

**CTG CUSTOMS**

# Disposal of abandoned import items starts today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

The customs house in Chattogram will start disposing off almost 3,000 tonnes of perishable and chemical goods stuffed in 130 containers today, which were left abandoned by the importers for years.

The process of destroying goods will start at 5pm at the Chattogram City Corporation's dumping yard in the city's Halishahar. The consignments of the products to be destroyed include onion, ginger, garlic, apple, malta and several chemicals. These products were brought in by 50 importers in seven years to 2016.

The goods will be destroyed in phases and it would take more than a week to complete, said Tapan Chandra Dey, deputy commissioner of customs.

According to rules, if an importer fails to receive imported consignments within

30 days after the goods are unloaded from ships the port authority hands over the import documents to the customs authority that issues notice to the importer.

If the importer does not take delivery within 15 days into issuing the notice, the goods can be auctioned off.

According to customs officials, main reasons for not taking delivery of imported goods include reduction of price of goods in the local market, failure of submitting original documents in support of import, failure to get clearance permit report and importers' denial to give fine after being accused for breaching rules.

Representatives of the Department of Environment, Bangladesh Navy, local city corporation, Chattogram Metropolitan Police, Rapid Action Battalion, shipping agents and other organisations concerned will be present on the occasion.

# SBAC Bank reelects chairman



**SM Amzad Hossain**

STAR BUSINESS DESK

SM Amzad Hossain has been reelected as chairman of South Bangla Agriculture and Commerce (SBAC) Bank Ltd for a three-year term.

The election took place at the bank's 87th board meeting at its head office in Dhaka, the bank said in a statement yesterday.

Hossain is the chairman of the Lockpur Group of Industries.

He served the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry as a director and Bangladesh Frozen Foods Exporters Association as president.

# Memorial conference on Samson H Chowdhury held

Three win young scientist award



SQUARE PHARMACEUTICALS

Salman F Rahman, private industry and investment adviser to the prime minister; Nazmul Hassan, president of Bangladesh Association of Pharmaceutical Industries, and Mustafizur Rahman, a distinguished fellow of the Centre for Policy Dialogue, attend a session of the "Fourth Samson H Chowdhury Memorial Conference" at Sonargaon hotel in Dhaka on Saturday.

STAR BUSINESS DESK

Three local scientists have recently been awarded with the "Samson H Chowdhury Award for Young Scientist" for their outstanding research work and contribution in pharmaceutical and healthcare sector.

The recipients of the awards are: Ronok Zahana, an assistant professor of the pharmacy department at Rajshahi University; Md Hossain Shariar, an associate professor of the pharmaceutical sciences department at North South University, and Md

Anwar Siddique, an assistant professor of the microbiology department at Dhaka University.

Salman F Rahman, a lawmaker and private industry and investment adviser to the prime minister, and Nazmul Hassan, another lawmaker and president of Bangladesh Association of Pharmaceutical Industries, handed over the awards at the fourth Samson H Chowdhury Memorial Conference at Sonargaon hotel in Dhaka.

Around 450 people, including policymakers, government officials, industrialists, scientists, academi-

cians, business professionals, attended the conference.

Tapan Chowdhury, managing director of Square Pharmaceuticals Ltd, highlighted the role of late Samson H Chowdhury in developing the pharmaceutical sector of Bangladesh.

The biennial conference is organised to continue the legacy of Samson H Chowdhury for spreading knowledge and encouraging involvement of academicians, public and private sectors for achieving the sustainable development goal in the healthcare sector, Chowdhury said.

# EA's 'Fortnite' rival wins 10m gamers in three days

REUTERS

A game developed by Electronics Arts Inc as a competitor to the wildly popular "Fortnite" has signed up 10 million players within three days of its launch, the videogame maker said, driving its shares up 16 percent on Friday.

With "Apex Legends," EA is hoping to reproduce the success of "Fortnite," a sort of hybrid of "The Hunger Games" and "Minecraft" that drops 100 people onto an

island to fight each other for survival.

The number of gamers playing "Apex Legends" had crossed 10 million and there were about 1 million gamers logged on at the same time, EA said late on Thursday. As of Friday, the game was the most viewed on gaming live-streaming network Twitch.

The figures come just days after EA lowered its yearly revenue projections following weak sales of its "Battlefield V" title, news that had sent its stock plunging 18 percent.

# Flat buyers worry about delays

FROM PAGE B1

Some of the aggrieved customers have legitimate complaints, said Liakat Ali Bhuiyan, vice-president of REHAB, adding that those facing problems in getting possession of their properties can complain to the REHAB office every Saturday.

"We have a complaint cell to settle the dispute. But this cell can settle the case only in case of REHAB members," he added. Before booking a flat or plot customers should check the legal documents, financial strength and history of the real estate companies as well as the design approval of a project, said Abdul Fazal Mohammad Tofazzal, head of marketing of Tropical Homes.

"The allegations of customers are true as some companies have entered the market to make money in the name of business."

He advised customers to opt for renowned companies to buy flats. "Otherwise, they will lose their money."

Customers prefer flats with the sizes of 1,400sqft to 1,600sqft and within the price range of Tk 80 lakh to Tk 1.20 crore. "Affording a flat in the capital city is still beyond the purchasing capacity of the middle-income group," Tofazzal added.

Mohammad Saddam Hossain, senior executive of Assurance Developments, said their target is premium customers and they have received positive response at the fair.

Most customers want to buy flats at Tk 6,000 to Tk 6,500 per sqft, said Sheikh Mohammed Ibrahim, an assistant manager at Anwar Landmark.

"It is possible to supply flats at that price in areas such as Mohammadpur, Shyamoli, Banashree and Mirpur, but not in posh areas," he added.

# Ensure quality public investment: CPD

FROM PAGE B1

The minister said they also want equity, equality and inclusiveness in growth, so they are taking advices from many think-tanks and economists.

Fahmida Khatun, executive director CPD, presented a keynote paper at the event.

There are two major concerns about the economy: the higher growth could not generate adequate employment and the benefits of growth are unequally distributed.

To ensure inclusive growth, the government should focus on quality education, which would enhance the efficiency of students.

The government should focus on quality healthcare for all as well as higher coverage of social protection for all, she added.

M Syeduzzaman, a former finance minister, Mustafizur Rahman and Rounaq Jahan, distinguished fellows of the CPD, also spoke.

A publication titled "State of the Bangladesh Economy and National Elections 2018 Priorities for Electoral debates" was unveiled at the programme.



BANK ASIA

Rumee A Hossain, chairman of the executive committee of Bank Asia and a director of Bank Asia Foundation, poses with 76 meritorious students of Cumilla and Noakhali region who received Bank Asia Higher Education Scholarship at a programme organised by the foundation at an auditorium of the Bangladesh Academy for Rural Development in Cumilla on Saturday. Md Arfan Ali, president and managing director of the bank, were also present.

# All export, import items to be scanned : Kamal

FROM PAGE B1

"It is a good initiative. Bona fide businesses suffer for a handful of criminals who import goods by mis-declaration."

Bangladesh losses about \$2 billion worth businesses annually for delays in clearance of sample fabrics, he said.

"Scanning is also a requirement of many buyers to prevent shipment of harmful items," the FBCCI chief added.

Mongla port, the Inland Container Depot at Kamapur and the Benapole land port have one scanner each, said Md Reyadul Islam, second secretary of customs modernisation department of the NBR. Nine more scanners will be procured, he added.

At the meeting, commissioners of the department raised various problems that hinder revenue collection such as inadequate manpower, absence of offices at every district and tariff and VAT waiver given to different sectors.

Revenue collectors also sought clear directive from Kamal on the implementation schedule of VAT Law 2012 and the rate of VAT.

Kamal said the VAT officials would be informed after hearing from the businesses and getting the consent from the prime minister, according to an official who was in the meeting.

The finance minister also cited the low

tax-GDP ratio and asked the NBR to take measures to achieve the tax collection target of Tk 296,201 crore.

In the first half of fiscal 2018-19, the NBR managed Tk 98,027 crore, up 6 percent year-on-year, which is the lowest growth rate in recent years.

It missed the target for the period by Tk 28,000 crore.

At the meeting, revenue officials also said collection of huge amounts of revenue has got stuck owing to cases pending at the courts.

Kamal underscored the issue and said steps would be taken to discourage filing cases with ill motives.

"We have a tendency to go to the court even if there is no ground. Anyone can go to the court to seek justice. But how will we attain our revenue collection goal if we all go to court?"

Currently, a taxpayer has to pay 10 percent of the claimed tax by revenue officials for appealing to the commissioner of VAT.

If the taxpayer goes to the Appellate Tribunal against the commissioner's verdict, he/she will have to deposit 10 percent of the claimed money, according to VAT law. The taxpayer would get his deposited amount back along with interest if the government losses in the case, Kamal said.

# Grameenphone named significant market power

FROM PAGE B1

The committee recommended increasing the SMP operator's tariffs for both voice calls and data and imposing different quality control parameters.

The regulation -- already in place in India, Thailand, Singapore and Malaysia -- states that if an operator is found to have wage anti-market activities, the BTRC can step in to break the monopoly or oligopoly.

Any competitor can file complaint against the SMP and the regulator will have a look into it.

The restrictions on GP are expected to give a leg up to Robi and Banglalink and to a certain extent to Teletalk.

Robi controls 29.87 percent of the subscriber base, followed by Banglalink 21.35 percent and Teletalk 2.46 percent.

# Five IT trade bodies team up

FROM PAGE B1

ISPAB would push for declaring fixed broadband business as an IT-enabled service with the view to getting tax holidays. "This would reduce our cost of doing business," said MA Hakim, president of ISPAB.

The trade bodies also objected to the ICT minister's proposal to introduce taxes on computer imports with the view to promoting local assembling.

"The government wants to make internet flourish in the remotest parts of the country and at the same time it is imposing tax on computer and other device imports. This is contradictory," said another leader who was also present in the meeting.

In fact, the trade bodies want tax exemption on computer imports to be extended by another five years.

"Otherwise, the prices of computers will rise, which would be a setback for the industry," Kabir said.

BACCO said there is no tax on import of equipment related to call centres and outsourcing services. But if bought from local sources there is a high tax.

"This tax should be withdrawn," said BACCO President Wahidur Rahman Sharif.

The trade bodies will also seek dislocation allowance to encourage the employees of IT companies to shift to high-tech parks, which are located in remote areas.

BCS President Subrata Sarkar and e-CAB General Secretary Muhammad Abdul Wahed Tomal were also present.

# Karnaphuli tunnel excavation begins Feb 24

FROM PAGE B1

A new township will develop on the other side of the Karnaphuli once the construction of the tunnel completes, linking the port city with Anwara upazila.

The total length of the proposed tunnel will be about 9.3 kilometres: 3.4 km under the river, an approach road of 5.25 km and 727 metres of over-bridge.

Industrialisation would take place in the vast area of southern Chattogram, said Nasir Uddin Chowdhury, a former first vice-president of the Bangladesh Garments Manufacturers and Exporters Association.

"It will create jobs for thousands of people," he added.

The tunnel would strengthen the role of Chattogram as the centre of communications system, said Mahbul Alam, president of the Chittagong Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

The cost of the project was estimated at Tk 8,446 crore in 2015 and was later revised to Tk 9,880 crore as the price of the land rose three times, according to Harunur Rashid Chowdhury, the project director. China Communication and Construction Company is constructing the tunnel.

The Chinese government is funding the project and Bangladesh is bearing the cost of land acquisition and utilities.

The construction of the project began on December 5, 2017 and is due to be completed by December 2022. About 32 percent works of the project have so far been completed, the project director said.



SHAHJALAL ISLAMI BANK

Mohammed Golam Quddus, vice chairman of Shahjalal Islami Bank, and M Shahidul Islam, CEO, open the bank's relocated branch on Kapasgola Road at Chawkbazar in Chattogram yesterday.



CRAFTSMAN FOOTWEAR AND ACCESSORIES

Sadat Hossain Salim, chairman of Craftsman Footwear and Accessories Ltd, and Raghu Mustafa, a renowned photographer, open the first showroom of the company at Rapa Plaza of Dhanmondi in Dhaka on Friday.