

STOCKS		COMMODITIES		ASIAN MARKETS				CURRENCIES			
DSEX	CSCX	Gold	Oil	MUMBAI	TOKYO	SINGAPORE	SHANGHAI	USD	EUR	GBP	JPY
▲ 0.85%	▲ 0.77%	\$1,348.70	\$47.56	▲ 0.08%	▼ 0.63%	▲ 0.02%	▼ 0.00%	BUY TK 80.95	96.33	105.86	0.73
6,167.40	11,566.45	(per ounce)	(per barrel)	31,687.52	19,274.82	3,228.56	3,365.44	SELL TK 82.05	99.93	109.46	0.76

রোগ নির্ণয়ে সর্বাধুনিক যন্ত্রপাতি ও সর্বোচ্চ মান।
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Star BUSINESS

DHAKA MONDAY SEPTEMBER 11, 2017, BHADRA 27, 1424 BS

Luxury buses make much headway in intercity travel

SOHEL PARVEZ

More and more luxury buses can be seen operating on the highways nowadays driven by a growing demand for a comfortable ride among long-haul travellers amid dust and traffic congestion on the road.

Nearly 1,000 air-conditioned buses from foreign brands such as Scania, Volvo, Hyundai, MAN, Mercedes Benz and Hino can be spotted on the highways every day with passengers from almost every corner of the country.

"There has been a massive change over the years," said Md Faruk Talukder Sohel, managing director of Shohagh Paribahan, one of the leading intercity coach operators in Bangladesh with a 200-strong fleet, 50 of which are air-conditioned coaches from Swedish manufacturers Scania and Volvo.

Not a single air-conditioned bus could be seen up north 15-20 years ago; such service was available only on the Dhaka-Chittagong, Dhaka-Khulna and Dhaka-Benapole routes then.

But now, 300-400 such buses are serving the northern region, he said.

One of the reasons for the spike in demand for air-conditioned buses is the rise in per capita income, according to Sohel. The weather also plays a part as well as the congestion on the highways.

As a result, the inter-city bus operators are progressively adding air-conditioned buses to their fleet,



Inter-city bus operators are progressively adding air-conditioned buses to their fleet.

or are equipping their regular buses with the cooling mechanism.

In so doing, they are also widening business opportunities for bus manufacturers.

Currently, bus engine makers from Sweden, Germany, South Korea and Japan are competing in Bangladesh to win the hearts of transporters, said market insiders.

"Competition is mainly taking place here among Scania, MAN,

Volvo and Hyundai," said Mohammad Abdus Sattar, general manager of Green Line Paribahan, a pioneer luxury intercity bus operator.

Market insiders said the prices of air-conditioned buses range from Tk 1 crore to Tk 2.25 crore, depending on brands and types.

Luxury passenger vehicles began to make their ways into Bangladeshi roads during the late 1990s to cope with the changes in

the tastes of consumers who were increasingly choosing buses over trains due to shorter journey time.

The roads carry more than 88 percent of the total passenger traffic in Bangladesh. Waterways and rail carry the rest of the passenger and freight traffic, according to a Planning Commission report on sustainable transportation and infrastructure.

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Exports hit record high in Aug

REFAYET ULLAH MIRDHA

Exports fetched \$3.64 billion in August, the highest in a single month in the country's history, on the back of increased shipments of garment, frozen fish, agricultural and leather products.

The previous monthly highest earning was recorded in June last year when exporters brought home \$3.58 billion.

August's receipts, which comfortably beat the target of \$2.90 billion, were an increase of 10.64 percent from a year earlier and 13.75 percent from a month earlier, according to data from the Export Promotion Bureau.

This marks the fourth month in a row in which the receipts crossed the \$3-billion mark, suggesting a pick-up in exports that somewhat lost its momentum last fiscal year.

August's receipts take the two-month tally to \$6.63 billion, up 13.92 percent from a year earlier.

Garment, which typically accounts for more than 80 percent of the export receipts raked in \$3.04 billion last month, an increase of 11.76 percent from a year earlier.

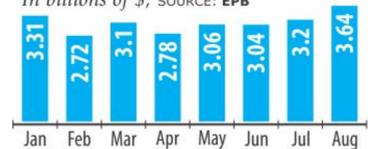
"Export earnings of the garment sector showed higher growth in August because of lower growth in the last few months," said Siddiqur Rahman, president of the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association.

The upward trend might continue into the next month as the garment exporters are now receiving payments for previous shipments.

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EXPORTS

In billions of \$, SOURCE: EPB



Banking career open to all disciplines

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Entry-level banking jobs, which offer a better pay package than many others, have become more accessible after the Bangladesh Bank yesterday instructed banks not to mention any specific discipline or university in their job advertisements.

The decision means thousands of competent graduates who were previously disqualified for applying due to their subject field or university will now be able to have a crack at it.

The instruction came at a meeting chaired by BB Governor Fazle Kabir and was

attended by the chief executives of all banks.

"We have agreed that we will not specify subject and university in the job circular for entry level posts," said Anis A Khan, chairman of the Association of Bankers Bangladesh.

So, the two posts of probationary officer and management trainee officer will be open for graduates of all recognised universities, Khan, also the managing director of Mutual Trust Bank, told reporters after the meeting.

However, the banks differed with the BB on the introduction of uniform designation and hierarchy in the sector.

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Govt gets biometric software to list Rohingyas

MUHAMMAD ZAHIDUL ISLAM

The government has acquired a software system to record biometric data of Rohingyas as part of efforts to document the refugees entering Bangladesh to escape genocide in Myanmar.

Bangladeshi firm Tiger IT handed over the software to the Department of Immigration and Passports yesterday evening. Since August 25, some three lakh Rohingyas have entered Bangladesh, according to the International Organisation for Migration.

The department's Director General Maj Gen Md Masud Rezwana said they along with Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) and the Cox's Bazar district administration would collect the data

at 12 registration points.

He said, as the government last week instructed the department to start biometric registration of the Rohingyas, they have asked BGB to provide personnel for data entry. The department will also try to incorporate data of those who entered years earlier, Rezwana added.

The registration process will begin ahead of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's visit to Cox's Bazar tomorrow, said a senior official of the department requesting anonymity.

Apart from the fingerprint, several information of each refugee will be stored in a dedicated server including name, gender, age, photo, parents' name, birthplace, nationality, country and religion.

Each person will receive an ID card

having a barcode containing all relevant information, said a senior executive of Tiger IT, which has developed the identification related software for other Southeast Asian countries.

In the absence of the ID, a scan of the person's fingerprint will also reveal all the data, he added.

Rezwana said there was no proper identification system earlier for which the authorities concerned found it difficult to track Rohingyas while some of the refugees collected forged Bangladeshi passports to migrate abroad.

"This time we are very careful and the high command asked us to find a solution to resolve future problems," he said, adding that the database would also prove useful in distributing relief.

ADP spending rises in Aug

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

The ministries and divisions put to use 5.15 percent of their total outlay in the first two months of the fiscal year thanks to a spike in expenditure in the month of August.

Last month, the ministries and divisions employed Tk 7,505 crore to take the two-month tally to Tk 8,457 crore, according to statistics from the Implementation Monitoring and Evaluation Division.

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TK Group to set up refinery, LPG terminal

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

The Bangladesh Economic Zones Authority yesterday signed an initial deal with Super Petrochemical Pvt Ltd, a concern of TK Group, to award land to the company to help it set up refinery, storage facilities, liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) terminal and a power plant in Moheshkhali.

The two parties signed the memorandum of understanding on land allocation at a programme at Sonargaon hotel in Dhaka, according to a statement of the BEZA.

The 300-acre land is located in Dholghata and south Dholghata mouza under the Moheshkhali-3 Economic Zone in Cox's Bazar.

Once completed, the project will create about 10,000 jobs, directly and indirectly, according to the statement.

It said SPPL would make heavy investment to set up a large petrochemical refinery plant at Moheshkhali with technical support from China, Germany, the US and France.

The company is expected to form a joint venture with South Korea's leading LPG player SK Gas to see the financial and technical feasibility of setting up an LPG terminal.

If the terminal is set up, it would

save the country about \$40 million annually, the company said.

SPPL is the largest producer of petroleum and petrochemical products in the private sector in Bangladesh. It produces and supplies fuel oil to state-run Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation.

It also has an exclusive contract with state-run Eastern Refinery Ltd on naphtha buy and sales.

The company caters 60 percent of local demand for octane. Besides, it produces petrochemical products such as toluene and xylene used in making paints, inks and adhesive.

JW Kim, director general for trade at South Korean embassy in Dhaka; Rho Kangho, vice-president of SK Gas, and Mohammad Mustafa Haider, managing director of Super Petrochemical Pvt Ltd, attended the signing ceremony.

Md Abul Kalam Azad, chief coordinator for sustainable development goals at the Prime Minister's Office; Kazi Aminul Islam, executive chairman of the Bangladesh Investment Development Authority; Abul Mansur Md Faizullah, chairman of Petrobangla; and Paban Chowdhury, executive chairman of the BEZA, were also present.

Add zinc-enriched rice in safety net schemes: HarvestPlus

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

HarvestPlus, a biofortified food crop development initiative, yesterday urged the government to distribute zinc-enriched rice in social safety net schemes to fight malnutrition.

Biofortification is the idea of breeding crops to increase their nutritional value.

The distribution will encourage people to purchase of biofortified paddy and encourage farmers to grow the biofortified rice, said Md Khairul Bashar, country manager of HarvestPlus, at a press meet at its Dhaka office.

HarvestPlus Founding Director and Ambassador-at-Large Howarth E Bouis, also spoke. Bouis will leave Dhaka tomorrow after completing his four-day visit.

In Bangladesh, 44 percent of children below five years of age and 57 percent of women suffer from various complications for zinc deficiency, according to HarvestPlus.

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