

STOCKS		COMMODITIES		ASIAN MARKETS				CURRENCIES				
DSEX	CSCX	Gold	Oil	MUMBAI	TOKYO	SINGAPORE	SHANGHAI	USD	EUR	GBP	JPY	
▲ 0.23%	▲ 0.19%	\$1,279.90	\$51.58	▼ 0.60%	▲ 0.40%	▲ 0.18%	▼ 0.35%	81.35	94.82	106.28	0.71	
6,039.55	11,329.75	(per ounce)	(per barrel)	32,389.96	21,448.52	3,334.91	3,370.10	BUY TK	82.75	98.42	109.88	0.75

রোগ নির্ণয়ে সর্বাধুনিক যন্ত্রপাতি ও সর্বোচ্চ মান।
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Star BUSINESS

DHAKA FRIDAY OCTOBER 20, 2017, KARTIK 5, 1424 BS

Accord to leave next year

At most six months' extension will be given: govt

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Accord, the garment factory inspection agency sponsored by more than 200 brands mostly based in Europe, will leave Bangladesh in May next year after failing to get an extension despite lobbying for more than a year.

The platform wanted to stay in Bangladesh until 2021 to ensure its goals were fully met.

The government yesterday said the platform's tenure in Bangladesh may be extended by six more months from May 31 next year if the steering committee deems it necessary.

"In that case, the name of the agency will be 'transitional Accord'," Commerce Minister Tofail Ahmed told reporters after a meeting of the steering committee of the Accord, the main operation body of the platform, at the secretariat.

The steering committee's members include: Mujibul Haque Chunnun, state minister for labour and employment ministry; Shafiqul Islam Mohiuddin, president of the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry; and Siddiqur Rahman, president of Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association.

A new steering committee comprising representatives from the international clothing brands that

KEY POINTS

- Accord was formed in May 2013
- The agency inspected nearly **2,000** garment factories
- Accord to leave Bangladesh after May 31 next year
- More than **80pc** remediation works have been completed
- Factories spent **Tk 5cr to Tk 20cr** on factory remediation
- Remediation Coordination Cell will look after the remediation and safety issues after the departure of Accord

source from Bangladesh, representatives from the BGMEA, International Labour Organisation and trade union leaders will review the activities of Accord in January and May next year.

Alliance, the platform of 17 North American retailers, has already informed the government through a letter that it will leave Bangladesh by May next year.

Both the platforms have already completed 80 percent of the inspection and remediation of the factory buildings from which their members source apparel items, according to the minister.

The factory owners have spent between Tk 5 crore and Tk 20 crore for

remediation of the structures as per the recommendations of the experts of Accord and Alliance.

Both the agencies will hand over their responsibilities to the Remediation Coordination Cell, which will monitor the progress in enhancing workplace safety in garment factories.

The cell will be run by the steering committee, which will act under the ministry of labour and employment.

During its stay in Bangladesh, Accord had to struggle to complete the inspection and remediation works in the factories as many did not cooperate.

The agency also faced court cases in Dhaka and Amsterdam as the garment factory owners challenged its legality to inspect and suggest remediation activities in Bangladesh.

The garment manufacturers have been complaining that Accord signatories were not giving money for remediation works although they promised it in the guidelines.

The relation between the Accord and the BGMEA was not warm enough because of its lack of representation initially in the steering committee of the Accord.

After the meeting, a signatory of the Accord, said the retailers are here to do business, not to remediate the factory buildings.

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NBR to probe outsiders' entry into Ctg customs

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

The National Board of Revenue is going to investigate outsiders' involvement as middlemen in customs assessment and related work at Chittagong Customs House.

A four-member probe body was formed and it will visit the customs house on Sunday, according to a notice issued on October 16.

The members are: SM Ashfaq Hussain, member for board administration at the NBR; Md Rezaul Hasan, member for customs and VAT administration; Md Belal Uddin, director-general of the NBR's central intelligence cell, and Moinul Khan, director-general of the Customs Intelligence and Investigation Directorate.

With covert support from a section of corrupt officials, a good number of outsiders are taking advantage of workforce shortage.

The outsiders have long been active in the customs house, assisting officials in composing on computers, transferring file from one department to another and assessing related activities.

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Govt meets mobile operators' demands

Agrees to amend 4G guideline within a week

MUHAMMAD ZAHIDUL ISLAM

In a surprise move the government yesterday decided to amend the guidelines on 4G service by incorporating the mobile operators' concerns, lifting the shroud of uncertainty surrounding the technology's long-delayed roll-out in Bangladesh.

As many as 22 of the 23 concerns raised by Association of Mobile Telecom Operators of Bangladesh about the guideline were sorted after a meeting with Prime Minister's ICT Affairs Adviser Sajeb Wazed Joy, held at the premier's official residence on Wednesday.

The adviser took note of the concerns and asked the Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission to amend the guidelines accordingly. An amended guideline is likely to be issued within a week.

In a separate programme yesterday, Joy also said the government has sorted out 22 of the 23 concerns raised by the operators.

"The last one will be resolved within a few days," he said at the launch of PayPal service in Bangladesh.

During Wednesday's three-hour meeting, the government decided to lift the restriction on the source of funding. The telecom watchdog had earlier recommended making it mandatory that all investment was in foreign currency.

But mobile operators now can invest in 4G after borrowing from local banks -- a move that will ultimately help banks as they are sitting on idle money.

As per the new decision, the operators will not be required to obtain the no-objection certificate from the telecom regulator in advance about their corporate social responsibility projects.

4G

MAJOR CHANGES

- Operators can take loans from local banks for 4G rollout
- Revenue sharing will remain unchanged at 5.5pc for 15 years
- Operators will keep users' data for 3-5yrs instead of 12yrs
- Finance ministry will decide on spectrum's price reduction
- Operators will not need to take NOC from regulator for CSR activities

The meeting also decided to redefine 4G services in terms of speed.

According to the existing guideline, the minimum speed would be 100 Mbps when the users are in move and 1 Gbps when they are not moving.

Operators said this was not technically impossible but would need huge investment. As a result, the service will be costly.

Joy accepted the argument and asked officials to redefine it, said a top official of the BTRC who was present in the meeting.

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ADP spending up in first quarter

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Development spending in the first quarter of fiscal 2017-18 has been higher than last year on the back of greater use of foreign aid.

Between the months of July and September, the ministries and divisions spent Tk 16,755 crore, which is 10.21 percent of their total outlay, according to statistics from the Implementation Monitoring and Evaluation Division.

At this point last fiscal year, Tk 10,789 crore was spent, which was 8.75 percent of the total allocation for the annual development programme.

This fiscal year, the total allocation was Tk 164,085 crore, so both in terms of percentage and amount the ADP's implementation has been better.

The use of foreign aid this year has also been higher both in terms of percentage and amount.

In the first quarter, foreign aid spending was Tk 7,772 crore, which was almost double the amount from a year earlier. Foreign aid utilisation was 12.86 percent during the period in contrast to 8.19 percent last year.

ADP IMPLEMENTATION RATE



Of the total outlay this year, the government's own resource accounts for Tk 95,515 crore, about 8.48 percent of which was spent in the first three months.

During the same period last fiscal year, the implementation rate was 9.19 percent, meaning this year's implementation declined about 1 percentage point.

In terms of amount, the spending increased: it was Tk 8,104 crore against Tk 6,494 crore a year earlier.

Despite natural disasters, project implementation has been good, said a planning ministry official. Of the 15 large ministries and divisions that got 80.83 percent of the allocation this year, five spent higher than the average.

The power division spent the highest this quarter: 29.07 percent. It was followed by the road transport division, which spent 17.04 percent of its total allocation for the year, the local government division 14.36 percent, agriculture ministry 13.79 percent and secondary and higher education division 10.47 percent.

The other 10 ministries and divisions' implementation rate is low. For instance, a number of mega projects are being implemented under the bridges division but the division spent only 3.81 percent of its allocation in the first quarter.

The science and technology ministry, which has the huge Rooppur nuclear power project in implementation, could spend only Tk 4.48 crore in the first three months -- only 0.04 percent of its total outlay for the year. Information and communication technology division spent 8.17 percent and health service division 5.76 percent.

The railways ministry, primary and mass education ministry, shipping ministry, energy and mineral resources division, housing and public works ministry and water resources ministry could spend between 1.25 percent and 6.5 percent.

66 weavers get nod to use GI tag for Jamdani

SOHEL PARVEZ

The Department of Patents, Designs and Trademarks has given go-ahead to 66 Jamdani weavers to use geographical indication tags to market and brand the traditional fabric at home and abroad.

Geographical indication (GI) is a name or sign used on products to certify that it possesses certain qualities for being made as per traditional methods or enjoy a certain reputation due to its geographical origin.

"We think the Jamdani weavers will get better prices for their product thanks to the opportunity to market the fabric as a GI product of Bangladesh," said Md Sanowar Hossain, registrar of the patents department under the industries ministry.

On October 18, the department revealed the names of the weavers based mostly in Rugganj, Narayanganj through a notification, GI Authorised Users Journal.

The local patent authority will now wait two months to see if there is any objection regarding the names of the authorised users of GI.

If there is no objection, the patents department will issue authorised user certificates to the



Jamdani saris being sold at a wholesale market at BSCIC Jamdani Palli in Demra.

weavers to use the GI logo, according to Hossain.

The patents department issued the notification nearly a year after

it registered Jamdani as a GI product of Bangladesh and handed over the ownership of Jamdani's GI to the state-run Bangladesh

Small and Cottage Industries Corporation (BSCIC).

On behalf of the Jamdani weavers, the BSCIC applied for the



GI logo

registration in September 2015, a move that came a few years after India registered "Uppada Jamdani" sari as a GI product.

The GI registration cleared much of the concerns that India's move might cause Bangladesh to lose its GI recognition for Jamdani despite having a century-old tradition of weaving the fabric in Dhaka.

Bangladesh's patents authority, which later recognised hilsa as a GI product of the country, also received applications from weavers through BSCIC for permission to be the authorised users of the GI tag on Jamdani.

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GP heading towards a record year

Q3 profits up 6.7pc

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Grameenphone, the country's leading mobile operator, is on course to logging in its highest ever profit in its 20-year history on the back of a healthy growth in internet subscription and operational efficiency.

The operator recorded Tk 700 crore as profit for the third quarter to take the tally so far this year to Tk 2,146 crore. Grameenphone's highest profit was registered last year: Tk 2,250 crore.

The profit for the third quarter is an increase of 6.70 percent from a year earlier but is 11.39 percent lower than the previous quarter.

"The quarter was a particularly challenging one due to heavy rainfall and the disastrous flooding that affected much of the country," said Michael Patrick Foley, chief executive officer of Grameenphone.

The industry continued to be very competitive on a number of fronts, including subscriber acquisition.

GP's NET PROFIT

in crores of taka, SOURCE: GP



active subscribers stood at 6.39 crore, up 3.7 percent from the previous quarter.

The operator recorded Tk 3,320 crore as revenue for the third quarter, up 12.92 percent from a year earlier.

"The healthy growth in our revenue generating subscriber base, price stability in voice segment and ongoing operational efficiency programmes are all contributing in value creation for our shareholders," said Karl Erik, Grameenphone's chief financial officer.

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Farm loan lending goes up 23pc

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Farm loan disbursement rose 23 percent year-on-year to Tk 4,235.74 crore in the first quarter of 2017-18, according to central bank data.

Bangladesh Bank officials said banks sitting on surplus liquidity have showed increased interest in disbursing agriculture credit amid a sluggish trend in the industrial sector credit growth.

Growth of industrial loan disbursement fell to a five-year low in fiscal 2017 despite a sharp decline in interest on lending.

Industrial loan disbursement registered a 13.51 percent growth in the last fiscal year compared to 20.77 percent in the previous year, the BB data showed.

The banks are also disbursing a hefty amount of consumer loans with a view to earning quick profits, the officials said.

In July-August of the current fiscal year, eight state-owned commercial and specialised banks -- Sonali, Janata, Agrani, Rupali, BASIC, BDBL, Bangladesh Krishi and Rajshahi Krishi Unnayan Bank -- together disbursed Tk 1,475.25 crore in agriculture loans.

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