

STOCKS		COMMODITIES		ASIAN MARKETS				CURRENCIES			
DSEX	CSCX	Gold	Oil	MUMBAI	TOKYO	SINGAPORE	SHANGHAI	USD	EUR	GBP	CNY
▼ 0.38%	▼ 0.61%	\$1,883.39 (per ounce)	\$40.46 (per barrel)	▲ 0.25%	▼ 1.50%	▼ 0.02%	▼ 0.20%	BUY TK 83.95	97.43	106.82	12.10
4,963.29	8,507.45			38,067.93	23,185.12	2,466.62	3,218.05	SELL TK 84.95	101.23	110.62	12.72

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BUSINESS

DHAKA THURSDAY OCTOBER 1, 2020, ASHWIN 16, 1427 BS ● starbusiness@thedailystar.net

Huawei trims device business in Dhaka

Smartphone sales to continue through distributors

SOHEL PARVEZ

Chinese tech giant Huawei has significantly trimmed down its device business division in Bangladesh which was directly involved in monitoring its smartphone and other device businesses here, said insiders yesterday.

The development comes as one of the world's biggest smartphone and telecommunications equipment makers faces challenges amid restrictions imposed by the Trump administration.

Yesterday was the last day of office for most officials of the device division of Huawei Dhaka as the tech company plans to monitor its device business in Bangladesh from Malaysia, said industry insiders here.

Smart Technologies, distributor of Huawei smartphones in Bangladesh, will now look after the sales, marketing and business of Huawei's smartphone and other devices, said Md Anawar Hossain, the distributor's channel sales manager.

The tech company reorganised direct monitoring of device business owing to factors including the Covid-19 pandemic, he said.

Huawei used to physically monitor operations and branding here earlier and will now mostly guide Bangladesh's operations from Malaysia, he said over the phone, clarifying that Huawei was not closing its device business here.



It is basically changing operation module, he said, adding that Smart Technologies, which had been handling sales and operations since November last year, would continue to do the device business as national distributor.

Huawei Dhaka office did not comment on the issue.

Huawei had significantly reduced the number of employees in its device division at the end of last year as its smartphone business suffered for a series of US rules that restricted the company from using American technologies, including Google services.

The US Department of Commerce said global chipmakers which had been using US technology now had to obtain a licence from the US government to work on designs for Huawei, reported BBC last month.

And from September 15, the company could no longer buy key chips from its manufacturers, reported BBC on September 23.

Huawei says it had to rush to stockpile chips ahead of the latest tightening of trade restrictions from Washington, which has hit its supply hard, said the BBC.

The restrictions also affected sales of Huawei smartphones here, partly for consumers' falling appetite for Huawei smartphones and an increasing number of smartphone assembling facilities here including of global brands such as Samsung, said industry stakeholders.

A top industry operator seeking to remain unnamed said Huawei became one of the top three smartphone brands in high-end segment within a short time after it had launched its devices in Bangladesh.

It lost significant market share over the past year suffering issues in accessing Google services and for entry of competitors in the market, he said.

Banks' profit soars, on paper

AKM ZAMIR UDDIN

Net profit in the banking sector soared 33.60 per cent year-on-year to Tk 2,424 crore in the first half of 2020 despite a collapse in business and a feeble recovery of loans due to the onslaught of the coronavirus pandemic.

The increase in the profit came at a time when the majority of indicators in the financial sector has been on the decline because of the economic slowdown brought on by the crisis and banks face an uphill struggle to recover both defaulted and unclassified loans.

This led experts to call the jump in the net profit a mirage as the profit has just increased on paper.

The central bank has given a loan moratorium facility to borrowers for this year to help them avoid the default zone.

The ongoing economic hardship and the moratorium facility have put an adverse impact on the loan recovery of banks.

But lenders are transferring the interest of the loans, which is yet to be realised, to their income books enlarging the profit artificially.

Such interest is treated as an accrued interest in banking

norms. Banks are allowed to show the accrued interest as income, but such amounts have to be treated as an interest in suspense if loans become defaulted.

Interest in suspense is a particular kind of asset that may appear on a company's -- or even an individual's -- balance sheet.

It often denotes that a company has money due as the result of a loan, but that its borrower has not paid on the loan per an agreement.

On Monday, the central bank extended the loan moratorium facility. It also indicated that it would instruct how much of the accrued interest could be shown as income for the year.

"The Bangladesh Bank is working on it. Net profit in banks will decline at the end of this year and the banking regulator will issue a clear instruction to this end," a BB official said.

"The central bank should take the issue seriously, or else directors of private banks will enjoy dividends from public deposits," said Ahsan H Mansur, executive director of the Policy Research Institute of Bangladesh.

"It is reported that a good number of directors of banks are involved in financial scams. So, they will try to enjoy more

BANKS THAT SAW HIGHER NET PROFIT IN FIRST HALF OF 2020		
In crore taka; SOURCE: BB		
Banks	First half, 2019	First half, 2020
StanChart	580.55	536.58
HSBC	201.59	365.77
IBBL	320	311.51
DBBL	191.33	216.41
Southeast	256.41	188.09
Bank Asia	124.33	161.01
Jamuna	128.01	159.02
Eastern	152.34	155.06
BRAC	256.40	151.95
Pubali	203.42	146.31
EXIM	78.68	142.41
Trust	104.34	127.37
NCCBL	115.57	111.28
Mutual Trust	82.88	108.54
Shahjalal	105.80	107.40
Premier	119.95	103.86
National	112.48	101.81
Mercantile	162.51	97.27
Sonali	76.97	95.19
City	170.16	90.36

dividends riding on the artificial profit. They should be strictly barred from doing so," he said.

Banks should be instructed to treat actual incomes based on the recovery of loans, Mansur said.

Between April and June, lenders recovered Tk 869.68 crore from their defaulted loans, down from 49.13 per cent three months earlier, according to data from the central bank.

Banks realised Tk 108,288

crore from the unclassified loans in the second quarter, down 31.37 per cent a quarter ago.

The central bank should unearth the actual situation of the economy to take a decision to this end, said Mansur, also a former senior official of International Monetary Fund.

Non-performing loans did not increase too much in the first half because of the loan moratorium facility, said Syed Mahbubur

Rahman, managing director of Mutual Trust Bank.

"This has helped banks keep a lower amount of provisioning against their loans, pushing up net profit," he said.

As of June, defaulted loans stood at Tk 96,116 crore, down 14.50 per cent year-on-year.

Banks should transfer their accrued interest to the income segment by analysing the actual recovery trend of loans, Rahman said.

"The rising net profit will not create any major challenge for the banking sector if dividends can be checked," said Md Arfan Ali, managing director of Bank Asia.

The central bank should give a clear instruction on the distribution of dividends, he said.

Banks will be able to keep more provisioning to tackle tough times if they are allowed to give out a lower amount of dividends than the usual period, Ali said.

Net profit in private commercial banks decreased slightly to Tk 3,292 crore in the first half in contrast to Tk 3,395 crore a year ago.

Profit in foreign banks stood at Tk 1,091 crore, up 12.90 per cent year-on-year.

Between January and June, net loss in the six state-owned commercial banks stood at Tk 76.05 crore, which was Tk 1,588 crore during the same period a year ago, BB data showed.

Three state-run specialised banks -- Bangladesh Krishi Bank, Probashi Kallyan Bank and Rajshahi Krishi Unnayan Bank -- saw their combined net loss doubling to Tk 1,882 crore from Tk 959 crore during the same period a year ago.

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TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY and
REJAUl KARIM BYRON

A South Korean joint venture is likely to be engaged in turning the Dhaka-Mymensingh highway into an expressway under a public private partnership (PPP) initiative.

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs yesterday approved a proposal to convert an 87-kilometre section from Gazipur's Joydebpur to Mymensingh into an expressway under a government-to-government contract.

The committee, led by Finance Minister AHM Mustafa Kamal, gave the approval at a virtual meeting.

An expressway is a highway especially planned for high-speed traffic, usually with no or very few intersections, limited points of access or exit, and a divider between lanes for traffic moving in opposite directions.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on March 12 opened the country's first-

ever expressway running from Dhaka to Faridpur's Bhanga upazila. However, users will get the full benefit of the expressway once the construction work of the Padma bridge is complete.

South Korea has already selected three companies -- SK E&C, Korean Expressway Corporation and Lotte E&C -- for implementing the Joydebpur-Mymensingh project. The SK E&C will be the lead company, said an official of the Ministry of Road Transport and Bridges.

The preliminary cost of the new project has been estimated to be Tk 3,353 crore, said an official of the Roads and Highways Department (RHD), adding that the estimate may vary. As the project would not require too much land, the duration of the project will be relatively short, he said.

Under the project titled "Improvement of Dhaka (Joydebpur)-Mymensingh into Expressway with Service Lane on Both

The preliminary cost of the project has been estimated to be Tk 3,353 crore, said an official, adding that the estimate may vary

Sides through PPP," the authority aims to ensure better connectivity between the capital and Mymensingh division, where 10 economic zones will be established, said the RHD officials.

Once complete, this would be the first expressway in Bangladesh with eight lanes -- four main lanes, two emergency and two service lanes, they said. It will also be the first road in the country with dedicated

emergency lanes, they added.

Public Private Partnership Authority (PPPA) and Korea Overseas Infrastructure and Urban Development (KIND), a Korean organisation for providing support to global PPP businesses, signed a memorandum of understanding in April last year.

The RHD submitted two projects and South Korea so far accepted the Dhaka-Mymensingh Highway project, said Shishir Kanti Routh, additional chief engineer of the RHD.

Then the RHD, following the endorsement of the PPPA and through the Ministry of Road Transport and Bridges, recently sent the proposal to the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs for "in-principle approval", he said.

Now, an adviser would be hired to carry out a detailed feasibility study and physical and financial assessments before the final contract is signed, he added.

READ MORE ON B3

Make stimulus loans collateral-free for small businesses

Analysts urge BB at a virtual discussion

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

The central bank should make lending to pandemic-hit cottage, micro, small and medium enterprises (CMSMEs) from the stimulus package collateral-free to accelerate disbursement of the fund as many of them are struggling to stay afloat because of a shortage of finances, speakers said yesterday.

Bangladesh Bank should have asked banks not to demand any collateral when it announced the Tk 20,000-crore stimulus package so that a significant number of the cash-strapped CMSMEs could avail the soft loan, they said.

"The central bank should have taken care a lot earlier to help CMSMEs overcome the Covid-19 fallout," said Syed Nasim Manzur, managing director of Apex Footwear Ltd and a core group member of the Citizen's Platform for SDGs, Bangladesh.

"Studies show that the units that availed the money from the fund have benefited," said Debapriya Bhattacharya, convener of the Citizen's Platform for SDGs, Bangladesh and a distinguished fellow of the Centre for Policy Dialogue."

"The CMSMEs are lagging because their voices were not raised strongly with the government's decision-making level."

Industries Minister Nurul Majid Mahmud Humayun asked banks to ease rules and

RECOMMENDATIONS

- BB should ask banks to arrange collateral-free loans for CMSMEs
- Govt should give subsidies in VAT, tax, utilities
- NGOs, micro lenders should be involved in loan disbursement
- Definition of SMEs needs to be updated

KEY POINTS

- Govt announced Tk **20,000**cr stimulus package for the sector
- CMSMEs also contribute to exports
- Number of CMSMEs **7.76m**
- Of them **99.84%** are privately owned
- Of total industrial employment, **80%** in CMSMEs



disburse collateral-free loans to the CMSMEs as the enterprises play significant roles in the national economy.

They made these comments while speaking at a virtual dialogue on 'post-pandemic status of CMSMEs and effectiveness of stimulus packages'.

The Citizen's Platform for SDGs Bangladesh, a platform of non-state actors and their networks and associates, and the Business Initiative Leading Development (BUILD) jointly organised the meeting.

CMSMEs play a significant role in the country's economy and employment generation.

The number of CMSMEs in Bangladesh is 7.76 million. Of them, 99.84 per cent are privately owned, said Abul Kasem Khan, chairperson of the BUILD, in his keynote paper.

Of the total industrial employment, 80 per cent are in the CMSMEs. The units account for 35.5 per cent to 50 per cent of the total employment in Bangladesh.

Tk 59,292 crore are available in the form of loans for the CMSMEs under different categories. Of the sum, Tk 4,120 crore, or 20.5 per cent, was disbursed among 11,183 firms from the Tk 20,000 crore stimulus package for the CMSME.

READ MORE ON B3



Quazi Osman Ali, CEO of Social Islami Bank, opens the bank's 50th sub-branch at Satarkul Bazar in the capital's North Badda on Tuesday through a digital platform.

UK GDP collapsed nearly 20pc in second quarter in historic Covid-19 hit

REUTERS, London

Britain suffered a record collapse in economic output in the second quarter of 2020 when COVID-19 lockdown measures were in full force, though the decline was slightly smaller than first estimated.

Gross domestic product shrank by 19.8 per cent in the three months to June, the Office for National Statistics said, slightly less than the initial estimate of a quarterly 20.4 per cent crash but still more than for any other major advanced economy.

The fall was the biggest since the ONS records began in 1955. Other data has suggested Britain is on course for its biggest annual fall since the 1920s. Britain's economy had already shrunk by 2.5 per cent in the January-March period as the country entered lockdown in late March.

Output has rebounded in recent months but the recovery looks to be fading with rising coronavirus cases and forecasts of a jump in unemployment as the government scales back job support.

"The renewed COVID-19 restrictions will probably mean that GDP stagnates in Q4, leaving economic activity marooned 5.5 per cent short of its pre-crisis level," Ruth Gregory of consultancy Capital Economics said.

"And the risk now is that renewed containment measures send the recovery into reverse," she added.

Households saved a record 29.1 per cent of their income, up from 9.6 per cent in the first quarter, as they were unable to spend in many shops and restaurants during the lockdown,

while incomes were supported by a government job programme which ends next month.

Britain has suffered Europe's highest death toll from COVID-19, with more than 42,000 fatalities.

Compared with a year earlier, Britain's second quarter output tumbled 21.5 per cent - the same as in Spain - while France reported a 19.0 per cent drop.



REUTERS/FILE

People wearing protective face coverings walk past an empty retail unit in Manchester, Britain.

The statistics office said differences in how countries estimated public sector activity - especially whether they focused on money spent or used the ONS's approach of looking at the extent of disruption to normal services - complicated international comparisons. Nonetheless, it said Britain's economy shrank more than any other Group of Seven economy in the first half of 2020.

There have been some bright spots

in the recovery.

Retail spending exceeded pre-pandemic levels in July and August - driven by a boom in online shopping, groceries and home improvement - and figures on Wednesday showed the biggest annual rise in house prices in more than four years.

However, Bank of England Governor Andrew Bailey has warned the expansion is likely to lose pace,

while incomes were supported by a government job programme which ends next month.

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There have been some bright spots

Ally of Japan PM urges more fiscal, monetary stimulus to boost virus-hit economy

REUTERS, Tokyo

Japan should keep selling government bonds to the central bank to pay for the cost of reflating the economy out of a pandemic-induced slump, an academic close to new Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga said.

There are "no limits" to what monetary policy can do to achieve

higher inflation, at least until the Bank of Japan achieves its elusive 2 per cent inflation target, Kaetsu University Professor Yoichi Takahashi told Reuters in an interview. A former finance ministry bureaucrat, Takahashi keeps close contact with Suga via mobile phone and email.

He met with the premier at a Tokyo hotel days after Suga was elected to

succeed Shinzo Abe, who resigned due to poor health. The two discussed "economy and other issues," Takahashi said, declining to comment in detail.

"Suga was absolutely right to say he would continue Abenomics," Takahashi said, referring to Abe's reflationary recipe comprised of bold monetary easing, flexible fiscal spending and reform.

FROM PAGE B4

We have had to adopt different things. We have carried out various activities from home and we are still doing that. Some tasks can't be performed sitting at home. We have to run the factories and make sales at shops.

We work with farmers. We have to buy crops from the farmers. We have to continue these tasks by maintaining as much safety as possible.

We have to keep the wheel of the economy moving. That was our clear message. We followed that path and we tried to carry on business by capitalising whatever opportunities the market has offered.

Bangladesh has not seen much effects of the Covid-19 as witnessed in many other countries. Our situation has been tolerable so far. I think the economy would soon return to its normalcy very soon and the recovery would be V-shaped and I am preparing my company for

the V-shaped recovery. [A V-shaped recovery involves a sharp rise back to a previous peak after a sharp decline.]

DS: How can corporates be connected with academia? Is there any platform where leadership can be practised and knowledge will be disseminated?

Munim: It is a very relevant issue. At organisations, we were given training at home and abroad. Sometimes, line managers imparted training. There were mentors and coaches. They were available in a platform and we attended them and learned things. Now, the question is how we can make them institutionalised.

The main topic in Bangladesh today is how to create leaders. My first question is: Do you have a school that teaches leadership? Who will be the coaches and mentors? Who will provide formal training and give the scope for on-the-job learning? These scopes have not developed in our country.

Rosneft, Aramco unlikely to bid for BPCL stake

REUTERS, New Delhi/Moscow

Rosneft and Saudi Aramco are unlikely to bid in the privatisation of Indian refiner Bharat Petroleum Corp, sources familiar with the matter said, as low oil prices and weak demand curb their investment plans.

Russia's Rosneft had expressed an interest in buying the federal government's 53.29 per cent stake in Bharat Petroleum (BPCL) when its chief executive Igor Sechin visited New Delhi in February, while India's trade minister has said that Saudi oil giant Aramco was enthusiastic about the stake sale.

A Rosneft source, however, said it will not buy BPCL, while another said the Russian oil major would only be interested in BPCL's marketing business, which is comprised of fuel depots and more than 16,800 fuel stations.

"For this, India has to sell BPCL in parts,"

the source said.

India's government, which is looking to finance welfare schemes and bridge a fiscal deficit that has already topped the annual target, had aimed to raise \$8 billion to \$10 billion through the sale of its stake in BPCL.

But BPCL's share price has plunged by nearly 30 per cent over the past year to trade at about 386 rupees on Tuesday.

"This is not the time to invest in refining ... demand would be there for oil to chemicals and not conventional products," one of the sources familiar with Aramco's thinking said.

Rosneft and India's finance ministry did not respond to requests for comment.

"We continue to explore potential growth opportunities in Asia, including India, and will make appropriate updates as and when necessary," Aramco said, declining further comment.

Dare to dream big

The private sector alone can't do it. The government will have to be taken on board.

We probably need a ministry on human capital development. Why should we only send migrant workers abroad? We want to send human resources. We have to work on this. Someone has to make a start.

DS: Any suggestions for the next CEOs?

Munim: Future CEOs would have to have a lot of courage. They have to believe that he/she is not lagging behind anybody and none is better than him/her.

You will have to believe in yourself and back yourself. You can't play safe. You will have to take a lot of risks in your life. We have taken a lot of risks. Those risks were perhaps calculated. That's why we have been successful. If you don't have courage, if you play like a timid person and if you don't take any chance, you would have to face the consequences.

Premier Leasing's classified loans surge 114pc

FROM PAGE B4

A number of securities houses that lent money to beneficiary accounts holders are facing the same problem as the stock market crash greatly reduced values of shares.

The margin loan holders are not looking around seeking assistance from brokerage firms, for which the latter are struggling.

Premier Leasing Securities has receivables from margin clients amounting to Tk 19.13 crore, or 51.89 per cent of its total assets, and that is significant, as per the auditor.

Employees' benefits provident fund, gratuity and income taxes and deferred taxes are not provided in the

financial statements.

The company has six branches and three subsidiaries, namely Premier Leasing Securities, Premier Leasing Capital Management and Premier Leasing Securities Broking, which were audited by other auditors.

The Z category company provided 5 per cent stock dividends in 2018, when its short-term loans amounted to Tk 132 crore and long-term loans Tk 161.4 crore.

The ongoing Covid-19 pandemic has only added to the woes of Premier Leasing as the government allowed borrowers to delay repayment of loans, Hamid said.

"To reduce classified loans, we

need to increase our loan portfolio and debt collection but the pandemic impacted both sides," he added.

The single digit ceiling on interest rates has also had an impact as borrowers go to banks rather than the NBFIs to get loans at even lower rates.

About their plans for the future, the managing director said they would attract deposits to enhance their loan portfolio.

"On the other side, we have already strengthened our recovery team," he said.

The company's stock price rose 2.99 per cent to Tk 6.90 on the Dhaka bourse yesterday.

Trade disputes could multiply without WTO reform: candidate

REUTERS, Brussels


Trade disputes could extend beyond the current US-China conflict if the World Trade Organization is unable to transform, according to the South Korean vying to lead the Geneva-based body.

Trade Minister Yoo Myung-hee told Reuters the Washington-Beijing battle might be due to the lack of progress at the WTO and the fact that its global trading rules had not been updated.

"If the WTO fails to reinvent itself more members might be compelled to resort to their own ways of dealing with disputes - protectionism or unilateralism because the WTO rule cannot provide any way out or solutions to them," she said late on Tuesday.

Yoo said she believed the WTO could act as a forum for negotiations between Washington and Beijing and hoped they could find some areas of convergence with results in the hope this rebuilt trust, a key ingredient in short supply at the WTO.

The South Korean, one of five remaining director-general candidates, is pitching herself as an experienced minister overseeing trade in challenging times and closing deals with the United States, China and others, while supporting global rules.

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার উপজেলা স্বাস্থ্য ও পরিবার পরিকল্পনা কর্মকর্তার কার্যালয় বিলাইছড়ি, রাঙ্গামাটি পার্বত্য জেলা E-mail No. belaichari@uhfpo.dghs.gov.bd Mobile No. ০১৫৩৩-৫০২৩৭৪		 মুজিব বর্ষে স্বাস্থ্য খাত এগিয়ে যাবে আরেক ধাপ
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দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি		
মহাপরিচালক, স্বাস্থ্য অধিদপ্তর, মহাখালী, ঢাকা-১২১২ স্মারক নং- স্বঃস্বঃবিঃ/বাজেট/এমএসআর/২০২০-২১/৭৭৯৭, তারিখঃ ৭/৯/২০২০খ্রিঃ মূলে ২০২০-২১ আর্থিক বৎসরের এসএসআর সামগ্রী ক্রয়ের জন্য পাবলিক প্রকিউরমেন্ট আইন ২০০৬ এবং পাবলিক প্রকিউরমেন্ট বিধিমালা, ২০০৮ (সংশোধিত ২০১৯) অনুযায়ী দরপত্র আহবান করা হইয়াছে। রাঙ্গামাটি পার্বত্য জেলা পরিষদের নিয়ন্ত্রণাধীন বিলাইছড়ি স্বাস্থ্য কমপ্লেক্সের আওতাধীন বিভিন্ন স্বাস্থ্য প্রতিষ্ঠানের জন্য ২০২০-২১খ্রিঃ অর্থ বৎসরের এসএসআর সামগ্রী (ঔষধ, মন্ত্রপাতি, কেমিক্যাল রিয়েজেন্ট, লিনেন, স্টীল আসবাবপত্র, গজ, ব্যাভেজ, কটন) সরবরাহ কাজে অভিজ্ঞতাসম্পন্ন ঠিকাদার/সরবরাহকারী/প্রস্তুতকারী প্রতিষ্ঠানের নিকট হতে সীমাবদ্ধনামূলক দরপত্র আহবান করা যাচ্ছে।		
১	মন্ত্রণালয়/বিভাগ	স্বাস্থ্য ও পরিবার কল্যাণ মন্ত্রণালয় (স্বাস্থ্য সেবা বিভাগ)।
২	সহঃ/প্রতিষ্ঠান	উপজেলা স্বাস্থ্য ও পরিবার পরিকল্পনা কার্যালয়, বিলাইছড়ি, রাঙ্গামাটি।
৩	সহঃকারী কর্তৃপক্ষ	উপজেলা স্বাস্থ্য ও পরিবার পরিকল্পনা কার্যালয়, বিলাইছড়ি, রাঙ্গামাটি।
৪	দরপত্র ক্রয় ও সহঃহের পদ্ধতি	উন্মুক্ত দরপত্র।
৫	আহবানকৃত দরপত্রের সূত্র নং	উঃস্বঃকমঃবিলাই/এমএসআর/২০২০-২১/৮১২ তারিখঃ ২৭/০৯/২০২০খ্রিঃ।
৬	বাজেট/তহবিলের উৎস	রাজস্ব বাজেট।
৭	দরপত্র প্যাকেজের নাম	(ক) ঔষধপত্র, ইডিসিএল বহির্ভূত, (খ) মন্ত্রপাতি, (গ) কেমিকেল (রিয়েজেন্ট), (ঘ) গজ, ব্যাভেজ, তুলা ইত্যাদি, (ঙ) লিনেন সামগ্রী, (চ) এমএসআর আসবাবপত্র।
৮	দরপত্র বিক্রয়ের শেষ তারিখ ও সময়	১৪/১০/২০২০খ্রিঃ, বিকাল ৪.০০ ঘটিকা (অফিস চলাকালীন সময় পর্যন্ত)।
৯	দরপত্র জমাদানের শেষ তারিখ ও সময়	১৫/১০/২০২০খ্রিঃ, দুপুর ১২.০০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত।
১০	দরপত্র বাজ খোলার তারিখ ও সময়	১৫/১০/২০২০খ্রিঃ, দুপুর ১২.৩০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত দরপত্রদাতাগণের সম্মুখে যদি কেহ উপস্থিত থাকেন।
১১	দরপত্র প্রাপ্তির স্থান	উপজেলা স্বাস্থ্য ও পরিবার পরিকল্পনা কার্যালয়, বিলাইছড়ি, রাঙ্গামাটি।
১২	দরপত্র দাখিলের স্থান	উপজেলা স্বাস্থ্য ও পরিবার পরিকল্পনা কার্যালয়, বিলাইছড়ি, রাঙ্গামাটি।
১৩	দরপত্র সিডিউলের মূল্য	ফ্রপঃ (ক) ৭৫০/-, ফ্রপঃ- (খ) ৭৫০/-, ফ্রপঃ- (গ) ৪০০/-, ফ্রপঃ (ঘ) ৪০০/-, ফ্রপঃ- (ঙ) ৪০০/- এবং ফ্রপঃ- (চ) ৪০০/- অফেরতযোগ্য।
১৪	দরপত্র সিডিউলের মূল্য পরিশোধের নিয়ম	উপজেলা স্বাস্থ্য ও পরিবার পরিকল্পনা কার্যালয়, বিলাইছড়ি, রাঙ্গামাটি এর অনুসূচী সোনালী ব্যাংক লিঃ এর যে কোন শাখা থেকে কোড নং-১-২৭১১-০০০০-২৩৬৬ এর ট্রেজারী চালালের মাধ্যমে জমাদান করিয়া জমা সাপেক্ষে সিটিএর সংগ্রহপূর্বক দরপত্র সিডিউল সংগ্রহ করা যাবে।
১৫	দরপত্রের সহিত দাখিলকৃত জামানতের পরিমাণ	ফ্রপ-ক- ১৯৬৪৬/-, ফ্রপ-খ- ১১২২৬/-, ফ্রপ-গ- ৫৬৩৩/-, ফ্রপ-ঘ- ৫৬১৩/-, ফ্রপ-ঙ- ২২৪৫/-, ফ্রপ-চ- ২২৪৫/- টাকা উপজেলা স্বাস্থ্য ও পরিবার পরিকল্পনা কর্মকর্তা, বিলাইছড়ি অনুসূচী পে-অর্ডার/ব্যাংক ড্রাফট দাখিল করতে হবে।
বিশেষ জ্ঞাতব্যঃ		
১৬। দরপত্র আহবানকারী কর্মকর্তার নামঃ ডাঃ রশ্মি চাকমা।		
১৭। দরপত্র আহবানকারী কর্মকর্তার পদবীঃ উপজেলা স্বাস্থ্য ও পরিবার পরিকল্পনা কর্মকর্তা।		
১৮। দরপত্র আহবানকারী কর্মকর্তার কার্যালয়ের নামঃ উপজেলা স্বাস্থ্য ও পরিবার পরিকল্পনা কর্মকর্তার কার্যালয়, বিলাইছড়ি।		
১৯। দরপত্র আহবানকারী কর্মকর্তার যোগাযোগের বিবরণঃ মোবাইল নম্বরঃ ০১৫৩৩-৫০২৩৭৪, ই মেইল নম্বরঃ rashmi_chakma@yahoo.com		
২০। কর্তৃপক্ষ কোন কারণ দর্শানো ছাড়াই যে কোন দরপত্র অথবা সকল দরপত্র গ্রহণ/বাতিল করার ক্ষমতা সংরক্ষণ করে।		
২১। বিস্তারিত শর্তাবলী দরপত্র সিডিউলের সহিত সংযুক্ত থাকবে।		
ডাঃ রশ্মি চাকমা উপজেলা স্বাস্থ্য ও পরিবার পরিকল্পনা কর্মকর্তা বিলাইছড়ি, রাঙ্গামাটি পার্বত্য জেলা		
জিডি-১৫৭৭		



BKASH

Kamal Quadir, CEO of bKash, and Major General (retd) Sheikh Md Monirul Islam, chief external and corporate affairs officer, hand over 12 high-flow oxygen ventilators to Abul Bashar Mohammad Khurshid Alam, director general of the Directorate General of Health Services, and Brigadier General AKM Nasir Uddin, director of Dhaka Medical College Hospital, for the hospital on its premises in the capital on Tuesday. The country's largest mobile financial service provider also donated such two ventilators to Dhaka Shishu (Children) Hospital and installed an oxygen plant at the Bangladesh Institute of Health Sciences General Hospital to make the Covid-19 treatment more effective.

Korean joint venture may build Joydebpur-Mymensingh expressway

FROM PAGE B1
WHY EXPRESSWAY?

Between July 2010 and June 2017, the RHD had upgraded the two-lane Dhaka-Mymensingh highway to a four-lane one spending around Tk 1,800 crore.

However, the cost of the project was Tk 902 crore when the Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (Ecne) approved the project in June 2010 and the deadline was June 2013.

But poor development project profiling forced the authority to change the cost and deadline of the project several times, according to a report of the Implementation Monitoring & Evaluation Division (IMED) of the planning ministry published in June this year.

The IMED report mentioned poor maintenance and presence of a huge number of illegal markers on the road and absence of mechanisms to control overloading as poor aspects of the project.

The report also recommended upgrading the national highway to six or eight lanes as a huge number of industrial units had developed on both sides of the road.

Besides, at least 193 intersections, 28 school zones and many markets and other structures along a 16.5 km section of the four-lane highway were slowing down traffic on the road, according to a road safety audit conducted by the RHD in 2017-2018.

The average number of vehicles running on the highway in a day in 2019 was 27,663.

Talking to The Daily Star in March this year, Shishir Kanti Routh, also a member of the RHD's PPP cell, said some 10 economic zones would be established in Mymensingh, Netrakona, Sherpur and Jamalpur districts.

There are also three or four land ports in the districts. So, the traffic on the highway would increase once the economic zones were established.

For the first time, the RHD also plans to install an Intelligent Transport System on the expressway to learn about accidents

or other incidents immediately after they occur. It will allow the department to take quick action to prevent disruption to traffic flow, he added.

Meanwhile, the Cabinet Committee on Public Purchase yesterday approved four procurement and one cancellation proposals.

The four procurement proposals comprise a cost of Tk 339.26 lakh. Of it, Tk 160.29 crore will be spent from government funds while Tk 178. 98 crore will come from Asian Development Bank and domestic banks.

Of them, one involves construction of 76 flats of 1,800 square feet at Tk 160.29 crore at Azimpur government colony (zone A) for government officials while another for the procurement of 30,000 tonnes of urea fertiliser from Kafco, Bangladesh at Tk 84.63 crore.

The third is on the procurement of 25,000 tonnes of urea fertiliser from Saudi Basic Industries Corporation at a cost of Tk 56.96 crore and the last is for procurement of 25,000 tonnes of urea fertiliser for Tk 57.81 crore from Ruwais Fertilizer Industries (Fertiglobe) of the United Arab Emirates.

The cancellation proposal was on "Developing proper standards of Jhenaidah-Kustia-Pakshi-Dashuria national highway including four lanes of Kustia municipal part". The proposal was cancelled as only one bidder submitted tender for the project.

Responding to a question from a reporter, Finance Minister AHM Mustafa Kamal said the government would give priority to businesses during the pandemic. If business cannot be saved, then the banks would not be able to recover their loans, he said.

Bangladesh Bank has extended the deadline for businesspeople to pay their loan instalments. According to Kamal, the banks made adequate profits before the pandemic, so a little loss afterwards will not lead to any massive damage.

Make stimulus loans collateral-free for small businesses

FROM PAGE B1
Another Tk 1,060 crore was disbursed from another stimulus package of Tk 3,000 crore, Kasem said.

Nasim Manzur said the government should have given subsidies on VAT, tax, utilities and factory and office rents during the difficult period to CMSMEs so that they can survive and continue their operations.

Many CMSMEs have had to shut their business because of high rents and office rents. The government should have announced the stimulus packages in consultation with other stakeholders so that all units get the fund properly, he said.

The entrepreneur called for involving NGOs, microfinance institutions and local chambers so that the real sufferers could be identified and the funds can be disbursed on time.

Many CMSMEs need to get a source tax waiver during this tough time and district chambers should introduce help desks for CMSMEs to secure the fund, said Manzur.

Bhattacharya said it is not wise only to depend only on banking channels to bankroll CMSMEs.

"Alternatives should also have been thought about a lot earlier because many enterprises have been doing business for many years but they are still unbanked."

Momtaz Uddin Ahmed, an honorary professor of economics at the University of Dhaka, said there should be an updated database of the CMSMEs so that every unit can avail financing from the fund. He supported financing CMSMEs through MFIs.

Mustafizur Rahman, another distinguished fellow of the CPD, said CMSMEs not only serve the local markets. They also help a lot in value addition for export-oriented sectors.

Shams Mahmud, president of the Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry, said there is a perception that the money from

the stimulus package is free. "People should change such mentality as it is a loan, but at a lower interest rate."

The definition of SMEs needs to be changed to make the initiative time-befitting, the industries minister said. He committed to preparing a database of the CMSMEs.

Syed Almas Kabir, president of the Bangladesh Association of Software and Information Services, said none of 1,500 members of the association received loans from the stimulus packages as IT companies cannot provide any collateral.

IT and software companies do not have physical assets to be mortgaged as collateral. However, BASIS members secured loans from two private commercial banks under special arrangements, he said.

Anwara Ferdousi, president of the Rangpur Women Chamber of Commerce and Industry, said handicrafts and beauty parlours are the worst sufferers as they did not get loans from banks. "Banks are not giving loans to small entrepreneurs because of collaterals."

Humaira Chowdhury, co-founder and managing director of Frontier Technologies Ltd, said she is not getting loans from banks although her company has a strong financial base.

She could not provide collateral as she has not managed to get land documents from her paternal side. "So, banks are not giving me loans."

Syed Abdul Momen, head of SME of Brac Bank, said of his bank's total portfolio of Tk 12,000 crore, Tk 10,000 crore are collateral-free loan for the CMSMEs.

Some 70 per cent to 80 per cent of the CMSMEs that have received the loan from the stimulus package have returned to their businesses, he said.

Asif Ibrahim, chairman of the Chittagong Stock Exchange, also spoke.

China's factory activity accelerates at solid pace in September on boost from overseas demand

REUTERS, Beijing

China's factory activity extended solid growth in September, twin surveys showed, as the nation's crucial exports engine revved up on improving overseas demand and underlined a steady economic recovery from the coronavirus shock.

The official manufacturing Purchasing Manager's Index (PMI) rose to 51.5 in September from 51.0 in August, according to data from the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) on Wednesday, remaining above the 50-point mark that separates growth from contraction for the seventh month.

Analysts had expected it to pick up slightly to 51.2.

A private survey, also released on the day, painted a similar picture of the manufacturing sector gaining momentum backed by stronger overseas demand.

China's vast industrial sector is steadily returning to the levels seen before the pandemic paralysed huge swathes of the economy, as pent-up demand, stimulus-driven infrastructure expansion and surprisingly resilient exports propel a recovery.

The official PMI, which largely focuses on big and state-owned firms, also showed the sub-index for new export orders stood at 50.8 in September, improving from 49.1 a month earlier and snapping eight months of declines.

The signs of stronger overseas demand were also highlighted in the Caixin/Markit Manufacturing Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI), which focuses more on small and export-oriented firms. Its gauge for new export orders rose at the fastest pace in over three years.

Recently, economic indicators ranging from trade to producer prices have all suggested a further pick up in the industrial sector. Profits at China's industrial firms extended robust growth in August to the fourth month, official data showed on Sunday.

Domestic demand also shows signs of broadening, with industrial output accelerating the most in eight months in August and retail sales growing for the first time this year.

Adding to the demand recovery from the coronavirus-induced slump, the official PMI showed activity in China's services sector expanded at a

faster pace in September.

"[W]e are entering a period of above trend growth, which should help absorb the remaining slack in the labour market and allow for some policy tightening next year," said Julian Evans-Pritchard, senior China economist at Capital Economics, in a note to clients.

Yet, even as China emerges from the pandemic in fairly stable shape, many expect the road ahead to be bumpy.

China's economy, which grew 3.2 per cent in the second quarter year-on-year, is set to expand 2.2 per cent this year - the weakest in over three decades.

A sub-index for employment in the official PMI improved slightly but remained in contractionary territory. It stood at 49.6 in September from 49.4 the month before, indicating the pressure on jobs and keeping policymakers primed for more support measures.

Moreover, a growing rift between China and the United States over trade, technology and a range of other issues have analysts warning about risks to the outlook.

China preparing an antitrust investigation into Google

REUTERS

China is preparing to launch an antitrust probe into Alphabet Inc's Google, looking into allegations it has leveraged the dominance of its Android mobile operating system to stifle competition, two people familiar with the matter said.

The case was proposed by telecommunications equipment giant Huawei Technologies Co Ltd last year and has been submitted by the country's top market regulator to the State Council's antitrust committee for review, they added.

A decision on whether to proceed with a formal investigation may come as soon as October and could be affected by the state of China's relationship with the United States, one of the people said.

The potential investigation follows a raft of actions by US President Donald Trump's administration to hobble Chinese tech companies, citing national security risks.

This has included putting Huawei on its trade blacklist, threatening similar action for Semiconductor Manufacturing International Corp

and ordering TikTok owner ByteDance to divest the short-form video app.

It also comes as China embarks on a major revamp of its antitrust laws with proposed amendments including a dramatic increase in maximum fines and expanded criteria for judging a company's control of a market.

A potential probe would also look at accusations that Google's market position could cause "extreme damage" to Chinese companies like Huawei, as losing the US tech giant's support for Android-based operating systems would lead to loss of confidence and revenue, a second person said.

The sources were not authorised to speak publicly on the matter and declined to be identified. Google did not provide immediate comment, while Huawei declined to comment.

China's top market regulator, the State Administration for Market Regulation, and the State Council did not immediately respond to requests for comment.

The US trade blacklist bars Google from providing technical support to new Huawei phone models and access to Google Mobile Services, the bundle of developer services upon which

most Android apps are based.

Google had a temporary licence that exempted it from the ban on Huawei but it expired in August.

It was not immediately clear what Google services the potential probe would focus on. Most Chinese smartphone vendors use an open-source version of the Android platform with alternatives to Google services on their domestic phones. Google's search, email and other services are blocked in China.

Huawei has said it missed its 2019 revenue target by \$12 billion, which company officials have attributed to US actions against it. Seeking to overcome its reliance on Google, the Chinese firm announced plans this month to introduce its proprietary Harmony operating system in smartphones next year.

Chinese regulators will be looking at examples set by their peers in Europe and in India if it proceeds with the antitrust investigation, the first source said.

"China will also look at what other countries have done, including holding inquiries with Google executives," said the person.

Mutual fund units in demand on hopes of reforms

FROM PAGE B4

One of the initiatives could see that the regulator would refuse to extend the tenure of closed-end mutual funds unless they receive approval from unitholders, he said.

Closed-end mutual funds are investment vehicles that gather a fixed pool of money for 10 years from investors and re-invest them into stocks, bonds and other assets. After 10 years, they are supposed to be liquidated and the value of the funds distributed among unitholders.

But on September 16 last year, following calls from some asset management companies, the BSEC extended the tenure of the closed-end mutual funds by another 10 years.

Subsequently, LR Global Bangladesh Asset Management Company extended the tenure of six of its closed-end mutual funds by a decade. Race Asset Management extended the tenure for 10 of its funds.

The BSEC's decision came under criticism.

There are 37 listed mutual funds. Of them, five are trading above their face-value and the rest below the face-value.

Paramount Textile topped the turnover list yesterday after its shares worth Tk 50 crore changed hands, followed by Beximco Ltd, Sandhani Life Insurance, Asia Pacific Insurance, Beximco Pharmaceuticals, Brac Bank, Pioneer Insurance, BD Finance, Republic Insurance and Nitel Insurance.

GQ Ball Pen shed the most, giving up 8.36 per cent, followed by United Airways, Asia Pacific Insurance, Tung Hai Knitting, KBB Power, Provati Insurance, Paramount Insurance, Premier Insurance, Bangladesh Industrial Finance Company, and Apollo Ispat.



NRB GLOBAL BANK

Syed Habib Hasnat, managing director of NRB Global Bank, opens 'Islami banking branch' of the bank in Chapainawabganj yesterday through a digital platform.

Abu Dhabi's Mubadala in advanced talks to invest up to \$1b in Reliance Retail

REUTERS, New Delhi/Dubai

Abu Dhabi state fund Mubadala Investment Co is in advanced talks to invest up to \$1 billion in the retail division of India's Reliance Industries Ltd, two sources told Reuters, as investor interest in the Indian company surges.

Reliance Retail is on a fund raising spree and has secured around \$1.8 billion in the past few weeks from and Silver Lake Partners.

Reliance, controlled by Asia's richest man Mukesh Ambani, has approached investors, who collectively pumped more than \$20 billion into its Jio Platforms digital business this year, to take stakes in its retail business, which has nearly 12,000 stores and sells everything from groceries and electronics to fashion and shoes.

Mubadala invested around \$1.2 billion in Jio Platforms and its executives have held extensive talks in recent weeks with Reliance for investing in its retail venture, several sources familiar with the talks said.

While one source said Mubadala "is ready with" \$1 billion for Reliance Retail and doing due diligence, a second source said the talks were at an advanced stage and said the investment could be anywhere between \$500 million and \$1 billion.

A Reliance spokesman said the company cannot confirm or deny any transaction, adding:

the "company evaluates various opportunities on an ongoing basis."

Mubadala declined to comment. It is the second-biggest state investor in Abu Dhabi after Abu Dhabi Investment Authority, managing about \$240 billion in assets.

For Mubadala, any further investment into Reliance will come months after it said it was under-invested in Asia and planned to expand its portfolio in the region.

Reliance is likely to soon announce a few investments into its retail unit, and those will be from investors who recently invested in its digital arm, one of the sources aware of the matter said.



Mukesh Ambani, chairman and managing director of Reliance Industries

While talks are ongoing with several investors, Reliance believes Facebook and Google, both of which invested in Reliance's digital business, are unlikely to put funds in its retail division due to lack of synergies, another source said.

"Reliance wants the same set of investors ... but some new investors could come in," the source said.

Japan's SoftBank Group had also expressed interest in investing in Reliance Retail, but the talks have not moved forward as the company was prioritising other investors with which it has struck recent deals, the source said.

SoftBank did not respond to a request for comment.

Ambani's push to seek investments in its retail business come as the oil-to-telecoms Indian conglomerate has been looking to expand its e-commerce operations to compete against Walmart's Flipkart and Amazon.com's Indian business.

A separate source said Amazon and Reliance have also been in talks, but there was no certainty of a deal on an investment in Reliance Retail.

"For Amazon, the issue is whether their own ambitions in India will collide with Reliance's," the source added.

An Amazon spokeswoman said the company has no comment on speculation about what it may or may not do in the future.

Dare to dream big

British American Tobacco Bangladesh's MD Shehzad Munim says at The Daily Star's The Chief Executive Show powered by Marico

Munim became the first Bangladeshi managing director of BATBC when he was appointed to the top position in 2013. On Saturday, he talked about his journey to the top, opportunities and challenges facing the current generation and the need for nurturing future leaders at the first episode of the Chief Executive Show.

DS: How was your childhood? You may not have found a role model to follow the footprints compared to the current generation.

Munim: We are discussing this issue at a very opportune time. Leadership is such a thing that we have to nurture it.

The civil servants who worked in the Civil Service of Pakistan played a glorious role after the Independence of Bangladesh. There was no such noise in the private sector and corporate jobs. So, our experience grew in keeping with the progress of the country.

I went to educational institutions in Bangladesh. I was in the first batch of the BBA programme at the Institute of Business Administration at the University of Dhaka. Many had little knowledge about studying business. Perhaps, we were the guineapigs.

I did not dare to think that one day I would become the CEO. My parents taught us to try to build an honest and disciplined life.

The company I worked for was always headed by a foreigner. So, our maximum aspiration was to become a functional head. But as we passed through more stages, we gained more courage. We learnt to take responsibility.

In many cases, we had to learn on

our own. But I can't say that there were no role models. There were many role models. I learnt following them and was inspired. The contribution of the people who helped me in many ways throughout my journey can't be forgotten. They guided me.

The periphery of the dream was not that big during our time. It has got bigger brick by brick. I think it can be even much bigger.

DS: Now the current generation can look up to you and feel that they can strive and achieve what you have achieved. What are the steps they can take?

Munim: Those who are joining our company now or are already in the mid-level, they can see that a Bangladeshi is the CEO of the company. So, the periphery of their dream should be far wider than what we had.

We have to understand the values. You can't be successful if you just chase profit. There is a far bigger thing and responsibility of a CEO. We have to adopt these things very quickly because the young generation should be doing our job much earlier than we did. Then, they have to leapfrog and aim to become the global CEO of a multinational organisation.

The way our economy is growing, I think about a Bangladeshi multinational company in the coming days. There are organisations in Bangladesh which are already doing business beyond the country's boundary.

The demand for management and corporate leadership has already been created in Bangladesh in a significant way. Bangladesh is 50 years old. The



MD Shehzad Munim

industrialists and entrepreneurs who established industries of significant size since Independence have started to retire. Either they are handing over the management to their next-generation or planning to hand over the responsibility to professional CEOs.

How would these sizeable companies make the transition to the next generation? We would like to see that the next generation would prepare themselves as the iconic CEOs because the good performance of a CEO can take the company in various directions. We have to see how we would grow our people and institutionalise it. One can't be a CEO by chance.

DS: There is a trend among mid-level managers to migrate to other countries. But they are leaving behind good positions and settling at a far lower position. What do you say about this?

Munim: This is part of life. We are a country that is going through a demographic dividend. We have a big young population. Our people are going abroad and they are working

there. One should not feel bad about it. A company would be dealt with a short-term blow if some of its people at the mid-management level whom it has been grooming and who are doing well suddenly leave.

So, we will have to prepare ourselves. We have plenty of resources. We have to train the new generation. Nobody is indispensable. I am today running this organisation. If I don't continue, the company would function and there would be no problem.

There is a feeling that a lot of expatriates are working in Bangladesh and a lot of money is being spent for them. The answer is we have talent. It is possible to groom them. If we can elevate them quickly to a position through right exposure, the need for expatriates would come down.

When I joined British American Tobacco, the top three officials were foreigners. Now, there is only three to four expatriates in the entire company in Bangladesh. The company is running very well and even better than in the past. So, it is possible to replace them. It is our responsibility.

Policy intervention is needed. Every organisation should have the responsibility of how they are developing talents and whether the people being hired from outside are working to develop local talents as well.

DS: Our current generation can't become CEOs overnight. It took 16 years for you. It is a journey. So, how will a corporate set the goal for various small stages?

Munim: We progressed step by step. If we think that we will overnight become CEOs or somebody, we may get distracted. For example, I am now holding a position. My next goal should be to get promoted to the



position currently being held by my direct boss. I have to prepare myself accordingly.

I can't sit idle just by learning my current responsibility. I have to deliver more than I am expected to do. I have to prepare the person below my position so that he or she can replace me smoothly when I move up.

It is a step-by-step growth approach. I have to help the people who report

The periphery of the dream was not that big during our time. It has got bigger brick by brick. I think it can be even bigger.

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Mutual fund units in demand on hopes of reforms

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Investors rushed to mutual funds in the last few days on growing hopes that the new commission would take reform initiatives to protect the interest of the unitholders.

Their enthusiasm came although the market is yet to overcome the uncertainty caused by the coronavirus pandemic.

The DSEX, the benchmark index of the Dhaka Stock Exchange, dropped 19 points, or 0.30 per cent, to 4,963 yesterday. Turnover, an important indicator of the market, rose 7.12 per cent to Tk 914 crore.

Mutual funds were among the top gainers in the last few days. Mutual funds are investment tools that gather a fixed pool of money from many investors and re-invest them into stocks, bonds and other assets.

TOP GAINERS ON DSE	
SOURCE: DSE	
COMPANY'S NAME	RISE IN %
EBL First Mutual Fund	10
Paramount Textile	9.86
CAPM IBBL Mutual Fund	9.82
SEML Lecture Mutual Fund	9.75
First Janata Bank Mutual Fund	9.25
Popular Life First Mutual Fund	9.25
First Prime Bank Mutual Fund	8.82
PHP Mutual Fund One	8.77
Vanguard AML Rupali Bank Balanced Fund	8.69
Bay Leasing	7.65

EBL First Mutual Fund topped the pack of gainers yesterday after it rose 10 per cent.

CAPM IBBL Islamic Mutual Fund, SEML Lecture Equity Fund, Janata Bank First Mutual Fund, Popular Life First Mutual Fund, Prime Bank First Mutual Fund, PHP First Mutual Fund, and VAML LR Fund also advanced significantly.

Initiatives taken by the Bangladesh Securities Exchange Commission (BSEC), led by its Chairman Prof Shibli Rubayat-ul-Islam in recent times, has instilled confidence into investors.

Investors now hope that the regulator would continue its reform momentum and would do something for the mutual funds. This optimism attracted investors to pour money into the units, said a top official of a merchant bank.

An official of the commission said the regulator is working on mutual fund units. The BSEC has not disclosed any plans officially yet.

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Delta Agrofood to invest Tk 1,200cr in soy, flour production

JAGARAN CHAKMA

Delta Agrofood Industries, a joint venture of SEACOM and Samuda, is set to invest Tk 1,200 crore in the production of various soy and wheat products with an aim to meet the country's growing demand for healthier consumer goods.

Under the fresh investment, Delta Agrofood will establish a new factory to produce both crude and refined soyabean oil, soybean cake, soya milk and flour.

"SEACOM decided to undertake this initiative as wheat has become the second most important food item in the country after rice," said Mohammed Amirul Haque, managing director of SEACOM.

"Since it is a basic industry for any country, we invested in wheat production with a view to develop the agro sector," he added.

As per a market assessment by Delta Agrofood, the domestic demand for wheat has more than doubled over the past six years

due to changing food habits and increased export of baked goods.

This led to a 116 per cent rise in imports as local cultivation fails to meet the country's needs despite having witnessed many significant changes in production, industry insiders said.

Besides, whole grains are rapidly gaining popularity as a healthy alternative to traditional cereals in the face of a rising trend of diabetes and obesity, they added.

Statistically, the daily consumption of wheat has gone up by about 42 per cent from 72 grammes in fiscal 2014-15 to 125 grammes at present, according to the Directorate General of Food and various traders.

The country's annual demand for the cereal currently stands at around 77 lakh tonnes, 85 per cent of which is met through imports, as per data from the National Board of Revenue and Department of Agricultural Extension.

BY THE NUMBERS

Jobs to be created: **1,200**

Per day flour production capacity: **500 tonnes**

Soya seed crushing capacity: **2,500 tonnes**

Edible oil refining capacity: **1,000 tonnes**

A silo will be built with capacity of **100,000 tonnes**

Similarly, the use of soybean oil and soybean cake has increased significantly over the years.

Soybean oil is now the preferred cooking medium in Bangladesh while soybean cake is used as animal feed in the fish and poultry farming industries.

The project, 40 per cent of which is being financed by Pubali Bank, will be developed

across a 35-acre plot in Saidpur of Narayanganj. According to SEACOM's managing director, it was a strategic location owing to the presence of a strong distribution channel.

"We will be able to create around 1,200 jobs with the new production facility. Commercial production is expected to start by end of this year," Haque said.

The per capita consumption of soybean oil in Bangladesh is currently 9.2 litres per annum, which is far below the global average of 25.2 litres.

However, this figure continues to rise in line with peoples' increasing purchasing power, as per a market analysis by LightCastle Partners.

Against this backdrop, Delta Agrofood sees the potential to do well in the business in the coming days even though there are already a number of market players present in the country.

In its analysis, LightCastle also said the demand for edible

oil in developing countries was set to surpass their developed counterparts within the next decade.

The business management firm pointed out the markets of China, India and Bangladesh as examples of places where the demand for edible oil was growing.

Just 30 year ago, the country's entire demand for soybean oil was met through imports but eventually, some entrepreneurs started to refine imported crude soybean oil to locally produce edible oil, said SM Nashir Uddin, general manager of Delta Agrofood.

Now though, some entrepreneurs produce the finished product wholly through local sourcing without making any import, he added.

According to the general manager, just 20 litres of edible oil can be produced from 100 kilogrammes of soybean seed while the leftover soybean cake can be used as food for fish or poultry.

Premier Leasing's classified loans surge 114pc

AHSAN HABIB

Listed non-banking financial institution (NBFI) Premier Leasing and Finance witnessed a staggering 114 per cent year-on-year increase in classified loans in 2019.

The previous year it had stood at Tk 19.35 crore or 25.63 per cent of its total loans.

According to the company's audit report, classified loans accounted for 29.31 per cent, or Tk 41.51 crore, of the total loans, leases and advances disbursed in 2019.

This is far above the NBFI sector's average non-performing loan (NPL) rate of 10.50 per cent.

Bangladesh Bank gave the Premier Leasing and Finance until

2022 to secure an adequate loan loss provision.

However, the provisioning required was Tk 338.66 crore, of which the company maintained just Tk 45.96 crore as of December 31, 2019. And so now the company, which had a paid-up capital of Tk 132.9 crore that year, now faces a Tk 292.7 crore shortfall in its provision on leases, loans, and advances.

In 2018, the Premier Leasing and Finance maintained a provision of Tk 44.33 crore against its Tk 150.16 crore requirement.

"Some big borrowers were struggling to repay loans so their loans were classified," said Abdul Hamid Mia, managing director of the Premier Leasing

and Finance.

Besides, the sector is suffering from a liquidity shortage and so the company failed to enhance its loan portfolios, he added.

Whenever there is a cash crunch in the banking sector, the rate of loan and advance disbursements falls, Hamid told The Daily Star recently.

At the end of 2019, the Premier Leasing and Finance reported that its total loan, advance and lease disbursements dropped 2.41 per cent to Tk 1,238.58 crore.

During the same period, the company's profits plunged 80.78 per cent to Tk 1.96 crore.

Meanwhile, as per an audit report, the Premier Leasing and Finance did not maintain a workers' profit participation fund for 2019 due to a shortage of funds for the required provision on loans.

There is also a tremendous lack when it comes to the NBFI's ability to collect receivables from margin clients for its securities subsidiary, most of which was provided during the stock market crisis in 2010.

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