

No single lab equipped to test food thoroughly: analysts

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Bangladesh has no single laboratory equipped to thoroughly test and analyse chemical and microbial hazards of food -- a setback that undermines efforts to fight food adulteration and limits the scope of exporting fresh and processed food to global markets.

The lack of a proper and accredited lab limits the scope of analysing heavy metals, food additives, pesticide residue, veterinary drugs, contaminants and toxic substances in fresh and processed food, said Md Saleh Ahmed, an expert on horticulture value chain currently working on food safety at the Food and Agriculture Organisation.

"There is a pressing need to set up laboratories that can reliably analyse food."

Ahmed shared the findings of a study at a seminar on food analysis for agricultural input and food safety at the Agricultural Policy Support Unit under the agriculture ministry.

Apart from the study on the food safety policy, three more studies related to seed, fertiliser and other inputs were presented at the programme.

"It is a prime need to address food safety issues completely. Without such a facility, it will not be possible to certify complete food safety. We will not be able to ensure access to international markets for our fresh and processed food without accreditation," Ahmed, a co-author of the study, told The Daily Star.

A lack of coordination and overlapping functions of various agencies responsible for ensuring food safety, inadequately qualified staff and inspectors, fund shortages, and weak logistics act as bottlenecks to ensuring food safety in Bangladesh.

Framing the Safe Food Act 2013 was a step forward and the food safety authority formed under the law will ensure coordination among various ministries responsible for ensuring food safety, said Z Karim, a former secretary.

The study suggested formulating a comprehensive food safety policy and building a food safety database to ensure consumer protection and harmonised standards.

Another joint study on improving the quality of agricultural inputs says the prevalence of poor quality and adulterated inputs leads to low agricultural productivity.

The use of low-quality fertilisers increases the cost of cultivation, deceiving farmers and polluting the environment, the study found.

"Input quality has implications on ecology and human health. We are concerned about the use of inferior inputs," said Mia Abdur Rashid, director of Centre for Agri-research and Sustainable Environment and Entrepreneurship Development.

Adulterated fertilisers are abundant in the market, the study said citing a Soil Resource Development Institute test of non-urea fertilisers. The test showed that 65 percent of fertilisers out of 717 samples were substandard or adulterated.

There are six labs for farmers to test soil, water and fertilisers at, but these are not capable of meeting national requirements, he said.

Referring to focus group discussions with stakeholders including farmers, Rashid said farmers prefer fertilisers marketed by Bangladesh Agricultural Development Corporation (BADC) but the products are not packed properly, and sometimes are short of the mentioned weight.

Also, fertilisers imported by the private sector are lower in quality.

"Except a few cases of admixture, BADC seeds are better and farmers prefer those. Almost all vegetable seeds of private companies marketed in the early season are carried over seeds and hence weaker," he said.

Results from group discussions show that seeds of some private companies perform well in one year but fail to maintain quality in the following year.

"Farmers are not capable of choosing the right pesticides. Unscrupulous traders or companies market pesticides through fake packaging. Adulterated, lower grade and misbranded pesticides are sold," he said.

Again, day-old chicks of low quality, fingerlings and feed affect productivity and profitability of poultry and fish farming, the study said.

The study suggested a review of seed certification and quality control regulations, to set standards for various types of seeds, and strengthening the capacity of the Seed Certification Agency (SCA).

The government is considering enhancing capacity and turning SCA into an authority, said Anwar Faruque, director general of agriculture ministry's seed wing.



SM Amzad Hossain, chairman of South Bangla Agriculture and Commerce Bank, opening the bank's 34th branch in Ghonapara, Gopalganj recently. Md Rafiqul Islam, managing director, was also present.



Officials of OP-seed Company, Bangladesh Steel Re-rolling Mills and Matin Spinning Mills pose after being awarded by the Japan-Bangladesh Chamber of Commerce and Industry for their efforts to strengthen business relations between Bangladesh and Japan, at a programme recently.



Sunil Kamath, vice president of Opera Software, and Mahtab Uddin, chief operating officer of Robi, launch a free internet coupon, at a press meet in Dhaka yesterday. Robi users will enjoy 5MB of internet for free with Opera Mini browser.

China cuts bank reserve requirement to spur growth

REUTERS, Beijing

China's central bank cut the amount of cash that banks must hold as reserves on Wednesday, the first industry-wide cut in more than 2-1/2 years, as it increased efforts to shore up flagging growth in the world's second-largest economy. The move, which came less than three months after China also cut interest rates for the first time in over two years, was widely expected by investors, who had bet that monetary policy had to be further loosened to lift economic growth from a 24-year low. The reserve requirement ratio, or RRR, would be lowered by 50 basis points, the People's Bank of China (PBOC) said in a statement on its website. The cut is effective from Feb. 5 and will take the RRR for big banks to 19.5 percent.

"The move was in line with expectations," said Wen Bin, senior economist at Minsheng Bank in Beijing. "Capital outflows and yuan depreciation have led to net FX sales in recent months. The central bank has tried to use short-term policy tools to inject more liquidity, but such tools look not enough, so it has to cut RRR."

He said he did not expect more policy moves in the first quarter.

Underscoring the Chinese government's concerns about slackening economic growth, the central bank said the RRR would be lowered by an additional 50 basis points for urban and rural commercial banks that lend to small- and medium-sized companies.

The reserve ratio for China

Agricultural Development Bank, a bank that lends at the behest of the government to support its policies, would be lowered by an additional 400 basis points, the central bank said.

Some analysts said the latest policy easing may have been triggered by an official survey of China's mammoth factory sector that showed it shrank unexpectedly for the first time in nearly 2-1/2 years in January.

The survey is known as the Purchasing Manager's Index, or PMI.

"The main reason was that the PMI was much lower than expected in January, so if there is no further policy reaction, it's very likely that China's Q1 GDP growth could fall below 7 percent," said Liu Li-gang, an economist at ANZ.

China cut the RRR for some banks earlier this year, but this was the first broad-based change in the ratio since a 50 basis point cut in May 2012.

It came after the central bank announced a surprise cut in benchmark interest rates in November after a run of data showing the economy losing momentum.

China's economic growth slowed to 7.4 percent in 2014 - the weakest in 24 years - from 7.7 percent in 2013.

The economy faces formidable headwinds into 2015 as a property downturn persists, while companies will continue to struggle to pay off debt and export demand may remain erratic.

Analysts polled by Reuters in January expect economic growth to sag further this year to around 7 percent.

Apparel tech fair kicks off

FROM PAGE B1

"But there is scope to further expand our business, which, in fact, is happening," he said, adding that Tk 2,600 crore was invested in the textiles sector last year.

More investment will come in if there is adequate gas and electricity supply, Chowdhury said, adding that political stability is no less an important factor.

Atiqul Islam, president of Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association, said the country currently consumes fabrics worth \$16 billion to export garments worth \$25 billion. The local textile millers supply fabrics worth \$10 billion and the rest are imported.

If the target to export \$50 billion worth of garment products by 2021 is to be met, another \$30 billion worth of fabrics would be needed. So there is a huge scope for local textile millers to expand their production, Islam said.

FBCCI President Kazi Akramuddin Ahmed said local entrepreneurs will come to know about the latest technology and machines from this exhibition. The fair is a gateway to providing garment makers with a one-stop selling and sourcing platform, organisers said.

Foreign funds in stocks slide

FROM PAGE B1

Banks are the foreign investors' preferred sector, but non-bank financial institutions, power and energy, pharmaceuticals, multinationals, telecoms and IT also draw their attention.

Investors include fund managers such as Morgan Stanley, JPMorgan, Goldman Sachs and BlackRock. They manage various types of funds like endowment funds, hedge funds, long-only funds and mutual funds, and they invest in the country's capital market through these funds.

Net foreign investment in 2014 was Tk 2,619.79 crore, which was a 35 percent rise over the previous year, according to DSE data.

Ctg port unfazed by political turmoil

FROM PAGE B1

Kaji Mahmud Imam Bilu, proprietor of CFS Services, a C&F agent, said many transport firms are taking risks and delivering the goods as they have loan servicing to attend to.

So far, there were around 38 incidents of attacks on vehicles on the Dhaka-Chittagong highway.

There is a strong demand from importers for timely delivery of goods, he said.

But Mahbulul Alam, president of Chittagong Chamber of Commerce and Industry, said the port situation could take the turn for the worse if the blockade lingers.

Marico profits slip

FROM PAGE B1

In the October-December 2014, the company's earnings per share stood at Tk 8.99, down from Tk 11.1 a year ago. The share price of the company closed at Tk 1,109.7 yesterday at the Dhaka Stock Exchange.

Last year, Marico Bangladesh offered 900 percent cash dividend in total, the highest among all listed companies, including the 500 percent special dividend the multinational firm handed to mark its 12th year in operation in the country.


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Shafiqur Rahman Bhuiyan, president of Bangladesh Auto Biscuit and Bread Manufacturers Association, and Jim Hershey, executive director of the World Initiative for Soy in Human Health, attend the signing of an agreement at a programme in Dhaka recently to inspire bakeries to use more soy flour.



Asanga Marasinghe, country director of IFS in Bangladesh, and Hafizur Rahman Khan, chairman of Runner Group, attend the signing of a deal at a programme recently for implementation of IFS applications at Runner Automobiles and Runner Motors.



গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার

বাংলাদেশ পুলিশ
ইন্ডাস্ট্রিয়াল পুলিশ হেডকোয়ার্টার্স
বাড়ি নং-০২, রোড নং-১০, সেক্টর নং-১০, উত্তরা, ঢাকা

স্মারক নং-ইউঃ পুলিশ হেডকোঃ/গবেষণা/দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি-২০১৪-১৫/৫৭৯(২) তারিখঃ ০৩-০২-২০১৫খ্রিঃ

পুনঃ গবেষণা প্রস্তাব আহ্বান

এতদ্বারা "পাবলিক প্রকিউরমেন্ট আইন-২০০৬ এবং পাবলিক প্রকিউরমেন্ট বিধিমালা-২০০৮" তদীয় সংশোধিত-২০১০ অনুযায়ী ইন্ডাস্ট্রিয়াল পুলিশ হেডকোয়ার্টার্স, সেক্টর নং-১০, রোড নং-১০, বাড়ি নং-০২, উত্তরা, ঢাকা জন্ম ২০১৪-২০১৫ অর্থ বছরের জন্য নিম্নোক্ত গবেষণাকার্য সম্পাদনের লক্ষ্যে আত্মসি গবেষক অথবা গবেষণা প্রতিষ্ঠানের নিকট থেকে গবেষণা প্রস্তাব আহ্বান করা যাচ্ছে।

১. মন্ত্রণালয়/বিভাগ	ঃ স্বরাষ্ট্র মন্ত্রণালয়।
২. সংস্থার নাম	ঃ বাংলাদেশ পুলিশ।
৩. সংগ্রাহক সত্তার নাম	ঃ ডাইরেক্টর জেনারেল, ইন্ডাস্ট্রিয়াল পুলিশ হেডকোয়ার্টার্স, বাড়ি নং-০২, রোড নং-১০, সেক্টর নং-১০, উত্তরা, ঢাকা।
৪. দরপত্রের বিষয়	ঃ গবেষণা কাজের জন্য গবেষক অথবা গবেষণা প্রতিষ্ঠানের নিকট থেকে আর্থিক বায় বিভাজনসহ "Industrial Police: Its Impact on Economic Growth" বিষয়ক গবেষণা প্রস্তাব আহ্বান।
৫. দরপত্রের পদ্ধতি	ঃ উন্মুক্ত দরপত্র পদ্ধতি (OTM)।
৬. বাজেট ও অর্থনৈতিক খাত	ঃ রাজস্ব খাত (জিওবি)।
৭. দরপত্র তফসিল বিক্রয়ের শেষ তারিখ ও সময়	ঃ ২৫/০২/২০১৫খ্রিঃ অফিস চলাকালীন সময় পর্যন্ত।
৮. দরপত্র গ্রহণের শেষ তারিখ ও সময়	ঃ ২৬/০২/২০১৫খ্রিঃ দুপুর ১২.০০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত।
৯. দরপত্র খোলার তারিখ ও সময়	ঃ ২৬/০২/২০১৫খ্রিঃ দুপুর ১২.৩০ ঘটিকা। দরপত্রদাতা বা মনোনীত প্রতিদ্বন্দ্বিতাদের সম্মুখে (যদি কেহ উপস্থিত থাকেন) খোলা হবে।
১০. দরপত্র প্রাপ্তি ও দাখিলের স্থান	ঃ ডাইরেক্টর জেনারেল এর কার্যালয়, ইন্ডাস্ট্রিয়াল পুলিশ হেডকোয়ার্টার্স, বাড়ি নং-০২, রোড নং-১০, সেক্টর নং-১০, উত্তরা, ঢাকা।
১১. দরদাতার যোগ্যতা	ঃ অর্থ-সামাজিক গবেষণা কাজে কমপক্ষে ০৩ (তিন) বছরের অভিজ্ঞতা থাকতে হবে।
১২. শর্তাবলী	ঃ ১। নিম্নোক্ত শর্তাবলী/প্রমাণপত্রের সত্যায়িত কপি সিডিউলের সাথে জমা দিতে হবে। ব্যক্তির ক্ষেত্রে- (ক) শিক্ষাগত যোগ্যতা (খ) বয়সের প্রমাণপত্র (গ) গবেষণাকাজে নিয়োজিত থাকার সময়সীমা (ঘ) প্রকাশিত প্রবন্ধসমূহ (স্বাক্ষরসহ), (চ) উচ্চতর শিক্ষার সনদ (ছ) সহযোগী গবেষক/গবেষকগণের (যদি থাকে) উক্ত গবেষণাকর্মে অংশগ্রহণের সম্মতিপত্রসহ তাঁর/তাদের জীবনবৃত্তান্ত (জ) বিষয়ের সাথে সামঞ্জস্যপূর্ণ গবেষণা প্রস্তাব (নির্ধারিত ছকে)। প্রতিষ্ঠানের ক্ষেত্রে- (ক) প্রতিষ্ঠানের বৈধতার প্রমাণপত্র (খ) গবেষণা কাজে অভিজ্ঞতার প্রমাণপত্র (গ) প্রতিষ্ঠানের প্রধান নির্বাহীর গবেষণা কাজের অভিজ্ঞতা (ঘ) প্রতিষ্ঠানের প্রধান নির্বাহীর শিক্ষাগত সনদ (ঙ) সহযোগী গবেষক/গবেষকগণের (যদি থাকে) উক্ত গবেষণাকর্মে অংশগ্রহণের সম্মতিপত্রসহ তাঁর/তাদের জীবনবৃত্তান্ত (চ) প্রতিষ্ঠানের প্রকাশনাসহ (বই, প্রবন্ধ/গবেষণা প্রবন্ধ) (ছ) প্রতিষ্ঠানের সম্মতি (অবকাঠামো লজিস্টিক- যেনমঃ যানবাহন, ফটোকপিয়ার, স্ক্যানার ইত্যাদি) গবেষকের সংখ্যা, কর্মকর্তা/কর্মচারী (জ) বিষয়ের সাথে সামঞ্জস্যপূর্ণ প্রস্তাব। ২। গবেষণাটি অবশ্যই ২০১৪-২০১৫ অর্থ বছরের মধ্যে সমাপ্ত করতে হবে এবং গবেষণা প্রস্তাবে সময় বিভাজন উল্লেখ করতে হবে। ৩। গবেষণায় আত্মসি ব্যক্তি/প্রতিষ্ঠানকে সকল ক্ষেত্রে "বাংলাদেশ পুলিশ গবেষণা নীতিমালা-২০১৪" অনুসরণ করতে হবে। ৪। কোন প্রকার কারণ দর্শানো ব্যতিরেকে কর্তৃপক্ষ যে কোন দরপত্র গ্রহণ বা বাতিল করার ক্ষমতা সংরক্ষণ করেন।

১৩. দরপত্র দলিলের মূল্য	ঃ ৫০০/- (পাঁচশত) টাকা মাত্র (অফেরতযোগ্য)।
১৪. দরপত্র জামানত	ঃ ২১,০০০/- (একুশ হাজার) টাকা মাত্র (যে কোন তফসিলভুক্ত ব্যাংকের পেন-অর্ডার/ব্যাংক ড্রাফট)।

মোর্শেদুল আনোয়ার খান
বিপি নং- ৬৪৯১০২০৯৪৯
পরিচালক (অপ্স এন্ড ইন্ট.)
পক্ষে/ডাইরেক্টর জেনারেল
ইন্ডাস্ট্রিয়াল পুলিশ হেডকোয়ার্টার্স
উত্তরা, ঢাকা

জিডি-৪৮০