

STOCKS		COMMODITIES		ASIAN MARKETS				CURRENCIES			
DSEX	CSCX	Gold	Oil	MUMBAI	TOKYO	SINGAPORE	SHANGHAI	USD	EUR	GBP	CNY
▼ 0.83%	▼ 1.01%	\$1,834.05	\$55.02	▼ 0.96%	▼ 0.97%	▼ 0.48%	▲ 0.84%	BUY TK 83.95	100.30	113.02	12.73
5,801.72	10,197.52	(per ounce)	(per barrel)	48,564.27	28,242.21	2,990.40	3,596.22	SELL TK 84.95	104.10	116.32	13.39



Star BUSINESS

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Biscuit exports booming

JAGARAN CHAKMA

With most businesses suffering a deep wound inflicted by the coronavirus pandemic, biscuit makers in Bangladesh have a different story to share.

The crispy food, liked by people from all walks of life,

has seen its demand grow both in domestic and export markets as many consumers have stayed indoors and shunned eating out.

After posting 10 per cent year-on-year growth in the fiscal year of 2019-20, which included two pandemic-hit quarters, the upward trend of shipment of

biscuits has continued in the current fiscal year as well. Biscuits exports almost doubled to \$31.5 million in the July-December period from \$16.6 million in the corresponding period a year ago, data from the Export Promotion Bureau showed.

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LOCAL MARKET

Tk 5,500cr in 2019

Tk 6,500cr in 2020



ANVIL CHAKMA

A view of Rului Para of Sajek Valley, an emerging tourist spot situated among the hills of the Kasalong range of mountains in Rangamati.

Tourism recovering

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Hotels and resorts have seen a surge in tourist numbers in the last couple of months as young people are leading the recovery of an industry that had hit rock bottom at the height of the coronavirus pandemic.

Winter is the peak season for the tourism industry in Bangladesh, but it is going through a tough time because of the crisis-induced business slowdown.

The situation has improved recently

compared to that of first several months after the deadly pathogen hit the country in March.

There had been no tourists until September in Rangamati's Sajek, frequented by tourists thanks to its pristine natural beauty.

"Tourists started to turn up from October and their numbers have reached pre-pandemic levels," said Suparna Debbarma, president of the Cottage Malik Samity of Sajek, a forum of owners.

Almost all cottages and resorts are houseful on Fridays and Saturdays. Sajek has 90 resorts and cottages that can accommodate 2,000 visitors.

"Only younger people are going out for travelling purpose," said Nasir Majumder, a director of the Travel Operators Association of Bangladesh.

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INTRODUCING

NEW

HOTLINE NUMBER

16704

dbi CERAMICS

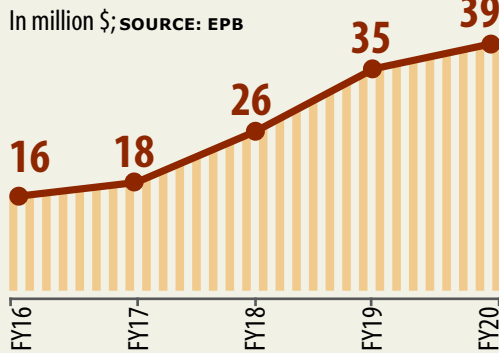
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EXPORT IN SECOND HALF



SOURCE: EPB

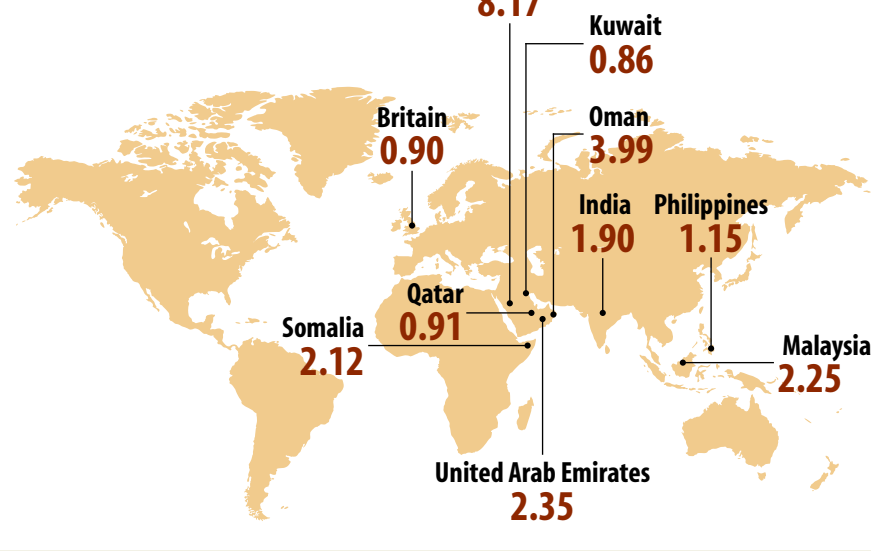
EXPORT OVER THE YEARS



SOURCE: EPB

TOP TEN EXPORT DESTINATIONS OF BISCUITS

Jul-Dec 2020; (In millions of \$)



Swindled depositors issue 15-day ultimatum

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Depositors of the People's Leasing and Financial Services (PLFS) who were swindled staged demonstrations in the capital's Motijheel yesterday demanding their money.

The Individual and Small Depositors' Council of the non-banking financial institution (NBFI), a platform that has been staging agitations for more than a year, first formed a human chain.

The forum later brought out a procession in front of Bangladesh Bank and forwarded a memorandum to the governor.

The demonstrators threatened to stage a sit-in at the gates of the central bank headquarters if their demand was not met within the next 15 days.

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Energypac Power's profit takes a tumble

Stock market debut today

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Energypac Power Generation announced that its profits tumbled in the July-September quarter of 2020 ahead of its trading debut in the Dhaka Stock Exchange (DSE) today.

Energypac's profits dropped 98 per cent year-on-year to Tk 6.64 crore in the period because of the ongoing coronavirus pandemic.

Humayun Rashid, managing director of Energypac Power Generation, said they produce industrial products and their sales declined as private investment slowed down amid the Covid-19 fallout.

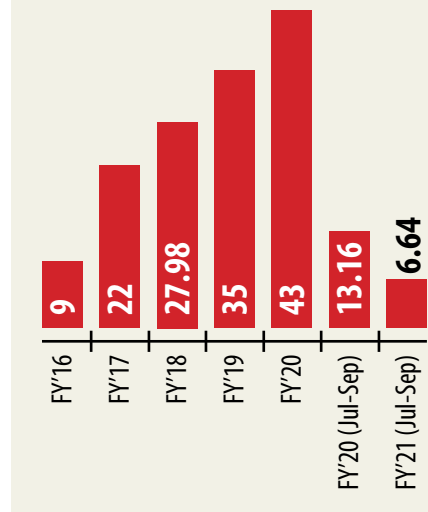
"As the pandemic hit the private sector during the July-September period, our profits dropped," he said.

"Our profits will jump with the revival of the economy, as our products are directly related to industrialisation," Rashid added.

Energypac Power Generation raised a fund of Tk 150 crore through its initial public offering (IPO), the proceeds of which will be used to make liquid petroleum gas (LPG) more available as a primary fuel source for vehicles in Bangladesh and repay the company's bank loans.

ENERGYPAC PROFITS

In crore taka; SOURCE: ANNUAL REPORTS



The applications for the company's shares had been oversubscribed by 10.76 times. Following bidding from institutional investors, its cut-off price for primary shares was set at Tk 35 per share.

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Onion imports thru land ports mark sharp fall

Thanks to a rise in local supply

KONGKON KARMAKER, Dinajpur

Imports of Indian onions through land ports witnessed a drastic fall in the last seven days thanks to the increased supply of the local variety.

Markets in most districts are now flooded with local onions and the consumers also prefer the local produce to the Indian ones because of better flavour.

Onion imports through different channels, including the Hili land port of Hakimpur upazila in Dinajpur, Bhomra port in Satkhira and Sonamasjid port in Chapainawabganj, resumed after January 1 when the three-and-a-half-month ban imposed by India came to an end.

Bangladesh has to import around 10 lakh tonnes of onions a year. At the same time, locally produced onions also hit markets across the country.

Onion imports through the Hili land port fell as traders are not purchasing as much as they used to before, said Harun Ur Rashid, president of the port's association of importers and exporters.

Most imported onions got stuck



RASHED SHUMON

People selling onion under an 'open market sale' initiative of the government barely see any customers as demand has fallen amid a supply glut. The photo was taken in front of Bangladesh Film Development Corporation recently.

in stores, he said, adding that more consumers are now purchasing the local variety in a new trend.

In Dinajpur, the retail price of onion

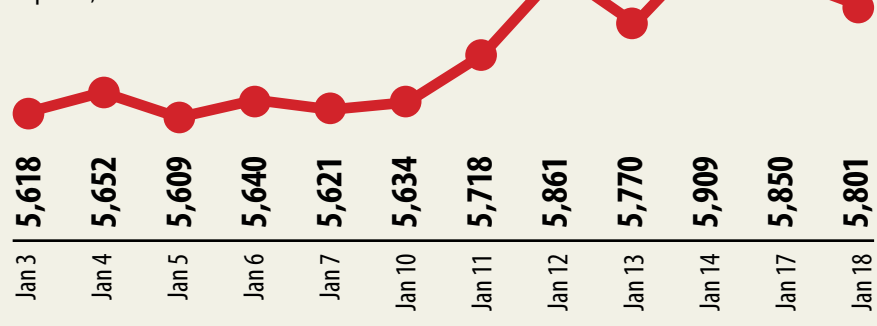
hovers around Tk 32 per kilogramme (kg) while every 5 kilogrammes are sold at Tk 130 at wholesale markets.

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Stock profit booking continues

DHAKA BOURSE'S KEY INDEX

In points; SOURCE: DSE



STAR BUSINESS REPORT

A tendency to take out profits continued to prevail in the stock market yesterday as had been in the last couple of days.

The DSEX, the Dhaka Stock Exchange's (DSE) benchmark index, dropped 48.71 points, or 0.83 per cent, to 5,801.72 yesterday.

"The index rose over 15 per cent in the last one month, so this profit booking tendency should be of no surprise," said Mir Ariful Islam, head of research of Prime Finance Asset Management Company.

On the bright side, buyers continue to stay engaged in the market, he said, adding that investors regained their confidence and so fresh funds were coming in.

Institutional investors are also pouring in their funds, he added. Turnover, an important indicator of the stock market, plunged 36 per cent to Tk 1,519 crore.

The currency is cheaper in the money market now but investment opportunities are still not that supportive, so the money is being diverted to the stock market, said a merchant banker.

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Look for alternative means to disburse SME stimulus

Analysts say at ICE Center's webinar

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Speakers at a virtual discussion yesterday suggested that channels alternative to banks be used to disburse government stimulus funds among cottage, micro, small and medium (CMSME) enterprises in a faster and even manner.

So far, a little over 30 per cent of the government CMSME stimulus fund has been disbursed in efforts to offset the Covid-19's fallout while almost all stimulus packages for other sectors have already been distributed through the banking channels.

The CMSME fund disbursement is going slow because banks are not interested in taking the risk of lending money to this sector's unbanked entrepreneurs, said speakers.

Many such entrepreneurs manage funds from alternative banking channels and so were reluctant to take the direct route, they said.

Shykh Seraj, founder director and head of news at Channel i and vice-president of Dhaka University Alumni Association (DUAA), said the government stimulus has not reached rural entrepreneurs who suffered the most.

He urged exploring alternative channels for the distribution.

Md Sirazul Islam, executive chairman of Bangladesh Investment Development Authority, requested developing a database of these rural and urban entrepreneurs and also ignite inner potential of students.

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US-Bangla sets sights on Dhaka-Dubai route

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

US-Bangla Airlines plans to operate flights on the Dhaka-Dubai-Dhaka route from February 1, starting off with 14 per week.

The airline said in a press release. The departure from Dhaka will be at 6:30pm every Monday, Thursday, Friday and Sunday. Landings at Dubai International Airport are expected at 10:00pm.

Subsequently on these scheduled days, the flights will leave Dubai at 11:30pm and reach Dhaka at 6:00am the next day.

Every Tuesday, the flights from Dhaka will be at 5:30pm, reaching Dubai at 09:00pm, on Wednesday at 3:55pm and 7:25pm and on Saturday at 5:00pm and 8:30pm respectively.

Minimum one-way fares for economy

class will be at Tk 54,999 while return tickets Tk 73,000. For business class, it will be Tk 79,200 and Tk 153,526 respectively.

The airline has also decided to soon operate flights to Abu Dhabi.

Apart from tourists, there are more than one million expatriate Bangladeshis in different cities of the United Arab Emirates, including Dubai and Abu Dhabi.

US-Bangla Airlines is currently operating flights to Muscat, Doha, Kuala Lumpur, Singapore, Kolkata, Chennai and Guangzhou. It also plans to operate flights to Male and Colombo shortly.

It has 13 aircraft in its fleet, four of which are Boeing 737-800 and 6 brand new ATR 72-600. There are plans to add four new aircraft soon.

