970	1.49	22.41
Onion	2,617	0.104	35.61
Garlic	1,522	0.11	34.8
Ginger	301	0.006	2.3
Total	10,410	1.71	95.12