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1.27%	1.47%	\$1,458.40	\$64.39	0.82%	0.23%	0.65%	0.43%	83.95	92.24	109.50	0.75
4,671.34	8,622.71	(per ounce)	(per barrel)	40,445.15	23,354.40	3,194.71	2,912.01	BUY TK	84.95	96.04	113.30
								SELL TK	84.95	96.04	113.30



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## CERAMICS INDUSTRY

# 15 new factories to create 1 lakh jobs

SAJJADUR RAHMAN

When some industries are struggling with liquidity crisis and high lending rates, the ceramics sector has been getting five new factories on an average every year since 2017, industry players said.

Riding on steady economic growth and rising purchases of consumers, another 15 factories are in the pipeline with an estimated investment worth around Tk 3,000 crore.

These plants are expected to begin commercial operations in the next four years and will create much-needed employment for nearly 100,000 people.

After entering the market with tiles and

sanitary ware two years ago, Akij Ceramics is now investing a fresh Tk 500 crore to set up a tableware unit.

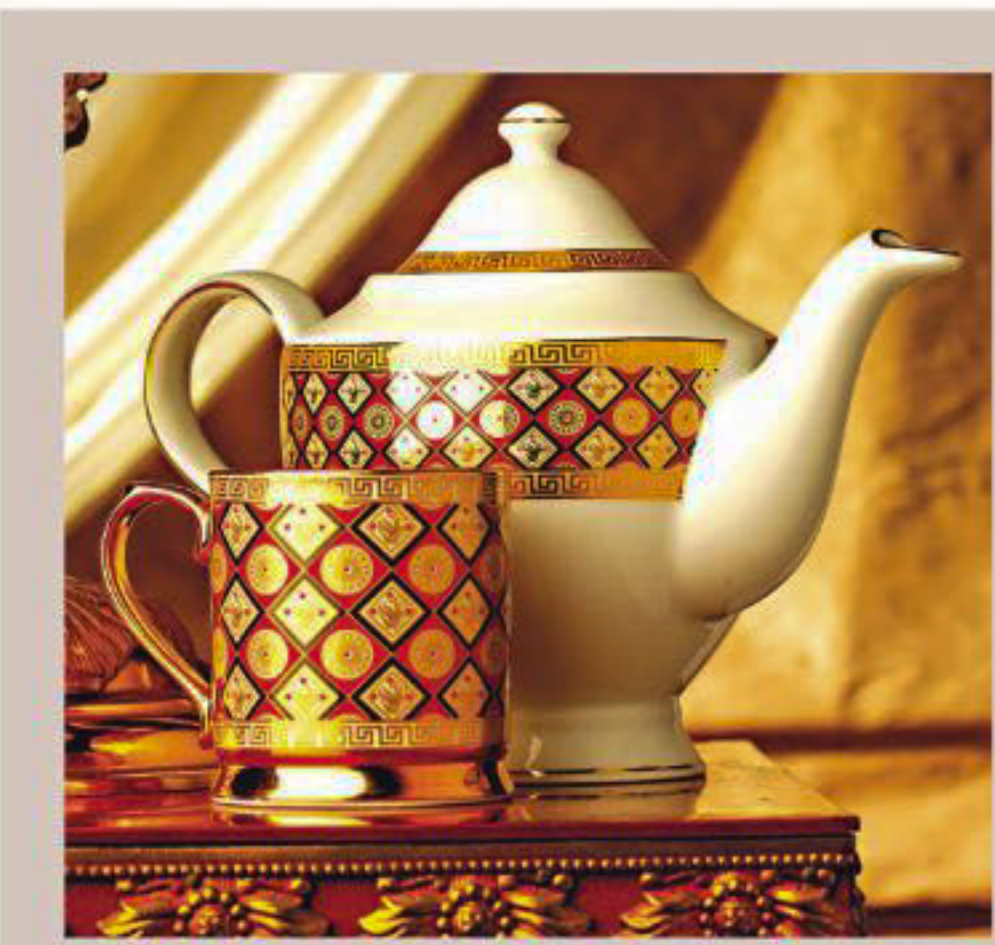
"We have already imported machines and installations are going on," said Mohammad Khourshed Alam, director for sales and marketing.

The factory has set a target to produce 250 lakh pieces of tableware, which will elevate Akij to the ranks of Monno Ceramic Industries as the largest producer, according to data of the Bangladesh Ceramic Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BCMEA).

As tableware has huge prospect in overseas markets, Akij will export the items and sell it in the local market as well, Alam said.

Meghna Group of Industries, one of the country's largest conglomerates, is investing Tk 400 crore to set up a tiles factory at its economic zone in Narayanganj.

"We hope to start commercial production by mid-next year," said Mostafa Kamal, chairman



### CERAMICS SECTOR AT A GLANCE

- Factories in operation: **54**
- Investment made so far: **Tk 8,600cr**
- Factories in pipeline: **15**
- Their investment: **Tk 3,000cr**
- Jobs to be created in 5yrs: **100,000**
- Current export: **\$50m**

and managing director of the group. Ceramics is a capital-intensive business as setting up a factory takes Tk 150 crore to Tk 200 crore.

Presently, there are 54 ceramic factories that are manufacturing tiles, tableware and sanitary ware.

BCMEA data showed tiles and sanitary ware's domestic demand to be higher than the existing production capacity.

Three tiles makers -- Excellent Ceramic Industries, Hi-Tech Ceramics and Top One Ceramics -- will hit the market in three months.

Another five factories of Akij Ceramics, JB Ceramics, Bangladesh Ceramic Industries, New Zhong Yuan Ceramics, and Sarmano Ceramics are expected to go into production next year.

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## EPZ firms await easy cargo container rules

SOHEL PARVEZ

The National Board of Revenue considers easing rules and procedures for investors in the export processing zones to promote trade and investment, said officials.

Firms located in the EPZs may be allowed to use for exports the same containers by which they imported raw materials to make finished products -- a move that will save both time and cost. "We have already formed a committee in this regard," said a senior official of the NBR.

The decision came after Japanese companies raised the issue at a meeting with the top officials of the revenue board recently.

Representatives from the Japanese embassy in Dhaka, Economic Relations Division, Bangladesh Investment Development Authority, Bangladesh Export Processing Zones Authority (Bepza) and Bangladesh Bank were present, according to minutes of the meeting held on November 26.

At the meeting, Japanese investors at the EPZs raised the issue of bringing utility to container use.

At present, investors in eight EPZs have to deliver containers empty for customs' checks after importing inputs in those.

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## Asia-Pacific businesses to discuss ways of financing SDGs

### Conference begins in Dhaka on Tuesday

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Business leaders from the Asia-Pacific region will discuss ways of financing the sustainable development goals at a conference in Dhaka between December 10 and 12. Mahbubur Rahman, president of the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC) Bangladesh, said this at a press conference at the office of the Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry in the capital yesterday.

ICC Bangladesh is organising the Asia-Pacific Conference on Financing for Inclusive and Sustainable Development in collaboration with the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UN-ESCAP), the Asian Development Bank's Trade Finance Programme, and the London Institute of Banking and Finance.

The finance ministry of Bangladesh is the patron of the event, which will be inaugurated by President Md Abdul Hamid at the InterContinental Dhaka.



Mahbubur Rahman, president of the International Chamber of Commerce Bangladesh, speaks at a press conference announcing the commencement of a summit at the DCCI in the capital yesterday. The three-day Asia-Pacific Conference on Financing for Inclusive and Sustainable Development begins on December 10.

The conference will also celebrate ICC Bangladesh's 25th anniversary while the 100th of the ICC, Rahman said.

The ICC with its headquarters in Paris is having its centenary

celebration the world-over in 2019. With its presence in more than 100 countries, the chamber represents 45 million companies and more than one billion workers worldwide.

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## Local brands steal the show

### Four out of top five brands honoured by BBF are home-grown

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Local companies are increasingly winning the hearts of consumers and it was evidenced again at the Bangladesh Brand Forum's Best Brand Awards yesterday where a local company topped the chart of the country's most-loved brands.

This year, bKash, Bangladesh's most popular mobile financial service provider, emerged as the best out of 100 brands that were recognised as the finest and popular products in the country.

Ispahani Mirzapore, a tea brand of Ispahani Group, last year scooped the top position of the best brand award for the first time as a local brand. This

year, the popular tea brand secured the fourth position.

RFL Plastics took the second spot and Radhuni the third at the Best Brand Awards at Le Méridien Dhaka, organised in partnership with Nielsen Bangladesh and in association with The Daily Star.

Of the top 10 brands, six were local, in a reflection of the growing strength of home-grown companies. This was the first time, four out of the top five brands were home-grown.

Some 100 brands were recognised in 34 categories at the 11th edition of the award. The winners were picked based on a direct survey of 4,000 consumers across the country. This year Nielsen Bangladesh, assisted by

Nielsen South Asia, added parameters that have made the study more robust.

Transcom Beverage, the sole franchisee of PepsiCo in Bangladesh, won the top award for 7up in the carbonated soft drink category like the previous year. Lux was the most-loved toilet soap. Rin Power Bright, Surf Excel and Wheel -- all of them are brands of Unilever -- became the most-preferred laundry products.

In the shampoo category, Sunilk retained the top spot. Closeup was recognised as the top oral care brand and Parachute Advanced as the top hair oil. Lifebuoy Liquid Handwash won in the hand-wash category.

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**NEWS IN brief**  
**Familytex slips to 'Z' category today**  
 Familytex (BD) Limited, one of the listed textile companies, is going to be downgraded to the 'Z' category today as it declared no dividend for its shareholders in 2018-19. The company did not declare dividend as it incurred losses last year.

**MODENA**  
**Monno Brings Modena's New Technology**  
 Inauguration Ceremony of opening the Energy Saving Biscuit Roller Kiln at Monno Ceramic Industries Ltd.  
 In Picture: Mrs. Afroza Khan, Chairwoman of Monno Ceramic and Mr. Benjamin Chan Ki-Wood, Chairman of Modena Technology Ltd. cutting the ribbon. From Monno Ceramic, Mr. Rasheed Mymunul Islam (Managing Director), Mr. Mojnul Islam (Vice-Chairman) and from Modena Mr. Gilbert (Overseas Sales Manager), Mr. Bosco Wang (Area Manager) and Mr. Bevis Yan (Area Manager)

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