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# star BUSINESS

DHAKA SUNDAY SEPTEMBER 17, 2017, ASHWIN 2, 1424 BS

## Cattle not subjected to quarantine pose health risks: experts

**SOHEL PARVEZ**

Cattle are being brought in over the borders without being put in quarantine, posing a health risk to humans and livestock for diseases that might arrive and spread undetected.

Such unchecked entry of cattle and animals has been on for years in the absence of adequate attention of the government, said stakeholders.

For example, it has been 12 years since the Animal and Animal Product Quarantine Act 2005 was passed but a corresponding rule on its application is not yet available.



STAR/FILE  
**Quarantine of animals is important because more than 70 percent of human diseases come through birds and animals, says an expert.**

The Department of Livestock Services said the rule has been framed and awaits vetting by the law ministry.

The department set up 24 quarantine stations at ports, including 19 land-based ones, to test animals and animal products before giving clearance for entry.

Officials say there is a lack of workforce and equipment for which only a few have become operational.

"Quarantine of animals is important because more than 70 percent of human diseases come through birds and animals," said Md Shahiduzzaman, professor of the Department of Parasitology at Bangladesh Agricultural University.

"Cattle that are brought from India and Myanmar may carry disease. This is risky," he said.

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## BoP hits deficit for first time in 16yrs

**STAR BUSINESS REPORT**

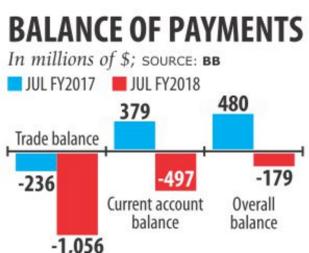
Bangladesh's balance of payments entered the negative territory for the first time in 16 years in July on the back of a wide mismatch in trade.

The overall balance was \$179 million in the deficit in the first month of fiscal 2017-18 against \$480 million in the surplus a year earlier.

While historical monthly data is not available, the last time the overall balance was in the negative was back in fiscal 2000-01, when it was \$281 million in the deficit for the whole fiscal year.

The current account balance also traversed to the negative territory for the first time in four years in fiscal 2016-17.

However, Bangladesh Bank projects that the overall balance will be



\$2.35 billion in the surplus at the end of the fiscal year, but the current account deficit will reach \$2.72 billion.

In July import soared 47 percent, whereas a year earlier it crept up only 2.99 percent.

As the import of food, capital machinery and raw cotton increased so did the overall import, said a BB official.

For instance, in July last year food import was only \$0.8 million, whereas this year it was a whopping \$101.8 million.

Besides rice, capital machinery import shot up 61 percent in the first month of the fiscal year. Raw cotton import increased 105 percent, yarn 26 percent and clinker 52 percent.

At the same time, the import of consumer goods like milk, edible oil, sugar and so on increased between 26 percent and 114 percent.

On the other hand, export slightly increased year-on-year but not at the rate as import.

In July export grew 18.50 percent. Due to the huge mismatch in import and export trade, deficit crossed the \$1 billion mark in July, in contrast to \$236 million a year earlier.

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## NBR bins plan to purchase electronic cash registers

**SOHEL PARVEZ**

The National Board of Revenue has abandoned plans to buy electronic cash registers (ECR) and distribute them among retailers and wholesalers.

Instead, the revenue authority plans to enlist importers, offer duty-free benefits and ask shopkeepers to install the devices for recording sales data electronically, senior officials of the NBR said.

Md Rezaul Hasan, project director of the VAT Online Project, said proper implementation of the new law on value added tax necessitated the government to make the purchase.

"As the implementation of the VAT law has been deferred by two years, we will issue circular soon asking businesses to install ECRs with certain specifications."

Another reason for scrapping the purchase decision is that providing after-sales service for the ECRs is not a manageable proposition for the NBR, said VOP Deputy Project Director Syed Mushfequr Rahman.

Finance Minister AMA Muhiht in his 2017-18 budget speech had said that the government was procuring electronic fiscal devices to distribute them among the business community at cost price.

"In addition, the government is also working to develop a mobile application, which will help taxpayers cross-check whether the VAT they pay is indeed deposited into the government exchequer," he had said in June.

The revenue authority earlier planned to procure 10,000 ECRs for large shops, wholesalers, restaurants and other businesses. Under a pilot phase, it found 8,007 entities eligible for ECR use.

Taxmen said revenue collection from retail and wholesale traders and restaurants would increase once they start using electronic sales recording machines with fiscal memory devices, which leave no scope for manipulating data.

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## Global rights groups urge brands to sign up for second Accord

**REFAYET ULLAH MIRDHA**

Two global rights groups, IndustriALL and UNI Global Union, have asked the Western clothing brands to hasten the signing of the second Accord agreement as the response from potential signatories is still lukewarm.

The 2018 Bangladesh Accord, which will cover more than 1,160 garment factories, was announced by the global unions and brand representatives at the meeting of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development in Paris in June.

However, until now only 30 brands have signed up for the new Accord, which is three years long and will go into effect once the current one expires next May.

The two global unions are calling on brands to sign up by October 5 before the World Day for Decent Work on October 7.

"While many brands talk about supply chain transparency and social responsibility, those are just empty words without accountability," said Christy Hoffman, deputy general secretary of UNI.

"The Bangladesh Accord is the only platform that is legally binding, and its track record of life-saving remediation is proof of the effectiveness of this model," she added.

The new Accord builds on the achievements of the first one and maintains the legally binding framework and commitment to transparency.

It also adds new layer of worker protection and ensures that many more factories will be inspected and renovated as signatory brands add on suppliers.

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## H&M makes breakthrough in upcycling garments

**STAR BUSINESS REPORT**

Experts have invented a technology that allows recycling of old garment items without any quality loss-- a development that will help reduce dependence on virgin raw materials like raw cotton for yarn and fabrics.

Previously, in the absence of commercially viable separation, sorting and recycling technology, the fashion industry was not able to properly recycle garment items.

"This is a major breakthrough in the pursuit of a fashion industry operating within the planetary boundaries," said Edwin Keh, chief executive officer of the Hong Kong Research Institute of Textiles and Apparel (HKRITA).

HKRITA with an estimated funding of 5.8 million euros from the H&M Foundation made the innovation, which will be licensed widely to ensure broad market access and maximum impact.

"By being able to upcycle used textiles into new high-value textiles, we no longer need to solely rely on virgin materials to dress a growing world population," Keh said in a statement.

The recycling method is cost effective and there is no secondary pollution to the environment, ensuring that the life of the recycled material is prolonged in a sustainable way.

"The fashion industry is using more resources than the planet allows," said the Swedish retail giant H&M, the largest buyer of the Bangladesh's garment sector.

The technology is a major breakthrough in the journey towards a closed loop for textiles, it said.

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