Tk 3220cr goods | Commodity prices spiral, consumers suffer | two months

CHITTAGONG, Oct 15: Bangladesh exported goods worth Tk 3220 crore during the first two months of the current financial year (1996-97) against Tk 2879 crore of the corresponding months of the last financial year, reports BSS.

Director of Export Promotion Bureau (EPB). Chittagong. Abdul Majid Bhuiyan told this at a seminar on SAARC Preferential Trading Arrangement (SAPTA), held at EPB office here Monday,

The seminar was also addressed by Deputy Director, EPB. Head Office. Wasiuddin Ahmed. More than 25 representatives of public and private organisations, banks and export firms attended the seminar.

Abdul Majid Bhuiyan said that export target for the current financial year had been fixed at Tk 18,396 crore. He said that collective efforts for boosting exports were more effective and beneficial and SAPTA came into being on April 11. 1993 in order to achieve that objective.

SAPTA accord effective since December, 1995 provides tax exemption facilities 226 exportable items of the SAARC member countries, he said. adding SAARC countries can increase their exports among themselves.

Withdrawal of VAT on retail sales of sanitary-ware demanded.

Sanitary-ware merchants here vesterday demanded withdrawal of value added tax (VAT) on retail sales and suggested that all duties and taxes be levied at the import points, reports UNB.

Bangladesh Sanitary-ware Merchants Association General Secretary MA Taher told a news conference that the recently imposed VAT on the retail sales of ceramic tiles and bath-tub material had created some anomalies

While importing such products, the importers pay 45 per cent import duty. 15 per cent VAT, 10 per cent supplementary tax, 2.5 per cent advanced income tax and 2.5 per cent licence fee, he said.

"So imposition of VAT again on retail sales of ceramic tiles and bath-tub materials is not logical," he said, adding that they are ready to pay VAT on retail sales, but that should be collected at the entry points.

Taher pointed out that the apartment builders, who are the main consumers of ceramic tiles and bath-tub materials, are now importing on their own and remained outside the retail VAT-net.

If these "builder-consumers" are allowed to remain outside the retail VAT-net, all the builders would be interested in importing on their own, forcing the merchants to close their

business, he said. If the VAT is collected on the import points, the builders of apartments would also be brought under the retail VATnet, ending the present anomaly, the merchant leader

City dwellers are experiencing a steady rise in prices of some essentials such as lentils. sugar, vegetables, flour, bread and eggs while prices of most qualities of rice have fallen

over the last one month. RICE: Farmers will pay the price .

Price of thick IRRI rice has gone up slightly from Taka 8.04 per kg in September to Taka 8.57 until vesterday at Badamtoli and Babubazar rice wholesale markets - the country's largest rice wholesale market. At the retailers, thick quality IRRI is being sold at Taka 10 per kg.

Other rice prices have fallen over the last one month and traders at different markets of the city attribute the rice price falls to factors ranging from over-importing to good harvest in the country. In the case of price rise of thick IRRI, traders attributed the price hike to government's decision to purchase it for its bufferstook

Haji Md Shahjalal, General Secretary of the Badamtali Babubazar Rice Wholesalers Association, said that since the next harvest would come up in a little over a month's time, the farmers all over the country have started selling their stocks of rice from the last harvest. "Moreover a lot of people

have imported huge amount of rice". Shahjalal said explaining that the waiving of sale tax on rice few months ago has also inspired many newcomers in the rice import business.

Remember, our border is almost open and in India they always have surplus production of rice," he said.

Shahjalal and other traders in Babubazar and Badamtali speculated that the prices of rice would remain unchanged for another six months. They added that this low price would greatly affect the farmers of the country who paid high price for all agri-inputs for producing

In the wholesale market, a kg of Katari Bhog was selling vesterday at prices between Taka 24.15 and 25.72 depending on quality. Nazir Shahil was selling at Taka 14.47. Pari at 10.72 and Sharna (Indian) at Taka 10.72 per kg.

In the retail market of New Market, the best quality Katari Bhog was priced yesterday at Taka 28 per kg. Nazir Shahil at Taka 16.50, Pari at Taka 12.50 while Sharna at Taka 13 per kg.

PULSES: Massive hoarding

... waive taxes, prices will fall "Massive hoarding of different pulses have shot the prices up," said Kowsar Ahmed. "Just

Participants at a seminar

here yesterday suggested that

suitable policies be formulated

to improve the audit and in-

spection system in banks, re-

ing Audit and Inspection in

Banks" discussed the current

position of audit and inspection

in banks and identified the de-

ficiencies of the present system.

Bank Management (BIBM) or-

ganised the seminar, where par-

Bangladesh Institute of

The seminar on "Restructur-

make an announcement that the government is considering to waive taxes on pulses. I can guarantee that the prices will fall within six hours", the General Secretary of the Dhaka City Pulse Traders' Association was giving his views on the recent price hikes of different

pulses. Another trader at Dal Patti of Maulavibazar in the city, the largest pulse wholesale market in the country with more than 150 shops, blamed the government policy as regards import of pulses. "You see, small traders do not get any help from the government to import. It is the big moneyed importers who dominate the import market." he said adding that unless the banks provide adequate facilities for the small traders to import, the prices of pulse would always be unpredictable.

Other traders said that the pulse market in the country was controlled by traders across the border in India. "Nepalese pulse is bought up by these traders who are influential enough to stop flow of smuggling into Bangladesh for any period. said Salam Miah, "at this 'blockade period' our prices swell and they choose the proper time to open up the bor-

This also happens when we import from Syria and Australia. Just before the arrival of imported goods, the market gets flooded with ghost pulses. So the genuine importers suffer as the prices fall, this also prompt the importer to hoard the goods in the hope of a better price," he

The traders also emphasised on importing wholegrain pulses instead of processed and crushed ones for stabilising the pulses' prices. "This would not only reduce prices but also revive the dying crushing mills of the country." said Kader Molla a trader.

At the wholesale market. however, the prices of different pulses were yesterday recorded as follows: At least four qualities of Musur Dal are sold in the market. The wholesale prices range from Taka 30 and 47 per kg depending on the quality. Retailers prices of the same Musur were between Taka 32 and 50 per kg in the kitchen markets

Booter Dal in the wholesale market was priced between Taka 18.75 and 32 per kg. Again the lentil has several qualities available in the market. The price in the kitchen market of the same pulse was between Taka 26 and 36. Round Dubli (the one used

BIBM seminar

ticipants observed that the

banks do not give proper impor-

tance and necessity of audit and

inspection in banks have been

increasing day by day with the

expansion of branches, diversi-

fication of banking activities

and introduction of new dimen-

tivities have also expanded the

importance and necessity of

audit and inspection in our

Financial sector reforms ac-

sion in the banking arena.

The speakers said the impor-

tance to audit and inspection.

By Morshed Ali Khan

for chatpatt) was between Taka 25 and 27 in the wholesale market while retailers sold it

between Taka 30 and 36 per kg. Chola (Cheek Peas) was between Taka 18 and 24 at the wholesale market while the city grocers were selling it between Taka 20 and 35 per kg.

Mugh Dal was sold at the wholesale market for Taka 40 and 41 per kg while the kitchen markets were selling it between Taka 44 and 50. All these prices rose by a

margin of about 20 to 30 per cent over the last two months traders said. WHEAT & FLOUR: Rumour

of shortage ... price shot up' "Only fifteen days ago we bought a sack of 74 kg of wheat for Taka 620 and 660," said Malek, a trader of flour at the Ata Patti of Maulavibazar in

the city.

"Today the asking price of the same sack is upto Taka

We came to know about the shortage of wheat more than a month ago. Then, when the government announced that it would give rice to Food for Work Programme, instead of wheat, the traders then knew what to do," Abdul Malek, a trader of the Boliadi Market in the Ata Patti said explaining that a huge quantity of wheat used to come to the market through the programme.

Another trader and agent of a leading flour mill of the country said that on October 3 they received a letter from the mill. "It was stated in the letter that the price of each kg of wheat would go up by Taka 2." said Abdul Wahid, the manager of the agency, "then, a day later it was increased by another Taka 1.50", he added, "then as soon as the government decided to allocate some 30,000 tonnes of wheat among the 282 mills. the same mill reduced the price on October 5 by Taka 1.50."

Wahid and other traders in the area alleged that the mill had stopped supply of flour to the agencies at least two days before hiking the price." They knew the prices would be increased so they hoarded their produce for two days and made further millions," said Wahid. In the wholesale market, a

kg of good quality loose flour was being sold at Taka 14 per kg. A kg of flour in a packet cost Taka 16. In the retail market. the price for loose flour was Taka 15 and 16 per kg while the one in packet cost Taka 17 per

ferred to audit and inspection

banks, he said, this thinking

should not prevail anymore

and proper attention must be

given by the management of the

banks to remove this bottle-

neck and make audit and in-

spection activities attractive,

in audit and inspection activi-

ties result in increase of irregu-

larities, fraud, forgeries and

malpractices in banking activ-

president post, in his election manifesto said the small and

medium scale industrialists

and businessmen are most ne-

glected in the country. He vowed

to work to solve the problems of small and medium entrepre-

to introduce modern technologies in the manufacturing sec-

tor enact anti-dumping acts on

unnecessary goods, and intro-

duce counter veiling measures

to protect the country from be-

coming a market of foreign

a vital role in helping the gov-

ernment in taking these vital

eral secretary of Bangladesh

Paint Manufacturers' Associa-

the port, easy availability of

capital, and proper identifica-tion of possible fields of in-

vestment for economic growth.

the FBCCI should be to bring

momentum in the industrial

sector, particularly revival of

the business sector of the coun-

try, said Amin Laskar another

not given on the development of

He said proper emphasis was

the sick industries, and boost

He said the FBCCI could play

Kamal is the honorary gen-

He also stressed developing

The main responsibility of

goods.

issues ahead.

candidate.

He said steps should be taken

Chowdhury said deficiencies

interesting and more useful.

For the betterment of the

banks, they added.

departments.

SUGAR: Where is

"Look here, this sugar comes from Brazil, this one from India, but where is our sugar?" asked Kashem, a grocer shop owner at New Market. Traders at different places of the city said that the market had no de-

owner at Kawran Bazar.

Bangladeshi sugar?

ficiency in supply of sugar but Bangladeshi sugar was nowhere to be found. "In the wholesale market, we bought a kg of sugar for Taka 32 per kg and we are selling it for Taka 33 or Taka 34 per kg .A month or so ago. the price was between Taka 29 and 32, said a grocer shop

Vegetables: 'Nothing unusual season starting "At this time of the year, the

beginning of the major veg-

etable season, prices of vegeta-

bles are always high, it is

nothing unusual," said Md

etables in the city's Kawran

Bazar for the last eighteen

wholesellers association came

up with a different story. "This

year the flood has been severe at

many places of the country.

This destroyed the harvest sig-

nificantly," said Abdul Man-

nan, the Secretary of the Asso-

ciation giving his opinion on

etables in the area pointed out

that transport cost rose sharply

as the toll collection at differ-

ent points on the highways in-

tensified. 'This year we are pay-

ing upto Taka four thousand to

A wholesaler of fresh veg-

the rising prices of vegetables.

Some others in the vegetable

Keramat Ali, a retailer of veg-

Kawran Bazar, a kg of onion

was being sold at Taka 12 while in the retail shop onion's asking price was Taka 15 per kg. Average quality ginger in the wholesale cost Taka 10 per kg. the retailer's asking price was between Taka 16 and 18 per kg. Green chillies at wholesale cost Taka 28 per kg while retailers sold it between Taka 35

and 40 per kg. Aubergine cost between Taka 12 and 18 per kg in the wholesale while the retailers price stood between Taka 20 and 22 per kg.

Cucumber was sold for Taka four per kg in the wholesale while the retailers in the

Scene at a city market shows adequate stocks, but prices are prohibitive.

Taka 10 per kg.

Taka 18 and 22.

kitchen markets asked for upto

Taka four per kg at the whole-

sale market. In the kitchen

the same was Taka 10 per kg.

markets, the asking price for

Taka 12 and 15 per kg at the

wholesale market. The retail-

ers' asking price was between

spinach) was sold at Taka seven

per kg while the same in the re-

tail shops cost between Taka 12

FISH: 'No problem ... Chalu

The prices of fish has been

the same for a long time, we

have no problem. There is

plenty of fishes in the market."

said Lakhan, a fish trader in

Good quality lal shak (red

Long beans cost between

Green papya was sold at

bring goods on a truck from the the City's Rayer Bazar area. nearest northern district." he In the wholesale market of

A Hilsa weighing about 700 grams cost between Taka 50 and 70 in the city retail markets. Rubi cost about Taka 120 per kg. Koral fish (medium size) Taka 70 to 90 per kg, pommefreit (large) between Taka 120 and 140 per kg while a kg of pangus fish cost between Taka 140 and 180.

EGGS: The hens are laying

alright .. but prices go up' "Over the last one month price of eggs has gone up by one to three taka per hali (four), we have plenty of them, hens are laying alright but price does not come down." Almas Mia of Kawran Bazar said while talking to this correspondent.

Yesterday's price of a dozen of red eggs there cost Taka 44 while a dozen of white eggs

there cost Taka 42. But in the

city's grocery shops, the prices

of eggs were little higher than at

shop in Mohammadpur and

asked for the price of a kg of live

farm chicken. When the shop-

keeper replied 'ashi taka,' the

buyer's instant reaction was

nowhere available, the hatch-

eries do not have enough supply

so we had to increase the price

of live chicken by Taka 10 per

kg within the last two months,"

chicken in the city kitchen

markets cost between Taka 60

A medium size free range

"You see poultryfeed is

CHICKEN: Taka 80 per kg?

A buyer entered a poultry

the kitchen markets.

"that is called theft .

replied the shopowner.

and 80.

That's theft ...

Committee on sich industries soon

An 'appropriate' committee will be constituted to address the issue of sick industries, a staggering problem of the coun-

try's economy, reports UNB. The decision was taken at a meeting between Finance Minister Shah AMS Kibria and a delegation of the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI) and other trade organisations yesterday.

Meeting sources said the committee would be constituted shortly with representation from the government, banking sector and the chambers and

trade bodies. The delegation, led by FBCCI President Salman F Rahman, apprised the minister of the

problems pertaining to the sick industries badly affecting the national economy. The finance minister gave them a patient hearing and assured that the government was aware of the problems regard-

ing the sick industries, which are not less than 1500 in num-Kibria said allout efforts would be made to tackle the issue so that the sick units could be rehabilitated in the greater

interest of the national econ-2-day workshop

on stock begins tomorrow in Sylhet Investors Forum Sylhet Bangladesh has organised a

two-day workshop on "What is stock exchange and how to invest in stock market" from October 17 to 18 at Sylhet Press Club, reports BSS. The workshop will be con-

ducted by the Securities and Exchange Commission.

Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad will attend the concluding session as the chief guest and will distribute the certificate among the participants.
The programme will be presided by MS Shekil Chowdhury. Chairman, Investors Forum Sylhet.

Jobs under int'l organisations

Some International Organi-sations have invited applications for filling up certain vacancies at their disposal, says a PID hand out.

Name of the organisations alongwith the post titles and last date for receipt of the application by the head offices of the concerned organisations are be-

Post under United Nations: Coordinator (D-1) for Bangkok-31 October.

Post under UNESCO: Regional Adviser for SHS (P-5) for

Bangkok-17 December. Post under World Intellec-

tual Property Organisation: Se-nior Legal Officer (P-4) for Geneva-12 November. Post under World Meteoro-

logical Organisation: Director (D-2) for Geneva-15 November. Post under International Atomic Energy Agency: Safeguards Data Evaluator (P-3) for Vienna-3 January '97: Section Head (P-5) for Vienna-3 January 97: Documentation Specialist

(P-4) for Vienna-3 January '97. Further details of the posts and procedures of applications will be available with the Ministry of Establishment, Divisional Commissioners, Deputy Commissioners and District Labour and Manpower offices.

On law and order, he noted

MCCI for reducing government control on economy

MCCI President Samson H Chowdhury yesterday said deregulation and privatisation still remained a vital factor for maximising the growth rate and called for reducing government control on the econ-

"The government must see the economy less as something thing to stimulate," he told UNB, stressing deregulation and privatisation as a step for

making the economy competi-"As a philosophy, the government must be convinced that true competition lowers costs to the public, eliminates scope for excess profit and in-

Pointing at the annual de-Metropolitan Chamber of

chief said successful implementation of ADP could create useful complementaries at the micro level and support effective demand in the economy. The government, therefore,

has an additional responsibility to make up the shortfall in some vital sectors like energy, in addition to quickly ensuring a good mix of implementation of big and small projects under the current ADP, he said. Referring to poor infrastruc-

tural facility, Chowdhury said the infrastructure sector showed an alarming position while a serious power shortage loomed large over the economy.

A quantum jump in the installed capacity through public and private investments will remain a pipe-dream unless a determined team with full involvement of the trade and industry starts working to sort out the problem, he said.

"Nothing works like a team work in any emergency situation," the MCCI president said, suggesting revival of the Con-sultative Committee of the Energy Ministry.

Besides, he said, in the face of the growing crisis, consumers who can afford should be encouraged to install standby generators and the fee required to pay to the government for installing such facilities should be waived.

Chowdhury called for "expeditious policy decisions and action plans" to attract private capital to finance such projects to leap-frog an entire generation's inefficiency and spare the national exchequer from wastage of public money.

that the law and order was still a major threat to the business community, particularly outside the metropolis.

Unemployment in China could hit 'historic' high by 2000

BEIJING, Oct 15: China's unemployment level is set to hit an "historic" high by 2000 unless officials at all levels take action. a Chinese state council member has warned, says AFP.

Chen Junsheng said "if we do not adopt more effective measures, the total of urban jobless people and rural surplus labour will hit a historic record by 2000," the China Daily reported

on Monday. In the next five years, urban unemployment could reach 54 million, while surplus rural labour could hit 214 million. the report said. Of China's working population of 600 million, 400 million are rural resi-

Chen acknowledged that rural-urban migration was a necessity but said local governments should try to create new jobs near farmers' home vil-

"It is not in keeping with the rules of a socialist market economy to restrict the reasonable flow of rural surplus labour," he said, adding that lo-

cal governments should be responsible for organising surplus labourers to move in an orderly manner" to cities. As millions of peasants have been drawn to greater opportu-

nities in China's cities, the central government has become increasingly concerned about its ability to control the human flood. Jobless transients in urban areas have been linked to rising crime, among other urban problems.

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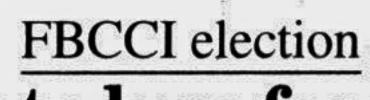
Improved bank inspection stressed Inaugurating the seminar. Director General of BIBM AHM Nurul Islam Chowdhury said there is a common notion that this is a punishment when a personnel is posted or trans-

to control and more as some-

Chowdhury noted. velopment programme, the

creases economic efficiency,

Commerce and Industry (MCCI)



By Staff Correspondent



Shafiqul Islam the small and medium indus-

tries in the past. All three vice-presidential candidates in tomorrow's election to the executive committee of the Federation of Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI) vowed to work for development of the small and medium sector industries and bring more foreign investment in the country, if elected. Talking to The Daily Star

industrial sector They also pledged to keep the FBCCI, the apex chamber body of the country out of all sort of political influences.

"If I am elected, I shall work

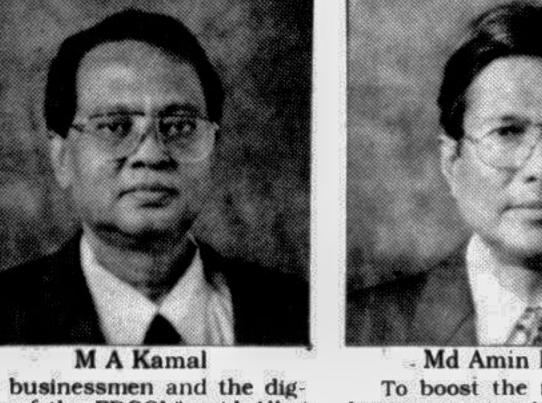


Kazi Shafiqul Islam a candidate for the post.

sound private sector in the country, he said as the apex chamber body FBCCI can play an active role in expanding and Explaining his panel's main

whole selling

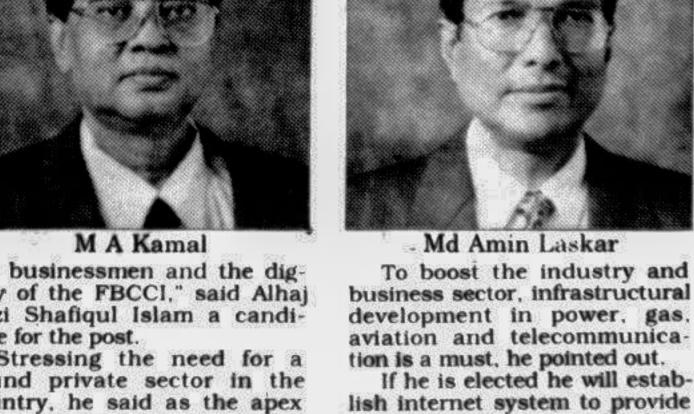
M A Kamal, another prosmy best to uphold the interest of pective candidate for vice-



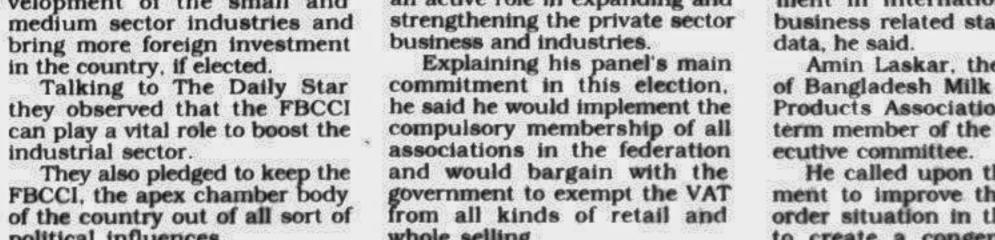
Stressing the need for a

business related statistics and data, he said. of Bangladesh Milk and Dairy Products Association was two term member of the FBCCI ex-

ecutive committee. He called upon the government to improve the law and



all kinds of business development in international arena. Amin Laskar, the president



order situation in the country to create a congenial atmosphere for increasing invest-

ities which will fail to protect the interest of depositors as well as the owners, employees of the bank and the nation as a whole. Candidates vow to lure foreign investment