

STOCKS		COMMODITIES		ASIAN MARKETS				CURRENCIES			
DSEX	CSCX	Gold	Oil	MUMBAI	TOKYO	SINGAPORE	SHANGHAI	USD	EUR	GBP	JPY
▲ 0.57%	▲ 0.52%	\$1,829.50	\$48.73	▲ 0.77%	▼ 0.76%	▼ 0.51%	▼ 0.81%	83.95	100.83	111.77	0.79
5,053.49	8,727.38	(per ounce)	(per barrel)	45,426.97	26,547.44	2,825.51	3,416.60	84.95	104.63	115.57	0.83



# Star BUSINESS

DHAKA TUESDAY DECEMBER 8, 2020, AGRAHAYAN 23, 1427 BS • starbusiness@thedailystar.net

## Maksons Group to invest \$111m at Bangabandhu Shilpa Nagar

Will set up three textile, apparel units

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Maksons Group, a local textile miller, is going to set up three industrial units at the Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Shilpa Nagar (BSMSN) in Mirsarai at a combined investment of \$111 million.

Mohammad Ali Khokon, managing director of Maksons Group and three other entities under the group, signed a land-lease agreement with the Bangladesh Economic Zones Authority (Beza) at the Pan Pacific Sonargaon Hotel in Dhaka yesterday to establish the units on 30 acres of land by 2022.

Metro Spinning Ltd will invest \$40 million and create jobs for 1,200 people.

Maksons Spinning Mills Ltd will invest \$30 million to create 800 jobs and the second unit of the factory will invest \$41 million, Khokon said at the signing ceremony.

The group will produce fabric and export-oriented garment items at the proposed industrial units.

The entrepreneur has a target to start production at the units by 2022 as he has a lot of export orders from international retailers and brands.

Maksons Group, which has been in textile and spinning business for more than 35 years, exported goods worth \$77 million last year.

In the next year, the group would be able to export goods worth \$100



### KEY POINTS

- Maksons Group is mainly involved in yarn production and garment exports
- It is investing \$111m to set up three spinning and garment factories
- The group signed agreement with Beza yesterday for 30 acres of land
- Production to begin in 2022
- Currently the group's total exports amount to \$77m
- Exports may stand at \$100m this fiscal year
- Initially the group has a target to export goods worth \$200m from new plants at Bangabandhu Shilpa Nagar
- In the second phase it has a target to export another \$300m from its proposed industrial park

million despite the fallouts of the Covid-19 as the volume of export orders, especially for knitwear items, has increased at his factories.

In the first phase, the group plans to earn \$200 million in

exports from the proposed units. It will add another \$300 million in the second phase.

Of the \$34 billion garment export from Bangladesh, \$23 billion is supported by local

textile millers and spinners by way of supplying raw materials, said Khokon, also the president of the Bangladesh Textile Mills Association.

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## NBR introduces lottery to boost VAT collection

SOHEL PARVEZ

Buying a product from a store could help you win Tk 100,000.

Sounds bizarre? Well you do have the chance to win this amount after buying any product or seeking any service if you collect a receipt generated from the Electronic Fiscal Device (EFD), a kind of cash register, as proof of payment to the retailer.

The National Board of Revenue (NBR) announced this prize along with 100 more prizes on Sunday to encourage buyers to ask sellers for receipts against purchases.

The revenue authority made the move with an aim to boost value added tax (VAT) collection from retail and plug the scope for people to evade this charge.

With the lowest amount being Tk 10,000, the prizes, a first time initiative by the NBR, will be distributed every month based on VAT receipts to be issued through the EFDs from the first day of the month to the last, according to the policy on lottery by receipts of the EFD management system issued by the NBR.

By March next year, the NBR wants to install 4,000 EFDs across the country and 10,000 by June.

"We are considering conducting the lottery from next month," said Bashir Ahmed, first secretary (VAT)

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### DETAILS OF PRIZES

CATEGORY	PRIZE MONEY (EACH)	No
First	100,000	1
Second	50,000	1
Third	25,000	5
Fourth	10,000	94

## State mills to start sugarcane crushing on Dec 10

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Nine out of the 15 mills under the Bangladesh Sugar and Food Industries Corporation (BSFIC) will start their seasonal operations with the crushing of sugarcane from December 10, decided a virtual inter-ministerial meeting on Sunday.

The remaining six will stay shut till further notice for the implementation of a Tk 5,000 crore modernisation and product diversification project, according to an industries ministry statement.

While mills of Shyampur, Panchagarh, Setabganj, Rangpur, and Kushia undergo the commercial viability and economic life enhancements for the reduction of their losses, their workers will be employed at the operational nine.

Moreover, sugarcane of farmers of the catchment areas of the six will also be procured.

The inter-ministerial meeting was presided over by Industries Minister Nurul Majid Mahmud Humayun.

Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan, State Minister for Industries Kamal Ahmed Majumder, State Minister for Labour and Employment Begum Monnujan Sufian and parliament member of the constituencies concerned were present.

The BSFIC will implement the project through a joint venture with investments from Thai Exim Bank and the Japan Bank for International Cooperation and expertise of Thailand-based Sutek Engineering Company.

The two banks have started feasibility studies on the state-run sugar mills but progress has been slightly slow due to the ongoing pandemic.

According to the new plan, the BSFIC's distilleries will produce spirits and alcohols, biofertiliser and electricity as by-products of sugar production.

However, mill workers have demanded all the plants be kept running at least for this season so as to ensure that all the produce of farmers get sold.

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## BGMEA reiterates demand for a fresh round of stimulus

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Garment manufacturers yesterday reiterated their demand for another round of stimulus package from the government to cope with the deep fallouts of the Covid-19.

"The government should either announce a fresh stimulus package for the sector or continue the supports given at the beginning of the Covid-19," said Rubana Huq, president of the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA), at a virtual media briefing.

The government has given Tk 10,500 crore to the export-oriented garment sector in three phases since April to help factories pay salaries and allowances to workers at 2 per cent service charge.

Besides, the country has unveiled some other packages.

For example, the government has introduced a Tk 33,000-crore stimulus package for large industrial units and has made available another Tk 12,750 crore in the Export Development Fund.

Huq also demanded the government extend the moratorium period for the repayment of the loans under the first stimulus package to one year from six months now.

The government should also extend the payback period to five years from one year as the sector is going through a rough patch, she said.

For instance, international retailers and brands have placed 30 per cent fewer work

orders for the December and March season due to the second wave of coronavirus infections that have jolted the global economy.

This time, international retailers and brands have not cancelled work orders, but they are deferring orders citing the second wave that is considered as an indirect cancellation of orders.

Whatever the cases, the capacity of manufacturers would remain idle. The small and medium enterprises would face hurdle particularly, she said.

In March-April, international retailers and brands either cancelled or deferred payment or put on hold work orders worth \$3.18 billion.

As a result, 1,160 factories, which used to supply garment items to 1,300 international retailers and brands from 65 countries, were affected.

Of the sum, orders worth \$52 million were cancelled by Canadian buyers, \$574 million by the US buyers, \$1,930 million by European buyers and \$620 million by others.

Huq said the BGMEA also participated in the Call for Action programme launched by the International Labour Organisation to get back payments from international retailers and brands through discussions and consultations.

Of the major retailers and brands with which the BGMEA held talks and discussions are C&A, Bestseller, H&M, M&S, VF, PVH, KIK, Primark, Tesco, Decathlon,



STAR/FILE

The government has given Tk 10,500 crore to the export-oriented garment sector in three phases since April to help factories pay salaries and allowances to workers.

Arcadia Group, Next, New Look, Asda/George, OVS, K-Mart and Target Australia, Camieu, La Halle, and Ny Gard.

So far, 90 per cent cancelled work orders have been reinstated, she said.

Because of the pandemic, garment exports declined by 34.72 per cent year-on-year from March to July. It had rebounded

in August and September declining again in October because of the surging infections in the export destinations.

In October, garment export to the US dropped by 8 per cent, Germany 10 per cent, Spain 6 per cent, France 15 per cent, Italy 30 per cent, and Japan 28 per cent, she said.

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## Bangladesh scores low in digital evolution index

STAR BUSINESS DESK

Although the country's evolution from a physical past to the digital present is gaining momentum even amid the ongoing pandemic, the progress still lags far behind other countries, according to a new global index.

As per Digital Intelligence Index, Bangladesh ranked 23rd out of 90 nations for its momentum in digital evolution while it placed 83rd for its present state in digital evolution.

The Fletcher School at Tufts University, in partnership with Mastercard, yesterday unveiled this charting of progress economies have made in advancing their digitalisation, fostering trust and integrating connectivity into the lives of billions.

Mapping 95 per cent of the world's online population and drawing on 12 years of data, a Digital Evolution scorecard measures 160 indicators in

90 economies across four key pillars: institutional environment, demand conditions, supply conditions and the capacity for innovation

and change. Building upon earlier editions in 2014 and 2017, this year's index paints a picture of global digital development,

sheds insight on key factors driving change and momentum and unpacks what this means for economies facing the challenges of a global pandemic and post-

pandemic future. According to the index, across Asia Pacific, Singapore, Hong Kong, South Korea and Chinese Taipei are amongst the most

digitally dynamic economies. South Korea and Chinese Taipei have significantly outperformed the OECD growth rate in the second quarter of the year amid the global lockdown.

These economies feature high levels of available talent, active R&D collaboration between industry and academia, and a strong record of creating and bringing digital products into the mainstream.

According to a report titled "Digital in the time of Covid", mid-sized nations such as Kenya, Vietnam, Bangladesh, Rwanda, and Argentina have been using digital technologies, with potential to leapfrog and transform their economies.

These leapfrogs make for ideal role models and benchmarks for those in the "Watch Out" zone on how to use the digital economy as a lever for change.

Bhaskar Chakravorti, the dean for global business at Fletcher, said the pandemic may

be the purest test of the world's progress towards digitalisation.

"We have a clearer view on how dynamic digital economies can contribute to economic resiliency during a time of unparalleled global turmoil and can be positioned for recovery and change," he added.

With nearly two thirds of the world's population online today, the world is entering an "after access" phase, where access alone is not enough.

Aspects such as the quality of access, effective use of digital technologies, accountable institutions, robust data governance policies and fostering trust are greater factors in determining digital competitiveness and sustainability, according to findings.

Young people in emerging economies are demonstrating high levels of digital engagement, a bright spot for

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### Governments and businesses must act now

Nurture trust in their digital economies

Enhance their digital competitiveness

Introduce policies that encourage digital adoption and innovation



Ajay Bhalla  
President  
Cyber & Intelligence,  
Mastercard

“Never before has there been such an acute need to understand the factors that drive digitalisation and digital trust. With that knowledge, businesses and governments can work together to ensure that all 7.6 billion people around the world can benefit from the vast opportunities a digitally advanced economy can bring.”