

STOCKS		COMMODITIES		ASIAN MARKETS				CURRENCIES			
DSEX	CSCX	Gold	Oil	MUMBAI	TOKYO	SINGAPORE	SHANGHAI	USD	EUR	GBP	CNY
▼ 0.76%	▼ 0.84%	\$1,888.04	\$42.78	▲ 0.86%	▼ 0.53%	▼ 0.02%	▼ 0.86%	BUY TK 83.95	88.29	109.78	12.54
4,867.73	8,398.83	(per ounce)	(per barrel)	43,815.45	25,385.87	2,711.39	3,310.10	SELL TK 84.95	102.09	113.58	13.18



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DHAKA MONDAY NOVEMBER 16, 2020, AGRAHAYAN 1, 1427 BS
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# Industries vexed at no-gas plan beyond economic zones

JAGARAN CHAKMA and REEYAT ULLAH MIRDOHA

A decision by the energy ministry regarding stoppage of providing gas connections to industries outside economic zones and industrial parks from April next year has created ire among industrialists.

Businesses are not fully agreed with the government decision of stoppage of gas connections to the new industries as such a sudden decision will act as a hurdle to industrialisation of the county.

A circular from the Energy and Mineral Resources Division on October 5 said the government would not allow any new gas connections to industries from March 31 next year, mainly to bring about industrialisation in a planned way in the country.

The government will only allow gas connections for industrial purposes to the industries housed inside special economic zones (SEZs) after March 31 next year.

Trade body and business chamber leaders said they do not fully agree with the government decision primarily because the SEZs were not yet ready to set up the industrial plants there.

Secondly, many of the

GOVT ECONOMIC ZONES	GAS CONNECTION	STATUS
Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Shilpa Nagar, Chattogram	Available	Partly ready
Shreehatta Economic Zone, Moulvibazar	Available	Almost ready
Mongla Economic Zone, Mongla	No gas, power available	Under construction
Jamalpur Economic Zone	Available	Under construction
Moheshkhali Economic Zone, Cox's Bazar	Power available, other utility connection will be given shortly	Construction work started recently

### BSCIC INDUSTRIAL ESTATES

Total no. of Industrial Estates: **76**

Total no. of Industrial plots: **10,389**

Total no. of Industrial units allotted (Up to Feb 2020): **5,830**

Total no. of units under production (Up to Febr 2020): **4,545**

entrepreneurs have purchased land for expansion and thirdly, micro, cottage, small and medium enterprises do not have the capacity to set up plants in the SEZs. However, the business

community also believes that the country needs planned industrialisation because Bangladesh has a scarcity of land and haphazard industrialisation pollutes the environment and create troubles for human lives.

For instance, there are more than 8.8 million cottage, micro, small and medium enterprises, many of which have no capacity to purchase land at the SEZs to set up industries.

Moreover, many industrial entrepreneurs purchased land earlier to expand operations at a convenient time, but now they might not expand their units because of the government decision.

So the much-coveted investment from private sector in the growing economy will be affected, thus employment in the time of Covid-19.

So the government should take time until the SEZs and industrial plots under the Bangladesh Small and Cottage Industries Corporation (BSCIC) were ready so that the industrial entrepreneurs could also be prepared to shift to the new plots.

And the government should also widely discuss the issue with the

trade bodies and business chamber leaders for the right decision to be taken so that the businesses do not become victims of any form of harassment from the utility services providing companies.

The government should especially have special consideration for the micro, cottage, small and medium enterprises as those units are the main strengths of the economy and catalyst for employment generation.

In contrast, they do not have that much of a capability to face any sudden trouble, like the possibility of not getting the gas connections.

"We also want planned industrialisation but some risks are there," said Shams Mahmud, president of the Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry (DCCI) which mainly works with the micro, small and medium enterprises.

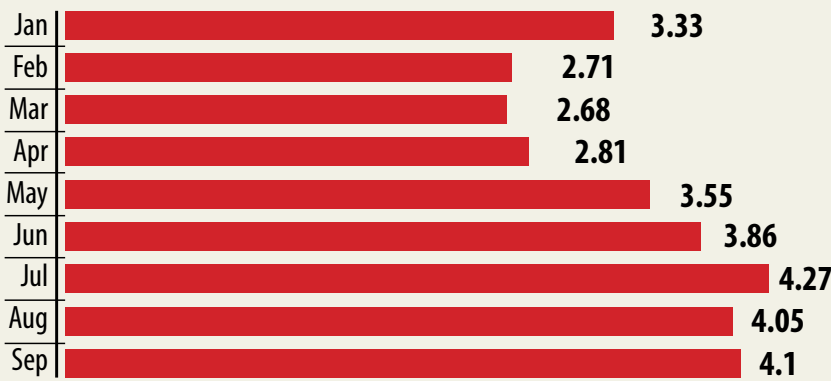
For instance, many entrepreneurs have already purchased land for expansion but could not because of the coronavirus pandemic. So they will be in trouble due to the government decision, he said, suggesting that the government reconsider the decision and take time.

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## Govt caps MFS's cash-out charge for safety net funds

### ACTIVE ACCOUNTS PER MONTH

Figures in crore; SOURCE: BB



AKM ZAMIR UDDIN

The government decision to distribute the fund under its social safety net programme through mobile financial services will ensure transparency and bring more unbanked people under the formal financial system, according to industry people.

As part of its move to release the fund smoothly through the mobile financial service (MFS) providers, the government has fixed Tk 7 as the cash-out charge per Tk 1,000 withdrawal for the funds to be disbursed under the social protection programmes, according to a finance ministry circular on Thursday.

Top MFS providers have welcomed the move, saying the initiative will widen the digital financial inclusion to a large extent.

The appropriate beneficiaries under the social safety net programmes will be able to manage their desired funds without any hassle, they said.

The government would bear the uniform cash-out charges for disbursing the funds through the MFS providers.

### SOCIAL SECURITY in FY21

- Tk **95,574cr**
- **3.01pc** of GDP, **16.83pc** of budget
- **125** social protection programmes in FY20
- **25** ministries or divisions

SOURCE: CABINET DIVISION

All ministries and divisions would follow the rate while disbursing the funds, the circular said.

The government disburses cash support in the form of allowances, honorarium, scholarships and stipends. Besides, other programmes also provide cash support.

Currently, Bangladesh runs more than 125 social protection programmes through 20 ministries and divisions.

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## Bangladesh on track to becoming a \$6b pharma market by 2025

*Says Irish market research firm*

JAGARAN CHAKMA

The pharmaceutical market of Bangladesh is expected to surpass \$6 billion by 2025 with an absolute growth of 114 per cent from its 2019 levels, according to a report from a Dublin-based market insight and analysis firm, Research and Markets.

"The pharmaceutical market has been witnessing excellent growth in recent years, and it is expected to have a compound annual growth rate of more than 12 per cent during the 2019-2025 period," as per the Bangladesh Pharmaceutical Market Future Opportunity Outlook 2025.

According to the report, biotech pioneers of Bangladesh's pharmaceutical industry are considered as a valuable tool for the overall improvement and efficacy of the market.

A majority of the growth will be contributed by local companies with a market share of more than 90 per cent as similar to past trends attained over the last two decades, the report said.

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### KEY POINTS

- \$3b worth local pharma market to surpass \$6b by 2025
- 200 local pharma companies occupy 90pc market
- Major players: Square, Eskayef, Incepta, Beximco, Beacon, ACI, Opsonin, and Renata
- Share of generics drugs 75pc
- Bangladesh exports pharma products worth \$130m a year and it may hit \$450m by 2025
- Products are exported to 144 countries



## Listed apparel makers bleed for pandemic-induced demand collapse

AHSAN HABIB

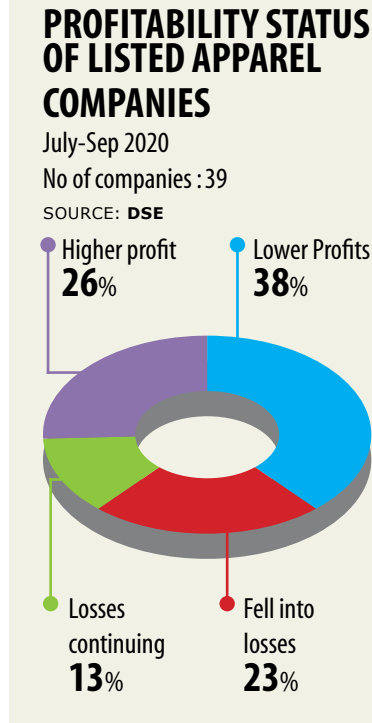
The profits of most of the listed apparel companies tumbled in the July-September quarter due to the collapse in demand abroad amid the coronavirus pandemic.

Among the 56 textile and garment companies listed on the Dhaka Stock Exchange (DSE), 39 companies published their first quarterly financial reports. Of them, 15 posted profits that were lower than in the same period a year ago.

Nine companies returned to red after making profits in the same period last year. Five companies extended their struggle to return to profits.

"The apparel industry witnessed lower earnings due to a drop in sales in our export destinations amid the pandemic," said Anwar-Ul-Alam Chowdhury, chairman of Evince Textile.

"At the height of the pandemic, our export orders had been cancelled, hold, or revised," he said.



He said the woven sector received the major blow as people did not go to offices or have been working from home and limited attending social gatherings and parties. So, the demand for formal shirts and apparel products has dropped.

In the July-September quarter, the export earnings of the woven sector declined by 5.78 per cent year-on-year to \$3.88 billion, data from the Export Promotion Bureau showed.


Of the total earnings from the garment sector, \$4.46 billion came from knitwear shipment, which rose 7.04 per cent.

"The overall situation will not improve until the pandemic goes," said Chowdhury, also a former president of the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturer and Exporters Association.

Evince Textile's earnings per share stood at Tk 0.32 in the negative in the first quarter. It was Tk 0.19 in the same period last year.

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