

STOCKS		COMMODITIES		ASIAN MARKETS				CURRENCIES			
DSEX	CSCX	Gold	Oil	MUMBAI	TOKYO	SINGAPORE	SHANGHAI	USD	EUR	GBP	CNY
▼ 0.01%	▼ 0.16%	\$1,908.31 (per ounce)	\$43.05 (per barrel)	▲ 0.42%	▲ 0.11%	▼ 0.47%	▼ 0.56%	BUY TK 83.95	89.53	107.64	12.27
4,839.05	8,296.01			40,794.74	23,626.73	2,555.59	3,340.78	SELL TK 84.95	101.33	111.44	12.90

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BUSINESS

DHAKA THURSDAY OCTOBER 15, 2020, ASHWIN 30, 1427 BS ● starbusiness@thedailystar.net

Air shipment to Europe hits a snag

Scanners at airport go out of order; vegetable exporters worried of losing buyers

SOHEL PARVEZ

For the last four days, Mohammed Abul Hossain, a vegetable exporter, has been trying to send his consignments to England but each of his attempts ended in failure as two scanners solely used for Europe-bound cargoes are out of order at Hazrat Shahjahal International Airport (HSIA).

The exporter had to make do with selling each consignment of the exportable vegetables at local markets at roughly one-fifth of their export value of Tk 100,000, which is excluding freight charge. Nevertheless, this is causing him to incur losses on his investment.

The problem does not end here.

On Tuesday, his buyer, Bangla Port at the UK, threatened to stop continuing doing business with Bangladeshi suppliers because of their failure to ship cargoes on time.

The buyer was irked by disruptions in supply for traffic gridlocks, floods and problems at airports and over flights.

“He is very annoyed. He told me that he would rather switch to vegetable exporters in India to ensure that supply is smooth. It is really frustrating,” said Hossain, proprietor of Lee Enterprise, over the phone yesterday.

He is one of the 15 regular fresh vegetables exporters who are suffering from the same problem for nearly a week after the last explosive detection system used for examining Europe-bound export cargoes from the Dhaka airport stopped functioning.

The airport has half a dozen scanners at the cargo section of which two are fitted with explosive detection systems to dedicatedly scan vegetables flown to European destinations such as the UK and Italy.

One of the duo went out of order in August this year, said a senior official of the Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh (CAAB).

For vegetable exporters, who earned \$164 million in fiscal 2019-20, Europe is the second biggest destination after the Middle East

The second one had been running but it too went out of order early this month, hampering air shipment of all exports including vegetables, garments and other items to European destinations. A senior official of Emirates Dhaka office said all the exporters were suffering because of the breakdown of the scanners.

“Following the malfunctioning of the last machine, bomb detection dogs are being used to check whether there are any explosives in the export cargoes destined to Europe. This is inadequate,” said the airline official seeking to remain unnamed.

“Besides, as the export cargoes have to be rechecked at the transit, shipment time is increasing, so is the cost,” he said, suggesting that the CAAB fix the scanners as soon as possible for the sake of exports.

“It should be solved with due priority,” he said.

For vegetable exporters, who fetched \$164 million as receipts in fiscal 2019-20, Europe is the second biggest destination after the Middle East, the workplace of a majority of Bangladeshi migrant workers.

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Bangladesh set to surpass India in per capita GDP

Indian media praise Bangladesh

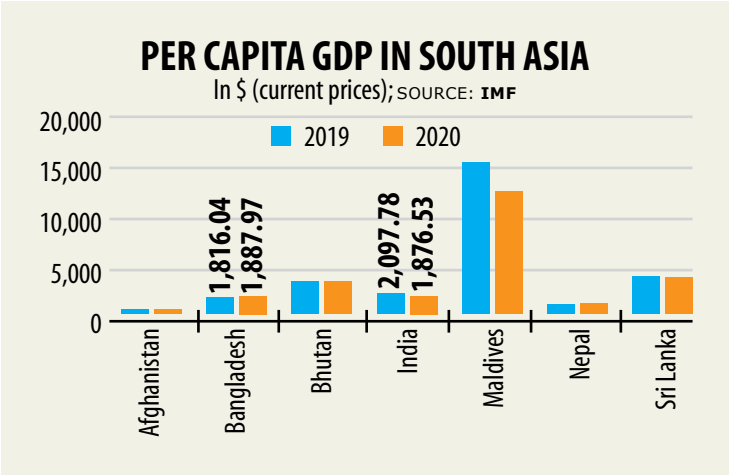
REJAUL KARIM BYRON and MD FAZLUR RAHMAN

Bangladesh is set to surpass India in terms of per capita gross domestic product (GDP) in 2020 thanks to robust agriculture production, exports and remittance despite the coronavirus pandemic, in another testimony to the country’s steadily growing economy.

According to the International Monetary Fund’s latest World Economic Outlook report, Bangladesh’s per capita GDP would rise to \$1,887.97 at current prices at the end of this year, up 3.96 per cent from \$1,816.04 in 2019.

India’s per capita GDP would fall to \$1,877 in 2020, a decline of 10.3 per cent. Bangladesh’s progress was appreciated by the Indian media yesterday.

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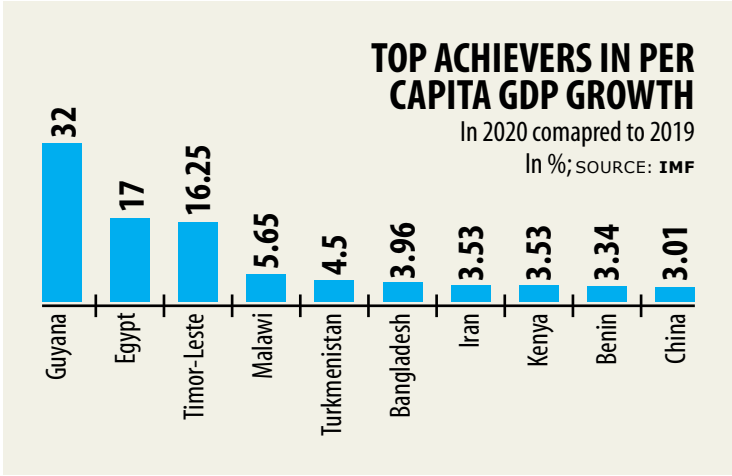
In per capita GDP terms, India was significantly above Bangladesh till a few years ago, but the gap has been substantially closed owing to the country’s

rapidly-rising exports.

Besides, during the intervening period, while India’s savings and investments remained lukewarm, the corresponding numbers for Bangladesh saw a sizeable surge, the Economic Times of India reported. Five years ago, India’s per capita GDP was nearly 40 per cent higher than that of Bangladesh.

In the last five years, Bangladesh’s per capita GDP has grown at a compound annual growth rate of 9.1 per cent, against 3.2 per cent growth posted by India for the period.

“This has allowed Bangladesh



to close the economic gap with its giant neighbour,” said the Business Standard of India.

Not only that, Bangladesh is set to post the highest per capita GDP growth rate in South Asia and the fourth-highest in the whole of Asia in 2020 compared to that of last year, comfortably ahead of India and China, data from the IMF showed.

The country’s per capita GDP growth would be the sixth highest in the world in the current calendar year, as the pandemic has battered most economies in the world in the eight months.

Apart from Bangladesh, only two countries in South Asia, namely Bhutan and Nepal, would register positive growth in the per capita GDP, expanding by 2.2 per cent and 3.4 per cent respectively in 2020.

Pakistan’s per capita GDP was \$1,348.68 in 2019. Its figure for 2020 was not available in the IMF’s report.

In Asia, only Egypt, Timor-Leste and Turkmenistan are ahead of Bangladesh in per capita GDP growth terms, expanding by 17 per cent, 16.25 per cent and 4.5 per cent respectively.

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Beef up monitoring to improve construction standards: experts

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Using quality materials under adequate supervision at development sites will ensure a higher standard of construction, experts said yesterday.

“The standard of finished projects depends on the use of quality materials and proper supervision during construction,” said Md Shamsul Hoque, director of the Bureau of Research, Testing and Consultation.

Bangladesh is now self-sufficient when it comes to supplying world-class raw materials to the construction sector. However, a lack of supervision by the engineers or managers impacts the overall quality of construction, he added.

Hoque made the comments during a webinar styled “Standard material for safe construction” jointly organised by The Daily Star and BSRM.

M Firoze, adviser for marketing and product development at

RECOMMENDATIONS

- » Conduct supervision at construction sites
- » Strengthen capability of BSTI to ensure better compliance
- » Create awareness about compliance
- » Use housing code in construction
- » Adopt local standards along with social value
- » Follow appropriate architectural designs



BSRM, said that the standard for construction work is not being maintained even though quality raw materials are readily available.

Standards are not being maintained even for the Padma Rail Link, one of the biggest ongoing development projects in

the country, as the implementing agency placed an order for raw materials following standards of a neighbouring country, which is a violation of compliance, he said.

“They are not following the standards set by the Bangladesh Standards and Testing Institution

(BSTI),” he said.

The standard of construction depends on the raw materials used and so the BSTI should monitor compliance in this regard, Firoze added.

According to Mahfuz Anam, editor of The Daily Star, everyone

is responsible in their own capacity to maintain a certain standard of construction at every level.

“We need sustainable construction plans for bridges, buildings and culverts that do not compromise with the country’s standards,” he said, emphasising the need for legal actions against the violation of regulations.

Besides, the BSTI’s capability to monitor and ensure compliance during the construction of projects should be bolstered to maintain standards, Anam added.

M Shamim Z Bosunia, chairman and managing director of Abode of Consultants and former president of the Institution of Engineers, Bangladesh, stressed the need for enhanced supervision at project sites to ensure the proper use of raw materials.

Like Anam, Bosunia said widening the BSTI’s activities by strengthening the organisation could lead to better quality control.

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Retrenched workers yet to get govt allowance in absence of beneficiary list

REJAUL KARIM BYRON and REAYET ULLAH MIRDAH

The disbursement of allowances for retrenched workers in the export-oriented garment, leather and footwear sectors will begin once the associations concerned provide

the list of employees, according to a senior official of the finance ministry.

In the meantime, the financial aid meant for workers that have been made redundant by the Covid-19 fallout will continue to remain idle, he said.

The government aims to disburse Tk 3,000 per month for a three-month period to about 10 lakh workers over the next two fiscal years, according to last week’s circular from the labour and employment ministry.

Beneficiaries will receive the

funds directly through their mobile financial service accounts.

Any worker, including lactating mothers, who were employed in any active member factory of the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA), Bangladesh Knitwear Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BKMEA), Leathergoods and Footwear Manufacturers and Exporters Association of Bangladesh (LFMEAB) and Bangladesh Finished Leather, Leathergoods and Footwear Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BFLFEA) up till February this year will be eligible to receive money from this fund, the circular said.

The authorities concerned can begin disbursing funds from next month onwards, the ministry official added. However, a list of retrenched workers is yet to be submitted to the labour ministry due to various complications, according to the association leaders.

“Since the coronavirus outbreak reached its peak in April-May, it was assumed that many people had returned to work by now,” said BGMEA President Rubana Huq.

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MAJOR POINTS

- » Every retrenched worker will get Tk **3,000** a month
- » Govt targeted to deliver the benefit to 10 lakh workers in two years
- » Workers of four export-oriented sectors will get the benefit
- » The Department of Labour will implement the project
- » EU and Germany are the major donors in the fund
- » Union leader demand transparency in disbursement

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আপনার সংগে। সকল।

মহাখালী শাখা
শুভ উদ্বোধন

উন্নয়নের ধারাবাহিকতায় ১২২তম শাখা

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