STOCKS		COMMODITIES		ASIAN MARKETS				CURRENCIES (STANDARD CHARTERED BANK)				
DSEX	CSCX	Gold	Oil	MUMBAI	TOKYO	SINGAPORE	SHANGHAI		USD	EUR	GBP	JPY
0.96%	0.97%	$1,487.20 (per ounce)	$61.11 (per barrel)	0.10%	0.55%	0.78%	0.02%	BUY TK	83.75	92.45	107.53	0.75
4,772.00	8,832.51			39,020.39	22,750.60	3,168.87	2,940.92	SELL TK	84.75	96.25	111.33	0.79

Star BUSINESS

DHAKA FRIDAY OCTOBER 25, 2019, *KARTIK 9, 1426 BS* starbusiness@thedailystar.net

Encouraging progress, still long way to go

ZAHID HUSSAIN

Bangladesh has made encouraging progress on the World Bank's Ease of Doing Business (DB) 2020. The rank has improved by 8 places to 168 from 176 a year ago.

The country earned a place among the "Top-20 improvers in Doing Business 2020" because of reforms in the areas of starting a business, getting electricity and getting credit.

The DB indicators measure the regulations applying to domestic small- and medium-sized companies through their life cycle covering the regulatory processes dealing with the costs and risks of doing business in a country. These help identify places where reformers can reduce unnecessary costs and risks caused by improper regulation.

The DB assessment presents results, covering 190 economies, for the ease of doing business score, called Distance to Frontier (DTF), as well as ranking based on DTF.

Bangladesh's overall score increased from 42.5 last year to 45 this year, driven by increase in the DTF on the ease of getting credit from 25 last year to 45 this year followed by electricity from 30.8 to 34.9 and starting business from 80.8 to 82.4. The rank on getting credit improved 42, starting a business 7 and getting electricity 3 notches.

What did Bangladesh actually do to achieve the improved scores and rankings in the above areas?

Bangladesh earned points on the credit information index by expanding the coverage of the Credit Information Bureau in both Dhaka and Chittagong.

The minimum amount for loans to be reported to the Credit Information Bureau (CIB) database was lowered from Tk 50,000 to Tk 1. The CIB also restored the archived data for the last five years in its database, which was not previously available before its server upgrade.

Bangladesh made starting a business less expensive. It reduced the official name clearance and registration fees from Tk 600 to Tk 200 and abolished the Tk 1,000 fee for digital certificates in both Dhaka and Chittagong.

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WHAT BUSINESS LEADERS SAY ON DOING BUSINESS RANKING

SHEIKH FAZLE FAHIM
PRESIDENT OF THE FEDERATION OF BANGLADESH CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY

We welcome the country's progress in the World Bank's Ease of Doing Business ranking. We look forward to substantial changes next year.

SHAFIUL ISLAM MOHIUDDIN
FORMER FBCCI PRESIDENT

We need a jump-start to improve in the ranking. We are still confined in the red tape. We could have done much better had we improved our business environment.

RUBANA HUQ
BGMEA PRESIDENT

The eight-notch improvement is a major achievement by Bangladesh. One of the major focuses of the government is to boost investment, so improvement in the ranking is a must.

ABUL KASEM KHAN
FORMER DCCI PRESIDENT

There has been progress in some areas. However, we need to do better. Some major improvements are needed urgently. The pace of improvement is slow, so it needs to be expedited.

ASIF IBRAHIM
FORMER BUILD CHAIRMAN

We will be able to improve in the ranking to move below 120 if we can show significant reforms. Going forward, the Bida must work in a collaborative manner with focal government agencies and the private sector.

Reform of laws on to improve Doing Business ranking

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

The government has taken on an initiative to carry out legal and other reforms to bring down Bangladesh's ranking in the World Bank's ease of doing business to double-digit from 168th position this year, said top government officials yesterday.

As part of the strategy, the government is focusing on accelerating reforms of various laws such as Companies Act, Bankruptcy Act, Arbitration Act and Imarat Nirman Bidhimala (building construction rule).

It has also taken steps to formulate Secured Transaction Bill, establish of commercial dispute resolution court, and introduce efficient inspection systems for border compliance by developing risk-profiles of businesses, said the Bangladesh Investment Development Authority (BIDA) in a press conference at the Prime Minister's Office (PMO).

The event was organised to share Bangladesh's improvement in the rankings this year. The country advanced 8 steps to 168th position this year.

"This is the first time we have made such a huge jump, but definitely we will not consider this a big achievement," said Salman F Rahman, the prime minister's private industry and investment Adviser to Prime Minister at the conference.

Rahman said efforts to improve Bangladesh's standing in the ranking has started lately, especially after the current Awami League government reassumed power in 2019. As the cut-off date for this ranking was April, the government did not get much time.

"We are now focusing on the practical implementation of the change that we made so that we can get full marks in the future. We want to make substantial improvement next year."

In addition, initiatives have been undertaken to make amendments in key laws, which, if implemented, will boost Bangladesh's standing in the rankings.

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Leather goods export stagnant on compliance crisis

Sector leaders say

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Export of leather goods has failed to match the growth the garment sector has achieved due to a lack of compliance and reluctance to adopt latest fashion trends, a top official of an exporters' platform said yesterday.

Shipment of footwear and other leather goods brought $1.04 billion in 2018-19. Of it, footwear bagged $608 million, up from $565 million a year ago, leather goods $249 million and finished leather $187 million.

"Tannery owners having the financial capability should set up their own effluent treatment plants (ETP) to reduce pressure on the central one," said Saiful Islam, president of the Leathergoods and Footwear Manufacturers & Exporters Association of Bangladesh (LFMEAB).

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Quality key to boost fruits, vegetables exports

Experts say at a roundtable

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Bangladesh has been failing to export its fruits and vegetables, which are in surplus now, due to a lack of quality and variety sought by importing countries, experts and businesses said yesterday.

Amid this situation, they said Bangladesh needs to take concerted efforts to ensure safety and certify farmers so that they get fair prices for products.

Adoption of good agricultural practices (GAP), be it local, regional or international, could address safety concerns of consumers, they said.

Their comments came at a roundtable on "Enabling fruits and vegetable export to improve farm income" organised by Germany-based Bayer CropScience in association with The Daily Star at the The Daily Star Centre in Dhaka.

Albert Schirring, global crop manager for vegetables and potatoes of Bayer CropScience, said Bangladesh has a huge number of people ready to pay higher prices for quality products while their export also has huge potential.

STAR

Md Abdur Rouf, additional secretary to agriculture ministry, and Albert Schirring, global crop manager for vegetables and potatoes of Bayer CropScience, attend a roundtable on "Enabling fruits and vegetable export to improve farm income" organised jointly by The Daily Star and the company at The Daily Star Centre in Dhaka yesterday.

"Certifying farmers is very very important. As the global GAP is a very high standard quality, Bangladesh can develop its own GAP for its farmers, traders and exporters," he said.

The government can set a guideline which should be followed by all, he said, adding that farmers would happily adopt GAP when provided training, support and especially fair prices.

"So, raising quality of product is a way to improve farm income," said Schirring.

Md Abdur Rouf, additional secretary to the agriculture ministry, said the government has a target to make farming profitable through quality improvements so that the products can compete in the global arena.

Quality control is most important when it comes to export but sometimes many of the country's farmers do not maintain it, he acknowledged.

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Tripura to set up two new border haats

Tripura's chief minister says

PALLAB BHATTACHARYA, *New Delhi*

Two new border haats along the India-Bangladesh border will be established in Tripura, Biplab Kumar Deb, chief minister of the Indian state, said yesterday.

Speaking at an event in Agartala, he said the border haats will come up at Ragna village in North Tripura district's Dharmanagar and Dhalai district's Kamalpur.

At present, two such border markets are operational at Kamalasagar in Sepahijala district and Srinagar in South Tripura district.

Deb said border haats play a major role in strengthening the relationship between people of the two countries.

"The India-Bangladesh relations are cordial and we want to forge cooperation between the two nations for the development of both," he said.

Deb said not only Sonowal but also Bangladesh's Commerce Minister Tipu Munshi and Prime Minister's Economic Affairs Adviser Mashiur Rahman pitched for Tripura's development.

The Indian minister said he has requested the Bangladesh authorities to enlist Tripura as one of their export routes.

Deb said almost 90 percent of the businessmen from Bangladesh, who participated in the stakeholders' meeting in Guwahati, expressed their keenness to set up industries in the proposed Special Economic Zone (SEZ) in Sabroom, a town in Tripura near the international border.

The distance between Sabroom and Chattogram port is 70 km.

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India to try to lift onion export ban

New Delhi assures Dhaka, says Tipu Munshi

PALLAB BHATTACHARYA, *New Delhi*

India has assured Bangladesh that it would try to lift the ban on the export of onions after the Maharashtra assembly elections, which took place on October 21.

Bangladesh Commerce Minister Tipu Munshi said in Guwahati on Tuesday that he had spoken to Indian Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal on the issue.

"He assured me that India will try to lift the ban after the Maharashtra assembly elections. We are waiting for that," he said, while addressing the India-Bangladesh Stakeholders' Meet in the largest city of Assam.

On September 13, India set the minimum export price of onion at $850 a tonne to curb its shipments and help bring down soaring prices in the domestic market. Two weeks later, it announced a ban on export of onions with immediate effect, after extended Monsoon downpours delayed harvests and supplies shriveled.

Imported onions were selling at Tk 90 to Tk 100 a kg at kitchen markets in Dhaka city yesterday, data from state-run Trading Corporation of Bangladesh showed. It was Tk 45-55 a kg in the middle of September.

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Noab seeks FBCCI support to ride out crisis

STAR BUSINESS DESK

The Newspaper Owners' Association of Bangladesh (Noab) yesterday sought cooperation from the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI) in developing the industry and resolving the crisis it is facing through talks.

Noab leaders made the call at a meeting with FBCCI President Sheikh Fazle Fahim and other leaders of the apex trade body at the latter's office in Dhaka, according to a statement of the federation.

The newspaper industry is currently going through an unprecedented difficult time, said Noab President and Prothom Alo Editor Matiur Rahman.

Despite being a service industry the corporate tax for the newspaper industry is 35 percent, which is a major stumbling block to the growth of the sector, he said.

As a result, the industry is struggling to survive. Many newspapers are running operations through subsidies, according to Rahman.

The two sides also talked about the ninth wage board for journalists.

The Noab president said the newspaper industry has come under pressure because of the new wage structure.

Rahman urged the FBCCI to create a scope for the Noab to increase communication with the government in order to drive the growth of the newspaper industry, help increase earnings and slash the corporate tax to 10 percent.

FBCCI

Sheikh Fazle Fahim, president of the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry, presents a memento to Matiur Rahman, president of the Newspaper Owners' Association of Bangladesh and editor of the Prothom Alo, at the former's office in Dhaka yesterday.

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DSE turnover rises 19pc

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Turnover at the Dhaka Stock Exchange rose around 19 percent yesterday thanks to higher participation of institutional investors.

Market insiders said some well-performing companies declared dividends in the last couple of days, which encouraged investors to take new position.

As a result, turnover, one of the important indicators of the stock market, and index rose in the past two days.

The DSEX, the benchmark index of the premier bourse, edged up 45.38 points, or 0.96 percent, to close at 4,772.

Of the traded issues, 223 advanced, 85 declined and 46 remained the same.

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