

CURRENCIES

USD

83.50

EUR

92.84

GBP

103.00

JPY

0.76

BUY TK

84.50

SELL TK

84.50

STANDARD CHARTERED BANK

BUY TK

83.50

SELL TK

84.50

সুপার ডিপিএস

প্রাকল্পিত মুনাফা:

৩ বছর

৫ বছর

১০ বছর

৯.২৫%

৯.৫০%

১০%

ইসলামী শরীআহ এর মূদারাবা

নীতির ভিত্তিতে পরিচালিত।

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BUSINESS

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Cigarette maker dodges Tk 62cr VAT: customs

MOHAMMAD SUMAN, Ctg

International Tobacco Industries Ltd, a Chattogram-based cigarette manufacturer, has dodged Tk 62 crore in value added tax by importing 169 tonnes of raw materials under a fake company, according to a probe report.

The Customs, Excise and VAT Commissionerate in Chattogram has found that the company imported the raw materials between November 2016 and April 2018 under the name of Biplob Traders, a company set up in the name of its executive officer Moin Uddin Suhel.

According to the probe report, which was submitted to the commissioner in June, International Tobacco Industries set up Biplob Traders in the middle of 2016 using the personal documents of Suhel.

Biplob Traders imported 17 consignments of acetate tow and cigarette paper worth Tk 5.52 crore through the Chattogram port and the Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport in Dhaka.

International Tobacco was directly involved with all the activities, including opening of the bank account, letters of credit and appointment of the clearing and forwarding (C&F) agents to take the delivery of the goods.

Around Tk 6 crore was deposited to the bank account of Biplob Traders from the accounts of International Tobacco and its directors during the period, the probe found.

Quoting officials of the C&F agent and Bank Alfalah, the report said Mujibur Rahman, another executive officer of International Tobacco, carried out all the activities such as bank transaction, VAT registration and recruiting the C&F agent in favour of Biplob Traders.

According to the bank documents, around Tk 2.5 crore was transferred to the account of Biplob Traders at the Agrabad branch of Bank Al-Falah from the account of International Tobacco.

Tk 56.40 lakh was transferred to the account of Biplob Traders from the personal account of Mohammad Asafaq, a director of International Tobacco, through three cheques on January 22 and 23 and May 4 in 2017.

Around Tk 1 crore was deposited in cash in several instalments by Rahman in the account of Biplob Traders.

Mohammed Enamul Hoque, commissioner of the Commissionerate, said the government did not get any VAT as there is no existence of Biplob Traders and International Tobacco Company had sold out all the cigarettes that used the raw materials.

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Stones imported from Bhutan thru' India

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Some 1,000 tonnes of stone aggregates from Bhutan were delivered successfully to Bangladesh using Indian territory, paving the way for trade with the landlocked nation in a quicker and cheaper way.

The stone aggregates, which were imported by Bashundhara Group, were sent from Phuentsholing in trucks to Assam's Dhubri river port for delivering them to Bangladesh.

This is the first time the Indian waterway was used as a channel for transport of cargo between Bangladesh and Bhutan.

Thanks to using the waterways, the transportation cost to and from Bhutan will be 30 percent lower and the travel time at least eight days shorter, SK Mahfuz Hamid, chairman of the Coastal Ship Owners' Association of Bangladesh, told The Daily Star yesterday.

Bangladesh is the second largest trading partner and export market for Bhutan. The trade volume between the two countries was \$53 million in 2017, up from just a few thousands in 1998, according to official data of Bhutan.

Bhutan exports significant quantity of stone aggregates to Bangladesh using the time-consuming land route.

The ship -- MV AAI of the Inland Waterways Authority of India -- set sail from Dhubri on July 12 and arrived at Narayanganj on July 16.

Mansukh Mandaviya, Indian minister of state for shipping, digitally flagged off the ship from Dhubri, 160-km away from Bhutan's Phuentsholing.

Riva Ganguly Das, high commissioner of India to Bangladesh, Sonam T Rabgye, ambassador of Bhutan, and Safwan Sobhan, vice-chairman of Bashundhara Group, received the first-ever consignment through the Indo-

Bangla Inland Waterways Protocol route at Narayanganj yesterday.

The move will be beneficial to India, Bhutan and Bangladesh and it will strengthen relations between the neighbouring countries, Das said.

Transportation costs of goods will significantly

come down for the use of the river routes, Rabgye said. More ships with the capacity to carry 5,000 tonnes to 7,000 tonnes will soon come from Bhutan at Rowmari point in Kurigram district and from there goods will be transported by road, according to Hamid.



Indian High Commissioner to Bangladesh Riva Ganguly Das, Bhutanese Ambassador Sonam T Rabgye and Bashundhara Group Vice Chairman Safwan Sobhan take a walk at the Narayanganj port yesterday on receiving the first-ever consignment, which came from Bhutan traversing India.

Dream flats to remain elusive

Property to be costlier for price hike of raw materials, gas

JAGARAN CHAKMA

The dream of owning a flat may never come true for many as properties will become more expensive owing to the hike in prices of major construction materials as well as gas, realtors say.

Consequently, realtors' expectation about sales growth in 2019 is unlikely to be fulfilled.

Realtors had hoped that the real estate sector would receive a boost after the government cut the registration cost for flats by 6 percent and gave special opportunity for investment of untaxed money in the sector in the budget for the current fiscal year.

But some new VAT and tax measures spooked the confidence of the sector, which has been on a sluggish mood for a long time. The latest blow came on June 30 when gas price was hiked.

Since the unveiling of the budget on June 13, the retail price of each 50-kg bag of cement has gone up by 12 percent, or Tk 50, to Tk 460-Tk 470. Rod prices will likely see an increase of Tk 9,000 per tonne.

Cement and steel are the major raw materials for the housing sector.

For a quality flat, cement use makes up 16.4 percent of the raw materials and steel 24.6 percent, according to Khan Mahmud Amanat, a professor of the civil engineering department at the Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology.

He said 400 bags of cement and four tonnes of mild steel rods are required for a 1,000 square

feet apartment of high quality.

As per his calculation, the cost of construction will increase by Tk 56,000 for a 1,000 square feet apartment, of which Tk 20,000 will be spent for cement consumption and Tk 36,000 for rod use.

The construction cost will increase by Tk 20

for cement and Tk 36 for rod for per square feet, Prof Amanat said.

"The impact of the price hike will be reflected very soon and the cost for mega infrastructure projects will escalate."

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Realtors expected at least 9 percent growth in 2019 after disappointing sales in the previous year.

Ctg port to get 4 more gantry cranes in a week

DWAIPAYAN BARUA, Ctg

Chattogram port is all set to get four more quayside gantry cranes by the coming week which will enhance the port's efficiency in handling containers to and from vessels.

The Chittagong Port Authority (CPA) purchased the cranes from Shanghai Zhenhua Heavy Industries Company at a cost of Tk 238.63 crore for its New Mooring Container Terminal.

The four are on way from China on vessel De Bo-3, which may arrive at the port's outer anchorage by July 20 or a day later, said CPA Chief Engineer (mechanical) Aminul Islam.

It will take two weeks to unload the four on the jetty if favourable weather persists and a month more to install and bring into operation, he added.

With the addition, the terminal will have 10 such cranes, 12 years past its construction incorporating five jetties.

Last year the port procured six gantry cranes from the company at a cost of Tk 344.92 crore, 13 years after procuring four others which were engaged in two jetties of Chattogram Container Terminal. Containers have traditionally been handled in other port jetties with the help of geared vessels, or those having cranes on board.

The lack of gantry cranes forced the port

for long to allow small geared vessels while leaving it unable to allow more gearless vessels, which are capable of carrying more containers.

The Chittagong Port Authority purchased the cranes from Shanghai Zhenhua Heavy Industries Company at a cost of Tk 238.63 crore for New Mooring Container Terminal

Port users including the business communities have long been raising voice to purchase more gantry cranes, particularly after the New Mooring Container Terminal's construction in 2007, for boosting container handling capacity.

Tarafdar Ruhul Amin, managing director of Saif Powertech, the private berth operator of the New Mooring and Chattogram container terminals, said one crane could handle 25 to 30 containers per hour while those on ships 15 to 19.

He said this would enable container vessels to load, unload and leave jetties faster.

Garment exporters call for faster customs service

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Garment exporters yesterday demanded a faster and more efficient service from the customs houses of Dhaka, Chattogram and Benapole ports as some of them are facing troubles in their business operations.

Many garment entrepreneurs are becoming victims of harassment by a section of officials as notices are being served to factory owners for not attaching the details of back-to-back letters of credit with the utilisation declaration (UD) of bonded goods.

There is a trust deficit regarding the services between the officials of the customs and bond facility users, said Rubana Huq, president of the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA), at a meeting between the leaders of the trade body and the customs bond commissioner, the customs houses of Dhaka, Chattogram and Benapole at the BGMEA office in Dhaka.

Huq suggested forming a joint committee involving the officials of the Bond Commissionerate of Dhaka, the customs houses of Dhaka, Chattogram and Benapole ports and representatives from the BGMEA and clearing and forwarding agents for easing the activities of bond related issues in garment business. She also demanded automation of bond management so that the entrepreneurs can easily complete the audit efficiently.

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Angry stock investors want PM to step in

Submit memorandum as market extends bear run

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

A group of stock investors yesterday handed over a memorandum to the Prime Minister's Office and called for initiative from the government to revive the market.

The investors also demanded the removal of the chairman and the commissioners of the Bangladesh Securities and Exchange Commission (BSEC), saying they have failed to regulate the market.

In the last six months, the benchmark index of the Dhaka Stock Exchange (DSE) dropped 850 points, wiping out Tk 41,950 crore in market value.

In protest of the market slump, the investors have been demonstrating in front of the DSE for the last six trading days.

The memorandum included the demand to implement a directive of the BSEC that makes it mandatory for the directors of all the listed companies to hold at least 2 percent shares in their companies individually and 30 percent jointly.

The investors urged the directors to buy back the shares whose prices have fallen below the face value.

The demands also include extending the lock-in period to five years from two years

now for the placement shareholders of newly listed companies and raising the quota for general investors in the initial public offering to 80 percent from 50 percent.

The investors sought exemption from the interest on margin loans for the affected small investors, who borrowed to invest money in the stock markets between

January 2011 and June 2019.

They called for forming a special fund of Tk 10,000 crore to increase the liquidity in the market. The fund should be provided to the investors at 5 percent interest rate.

The memorandum said there should be money whitening opportunity in the stock market and also called for withdrawal



A procession moves along Fakirapool towards the Prime Minister's Office in Dhaka yesterday seeking to hand over a memorandum demanding initiatives to bring back confidence of stock market investors.

of the cases that were filed against the investors on various occasions for taking part in demonstrations.

Yesterday, the DSEX fell 2.43 points, or 0.04 percent, to 5,130.69. Turnover rose 27.7 percent to Tk 395.29 crore.

Of the traded issues, 111 securities advanced, 204 declined and 38 closed unchanged.

Fortune Shoes dominated the turnover chart with 97.69 lakh shares worth Tk 38.84 crore changing hands, followed by Beacon Pharmaceuticals, Sonar Bangla Insurance, Sea Pearl Beach Resort & Spa, and National Polymer Industries.

Sonargaon Textiles was the day's best performer with 10 percent gain, while Pragati Life Insurance was the worst loser, shedding 10 percent.

Chittagong stocks also fell with the bourse's benchmark index, CSCX, declining 1.12 points, or 0.01 percent, to finish at 9,558.29.

Losers beat gainers as 150 issues declined, 111 advanced and 25 finished unchanged on the Chittagong Stock Exchange.

The port city bourse traded 73.95 lakh shares and mutual fund units worth Tk 16.80 crore.