

DHAKA WEDNESDAY AUGUST 31, 2016, BHADRA 16, 1423 BS

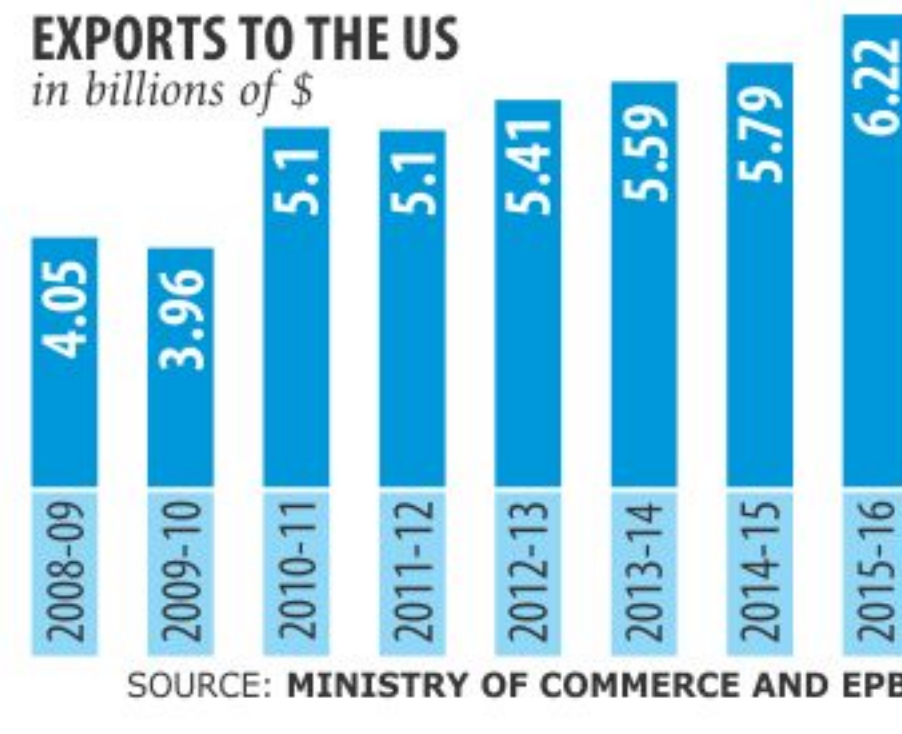
# US taking fresh GSP petitions

REFAYAT ULLAH MIRDHA

The US government is accepting applications from countries for trade benefits to the American market, in what is a stroke of good fortune for Bangladesh.

Bangladesh has been lobbying hard with the US government for the reinstatement of its Generalised System of Preferences scheme, which was suspended in June 2013 on grounds of serious shortcomings in workplace safety and labour rights.

Bangladesh has since submitted its progress report on workplace safety upgrades twice to the United States Trade Representative, the chief trade negotiation body for the American government, but



they were deemed insufficient. Now, Bangladesh has the opportunity to present its case once again.

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# Open up MFS to telcos: Tarana

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Mobile operators and other players should be allowed to provide mobile financial services (MFS), in a bid to ensure competition and benefit the masses through financial inclusion, State Minister for Telecom Tarana Halim said at a roundtable yesterday.

Tarana said the telecom and banking regulators should work together to formulate a model of regulation, which will help the operators and existing players to enter digital financial services.

Such a move will allow MFS to cover more unbanked people, she said. "I think mobile operators are deprived of the opportunity," she said.

Marginal people and others who live in hard-to-reach areas need to be brought under the banking network, Tarana said at the discussion on "financial inclusion in Bangladesh: opportunities, challenges and way forward through digital financial services" organised by Telecom Reporters' Network, Bangladesh (TRNB).

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# Mobile internet sets new record

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

The number of active mobile internet connections crossed the six-crore mark in Bangladesh at the end of July, according to data released by the regulator yesterday.

The number of mobile internet connections reached 6.04 crore or 94.45 percent of the total internet connections of 6.39 crore in July, Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission said.

The number of active internet connections went up by 3.79 lakh in July.

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# Three projects funded by India get nod

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

The Executive Committee of the National Economic Council yesterday approved three projects to be funded largely by India.

Of the projects, a medical college and hospital and a nursing college will be set up in Jamalpur at a cost of Tk 717 crore. Of the total cost, Tk 280 crore will come from Indian soft loans.

A six-storey hospital building and an academic building will be constructed under the project that is expected to be complete by 2019.

Hostels for the students and residential buildings for the doctors, teachers and employees will be built and modern medical equipment will be purchased for the hospital.

Under the second project that involves Tk 581 crore, Bangladesh will purchase buses for BTRC; Tk 434 crore will come from the Indian line of credit.

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