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**Stocks**

DGEN	0.38%	2,966.21
CSCX	0.46%	6,644.03

**Currencies**

	Buy Tk	Sell Tk
USD	69.06	69.06
EUR	98.76	98.78
GBP	112.37	112.40
JPY	0.74	0.74

SOURCE: BANGLADESH BANK

**Commodities**

Gold	\$955.50	(per ounce)
Oil	\$72.74	(per barrel)

SOURCE: AFP  
(As of Friday)

**Brazil to announce new rules for oil bonanza**

AFP, Brasilia

Brazil's government is to announce on Monday new rules aimed at securing greater control and revenues from vast, recently discovered offshore oil fields, according to officials.

President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva will outline the changes that then have to go to Brazil's Congress for approval -- a tough proposition in itself, given power plays a year ahead of presidential and legislative elections.



Ceramic tableware is in the race to keep up with growing demand on domestic and international markets. FARR CERAMICS

## Ceramics brace for high demand

SAJJADUR RAHMAN

Domestic and export demand for ceramic tableware is rising rapidly, widening the gap between its demand and supply.

The demand-supply gap was estimated at 21,257 tonnes in fiscal 2007-08. It is expected to rise to 22,544 tonnes in four years, according to a recent study by the syndication department of Prime Bank Ltd.

"Bangladesh enjoys a comparative advantage in manufacturing ceramic tableware, particularly in export markets, due to cost competitiveness," said Touhidul Alam Khan, executive vice president and head of the syndication finance unit of Prime Bank.

Ceramic manufacturing is a gas-based, labour intensive and skills-oriented business.

Traditionally, Japan, UK, Germany and other European countries dominated exports of ceramic tableware to world markets. But a jump in production costs, including wages and cur-

rency appreciation, made ceramic manufacturing unfeasible for the nations.

Khan said Bangladesh has certain competitive advantages over its competitors an availability of gas, cheap labour and the generalised system of preferences (GSP) that allows Bangladesh's duty-free exports to Europe. There is no quota restriction either on the export.

There are nine ceramic tableware manufacturing companies in the country with a total capacity of nearly 24,000 tonnes a year as of 2008, of which an average of 48 percent is being exported and the remaining 52 percent is used in the domestic market, the study found.

Bangladesh exported ceramic tableware worth over \$33 million in fiscal 2008-09, of which over 80 percent was destined to Italy, UK, USA, Germany, France, Canada and Sweden.

"We are getting export orders from new countries, like Turkey and India,

every month," said Iftekhar Uddin Farhad, managing director of FARR Ceramics, a fully export-oriented factory. The company's exports to India will cross Tk5 crore in 2009, he said.

"Our factory, which has a production capacity of around 30,000 pieces, is fully booked for the next months," Farhad said.

Monno and Shinepukur ceramics have the highest production capacity of nearly 60,000 pieces a day followed by Standard Ceramic industries with 40,000 pieces a day, the study shows.

Ceramic tableware is considered sophisticated, fashionable and an indispensable household item worldwide. The products are also being used in all types of social functions, offices, community centres, hospitals, hotels and restaurants.

"Ceramic tableware has become a common household item in Bangladesh with a continuous rise in use among middle income groups in the past decade," Khan said.

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## Indian eggs roll in amid protest

Tk 2.29 quoted for each

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Eggs imported from India have entered Bangladesh, amid widespread protests from local poultry operators.

The first shipment -- two truckloads of Indian eggs -- arrived at Benapole Land Port on Thursday.

Customs officials said a Dhaka-based export-import company, GM Enterprise, imported the eggs, which are waiting to be released from port.

Each of the 2,99,880 eggs imported in the first shipment has been priced at Tk 2.29 in import costs based on the prices shown by GM Enterprise.

The government has approved a plan to import two crore eggs to cut down the prices that soared to Tk 32 per set of four on the local market.

The decision prompted protests from local poultry farmers. They slammed the government for taking a "self-contradictory" stance on allowing egg imports from a country affected by avian influenza: India.

"The government has shifted from its early stand against allowing imports of eggs from a bird-flu affected country," Bangladesh Poultry Khamar Rakkha Jatiya Sangram Parishad said in a statement yesterday.

The statement said the imported eggs have been already unloaded at the port.

Parishad referred to a statutory regulatory order issued on August 12, which imposed restrictions on imports of eggs from any country reeling from bird flu.

"But the government has back-peddled on its own decision," said Parishad.

"We condemn the government's self-contradictory stance," it said. "Permission to import eggs from India will increase the risk of the spread of bird flu again in the local poultry industry."

Imported eggs have entered Bangladesh at a time when poultry farmers are offering a set of four eggs (red) for Tk21.6 in wholesale prices.

"But the government fails to ensure a price below Tk 26 every four pieces at retail level," Parishad said.

"Now we are calling off our previous decision of selling eggs at low prices to protest the import permission by the government," it added.

Also, Khulna Poultry Fish Feed Shop Owners' Association yesterday demanded that the government reverse the import decision.

The association also urged consumers to avoid Indian eggs to keep the bird flu disease at bay.

Kazi Mohammad Nurul Islam, president of the association, feared that more than two crore people involved in the industry would lose their jobs.

## BB profit erodes

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

The operating profit of Bangladesh Bank (BB) decreased by 21 percent last fiscal year and stood at Tk 2,505 crore because of a fall in interest income both from foreign and domestic sources.

The central bank's operating profit was Tk 3,153 crore in fiscal 2007-08.

The Bangladesh Bank yesterday finalised its balance sheet for the last fiscal year (2008-09).

A BB official said the bank's income from its investment in foreign currency reserve fell drastically last fiscal year due to global financial meltdown.

In the face of recession, the Bangladesh Bank withdrew the money from foreign financial institutions where it used to invest and kept in more secure places at lower interest rates that ultimately shrank the bank's interest income.

The total income of Bangladesh Bank fell by 22 percent last fiscal year and stood at Tk 3,240 crore, of which income from foreign sources fell by about 60 percent to stand at Tk 707 crore.

The central bank's local income also went down, as a sluggish investment demand was looming large over the economy, with a huge access liquidity flooding the banks.

As the demand for money fell, the rate of interest on the loans Bangladesh Bank provides to commercial bank also plunged, bringing down its income from local source, said BB officials.

A sizeable portion of non-tax revenue the government receives comes from Bangladesh Bank profit. As the profit of Bangladesh Bank fell, the government income from this head would also go down.

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# Best Employer Award 2008

**Award Winning Organizations**  
*Listed Alphabetically*

<p><b>BRAC</b> NGO / Development Sector</p>	
<p><b>British American Tobacco Bangladesh</b> Consumer Goods / FMCG</p>	
<p><b>Channel i</b> Media &amp; Advertisement</p>	
<p><b>Grameenphone</b> Telecommunication</p>	
<p><b>GraphicPeople   SoftwarePeople</b> Information Technology (IT)</p>	
<p><b>Standard Chartered Bank</b> Bank &amp; Financial Institution</p>	
<p><b>Youngone Group</b> Garments &amp; Textile</p>	

*The selection of the award winning organizations has been based on a perception survey participated by 4,514 bdjobs.com users. For selection process & methodology of the survey, please log on to www.bdjobs.com/EmployerAward*

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**About the Award**

Human Resource is the key to success for any modern organization. Employee development, fair and transparent recruitment & evaluation, creating good working environment and ensuring enabling career progression are some of the practices that any good organization must put in place for building a successful foundation for itself.

This award for Best Employer is the first of its kind in Bangladesh. Bdjobs.com, through this 'Bdjobs.com Best Employer Award' program, intends to encourage employers to be more sensitive to the perception of current and potential employees. This award is aimed at creating enough encouragement among different types of organizations in the country for benchmarking their employee management and development practices. We believe that this competitive environment will positively influence employers to take proactive initiatives in making their organizations more responsive to HR development issues. Thus the employers will ensure better and happier work life for the professionals working in their organizations. And only by doing so, the employers can make themselves more prepared for facing new challenges coming ahead.