

STOCKS		COMMODITIES		ASIAN MARKETS				CURRENCIES			
DSEX	CSCX	Gold	Oil	MUMBAI	TOKYO	SINGAPORE	SHANGHAI	USD	EUR	GBP	CNY
▲ 0.13%	▲ 0.13%	\$1,857.78	\$41.79	▼ 2.96%	▼ 1.11%	▼ 1.22%	▼ 1.72%	BUY TK 83.95	96.80	105.76	12.09
4978.77	8,523.90	(per ounce)	(per barrel)	36,553.60	23,087.82	2,450.82	3,223.18	SELL TK 84.95	100.60	109.56	12.71

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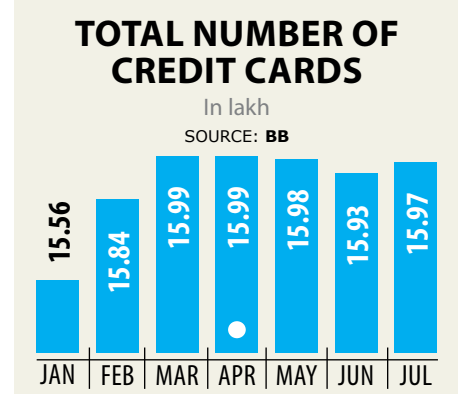
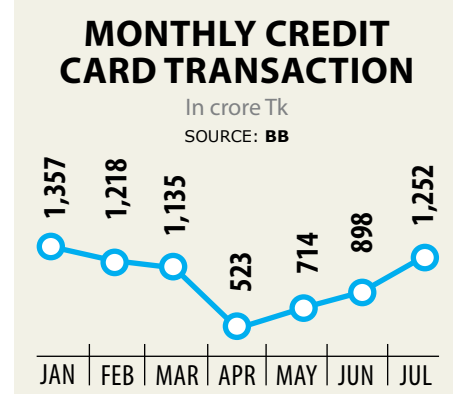
BB caps interest rate on credit card loans

AKM ZAMIR UDDIN

The central bank yesterday capped the interest rate on credit card loans at 20 per cent in a relief for clients as they would get rid of the burden of higher interest amid the pandemic.

for all loan products in Bangladesh.

As per a previous instruction of the central bank, banks were allowed not to impose more than 5 per cent on top of the highest interest rate of a consumer loan for the amount of the outstanding loan of a credit card. The provision helped



Banks charge between 25 and 27 per cent interest on credit card loans, way higher than the 9 per cent interest rate ceiling applicable

banks enjoy more than 25 per cent interest against their disbursed loans through credit cards. In April, the central bank had imposed the interest rate ceiling of 9 per cent for all loan products except the credit cards.

Had the Bangladesh Bank followed the previous provision, lenders would not be permitted to levy a maximum of 14 per cent interest on credit cards, a central bank official said.

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RAJIB RAIHAN

Jhum or shifting cultivation is practised by indigenous communities around the world, including Bangladesh's Chittogram hill tracts. The high ground is cleared by burning the vegetation, the resulting ash helping to keep the soil nourished for a few years. This goes on in rotation, allowing periods for exhausted hills to regenerate vegetation, an effective model for sustainable agriculture. The choice of crops is designed to provide harvest round the year, with paddy grown mostly during the monsoon. The photo was taken at Mro Para in Chimbuk area of Bandarban recently.

Spinners treading a tightrope

Their investment plans to boost local capacity, cut imports pushed back by pandemic

REFAAT ULLAH MIRDHA

Spinners' plans to pour in hundreds of crores of taka to expand domestic capacity and slash reliance on foreign markets have been pushed back by the coronavirus pandemic, forcing local exporters to continue footing more than \$5 billion in annual import bills for yarn and fabrics.

In Bangladesh, local garment exporters have started manufacturing high-end garment items, raising the demand for specialised yarn and fabrics such as the yarn from PET bottles, man-made fibre and durable fabrics used in sports garments and activewear.

This prompted top spinners and weavers to invest in the production of specialised yarn and fabrics.

Bangladesh has witnessed heavy investment in the spinning sector, the main pillar of the country's primary textile sector, over the last four decades because of higher export of apparels. The investment in weaving is relatively low.

The combined investment in the primary textile sector has reached more than \$10 billion, of which 60 per cent took place in the spinning sector and the rest in the dyeing, finishing, weaving and washing sectors.

Consequently, local spinners can supply 40 per cent of raw materials for the woven sector. Garment exporters import specialised yarn and fabrics from China, India, Pakistan, Vietnam, Malaysia, Turkey and Indonesia.

Although investment had been taking place gradually in the production of the raw

KEY POINTS

- ▶ Hundreds of crores of taka are in the pipeline for investment
- ▶ Spinners interested to produce specialised yarn and fabrics due to increased demand
- ▶ Local spinners can meet **90%** demand in knitwear sector and **40%** in woven
- ▶ Of total investment in primary textiles at \$10 billion, spinning mills account for **60%**
- ▶ Bangladesh has **500** spinning mills **450** of which are active
- ▶ Local spinners help reduce lead time significantly



materials, the pandemic has put the plans on hold.

"I was supposed to start constructing a big spinning mill in Narsingdi in March spending Tk 450 crore. However, I had to delay the project and I hope that I will be able to start in November," said Abdullah Al Mahmud Mahin, managing director of Mahin Group, one of the leading garment manufacturers.

The planned spinning mill will produce

specialised yarn from US cotton. The yarn would be used to make fabrics at the group's weaving factory for its international customers such as Hugo Boss, Abercrombie & Fitch, Tommy Hilfiger, Calvin Klein, PVH, H&M, M&S, Esprit and s.Oliver.

Mahin is going to set up the new spinning mill to produce the raw material on his own as he now has to rely on imported yarn from India, Indonesia, Vietnam, Turkey

and Malaysia.

Of the proposed investment amount, 60 per cent will come from foreign sources and the rest from local and own funding, said Mahin, whose weaving mill consumes 50 tonnes of yarn every day.

The planned mill will produce 30 tonnes of yarn daily, which will meet 60 per cent of the demand of the weaving mill. The rest of the requirement would be met through imports.

MA Jabbar, managing director of DBL Group, one of the leading garment groups, said he would start the construction of a spinning mill at the group's economic zone in Habiganj in June or July next year to produce specialised yarn.

"I have a target to invest Tk 400 crore initially in the proposed spinning mill to produce specialised polyester yarn for our factories," Jabbar said. Currently, the entrepreneur imports specialised yarn.

Many investors are coming up with new proposals for setting up spinning mills because the demand for yarn and fabrics has been increasing as the garment export is on the rise, said Monsoor Ahmed, secretary of the Bangladesh Textile Mills Association (BTMA).

Most of the investments are coming in the recycling yarn manufacturing as the demand for man-made fibre is rising globally, he said.

Bangladesh is one of the largest cotton yarn producers in the world. However, the ratio of cotton yarn and man-made fibre production has reached to 80 per cent and 20 per cent in recent years as local entrepreneurs invested money in the manmade fibre production, Ahmed said.

The construction of a Tk 115-crore plant of Debonair Group for the production of yarn from collected PET bottles in Bhaluka has come to a halt because of the pandemic, said Mohammad Ayub Khan, managing director of Debonair Group.

"We will re-start the construction next year in our convenient time," he said.

READ MORE ON B2

BB cuts interest rate on stock investment fund

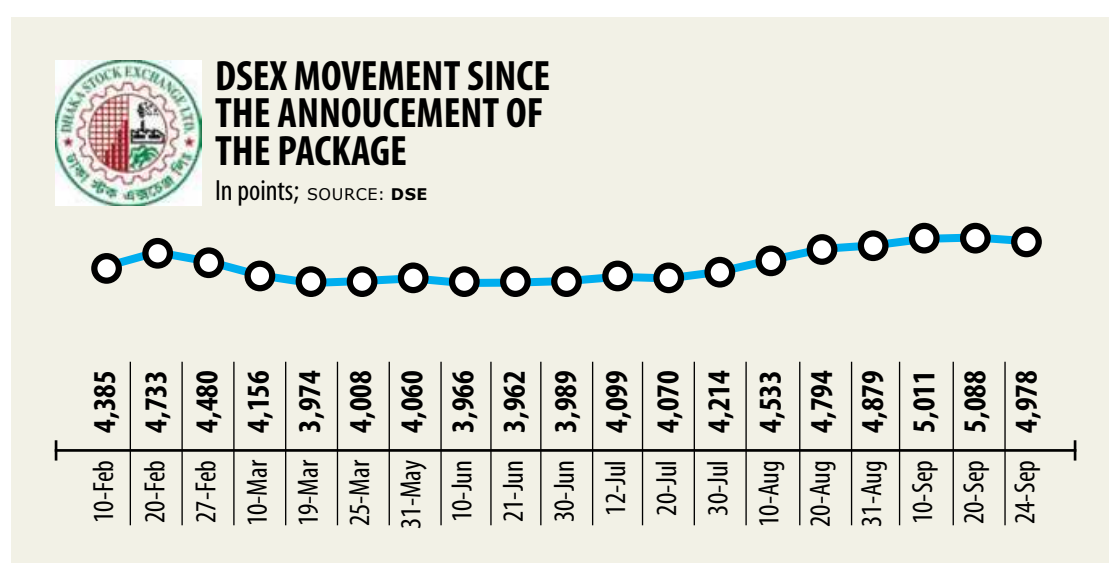
STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Bangladesh Bank has reduced the interest rate on borrowing from its special investment fund, aimed at helping the country's lenders increase their stock investment capacity.

"The interest rate was 5 per cent when the special investment fund was announced but it has been reduced to 4.75 per cent now," the central bank said in a circular yesterday.

On February 10, it was announced that local banks could set up a Tk 200 crore fund using repurchase agreements (repo), which refers to a system of short-term financing mainly through the purchase of government securities.

After the current repo tenure comes to an end, a new and lower repo rate will be introduced, it added. Under the existing repo programme, the repayment



duration is between 1 to 28 days as per Bangladesh Bank regulations.

On the day the package was rolled out, Tk 340 crore worth of shares were traded at the Dhaka

Stock Exchange (DSE) while DSEX, the benchmark index of the country's premier bourse, was far lower than usual at 4,385 points.

In order to boost Bangladesh's

ailing stock market, the central bank issued the special investment fund with a credit tenure of up to February 2025 and besides, the Tk 200 crore fund will not be

counted as market exposure.

Within six day of the announcement, the DSE's average daily turnover rose to Tk 1,021 crore while the index jumped up to 4,740 points.

Around 15 banks to advantage of the special package, forming a collective fund of about Tk 1,700 crore to invest in the stock market.

Apart from listed stocks, the banks are allowed to invest the fund in all kinds of bills and bonds, such as corporate, debenture, government and even asset-based or Sukuk, a shariah-compliant bond-like instrument used in Islamic finance.

However, the coupon or interest rate for any listed corporate bond or debenture needs to be at least 10 per cent, the central bank said.

But if a bank invests in an asset-based or Sukuk bond, then it should have coupons or profits of at least 8 per cent, it added.

READ MORE ON B3

Online air ticket purchase made easier

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

The central bank will now allow international credit and debit cardholders to purchase air tickets online while staying in Bangladesh for travelling from one foreign country to another.

For example, for a tour to New York via Thailand from Bangladesh, the cardholders earlier were not allowed to purchase air tickets from Thailand to New York while sitting in Bangladesh.

Yesterday, the banking regulator withdrew the bar through a notice. Now the international cardholders can purchase the tickets for travelling from one foreign country to another by online card payments from Bangladesh.

The Bangladesh Bank also allowed Bangladeshi travel operators to provide ticketing services to travellers proceeding abroad for journey to destinations outside Bangladesh against payment by international cards.

In this context, banks will have to provide acquiring services to travel operators in Bangladesh for capturing online payments by international cards against sales of air tickets.

But travel operators have to ensure that they have relevant registrations, permissions, licences, including membership with trade association representing the sector.

READ MORE ON B3

A roller coaster six months leaves US recovery still uncertain

REUTERS, Washington

As businesses shuttered and millions hit the unemployment line last spring, the most dour predictions saw the United States heading for another Great Depression of spiraling collapse and years of massive joblessness.

The worst has been avoided. But new academic research and commentary this week from Federal Reserve officials suggest the path of the US recovery remains much in doubt, and the programs approved last spring to buffer the economy from the pandemic may still be in for their stiffest test.

Cash that households socked away over the summer from rich unemployment benefits will begin to run dry; small business loans appear to have limited bankruptcies and closures so far but were not designed for the long haul; Federal Reserve programs that helped unlock a massive round of private corporate financing may have left companies with difficult-to-service debt if business does not fully rebound.

"Given the magnitude of the economic downturn triggered by the pandemic, we still face the possibility of a coming wave of credit downgrades and defaults,"

authors including Jeremy Stein, a Harvard University professor and former Fed Governor, warned in a paper being presented Thursday at the Brookings Institution, one of several which spelled out the risks facing the US economy in the coming months.

After its emergency credit programs allowed companies to sell a record \$1.7 trillion in corporate bonds to private investors through August, the Fed may have to rescue those markets if the bonds start to go bad, or risk the sort of financial crisis that has so far been avoided, the authors wrote.

The problems may not spool out all at once. But heading toward winter, when epidemiologists fear the spread of the virus will accelerate, renewed health fears may curb spending, make businesses less likely to hire and invest, and even prompt new restrictions - a phase the UK is entering, and which other European nations may face as case counts rise.

Boston Fed President Eric Rosengren said the steps taken so far "would have been fine if the pandemic lasted three months, but the pandemic isn't lasting three months."

"My baseline is that the pandemic gets worse this fall



REUTERS/FILE

A man wearing a mask rides past a Modell's store that is closed, as retail sales suffer record drop during the outbreak of the coronavirus disease in New York City, New York.

and winter," he told Reuters on Wednesday. "Some parts of the country will do a lockdown or people will choose to do so... Either way it is going to result in a decrease in economic activity."

In the roughly six months since a national state of emergency was declared, the US economy has been on a roller coaster - plummeting in March and April, reopening and rebounding in June and July, then reaching a

plateau of sorts. The pace of the initial recovery surprised many forecasters, and recent data has provided an explanation: the massive aid rolled out in March by the government did its job and then some.

Personal income was stable, small businesses used liberal access to loans to stay afloat, and families actually stuffed money into savings accounts as enhanced

benefits gave many of the newly unemployed more than they were earning at their jobs.

A Fed report this week noted savings and checking accounts were about \$700 billion higher at the end of June than in March.

But that money will eventually be spent. Proceeds of things like Paycheck Protection Program loans to small businesses will be used, and that may well happen before the economy fully reopens. The Metropolitan Opera on Wednesday said there would be no live performances until at least September, a high-profile example of how the entertainment and hospitality industry may face an extended recession even if other parts of the economy do better.

Congress is currently deadlocked over further aid, and it is unlikely any decisions will be made before the presidential election in six weeks.

In an analysis of the PPP program also to be discussed at Brookings on Thursday, economists Glenn Hubbard of Columbia University and Michael Strain of the American Enterprise Institute said it had been successful in stemming firm closures early on, but is still "unfolding" as the country's battle with the pandemic lengthens.

Initiative to help local communities recover better from pandemic

FROM PAGE B4

"UNDP's footprint across some 170 countries and territories, combined with the UN Global Compact's network of more than 10,000 companies and 68 local networks around the world, and the International Chamber of Commerce's network of over 45 million companies, multiplies our collective capacity and potential."

"The facility is the first of its kind - designed to join forces across public and private sectors to serve humanity in an imperative moment," he said.

Steiner made news of the facility public at the SDG Business Forum during the UN General Assembly, the largest and most inclusive UN convening of private sector leaders. Launched under the motto "Recover Better Together", this initiative marks commemoration of some important UN-related milestones and a time when multilateralism is facing the greatest challenge of its generation, the ICC statement also said.

The commemorations include the 75th anniversary of the UN's founding, the 20th anniversary of the establishment of the Global Compact, and the centenary of the ICC's founding after WWI.

Online sales of counterfeit products weigh on e-commerce industry: experts

FROM PAGE B4

Some of the best practices for consumer protection in digital economy are maintaining the accuracy of information by providing clear information on the quality, quantity, authenticity and the prices of goods and services, said Ismat Zerin, head of legal affairs at Daraz, another leading e-commerce platform.

Helping the consumers make informed choices according to individual wishes and needs is also one of the best ways to protect the consumers' rights under the digital economy, Zerin also said.

One in every two items bought online is FMCG in India, said Pratik Gupta, head of digital transformation of Marico Group. The FMCG contributes about 11 per cent of online sales and the FMCG online has been growing seven times faster than FMCG offline, he said.

He also said the counterfeit market in the FMCG sector is increasing at 44.4 per cent per annum and it is obstructing the growth of manufacturers.

Samsung expands online smartphone range in India to woo holiday shoppers

REUTERS, New Delhi

Samsung Electronics Co Ltd is expanding its online-only smartphone range, a senior company executive said on Thursday, as the South Korean tech giant hopes to win over new customers in India's festive season sales.

Samsung will launch the new India-made Galaxy F range of smartphones at Walmart Inc-controlled online retailer Flipkart on Oct. 8, Asim Warsi, a Senior Vice President and Head of e-commerce Business at Samsung India, told Reuters in an interview on Thursday.

"The series is aimed to address the burgeoning demand among the young online shoppers in India," Warsi said. Indian customers make big-ticket purchases of everything from gold to cars and electronics in the holiday season, which typically begins around October and lasts until the end of the year.

"We are building up for a very buoyant and a very strong festive sales period this year and by virtue of that our exit market share in the overall online space would be in excess of 30 per cent at the turn of the year," said



REUTERS/FILE

A customer prays inside a Samsung showroom in New Delhi.

Warsi. The F series, priced between \$200 to \$250 will only be sold online through Flipkart and Samsung own website, Warsi added.

Samsung, once an unrivaled leader in the world's second-biggest smartphone market, began losing customers to Chinese rivals led by Xiaomi Corp about three years ago, as

their devices were seen as better value for money.

But Samsung has since launched budget smartphones in India, its biggest revenue market after the United States, with longer-lasting batteries and high-resolution cameras in a bid to woo customers, especially those who shop online.

UK cancels autumn budget, readies new virus measures

AFP, London

The British government will not deliver its planned budget later this year due to uncertainty created by the coronavirus pandemic, a finance ministry source said Wednesday.

But Chancellor of the Exchequer Rishi Sunak is expected to set out new measures to protect jobs on Thursday, after a surge in cases sparked fresh nationwide restrictions.

"As our response to coronavirus adapts, tomorrow afternoon I will update the House of Commons on our plans to continue protecting jobs through the winter," he tweeted.

The source said the pandemic made long-term planning difficult, and the government wanted to focus on action now.

Prime Minister Boris Johnson on Tuesday set out new rules and guidance to stem the spread of infection, including early closing for pubs and restaurants - many of which are only just recovering after a full lockdown in the spring.

He also advised people to work from home if they can, abandoning a push to get office workers back into city centres to help the ailing economy. "No-one wanted to be in this situation but we need to respond to it," the source said.

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তারিখঃ ২৪/০৯/২০২০

নিয়োগ বিজ্ঞপ্তি

বাংলাদেশ শিপিং কর্পোরেশনে নিম্নোক্ত স্নান পদস্থ্যে সরাসরি নিয়োগের লক্ষ্যে প্রকৃত যোগ্যতাসম্পন্ন বাংলাদেশের স্থায়ী নাগরিকদের নিকট হতে দরখাস্ত আহ্বান করা যাচ্ছেঃ

ক্রম নং	পদের নাম	পদ সংখ্যা	১৪/১০/২০২০ তারিখে বয়স	বেতনস্কেল (বিএসসির বেতনস্কেল-২০১৫ অনুযায়ী)	শিক্ষাগত যোগ্যতা ও অভিজ্ঞতা
০১	উপ-মহাব্যবস্থাপক (জাহাজ মেরামত, ইঞ্জিনিয়ারিং/নিকাসাল)	০১টি	৪০	৫২২০০-৫৪২৯০-৫৬৪৭০-৫৮৭৩০-৬১০৮০-৬৩৫৩০-৬৬০৮০-৬৮৭৩০-৭১৪৮০-৭৪০৪০	প্রথম শ্রেণীর কম্পিউটার সাফটওয়্যার (মোটর/প্রথম শ্রেণীর কম্পিউটার সাফটওয়্যার) এবং উভয়ক্ষেত্রে উক্ত সাফটওয়্যার প্রোগ্রামিং পর সমুদ্রযাত্রী জাহাজে ৩ বছরের অভিজ্ঞতা।
০২	উপ-মহাব্যবস্থাপক (কার্গো সুপারভিশন এন্ড অপারেশন)	০১টি	৪০	৫২২০০-৫৪২৯০-৫৬৪৭০-৫৮৭৩০-৬১০৮০-৬৩৫৩০-৬৬০৮০-৬৮৭৩০-৭১৪৮০-৭৪০৪০	প্রথম শ্রেণীর কম্পিউটার সাফটওয়্যার (ডেপ) এবং উক্ত সাফটওয়্যার প্রোগ্রামিং পর সমুদ্রযাত্রী জাহাজে ৩ বছরের অভিজ্ঞতা। অথবা দ্বিতীয় শ্রেণীর দ্রুতকোত্তর ডিগ্রিসহ সংশ্লিষ্ট কাজে ৮ বছরের অভিজ্ঞতা।

০১। আবেদনকারীকে সরকার কর্তৃক চাকরির নির্ধারিত আবেদন ফর্ম পূরণ করে আগামী ১৪/১০/২০২০ তারিখের মধ্যে সচিব, বাংলাদেশ শিপিং কর্পোরেশন, বিএসসি ভবন, সল্টসোলা রোড, চট্টগ্রাম-এর বরাবরে হার্ডকপি এবং সফটকপি (সফটকপি) seeyb@bsc.gov.bd (cc to md@bsc.gov.bd) ই-মেইলে সৌহার্দ্যে হবে। অসম্পূর্ণ/ত্রুটিপূর্ণ আবেদনপত্র বা নির্ধারিত তারিখের পরে কোন আবেদনপত্র গ্রহণ করা হবে না। বামের উপর পদের নাম উল্লেখ করতে হবে। নির্ধারিত আবেদন ফর্মটি জমাশ্রমক মন্ত্রণালয়ের ওয়েবসাইটে এবং বিএসসির ওয়েবসাইটে www.bsc.gov.bd তে পাওয়া যাবে;

০২। আবেদনপত্রের সাথে যে সকল কাগজপত্র সংযুক্ত করতে হবে

(ক) সকল শিক্ষাগত যোগ্যতার সার্টিফিকেটের সত্যায়িত কপি; (খ) প্রথম শ্রেণীর পেজেন্টেড কর্মকর্তা কর্তৃক প্রদত্ত চারিত্রিক সন্দপত্রের সত্যায়িত কপি; (গ) স্থায়ী ইউনিয়ন পরিষদ/পৌরসভার চেয়ারম্যান/ওয়ার্ড কাউন্সিলর কর্তৃক প্রদত্ত নাগরিকত্ব সন্দপত্র ও জাতীয় পরিচয়পত্রের সত্যায়িত কপি; (ঘ) সন্য চোনা ০৪ (চার) কপি পাসপোর্ট সাইজের সত্যায়িত মনিন ছবি; (ঙ) অভিজ্ঞতা সন্দপত্রের সত্যায়িত কপি; (চ) বাংলাদেশ শিপিং কর্পোরেশন, চট্টগ্রাম এর অনুল্লেখ ২০০০/- (দুই হাজার) টাকার (অফসেটযোগ্য) পে-অর্ডার/ব্যাংক ড্রাফট; (ছ) সিভিসি এর সত্যায়িত কপি; (জ) সিওসি স্লাস-১ এর সত্যায়িত কপি;

০৩। মৌখিক পরীক্ষার সময় সব ধরনের সন্দপত্রের মূলকপি প্রদর্শন করতে হবে;

০৪। প্রার্থীদেরকে লিখিত ও মৌখিক পরীক্ষায় অংশগ্রহণ করতে হবে। নির্ধারিত পরীক্ষার (লিখিত ও মৌখিক সাফল্যকর) অংশগ্রহণের জন্য প্রার্থীদেরকে কোন প্রকার টিএ/ডিএ প্রদান করা হবে না।

০৫। কর্তৃপক্ষ সরকারি বিধিবিধানের সাথে সাংঘর্ষিক নয় এমনভাবে কোন শর্ত পরিবর্তন বা অতিরিক্ত শর্ত সংযোজন করতে পারবেন। আবেদনপত্র গ্রহণ, বাছাই এবং নিয়োগের ক্ষেত্রে কোন কারণ দর্শানো ব্যতিরেকে বাংলাদেশ শিপিং কর্পোরেশন কর্তৃপক্ষের সিদ্ধান্তই চূড়ান্ত বলে গণ্য হবে। এ নিয়োগ বিজ্ঞপ্তি আবেদনকারীকে সত্যায়িত কপি/প্রার্থীকে ০২ (দুই) বছরের জন্য শিক্ষানবিস থাকতে হবে;

০৬। কোন তথ্য গোপন করে বা ভুল তথ্য প্রদান করে চাকুরীতে নিয়োগপ্রাপ্ত হলে কোন কারণ দর্শানো ব্যতিরেকে সংশ্লিষ্ট প্রার্থীর নিয়োগপ্রাপ্ত বাতিল করা হবে এবং তার বিরুদ্ধে আইনানুগ ব্যবস্থা গ্রহণ করা হবে;

০৭। প্রার্থীর যোগাযোগের ঠিকানা সফটকপি ২০ (দশ) টাকা মূল্যের ডাক টিকটসহ '৯'x'৪' সাইজের দেহের নাম আবেদনপত্রের সাথে সংযুক্ত করতে হবে;

০৮। চাকুরীতে প্রার্থীকে অবশ্যই যথাযথ কর্তৃপক্ষের মাধ্যমে আবেদন করতে হবে, কোন অগ্রিম কপি গ্রহণযোগ্য হবে না এবং হাতে হাতে কোন আবেদনপত্র গ্রহণ করা হবে না;

০৯। নিয়োগের জন্য বাছাইকৃত ব্যক্তি/প্রার্থীকে ০২ (দুই) বছরের জন্য শিক্ষানবিস থাকতে হবে;

১০। বিজ্ঞপ্তিতে পদের সংখ্যা হ্রাস বৃদ্ধি বা বাতিল/প্রত্যাহারের অধিকার কর্তৃপক্ষ সংরক্ষণ করেন;

১১। নিয়োগ সন্দেহিত যে কোন বিষয়ে কর্তৃপক্ষের সিদ্ধান্ত চূড়ান্ত বলে গণ্য হবে।

খালেদ মাহমুদ
সচিব
বাংলাদেশ শিপিং কর্পোরেশন
বিএসসি ভবন, সল্টসোলা রোড, চট্টগ্রাম
ফোন নং-০৩২-৭২৪৪৭৯/৭২৪৮৩২

GD-1517

Spinners treading a tightrope

FROM PAGE B1

He said the demand for high-end garment items declined worldwide, a development that has affected the demand for specialised yarn and fabrics.

"Before the pandemic, the demand for the yarn made from plastic bottles was very high. So, we took up the project."

The experts who were employed in the plant came from Germany and China but they left due to the pandemic, he said.

Khan's target was to produce 40 tonnes of yarn per day mainly from the flakes of plastic bottles. The yarn would then be used to make jackets for western consumers.

Mohammad Ali Khokon, president of the BTMA, said some millers have been expanding their capacity but the applications for fresh investment proposals are not seen.

With the reopening of the economies in the western world, the local textile sector is rebounding. But the sustainability of the revival is depending on how the fallouts of the second wave of Covid-19 are managed, he said.

"We are expecting a strong revival of our business by January next year if the second wave does not break any havoc."

The number of spinning mills in the country is more than 500. Of them, 450 units are in operation.

কৃষিই সমৃদ্ধি
গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার
লেবুজাতীয় ফসলের সম্প্রসারণ, ব্যবস্থাপনা ও উৎপাদন বৃদ্ধি প্রকল্প
কৃষি সম্প্রসারণ অধিদপ্তর, খামারবাড়ি, ঢাকা-১২১৫

Date: 24-09-2020

Memo No. 12.01.0000.039.11.004.19-799

e-Tender Notice

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

S. No.	Tender ID & Reference No.	Procurement Nature, Title	Online (e-GP System) tender publication date & time	Online (e-GP System) tender closing date & time
01	497141 WD-01/Citrus-Dae/01-15/2020-21	Works, Installation of 15 Nos. (one in each upazila) Drip Irrigation System under Citrus Crops Extension, Management and Production Enhancement Project at Gazipur (Kapasia, Kaliakair, Kaliganj & Sreepur Upazila), Tangail (Sakhipur, Mirzapur, Ghatail, Madhupur Upazila), Narsingdi (Raipura, Shibpur, Monohardi & Belabo Upazila) and Sherpur (Nalitabari, Sreebordi, Jhenagati Upazila).	24-Sep-2020 at 3.00pm	19-Oct-2020 at 3.00pm
02	497142 WD-02/Citrus-Dae/02-11/2020-21	Works, Installation of 11 Nos. (one in each upazila) Drip Irrigation System under Citrus Crops Extension, Management and Production Enhancement Project at Brahmanbaria (Bijoynagar & Kasba Upazila), Sylhet (Gowainghat, Bishwanath, Golapganj, Jaintiapur, Beanibazar Upazila) and Moulvibazar (Juri, Barieka, Sreemangal, Kulaura Upazila).	24-Sep-2020 at 3.15pm	19-Oct-2020 at 3.15pm
03	497143 WD-03/Citrus-Dae/03-14/2020-21	Works, Installation of 14 Nos. (one in each upazila) Drip Irrigation System under Citrus Crops Extension, Management and Production Enhancement Project at Rangamati (Rangamati Sadar, Naniarchar, Barkal, Baghaichari, Kaptai, Rajasthali, Belachari & Langadu Upazila) and Bandarban (Bandarban Sadar, Ruma, Naikhongchhari, Lama, Alikadam & Rowangchhari Upazila).	24-Sep-2020 at 3.30pm	19-Oct-2020 at 3.30pm

This is online tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. Registration is essential to submit the e-Tender. The fees for downloading the e-Tendering documents from the National e-GP Portal have to be deposited online through any registered bank. Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).

Faruque Ahmed
Project Director
Citrus Crops Extension, Management and Production Enhancement Project
Department of Agricultural Extension
Khamarbari, Dhaka

GD-1514

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Local Government Engineering Department
Office of the Upazila Engineer
Upazila: Natore Sadar, Dist: Natore
www.lged.gov.bd

Dated: 24-09-2020

Memo No. 46.02.6963.000.07.012.20.355

e-Tender Notice: 02/2019-20

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

Sl. No.	Tender ID No.	Package No.	Name of works	Tendering method
1	498071	e-Tender/Nat-S/INF-2018-19-506963-01	Construction of a Jongli b. Paikpara & c. Gunarigram Community Clinic Labour Shed under Upazila Natore-s Natore.	OTM
2	498072	e-Tender/Nat-S/INF-2018-19-506963-02	Construction of Community Toilet a. Joybangla Hat b. Dorappur Hat under Upazila Natore-s Natore.	OTM

This is an online tender where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and offline/hard copies will not 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 up to 5:00pm date: 19/10/2020. Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and also from e-GP help desk (e-mail: xen.natore@lged.gov.bd or Call to 0771-66636). Interested persons can communicate with the undersigned during office hours.

Sk. Md. A. S. Mostafaezur Rahman
Upazila Engineer
LGED, Natore Sadar, Natore
Phone No. 0771-66636
E-mail: ue.natore-s@lged.gov.bd

GD-1515

Businesses cheer, unions fear contentious Indian labour reforms

REUTERS, New Delhi

Business groups on Thursday welcomed contentious and long-delayed labour reforms passed by India's parliament this week, aimed at making hiring and firing workers easier and imposing restrictions on trade unions.

The reforms to India's decades-old labour laws are a key part of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's moves to liberalise conditions for investment. But they have met with resistance from trade unions that plan to join a nationwide agitation on Friday against these and several other bills passed by the government.

Three key bills on labour reform were approved by India's upper house of parliament late on Wednesday, and will become law after receiving presidential approval. They were approved by the decision-making lower house on Tuesday.

"This change is welcome and bound to create more attraction for foreign investments in small-scale sectors," said KE Raghunathan, convener of Consortium of Indian Associations, an umbrella group representing small businesses.

"At the same time, workers might fear losing their rights in certain cases, and the onus is on the employers to make sure this feeling is eliminated."

Under the Industrial Relations Code, one of the three new laws, companies employing up to 300 workers will not require government permission to lay off workers or close plants - an increase



People hold placards as they attend a protest organised by various trade unions against labour law changes and the disinvestment and privatisation of public sector enterprises, in New Delhi yesterday.

from the previous cap of 100 and a major demand from industry over the years.

The code also puts restrictions on the recognition of trade unions - making it mandatory for them to represent at least 10% of workers in a given sector - and prohibit them from striking without prior notice and during conciliation proceedings.

Businessman Vinod Kumar, who employs just over 100 people at his factory

making parts for India's Tata Motors in the north Indian city of Lucknow, said the code will help him to expand operations.

"This will give us some power and rein in the labour unions, who have now a habit of blackmailing us in the name of increasing remuneration," he said.

Rick Rossow, a senior adviser at the Washington-based Center for Strategic and International Studies, who specialises in

U.S.-India business ties, said the reforms were likely to prove attractive to overseas investors.

"Foreign companies have long listed India's stifling labor regulations as a key deterrent to making larger investments," he said.

The northern state of Rajasthan, that introduced similar laws for companies with fewer than 300 workers in 2014, has seen an increase in the average number of employees, he added.

Indian state governments are allowed to pass their own labour laws, but the new codes issued by the federal government will over-ride these.

Six states have this year already relaxed labour laws, including raising caps on work hours, in what they say is an attempt to kick-start their economies badly damaged by the novel coronavirus pandemic, to the concern of groups including the United Nations' labour wing.

Amarjeet Kaur, general secretary of the All India Trade Union Congress, one of the biggest trade unions in the country, said the new codes will make it would be almost impossible for workers at small industrial units to form a trade union.

"Workers will be at the mercy of their employers who could fire them for any flimsy reason," she said.

AITUC, along with at least 10 major trade unions, will launch nation-wide protests against the labour code, and will join farmers on Friday to protest against the government, she added.



Nilufer Zafarullah

Md Shamsuzzaman

Midland Bank re-elects chair, elects vice chair

STAR BUSINESS DESK

Midland Bank recently re-elected Nilufer Zafarullah as its chairman and elected Md Shamsuzzaman as its vice chairman.

The election took place at a meeting of the board of directors, the bank said in a statement yesterday.

Nilufer has been serving the local lender as its chairman since 2018 and also served as its vice chairman.

A former member of parliament, Nilufer is a director of Hong Kong Shanghai Manjala Textiles and donor trustee of Begum Zubunessa and Kazi Mahabubullah Jono Kallyan Trust.

An architect by profession, she is a member of the board of trustees of Independent University Bangladesh and Chittagong Independent University.

Shamsuzzaman is a nominee director of Liberty Knitwear and managing director of Liberty Knitwear, Orient Chem-tex, Micro Fiber and Midland Knitwear.

BB cuts interest rate on stock investment fund

FROM PAGE B1

This announcement comes at a time when the DSEX is undergoing corrections. Though the benchmark index rose by 8 points in the last two days, it has witnessed a 146-point fall in the four days prior.

"This reduction of the repo rate will give a relief to the banks who formed the special funds because it reduces the overall cost," said the head of treasury at a listed bank, which formed the fund.

However, this move should have come sooner, when the central bank reduced the rate in this year's monetary policy, the banker added.

The government decided to cut the repo rate for the remaining half of the current year in a bid to help bank smoothly secure funds amid the ongoing coronavirus pandemic.

The repo rate was cut 50 basis points to 4.75 per cent when it was unveiled in the monetary policy last July.

Resilient supply chains to get small enterprises on track: analysts

FROM PAGE B4

Lack of skilled manpower, old machineries, lack of information, limited access to finance and access to harmonised tariff and non-tariff policies are some of the major challenges they face, he said.

Incorporating supply chains in business allows higher efficiency, cost reduction, increased output and profit and enhanced communication, he added.

Adoption of resilient supply chains will aid revenue growth by 40 per cent to 60 per cent, improve customer satisfaction by 20 per cent to 40 per cent and lower transportation costs by 10 per cent to 20 per cent, the statement also said.

Gold languishes at two-month low as dollar rallies

REUTERS

Gold fell on Thursday to its lowest level in more than two months, crippled by a robust dollar, while investors fretted over uncertainties surrounding further stimulus measures to support a sluggish economy in the United States.

Spot gold fell 0.3 per cent to \$1,857.36 per ounce at 0747 GMT. Earlier in the session, it hit its lowest since July 22 at \$1,847.99. US gold futures were down 0.4 per cent at \$1,860.70.

The dollar index hit a two-month peak against rival currencies. A firmer dollar makes bullion more expensive for holders of other currencies.

"Gold can't shake off this dollar dominance, that is reverberating across all asset classes," said Edward Moya, a senior market analyst at OANDA.

Meanwhile, US Federal Reserve officials tried to convince investors they will keep monetary policy easy for years to allow unemployment to fall, but analysts say immediate support is unlikely before the US elections.

"The stimulus side of this trade is looking rather bleak in the short term," Moya said.

SME sector in dire need of support

FROM PAGE B4

Almost 23,000 small enterprises and around 3,000 medium enterprises are involved in exports either directly or indirectly, Islam said.

Bangladesh Bank's positive attitude towards promoting the SME sector has been well reflected in the SME financing trend since the beginning of this decade, he added.

But while the country's SMEs have witnessed commendable growth over the past 10 years, new barriers to the sector's expansion have risen, said former central bank governor Rahman.

Industries Minister Nurul Majid Mahmud Humayun said during these difficult times, it was important to ensure that jobs stayed secure and businesses sustainable.

This includes protecting the livelihoods of workers who are most vulnerable to the adversities of the coronavirus fallout and those performing silently in the informal economy.

"The SMEs are in serious trouble

due to the Covid-19 crisis," Humayun added.

The industries minister also informed that the government has already taken some policy measures to help SMEs cope with the "new normal" and declared that it would provide some incentives to SME entrepreneurs as well.

This initiative will certainly widen up the opportunities to address the sufferings of SME entrepreneurs around the world and Bangladesh in particular, Islam said.

M Abu Eusuf, professor of economics at the University of Dhaka, said various SMEs suffered drops in both demand and supply due to the pandemic.

To address this issue, he suggested that the government implement policy changes that encourage SMEs to shift their operations online.

According to the professor of economics, start-ups in the SME sector should get easier access to finance while a special bank for SME and women entrepreneurs is required.

Arijit Chowdhury, the additional secretary to Financial Institutions Division (FID), said his organisation was at the final stages of preparing a strategy to resolve the access to finance issue for SMEs.

Besides, the sector will get focus in the national financial inclusion strategy which is being formulated.

The FID is trying to support the SME sector and take its development to the next level, he added.

Momtaz Uddin Ahmed, another professor of economics at the University of Dhaka, suggested that a survey on SMEs be immediately conducted to identify challenges to their businesses and find solutions.

As per the findings, necessary support could be provided to help the sector survive, he added.

Md Masudur Rahman, chairperson of the SME foundation, Md Safiqul Islam, managing director of SME Foundation, and Tina Blohm, resident representative of FES Bangladesh, were among others to speak at the webinar.

BB caps interest rate on credit card loans

FROM PAGE B1

"The latest ceiling on the interest rates will give a relief to clients," he said.

The central bank also found some irregularities committed by banks, which are impairing the interest of cardholders.

The Guidelines on Credit Operations of Banks issued in May 2017 stipulated that a client is allowed to withdraw a maximum 50 per cent in the form of cash against their credit card limit set by banks.

But lenders have disbursed loans in many forms ignoring the ceiling, thus widening the credit risk for banks, according to a central bank notice yesterday.

Loan disbursement through credit cards is highly unsecured and collateral-free, so banks should take extra cautionary measures while giving funds by way of using the tool, the BB said.

Besides, clients have to pay a higher interest rate against loans, which is harming the interest of the customers. The central bank yesterday instructed lenders to follow the 50 per cent cash withdrawal ceiling.

Some lenders also impose interest rate against the overdue loans of clients from the beginning of disbursement in another violation of the guidelines. Interest can be charged when the loan becomes overdue, the BB said.

In some cases, banks impose late payment fees several times against the defaulted clients, contradicting the guidelines. Lenders have been asked to realise the late payment fee for just once. The new directives would be effective from October 1.

Speaking to The Daily Star, heads of the card at three banks expressed frustration at the central bank's initiative, arguing that this will not bring any good for the country's credit card market.

The credit card operation of banks is highly costly. Besides, a large number of

employees has been recruited to run the operations.

Banks have to offer various discounts, buy-one-get-one offers and lounge facilities at airports to attract and retain customers. So, their cost of operation is high in this business.

So, the latest instructions will create an impediment to offering such discounts as profits from the credit card operations will be on the decline in the coming days, they said.

The bankers say the central bank had excluded credit card from the 9 per cent interest rate ceiling and it was a good thing for the growing credit card market.

Banks' profit has already faced different challenges because of the ongoing financial meltdown and the 9 per cent interest rate cap.

"The latest initiative will give another blow to the income of banks," said one of them.

"20 per cent interest rate is not sustainable for any bank," said an official of a payment-processing company.

The interest rate on credit card loans is high across the world and it goes up to as high as 35 per cent in some countries, the executive said.

"So, if the interest rate goes down, banks' incomes would go down. As a result, banks would not be able to continue offering the same benefits to customers as they are giving now. This means customers also would not benefit from the interest rate cut."

But the central bank official differed, saying clients are now reluctant to use credit cards because of a fall in purchasing power in the wake of ongoing economic recession.

So, the latest rate cut will encourage them to embrace the product that will surely give a boost to the credit card market, he said.

In India, some banks charge as high as 47 per cent annualised interest rate

on credit card loans, reported Indian business news website Moneycontrol in February.

The median credit card interest rate for all credit cards in the Investopedia database currently stands at 19.49 per cent, based on average advertised rates across several hundred of the most popular card offers in the US.

In July, credit cardholders spent Tk 1,252.4 crore in Bangladesh, the highest in six months and up 19.49 per cent year-on-year. Their spending stood at Tk 898 crore in June this year and Tk 1,048.1 crore in July last year, BB data showed.

The number of credit cards in circulation stood at 1,597,748 in July, up 10.56 per cent compared to 1,445,119 in the same month last year. The number stood at 1,593,697 in June this year. In Bangladesh, credit cards were launched in 1997, by Standard Chartered bank.

The credit card segment is dominated by City Bank, Eastern Bank, Standard Chartered and Brac Bank. Lanka-Bangla Finance dominates the domestic-only credit cards.

Online air ticket purchase made easier

FROM PAGE B1

They also have to have tie-up arrangements with internationally recognised tour operators and airlines.

In some cases, travel agencies have provided air tickets to travellers for travel outside Bangladesh, which was not supported by the foreign exchange guidelines.

The agencies made the payment by way of using hundi, an illegal cross-border financial transaction.

But the latest BB notice has given a great relief to them to run their business under a legal framework.

Sri Lanka scraps \$1.5b Japan-funded light rail system

AFP, Colombo

Sri Lanka's president has ordered the termination of a \$1.5-billion Japanese-funded light rail project, saying it is not a "cost-effective solution" for the congested capital Colombo, officials said Thursday.

The deal signed under the previous government is the largest single foreign-funded infrastructure project in Sri Lanka, and was seen as a sign

of the island nation reducing its dependence on China.

President Gotabaya Rajapaksa, elected last year, told the transport ministry to "terminate this project and close the project office with immediate effect", top aide P.B. Jayasundara said in a letter to the ministry.

There was no immediate comment from the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), which in March last year loaned 30 billion

yen (\$285 million) to finance the first phase of the Light Rail Transit (LRT).

Japanese technology including rolling stock was to be used on the rail system, which included 16 stations over 15.7 kilometres (9.8 miles).

Detailed planning and land acquisition for the project in Colombo, which has some of the worst traffic congestion in South Asia, had already been completed and initial construction was under way.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Directorate General of Health Services
National Tuberculosis Control Program, Mohakhali, Dhaka

Memo: DGHS/MBDC/GFATM/COVID-19(HR)/2020/1836 Date: 24/09/2020

Vacancy Announcement

National Tuberculosis Control Program under DGHS is seeking applications from suitable candidates in the following positions for COVID-19 RM of GFATM. These HR will fully dedicated to support COVID-19 national response along with ongoing activities of Global Fund to Fight against AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (GFATM).

A. Name of the post: Emergency Response Focal Person (No of Post-01)
Education: MBBS with Masters in Public Health
Experience: At least 05 years working experience in the field of public health as a supervisor, **Age:** Not more than 55 years.
Monthly gross salary including tax: BDT 1,27,578/- per month, **Period of Contract:** upto June 2021

B. Name of the post: Microbiologist (No of Post-02)
Education: MBBS with Post Graduation in (MD/M-Phil) in Microbiology or BSC(Hons) with M.S in Microbiology from any recognized University. **Experience:** 1(One) year experience in the similar position, **Age:** Not more than 55 years.
Monthly gross salary including tax: BDT 60,000/- per month, **Period of Contract:** upto June 2021

C. Name of the post: Medical Technologist (Lab) (No of Post-135)
Education: Diploma in Medical Technology (Lab) from any Govt. recognized institution. **Experience:** Candidates having working experiences in operating Gene- Expert machines will get preference. **Age:** Not more than 55 years, **Monthly gross salary including tax:** BDT 30,000/- per month., **Period of Contract:** upto June 2021

D. Name of the post: Communication and Documentation Officer (No of Post-1)
Education: BA (Hons) with Masters in Social Science or Mass Communication, Master of Public Health with education requirement will be preferable. **Experience:** 1(One) year experience in the similar position., **Age:** Not more than 55 years.
Monthly gross salary including tax: BDT 40,000/- per month, **Period of Contract:** upto June 2021

E. Name of the post: Lab Assistant (No of Post-90)
Education: Secondary School Certificate (SSC),
Experience: At least 02 years working experience in any Govt. recognized Lab, **Age:** Not more than 55 years.
Monthly gross salary: BDT 15,000/- per month, **Period of Contract:** upto June 2021

F. Name of the post: Lab Support Staff (No of Post-20)
Education: Secondary School Certificate (SSC), **Age:** Not more than 55 years.
Monthly gross salary: BDT 12,000/- per month., **Period of Contract:** upto June 2021

Interested candidates are requested to send their applications in the following address within 07(seven) working days from the date of publication of the vacancy announcement in the newspaper or on the website.:
Director (MBDC) & Line Director TB/Leprosy & ASP
Leprosy Hospital Compound, TB Gate, Mohakhali, Dhaka-1212.

Application must be written by the candidate himself and submit the following documents with the application:
(a) An application with detailed CV with education, experience, contact address, mobile number, email address and two referees. (b) 2 copies of recent passport size photograph (c) Photo Copy of all educational certificates (d) Copy of NID (e) Copy of Experience certificate.

Pl. mention the name of post on the top of the envelop. The Authorities reserve the right to accept or reject any application.

বি: দ্র: এটি দাতা সংস্থার অর্থায়নে স্বল্প সময়ের জন্য (জুন ২০২১ পর্যন্ত) সম্পূর্ণ অস্থায়ী চুক্তিভিত্তিক নিয়োগ। চাকরীর মেয়াদ বৃদ্ধি কিংবা সরকারী খাতে স্থানান্তরের কোন সুযোগ নেই।

Prof. (Dr) Md. Shamul Islam
 Director (MBDC) and Line Director TB/Leprosy & ASP
 DGHS, Mohakhali, Dhaka.
 &
 Member Secretary, Recruitment Committee

GD-1519

Disbursement of remittance incentive caught in paper work

BB asks banks to step up measures

AKM ZAMIR UDDIN and MD FAZLUR RAHMAN

Bangladesh Bank yesterday asked banks to fast-track paper work regarding the disbursement of cash incentives on remittance with a view to encouraging remitters to send their hard-earned money through legal channels.

The central bank also asked remittance recipient banks to send documents submitted by the beneficiaries in Bangladesh to sender banks as quickly as possible so that the disbursement of cash support on funds of more than \$5,000 can be easily disbursed.

Recipients have to submit documents within two months after receiving the fund in contrast to the 15-day period previously provided for claiming cash incentives for amounts of \$5,000 or above. They don't need to submit any documents if the amount is less than \$5,000.

There was no time limit to send the documents to the sender banks by the recipient banks.

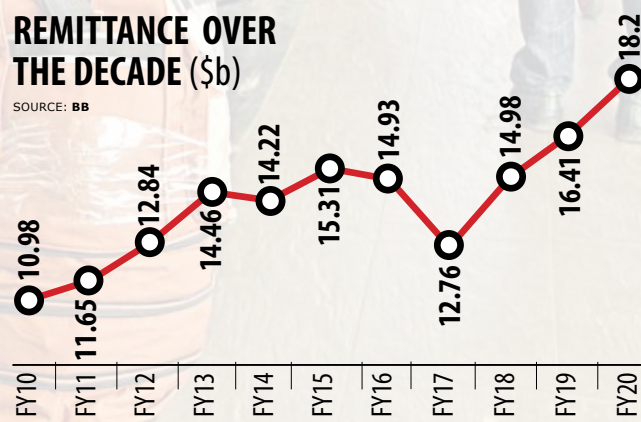
But the process to disburse the incentive is being disrupted as recipient banks are not sending the papers to sender banks despite receiving them from the beneficiaries in Bangladesh within the stipulated time, the central bank said in a notice yesterday.

As a result, there have been delays in releasing the incentive in favour of the beneficiaries, it said.

Against this backdrop, lenders have been asked to settle the whole process in the quickest possible manner so that recipients can smoothly avail the incentive, according to the central bank notice.

Zahid Hussain, a former lead economist of the World Bank in Dhaka, said a better solution would be if the 2 per cent incentive is added to the amount sent automatically through a 2 per cent depreciation of the local currency.

He said the cost of administering the policy



is high whereas it could be made zero.

"If the process were automatic, bankers would not have to spend too much time documenting transactions, which are needed to claim reimbursements from the central bank.

"At the same time, it would have cut the burden on the budget as well because the government has to give subsidies on it," Hussain added.

The government has set aside Tk 3,060

crore to subsidise remittance for the current fiscal year, unchanged from the last fiscal year.

In June last year, the government introduced the 2 per cent cash subsidy for remitters to encourage them to send money home through

legal channels. This has given a boost to remittance inflow.

Emranul Huq, managing director of Dhaka Bank, said beneficiaries face no delays when they submit required documents. The problems only surface when any of document submitted by a beneficiary does not match those at the sending banks' end.

Rahel Ahmed, managing director of Prime Bank, said the disbursement of the incentive has become much simpler compared to the initial months when it was introduced.

Remittance hit an all-time high of \$18.2 billion in the just-concluded fiscal year, giving much-needed breathing space to the government to manage the macroeconomic state of affairs hit hard by the ongoing financial whiplash.

The inflows were 10.87 per cent higher than in fiscal 2018-19, according to data from the central bank.

The momentum continued in the current fiscal year as well. Migrant workers sent home 36 per cent higher remittance in August, in a respite for their families as well as the ailing economy amid the coronavirus pandemic.

Last month, they remitted \$1.96 billion against \$1.44 billion in the same month a year ago, data from Bangladesh Bank shows.

This was the second straight month in the current fiscal year that they sent a higher amount of remittance. The inflow of remittance grew 50 per cent year-on-year to \$4.56 billion in the July-August period.

About 51 per cent remittance enters the country through legal channels while the remaining 49 per cent comes through informal channels, Finance Minister AHM Mustafa Kamal said on September 2, citing a previous study.

About 1.3 crore Bangladeshis are working abroad and their transferring of money back home has become a pillar of strength for the economy.

Online sales of counterfeit products weigh on e-commerce industry: experts

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Protection of consumers' rights and brand value of reputed companies has become a major challenge with the increased use of e-commerce platforms as a major engine of online sales and financial transactions, industry experts said.

The e-commerce platforms have been mushrooming in the country and every day crores of transactions take place without following the legal issues religiously and without ensuring consumers' rights and compliance.

Moreover, delivery of counterfeit products—especially fast moving consumer goods (FMCGs)—and transactions with fake accounts have become a headache for the consumers, users and reputed companies.

In many cases, counterfeit products are sold by unauthorised sellers, which in turn is hurting the image of the reputed brands and their customer base, they said.

Senior officials of different companies, users and entrepreneurs of different online platforms raised the issues at a virtual discussion on "Digital economy and intellectual property rights protection" organised by Marico in collaboration with different trade bodies and business chambers.

No e-commerce act has yet been formulated in Bangladesh to protect the rights of consumers in case of any anomalies and to protect the brand reputation, they said.

If consumers are cheated by one e-commerce platform, the whole industry will suffer because of a trust deficit, said Waseem Alim, CEO of Chaldal, a leading e-commerce platform.

For instance, many fake or lookalike hand wash items using the brand names of reputed companies came to the market after the Covid-19 outbreak, he said.

"Manufacturers should be aware of such counterfeit products."

KEY POINTS

- ▶ Online sales of counterfeit products are causing a trust deficit among customers
- ▶ Number of active internet users rose 9.5pc year-on-year to 66.44m as of January 2020
- ▶ 2,500 e-commerce sites sell \$2.07b worth of products a year
- ▶ 80pc consumers live in urban areas and 80pc of payments done through cash on delivery
- ▶ Tk 63,000cr change hands in 31cr online transactions a month
- ▶ Bangladesh is 46th largest market globally in terms of e-commerce revenue
- ▶ Bangladesh is the second largest supplier of online labour globally with 600,000 active freelancers

It is a must to use the Bangladesh Standards and Testing Institution's certification while selling goods or FMCG through e-commerce platforms, he said.

"But many superstores in the country are flouting the rules."

During the Covid-19 period, online transactions and the use of e-commerce platforms have gone up significantly in the country, said Syed Almas Kabir, president of Bangladesh Association of Software and

Information Services.

The lockdown period was a blessing for the e-commerce, he said.

Currently, the country has 2,500 e-commerce sites, which sell \$2.07 billion worth of products a year and Bangladesh is the 46th largest in the world in terms of e-commerce revenue.

Some 80 per cent of the consumers live in urban areas and 80 per cent of the payments are done through cash on delivery, Kabir said.

Bangladesh has 15 active mobile financial service operators at present with 67.5 million registered subscribers. Over Tk 63,000 crore change hands in 31 crore online transactions a month.

Moreover, Bangladesh has already become the second largest supplier of online labour globally, according to the Oxford Internet Institute.

About 600,000 active freelancers are currently working in Bangladesh regularly, Kabir said.

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Resilient supply chains to get small enterprises on track: analysts

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

A resilient supply chain for cottage, micro, small and medium enterprises (CMSMEs) will build competitive advantage, reduce cost of doing business and open up new market opportunities, believe experts.

These enterprises contribute 32 per cent of the GDP and create employment opportunities for about 2.45 crore people, which is 40 per cent of the country's total employment, said DCCI President Shams Mahmud.

The sector's sales have been hit hard by the Covid-19 pandemic and ensuring supply chains in this new normal situation is key for business sustainability, said a statement from the Dhaka Chamber of Commerce & Industry (DCCI).

The observations came at a webinar arranged by the DCCI in association with Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom (FNF Bangladesh).

Use of technology in supply chains has increased recently to maintain reliability, traceability and transparency, said Mahmud.

"For the CMSMEs we need to strengthen backward linkage industry to enhance efficient value addition in export," he said.

Following the pandemic-induced disruption, short, medium and long-term planning could beef up supply chains in the sector to fuel its export competitiveness, said Najmul Hossain, the foundation's country representative.

The enterprises are increasingly playing an important role in Bangladesh's economic growth, said Shankar Kumar Roy, corporate trainer and consultant, while presenting a keynote paper.

READ MORE ON B3

SME sector in dire need of support

Analysts call for better policy and access to finance

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Increased policy support and smooth accesses to finance are needed on an emergency basis to help small and medium enterprises (SMEs) cope with the ongoing coronavirus pandemic, various experts suggest.

"A lack of access to formal financing has been identified as a major obstacle to the survival and expansion of SMEs in Bangladesh," said Atiur Rahman, a former governor of Bangladesh Bank.

Besides, many SMEs have suffered tremendous setbacks in terms of production, marketing and sales amid the Covid-19 crisis.

Rahman made these remarks while presenting a keynote paper at an international webinar styled "The Pandemic and SMEs: Shock-absorbing policy measures and future debates, impacts in Bangladesh and lessons from responses around the World".

The event, jointly organised by the Small and Medium Enterprise Foundation (SMEF) and Friedrich-



About one-third of the human resources engaged in the SME sector are women who barely enjoy any policy incentives.

PHOTO: STAR/FILE

Ebert-Stiftung (FES) Bangladesh, was held yesterday.

Shibli Rubayat Ul Islam, chairman of the Bangladesh Securities and Exchange Commission (BSEC), said SMEs account for 25 per cent of the country's GDP but only one-third of the total workforce engaged in the sector were females due to its lack of policy incentives for women.

Islam, who moderated the discussion, referred to the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics when he went on to say that the country was currently home to about 7.8 million enterprises of all sizes, of which a staggering 6.8 million were cottage enterprises.

The second largest group were SMEs with over 8.66 lakh small and medium sized firms, making up just a little over 11 per cent of the total number of companies.

The SME sector generates 30 per cent of the total employment in the country as well. Small enterprises account for 27 per cent while medium enterprises add the remaining 3 per cent.

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Initiative to help local communities recover better from pandemic

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Global Compact and the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC) have established a Covid-19 Private Sector Global Facility to help local communities recover better from the pandemic.

The Deutsche Post DHL Group, Microsoft Corporation and the PwC network have already joined the global initiative bringing together public and private sector partners.

To operate at both global and national levels, the initiative is open for other like-minded private sector organisations that want to contribute, according to a statement from the ICC.

It is a response to corporate calls to jointly address the pandemic's negative impacts and better coordinate responses, helping to ensure that immediate stimulus efforts flow into the real economy.

It aims to co-create solutions that are tailored to the phase of the Covid-19 pandemic in a given area, specificities of the local private sector and government context.

Guided by the UN Global Compact's Ten Principles and the Sustainable Development Goals, the facility will support a multisectoral, whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach to face the multidimensional nature of the crisis.

Recovery efforts will focus on how to rebuild more inclusive economies and societies, to set a new course for a socially just, low-carbon and climate-resilient world where no one is left behind.

Initial projects will focus on Colombia, Ghana, the Philippines and Turkey. Both the geographical scope and participating partners will expand as the facility develops.

"Solidarity to 'Recover Better Together' can boost our collective efforts not only to cope with the crisis but overcome it," said UNDP Administrator Achim Steiner.

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