

| STOCKS | | COMMODITIES | | ASIAN MARKETS | | | | CURRENCIES | | | | |
|----------|-----------|-------------|--------------|---------------|-----------|-----------|----------|------------|-------|--------|--------|-------|
| DSEX | CSCX | Gold | Oil | MUMBAI | TOKYO | SINGAPORE | SHANGHAI | USD | EUR | GBP | CNY | |
| ▲ 0.32% | ▲ 0.16% | \$1,844.36 | \$55.56 | ▲ 1.72% | ▲ 1.39% | ▲ 0.18% | ▼ 0.83% | BUY TK | 83.95 | 100.51 | 113.31 | 12.73 |
| 5,820.80 | 10,193.34 | (per ounce) | (per barrel) | 49,398.29 | 28,633.46 | 2,995.92 | 3,566.38 | SELL TK | 84.95 | 104.31 | 117.11 | 13.39 |

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Star BUSINESS

DHAKA WEDNESDAY JANUARY 20, 2021, MAGH 6, 1427 BS • starbusiness@thedailystar.net

Jute exports on the mend Jute prices go thru the roof

SOHEL PARVEZ

Bangladesh's jute industry is passing exceptional times.

With raw jute trade at a historic high amid scarcity resulting from low yield, export earnings are surging.

However, millers said much of the growth in export receipts of jute yarn, twine, sacks and bags are the result of a price increase.

The volume of shipments increased too but the extent of growth was not as much as the spike in value growth.

Data from the Export Promotion Bureau (EPB) showed that export earnings from the main exportable yarn and twine soared 42 per cent year-on-year to \$449 million in the July-December period of fiscal 2020-21.

Similarly in case of jute sacks and bags, exporters fetched 56 per cent higher earnings to \$92 million in the fiscal's first half.

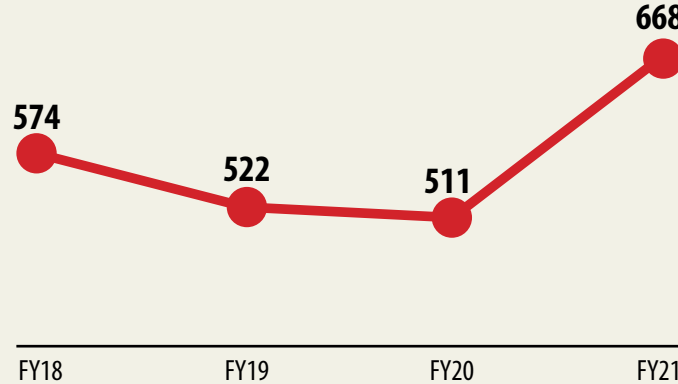
Millers said sales of 100,000 bales of previous stocks of jute sacks by state-run Bangladesh Jute Mills Corporation and private mills and higher demand for new carpets in the West amid increasing stays at homes for lockdowns buoyed shipments of jute yarn.

Yet the extent of growth has been much lower than the spike in value of exports.

READ MORE ON B3

EXPORT EARNINGS FROM JUTE AND JUTE GOODS

In million \$; July-Dec period; SOURCE: EPB



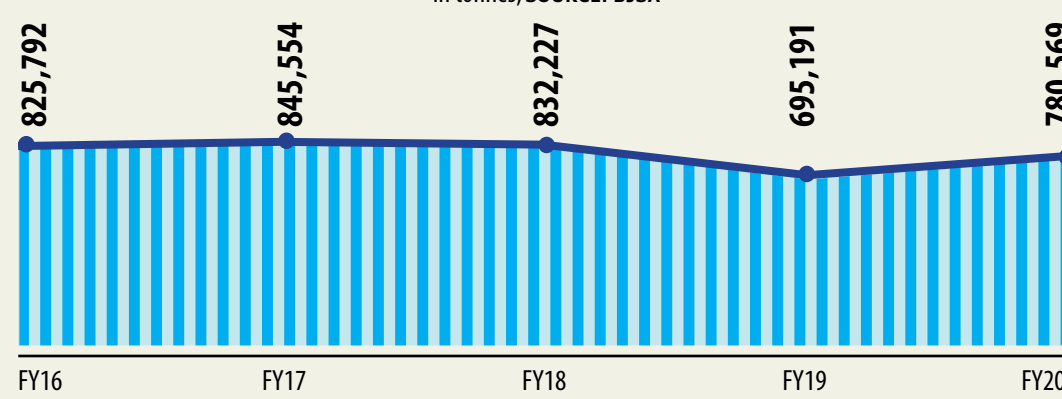
THINGS TO KNOW

- Production affected for floods, unfavourable weather
- Prices of raw jute soared to highest levels
- Export earnings balloon
- Millers say growth in export quantity is lower than value
- High prices to affect small and weak mills
- Some millers warn of production cut, suspension



JUTE GOODS EXPORT OVER THE YEARS

In tonnes; SOURCE: BJSJA



Hit record high amid supply crunch in Faridpur markets

SUZIT KUMAR DAS, Faridpur

Jute prices have doubled to hit Tk 4,000-4,200 a maund in Faridpur, the biggest grower of the fibre in Bangladesh.

Traders in the district have blamed the price spiral on the poor supply of the item in the market.

"The price per maund of jute was Tk 2,200-2,400 during the harvesting season in the July-August period, which has increased to Tk 4,200 now. But the growers are not getting the benefit," said Jewel Munshi, a jute trader of Nagarkanda bazar.

The 30-year-old trader also alleged that a group of middlemen has created the crisis by storing a major portion of jute, which they collected during the harvesting season at low prices.

"They are now releasing the jute at high prices. Some of them are even mixing water and sand with the jute to make them heavier and bag more profits."

Most of the jute growers sold their produce during the harvesting season, when the government exported a big amount of jute abroad, said Ananda Saha, another jute trader of Kanaipur bazar under Sadar upazila.

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INTRODUCING NEW dbi CERAMICS

HOTLINE NUMBER 16704

dbi CERAMICS

Facebook: dbiceramics, Instagram: dbiceramics.com

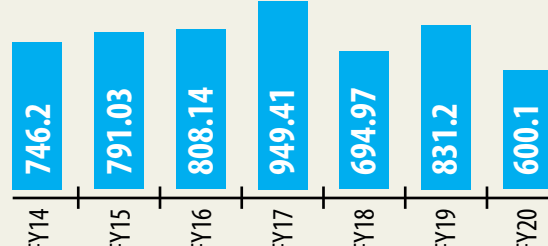
DUTY-FREE ACCESS FOR 97PC GOODS

Export potential in China market remains untapped for pandemic



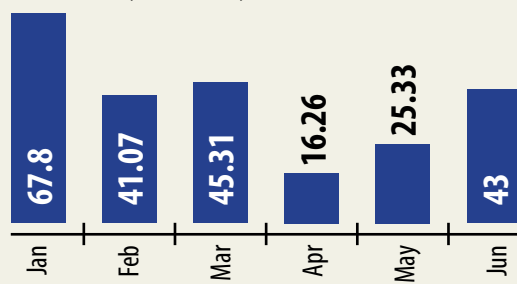
EXPORT TO CHINA OVER THE YEARS

In million \$; SOURCE: EPB



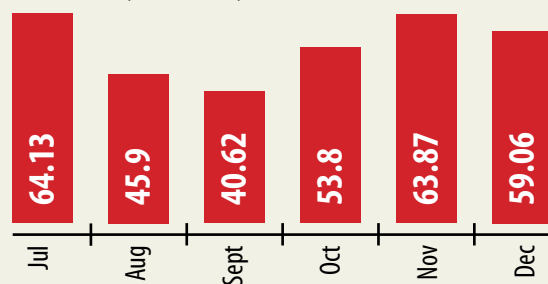
EXPORT BEFORE DUTY-FREE ACCESS

Jan-Jun 2020; in million \$; SOURCE: EPB



EXPORT AFTER DUTY-FREE ACCESS

Jul-Dec 2020; in million \$; SOURCE: EPB



REFAYET ULLAH MIRDHA

Despite the duty-free market access for 97 per cent goods, Bangladesh could not seize the opportunity for most of last year because of a lack of diversified goods and the fallouts of the coronavirus pandemic.

Beijing extended the duty-free access to 97 per cent of Bangladeshi goods in July last year, bringing 8,256 products under the tariff-free regime. Shipment to China stood at \$566.15 million in 2020, according to data from the Export Promotion Bureau (EPB). It was \$238.77 million in the January-June period and rose to \$327.38 million in the second half.

"The export to China in the second half was supposed to jump massively because of the duty privilege. But unfortunately, the fallouts of the Covid-19 impacted the overall business badly last year," said MA Razaque, research director of the Policy Research Institute of Bangladesh (PRI).

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BSEC to ensure proper distribution of dividends

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

The Bangladesh Securities and Exchange Commission (BSEC) has ordered issuers to maintain detailed information on shareholders in a bid to ensure the proper distribution and utilisation of dividends.

This includes information on a shareholder's BO account and bank account as well as their mobile phone number, email and home address.

The information must be updated at least once a year, according to the BSEC order issued recently.

The Central Depository of Bangladesh will provide such information to the issuer for the purpose of proper distribution of cash or stock dividends, it said. At present, undistributed dividends amounting to around Tk 21,000 crore remains idle in the accounts of listed companies.

Prof Shibli Rubayat Ul Islam, chairman of the BSEC, recently said the amount would be given to the Investment Corporation of Bangladesh (ICB) as a stabilizing fund.

"If the owners don't claim the money then it will be used for fund management," he added. The BSEC also issued a directive saying that issuers should have a dividend distribution policy and it should be disclosed in the company's annual report or official website.

The listed companies shall pay off the annual or final dividend within 30 days of approval. Within ten days of declaration of cash dividends, an amount equivalent to the declared dividend payable for the concerned year shall be kept in a separate bank account dedicated for this purpose.

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Foreign-owned firms can get funds from abroad easily

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Bangladesh Bank yesterday eased the rules for service sector industries that are owned or controlled by foreign entities to avail short-term working capital loans from their parent companies or shareholders.

Previously, only manufacturing companies were allowed to enjoy the facility but the new rule has widened the scope to a large extent, according to a central bank notice.

The companies concerned can avail short-term loans from their parent companies or shareholders abroad for up to 6 years after beginning their service output activities, as per the revised rules.

This means the central bank has extended the timeframe by three years from the previous eligible period of 3 years.

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Royal Enfield bikes may hit Dhaka roads soon

Ifad Autos signs primary deal with the manufacturer

JAGARAN CHAKMA

Bikers in Bangladesh are one step closer to ride a high-capacity motorcycle after Ifad Autos signed a memorandum of understanding with British-bred Royal Enfield to import the famous two-wheelers.

Founded in 1955, Royal Enfield is one of the world's oldest two-wheeler brands still in operation. Since 1994, it has been owned by India's Eicher Group.

Ifad Autos will market the bikes of Royal Enfield, said Taskeen Ahmed, managing director of Ifad Autos.

The local company is the distributor of India's TVS-branded motorcycles and the commercial vehicles of Ashok Leyland.

However, the government has to change rules to allow the import of high-capacity bikes. Currently, bikes with a capacity of up to 165cc can be imported, according to the Import Policy Order 2015-2018 of Bangladesh.

Royal Enfield makes motorbikes in the mid-segment market with a capacity of 250cc to 750cc, according to a news article of the BBC.

Bike manufacturers and assemblers have



requested the government to allow them to manufacture up to 500cc motorcycles for the export market. The government has said it would allow them to make bikes of up to 350cc, Ahmed said.

"After the government approval, we will bring in some bikes of higher capacity. Then we will decide what can be done," he said.

Ifad Autos is thinking of manufacturing high-capacity bikes to keep the price within the buying power of consumers. Royal Enfield bike will cost Tk 3.5 lakh to Tk 4 lakh.

Some 500,000 units of motorcycles are sold in Bangladesh every year. Of them, 35,000 are high-end.

READ MORE ON B3

Runner to bring KTM motorcycles



JAGARAN CHAKMA

The famed KTM motorcycles will be available in Bangladesh from January 25, thanks to Runner Automobiles.

In early August 2020, the Runner announced an agreement with Bajaj Auto that part-owns the Austrian bike brand to become its authorised distributor.

Initially models Duke 125 and RC 125 will be launched. "Both models are premium and the price range will be between Tk 3.5 lakh to Tk 4 lakh," said Amid Sakif Khan, marketing director of Runner Group.

According to him, around 15 per cent of current motorcycle sales in Bangladesh were of the premium segment and their target was to acquire an around 4 per cent market share.

Now, the annual demand for motorcycles is around 500,000 units and from the premium segment it is around 35,000 units.

Khan said the demand for premium motorcycles was going to increase in line with the economic development of the country.

Thereby, he believes their two models will win over motorcycle enthusiasts. He said initially the two models will be available at their Tejgaon showroom in the capital. "Gradually we will appoint dealerships across the country to enhance the market," said Khan.

Runner is even committed to make spare parts and after sales service available for the consumers, he noted.

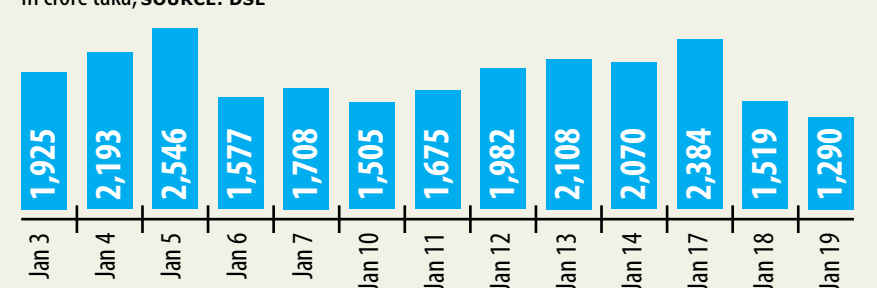
READ MORE ON B3

Insurance leads stocks' gain

Energypac Power soars 50pc on debut

DHAKA BOURSE'S TURNOVER

In crore taka; SOURCE: DSE



STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Insurance stocks led the capital market yesterday thanks to a regulatory order to abide by rules, including maintaining the minimum paid-up capital requirement.

The DSEX, the Dhaka Stock Exchange's (DSE) benchmark index, rose 19 points, or 0.32 per cent, to 5,820 yesterday.

Among the listed 49 insurance stocks, 46 advanced and the rest remained unchanged. The Insurance Development and

Regulatory Authority (IDRA) issued an order on January 17 asking all insurance companies to raise sponsor shareholdings to 60 per cent and maintain a minimum paid-up capital of Tk 30 crore to 40 crore.

The regulator also asked them to inform of compliance within 30 working days.

Life insurance companies need to maintain a minimum paid-up capital of Tk 30 crore. For non-life insurers it is Tk 40 crore.

READ MORE ON B2

Investors eye recovery as most markets rise, Yellen in focus



REUTERS/FILE

Janet Yellen, US President-elect Joe Biden's nominee to be treasury secretary, speaks as Biden announces nominees and appointees to serve on his economic policy team at his transition headquarters in Wilmington, Delaware, US.

AFF, Hong Kong

Optimism about the global economic recovery and vaccine rollouts trumped ongoing concerns about soaring virus infections Tuesday with most Asian markets clocking up big gains. Traders were also awaiting the Senate confirmation hearing for US Treasury secretary pick Janet Yellen, which is expected to give lawmakers a chance to go over Joe Biden's huge stimulus proposal. US markets were closed Monday for a public holiday, but regional investors were mostly in buoyant mood as they prepared for the new president to take office promising a vaccination blitz and a drive to kick-start the economy.

Hong Kong piled on more than three percent at one point, having jumped one percent on Monday, to

levels not seen since May 2019 thanks to an inflow of cash from mainland China. The Hang Seng later pared the rally. Seoul put on more than two percent, while Tokyo, Sydney, Mumbai, Taipei and Bangkok all rose more than one percent, while there were smaller gains in Singapore and Wellington.

Shanghai, Manila and Jakarta fell, however. US futures were in positive territory, while London, Paris and Frankfurt all opened higher.

Global coronavirus cases broke 95 million this week while deaths have topped two million, putting pressure on governments to quickly distribute vaccines while at the same time imposing strict, economically painful lockdowns.

While Biden's inauguration on Wednesday is the key event for the week, traders will be keeping a close

watch on Yellen's hearing, where the former Federal Reserve chief is expected to tell lawmakers the world's top economy could suffer if they do not approve a big spending plan.

"Economists don't always agree, but I think there is a consensus now: without further action, we risk a longer, more painful recession now -- and long-term scarring of the economy later," she was expected to say, the Wall Street Journal reported.

"Over the next few months, we are going to need more aid to distribute the vaccine; to reopen schools; to help states keep firefighters and teachers on the job. There are fears that Biden's \$1.9 trillion aid package, while welcomed by markets, could face stiff opposition from fiscal conservatives as it goes through Congress, watering down many of its elements.

China to become world's largest IoT market in 2024

ANN, Xinhua

China will surpass the United States to become the world's largest Internet of Things (IoT) market in 2024, according to an industrial report.

China's spending on IoT is expected to reach around US\$300 billion by 2024, with the compound annual growth rate to stand at 13 percent in the next five years, data from global market research firm International Data Corporation (IDC) showed.

In 2024, the country's spending on IoT will account for 26.7 per cent of global spending in the sector, followed by the United States at 23.8 per cent and Western Europe at 23.4 percent, IDC data showed. Among the 20 industries covered in the IDC's report, manufacturing, government and consumer IoT spending will account for more than half of the total market spending by 2024.

Jonathan Leung, a senior market analyst with IDC China, said the country saw disruptions in the IoT market due to COVID-19 and reduced IoT spending across all industries in early 2020. "As China continues along its road toward recovery, we expect the market to bounce back in the coming years as enterprises begin to grasp the vital role of IoT in epidemic prevention and control, as well as their capabilities in mitigating market disruptions," he said.

Chittagong Hill Tracts Development Board
Unit Office
Khagrachari

Memo No. 29.31.0000.012.07.002.21-3425, Date: 19-01-2021

e-Tender Notice
(Limited Tendering Method)

This is to notify all concerned that the following tenders have amendment through e-GP Portal:

| Tender ID & Package No. | Description | Publication date & closing date |
|---|---|---------------------------------------|
| 538371 & CHTDB-KHAG/2020-2021/221001100-94 | Construction of Shree Shyama Kali Mondir at Bhaibonchara union within Khagrachari Sadar upazila under CHTDB Khagrachari. | 19-Jan-2021 09:00 & 04-Feb-2021 14:30 |
| 538416 & CHTDB-KHAG/2020-2021/221001100-116 | Construction of connecting road from Ballyachari Koirtorchara to Shashato Banglow within Matiranga upazila under CHTDB Khagrachari. | 19-Jan-2021 09:00 & 04-Feb-2021 14:30 |
| 538605 & CHTDB-KHAG/2020-2021/221001100-85 | Completion of incomplete road with protective work from Chowdhurypara Passenger Shed to Jewel Ahmad house within Guimara upazila under CHTDB Khagrachari. | 19-Jan-2021 09:00 & 04-Feb-2021 14:30 |
| 538634 & CHTDB-KHAG/2020-2021/221001100-87 | Construction of Boundary wall at Chittagong Hill Tracts Development Board Rest House under CHTDB Khagrachari. | 19-Jan-2021 09:00 & 04-Feb-2021 15:00 |
| 538648 & CHTDB-KHAG/2020-2021/221001100-88 | Construction of Shosan Shed and Stair of Kaladeva Tripura Shosan within Ramgarh upazila under CHTDB Khagrachari. | 19-Jan-2021 09:00 & 04-Feb-2021 15:00 |

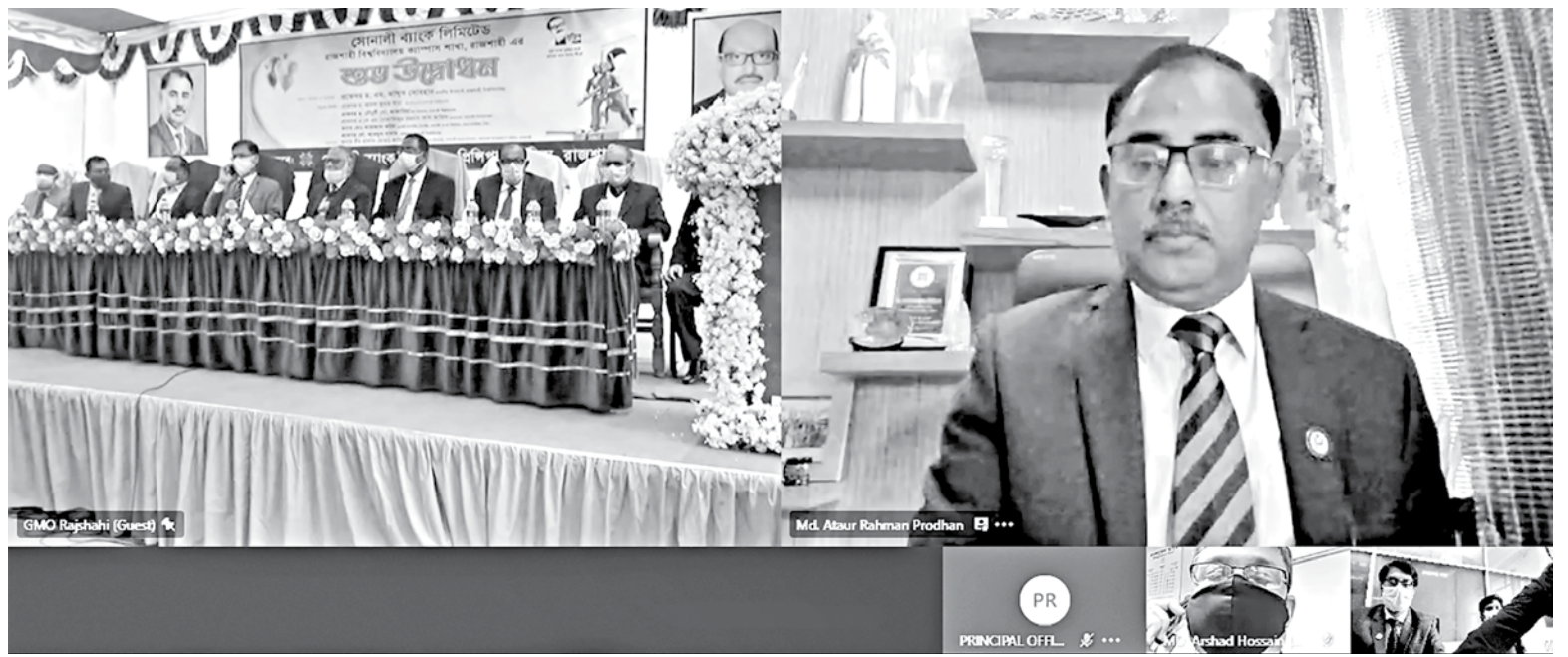
The interested firms/persons may visit the website: www.eprocure.gov.bd to get the details of the tender.

This is an online tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required.

Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).

SD/-
Md. Mozibul Alam
Executive Engineer
Chittagong Hill Tracts Development Board
Khagrachari

GD-129



M Abdus Sobhan, vice chancellor of the University of Rajshahi, opens a 1,227th branch of Sonali Bank on the campus on Monday.

Trump admin slams China's Huawei, halting shipments from Intel, others



REUTERS/FILE

Huawei logo is pictured on the headquarters building in Reading, Britain.

REUTERS, New York/Washington

The Trump administration notified Huawei suppliers, including chipmaker Intel, that it is revoking certain licenses to sell to the Chinese company and intends to reject dozens of other applications to supply the telecommunications firm, people familiar with the matter told Reuters.

The action - likely the last against Huawei Technologies under Republican President Donald Trump - is the latest in a long-running effort to weaken the world's largest telecommunications equipment maker, which Washington sees as a national security threat.

The notices came amid a flurry of US efforts against China in the final days of Trump's administration. Democrat Joe Biden will take the oath of office as president on Wednesday.

Huawei and Intel Corp declined to comment. Commerce said it could not comment on specific licensing decisions, but said the department continues to work with other agencies to "consistently" apply licensing policies in a way that "protects US national security and foreign policy interests."

Insurance leads stocks' gain

FROM PAGE B1

The overvalued insurance sector has got more fuel to make a big jump, said a stock broker preferring anonymity.

Among the top 20 on the gainers' list, 17 were from the insurance sector. Green Delta, Agrani and Pragati nearly had no one selling their stocks and rose 10 per cent.

But that list was crowned by Energypac Power Generation, rising 50 per cent on its debut day. There was also none of the stock for sale.

Market capitalisation of the insurance sector increased by 9.54 per cent while that of life insurance 5.32 per cent, according to the daily market review of LankaBangla Securities.

Turnover, an important indicator of the market, dropped 15 per cent to Tk 1,290 crore.

Robi Axiata was the most-traded stock, worth Tk 146 crore, followed by Beximco, Summit Power, Beximco Pharmaceuticals and LankaBangla Finance.

Padma Oil Company shed the most falling 7.83 per cent followed by Delta Spinners, National Bank, Dhaka Electric Supply Company (Desco) and Zeal Bangla Sugar Mills.

The port city bourse also rose yesterday. The general index of Chittagong Stock Exchange, the CASPI, increased 29 points, or 0.17 per cent, to 16,896 yesterday.

Among 278 stocks witnessing trade, 129 advanced, 90 fell and 59 remained unchanged.

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার
তত্ত্বাবধায়কের কার্যালয়
আধুনিক সদর হাসপাতাল, ঠাকুরগাঁও
ই-মেইল: thakurgaon@hospi.dghs.gov.bd

স্মারক নং-আসহা/ঠাক/দরপ্র-এমএসআর/২০২০-২০২১/৮৪ তারিখঃ ১৮/০১/২০২১ইং

দরপ্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি

পাবলিক প্রকিউরমেন্ট আইন-২০০৬ ও পিপিআর-২০০৮ (সংশোধিত-২০১৯) মোতাবেক ২০২০-২০২১ অর্থ বৎসরে আধুনিক সদর হাসপাতাল, ঠাকুরগাঁও এর জন্য এমএসআর সামগ্রী ক্রয়ের নিমিত্ত বাংলাদেশের যোগ্য দরপ্রদাতা/ঠিকাদার/গ্ৰহকৃত ব্যবসায়ী/সরবরাহকারী/গ্ৰহকৃতকারী প্রতিষ্ঠান এর নিকট হইতে গ্রুপ ওয়ারী পৃথক পৃথকভাবে সীলমোহরকৃত খামে দরপ্র আহ্বান করা যাইতেছে।

"ছক"

| ক্রমিক নং | বিবরণ | সীলমোহরকৃত খামে |
|-----------|---|---|
| ০১ | মন্ত্রণালয়/বিভাগ | স্বাস্থ্য ও পরিবার কল্যাণ মন্ত্রণালয়, বাংলাদেশ সচিবালয়, ঢাকা-১০০০। |
| ০২ | এজেন্সী | স্বাস্থ্য অধিদপ্তর/স্বাস্থ্য ও পরিবার কল্যাণ মন্ত্রণালয়। |
| ০৩ | সংগ্রাহক সত্তার নাম | তত্ত্বাবধায়ক, আধুনিক সদর হাসপাতাল, ঠাকুরগাঁও। |
| ০৪ | সংগ্রাহক সত্তার জেলা | ঠাকুরগাঁও। |
| ০৫ | দরপ্রের নাম/যে জন্য দরপ্র আহ্বান করা হইতেছে | এমএসআর সামগ্রী ক্রয় (ঔষধ/যন্ত্রপাতি/ক্যামিকেল ও রিয়েজেন্ট/লিনেন/গজ ব্যাজেজ তুলা/আসবাবপত্র)। |
| ০৬ | দরপ্রের সূত্র নং | দরপ্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি নং-১/২০২০-২০২১ |
| ০৭ | দরপ্র প্রকাশের তারিখ | ১৯/০১/২০২১ইং |
| ০৮ | সংগ্রাহক পদ্ধতি | উন্মুক্ত দরপ্র পদ্ধতি। |
| ০৯ | বাজেট এবং অর্থের উৎস | রাজস্ব ও উন্নয়ন বরাদ্দ, স্বাস্থ্য মন্ত্রণালয়/স্বাস্থ্য অধিদপ্তর। |
| ১০ | দরপ্র প্রকাশের তারিখ | ২১/০১/২০২১ইং বা তাহার পূর্বে। |
| ১১ | দরপ্র সিডিউল বিক্রয়ের শেষ তারিখ ও সময় | ২২/০২/২০২১ইং, অফিস চলাকালীন সময় পর্যন্ত (বিকাল ২:৩০ ঘটিকা)। |
| ১২ | দরপ্র দাখিলের তারিখ, সময় ও স্থান | ২৩/০২/২০২১ইং তারিখ দুপুর ১২-০০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত তত্ত্বাবধায়কের কার্যালয়, আধুনিক সদর হাসপাতাল, ঠাকুরগাঁও এবং জেলা প্রশাসকের কার্যালয়, ঠাকুরগাঁও এ রক্ষিত দরপ্রের কাছে হাতে হাতে ফেলিতে হইবে। |
| ১৩ | দরপ্র বাস্তব খোলার তারিখ ও সময় | ২৩/০২/২০২১ইং দুপুর ১:০০ ঘটিকা। |
| ১৪ | দরপ্র মূল্যায়নের স্থান, তারিখ ও সময় | তত্ত্বাবধায়ক, আধুনিক সদর হাসপাতাল, ঠাকুরগাঁও এর অফিস কক্ষ। তারিখঃ ২৫/০২/২০২১ইং, সময়ঃ সকাল ১১:০০ ঘটিকা। |
| ১৫ | সিডিউল বিক্রয়ের দস্তাবেজ/দস্তাবেজসমূহের নাম ও ঠিকানা | তত্ত্বাবধায়কের কার্যালয়, আধুনিক সদর হাসপাতাল, ঠাকুরগাঁও। |
| ১৬ | দরপ্র দলিল খোলার দস্তাবেজ | তত্ত্বাবধায়কের কার্যালয়, আধুনিক সদর হাসপাতাল, ঠাকুরগাঁও। |
| ১৬ | দরপ্রদাতার যোগ্যতা | সরকারি স্বাস্থ্য প্রতিষ্ঠানে এমএসআর সামগ্রী সরবরাহের বিগত ০৩ (তিন) বছরের অভিজ্ঞতাসম্পন্ন এবং দরপ্র দলিলের সাথে সরবরাহকৃত শর্তাবলী মোতাবেক যোগ্য হইতে হইবে। |
| ১৭ | মালামাল বা কাজের সংক্রান্ত বিবরণ | এমএসআর সামগ্রী সরবরাহ। |
| ১৮ | গ্রুপ | দরপ্র সিডিউলের মূল্য (অফেরতযোগ্য) |
| | 'ক' | ইউসিএল বহিভূত ঔষধ ১০০০/- ১,৯০,০০০/- |
| | 'খ' | সার্জিক্যাল যন্ত্রপাতি ১০০০/- ১,৫০,০০০/- |
| | 'গ' | ক্যামিকেল রি-এজেন্ট ১০০০/- ৭৫,০০০/- |
| | 'ঘ' | লিনেন সামগ্রী ১০০০/- ৭৫,০০০/- |
| | 'ঙ' | গজ ব্যাজেজ তুলা ১০০০/- ৭৫,০০০/- |
| | 'চ' | আসবাবপত্র ১০০০/- ৫০,০০০/- |
| ১৯ | দরপ্র আহ্বানকারীর নাম | ডাঃ মোঃ নাদিরুল আজিজ (কোড নং-৪১০১২)। |
| ২০ | দরপ্র আহ্বানকারীর পদবী | তত্ত্বাবধায়ক। |
| ২১ | দরপ্র আহ্বানকারীর অফিস ঠিকানা | আধুনিক সদর হাসপাতাল, ঠাকুরগাঁও। |
| ২২ | দরপ্র আহ্বানকারীর সাথে যোগাযোগ | টেলিফোন নং-০৫৬১-৫০৪৬০/০১৭২২০২৭৫১৬। |
| ২৩ | সংগ্রাহক সত্তার ক্ষমতা ও বিশেষ নির্দেশাবলী | ক) আগ্রহী দরপ্রদাতা যোগ্য বিজ্ঞপ্তি প্রকাশের তারিখ হইতে প্রতিদিন অফিস চলাকালীন সময়ে সংশ্লিষ্ট গ্রুপের দরপ্র দলিলের মূল্য বরাদ্দ কোড নং-১-২৭১১-০০০০-২৩৬৬ এ চালানোর মাধ্যমে সোনালী ব্যাংকে জমাদানপূর্বক উহার মূলকপি অত্র দপ্তরের ক্যাশিয়ার এর নিকট জমাদানপূর্বক সিডিউল সংগ্রহ করিতে পারিবেন। খ) কোন কারণ দর্শানো ছাড়াই দরপ্র গ্রহণ বা বাতিল করার ক্ষমতা দরপ্র মূল্যায়ন কমিটি সংরক্ষণ করেন। |

ডাঃ মোঃ নাদিরুল আজিজ
কোড নং-৪১০১২
তত্ত্বাবধায়ক
আধুনিক সদর হাসপাতাল, ঠাকুরগাঁও

জিডি-১২৪

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার
জেলা খাদ্য নিয়ন্ত্রকের কার্যালয়, কুমিল্লা।
<http://food.comilla.gov.bd>
www.dgfood.gov.bd

নং ১০.০১.১৯০০.০০৩.৪৯.০০১.১১.১৯ তারিখঃ ১৭ জানুয়ারী, ২০২১ খ্রিঃ

দরপ্র বিজ্ঞপ্তিঃ

এতদ্বারা ২০২০-২০২১ অর্থ বছরের অবশিষ্ট সময় এবং ২০২১-২০২২ অর্থ বছরের জন্য কুমিল্লা জেলার ১৪টি এলএসডি'র (খর্বপুত্র, চকবাজার, চৌদ্দগ্রাম, নাশ্বলকোট, পৌলতপাড়া, বরুড়া, চাপিনা, মুরাদনগর, দেবদ্বার, দাউদকান্দি, হোমনা, ব্রাহ্মণপাড়া, বুড়িচং এবং কংশনগর) জন প্রতিনিধিত্বে ০১(এক) জন করে প্রম ও স্বাক্ষর (হোজিডিং) ঠিকাদার নিয়োগের লক্ষ্যে নিম্নবর্ণিত শর্তে নির্ধারিত সিডিউল মোতাবেক দরপ্র আহ্বান করা যাবে।

| ক্রমিক নং | বিবরণ | সীলমোহরকৃত খামে |
|-----------|--|--|
| ০১ | মন্ত্রণালয় | খাদ্য মন্ত্রণালয়। |
| ০২ | প্রতিনিধি | খাদ্য অধিদপ্তর। |
| ০৩ | দরপ্র আহ্বানকারীর দপ্তর | জেলা খাদ্য নিয়ন্ত্রকের কার্যালয়, কুমিল্লা। |
| ০৪ | দরপ্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি নং ও তারিখ | নং ১০.০১.১৯০০.০০৩.৪৯.০০১.১১.১৯ তারিখঃ ১৭ জানুয়ারী, ২০২১ খ্রিঃ |
| ০৫ | কাজের নাম | কুমিল্লা জেলার ১৪টি এলএসডি'র (খর্বপুত্র, চকবাজার, চৌদ্দগ্রাম, নাশ্বলকোট, পৌলতপাড়া, বরুড়া, চাপিনা, মুরাদনগর, দেবদ্বার, দাউদকান্দি, হোমনা, ব্রাহ্মণপাড়া, বুড়িচং এবং কংশনগর) সরকারী খাদ্য শস্য, খাদ্য পণ্য ও অন্যান্য মালামাল সোর্সিং/জেনারেশিভ সংক্রান্ত যাবতীয় স্বাক্ষর কাজ। |
| ০৬ | কাজের সময়কাল | ২০২০-২০২১ অর্থ বছরের অবশিষ্ট সময় এবং ২০২১-২০২২ অর্থ বছর। |
| ০৭ | দরপ্র তফসিল মূল্য | খর্বপুত্র ও পৌলতপাড়া এলএসডি ৮০০/- (আটশত) এবং অন্যান্য এলএসডি ৫০০/- (পাঁচশত) টাকা। |
| ০৮ | দরপ্র প্রদানের জামানত | প্রতিটি এলএসডি'র জন্য দরপ্রতা কর্তৃক উদ্ধৃত মদের ৩% হারে পে-অর্ডার/বাংক ড্রাফট। |
| ০৯ | কার্যসম্পাদন(পারফরমেন্স) জামানত | প্রতিটি এলএসডি'র জন্য দরপ্রতা কর্তৃক উদ্ধৃত মদের ৫% হারে পে-অর্ডার/বাংক ড্রাফট। |
| ১০ | অভিজ্ঞতা ও যোগ্যতা | ক) প্রম ও স্বাক্ষর কাজে খাদ্য বাতিলের কমপক্ষে ০১(এক) বছরের ন্যূনতম ০২ বছরের বাস্তব অভিজ্ঞতা। খ) সিডিউল ব্যাংক হতে আর্থিক সম্ভলতার সনদ/০১(এক) বছরের ব্যাংক হিসাব বিবরণী দাখিল করতে হবে। |
| ১১ | বাজেট এবং অর্থের উৎস | জিওবি। |
| ১২ | দরপ্র বিক্রয় ও প্রাপ্তির স্থান | জেলা খাদ্য নিয়ন্ত্রকের কার্যালয়, কুমিল্লা। |
| ১৩ | দরপ্র গ্রহণের স্থান | জেলা খাদ্য নিয়ন্ত্রকের কার্যালয়, কুমিল্লা। |
| ১৪ | দরপ্র অফিসি বিক্রির শেষ তারিখ | ২৪/০২/২০২১ খ্রিঃ তারিখ অফিস চলাকালীন সময় পর্যন্ত। |
| ১৫ | দরপ্র গ্রহণের তারিখ ও সময় | ২৫/০২/২০২১ খ্রিঃ তারিখ বেলা ১০:০০ টা পর্যন্ত। |
| ১৬ | দরপ্র বাস্তব ও দরপ্র খোলার তারিখ, সময় ও স্থান | ক) ২৫/০২/২০২১ খ্রিঃ তারিখ বেলা ১০:০০ টায় যোগ্যতা বিষয়ক প্রস্তাব খোলা হবে এবং রেসপনসিভ ঠিকাদারদের তালিকা নোটিশ বোর্ডে ও জেলা খাদ্য নিয়ন্ত্রকের https://food.comilla.gov.bd ওয়েব পোর্টালে প্রকাশ করা হবে। খ) ২৫/০২/২০২১ খ্রিঃ তারিখ বেলা ৩:০০ টায় যোগ্যতা বিষয়ক প্রস্তাবের ভিত্তিতে কেবলমাত্র Responsive ঠিকাদারের আর্থিক প্রস্তাব খোলা হবে এবং দরপ্র মূল্যায়ন কমিটি কর্তৃক মূল্যায়ন করা হবে। |
| ১৭ | দরপ্র সম্পর্কিত তথ্য/ বিস্তারিত দরপ্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি জানার জন্য | ক) জেলা খাদ্য নিয়ন্ত্রক কার্যালয়ের হিসাব শাখা অথবা ০৮১-৬৬৬৫৫ নম্বরে যোগাযোগ করা যেতে পারে অথবা dcfcomilla@gmail.com ঠিকানায় ই-মেইল করা যেতে পারে। খ) কুমিল্লা জেলায় সকল উপজেলা খাদ্য নিয়ন্ত্রক ও ভারপ্রাপ্ত কর্মকর্তার কার্যালয়ের নোটিশ বোর্ডে দেয়া হবে। |
| ১৮ | দরপ্রের মেয়াদ | ১২০(একশত) দিন। |
| ১৯ | দরপ্রের ধরণ | দুই খাম পদ্ধতি (উন্মুক্ত দরপ্র)। |

এ দরপ্র The Public Procurement regulation, ২০০৬, ২০০৮ ও ২০০৯ (সংশোধিত) অনুযায়ী পরিচালিত হবে এবং কোন কারণ দর্শানো ব্যতীতকে কর্তৃপক্ষ এ নোটিশ বাতিল বা পরিবর্তন এবং যে কোন বা সকল দরপ্র গ্রহণ/প্রত্যাহান/কেন্সিল করার ক্ষমতা সংরক্ষণ করেন।

জেলা খাদ্য নিয়ন্ত্রক
কুমিল্লা।

সভাপতি, দরপ্র মূল্যায়ন কমিটি(খাদ্য), কুমিল্লা।

GD-127

Big Oil's flagship plastic waste project sinks on the Ganges

REUTERS, Singapore/Varanasi, India

A wheelbarrow and a handful of metal grids for capturing litter, emblazoned with the words "Renew Oceans," sit rusting outside an empty, padlocked office in the Indian city of Varanasi, a short walk from the Ganges.

It is all that is left of a programme, funded by some of the world's biggest oil and chemical companies, that they said could solve a runaway ocean plastic waste crisis which is killing marine life - from plankton to whales - and clogging tropical beaches and coral reefs.

The closure of Renew Oceans, which has not previously been reported, is a sign that an industry whose financial future is tied to the growth of plastic production is falling short of its targets to curb the resulting increase in waste, according to two environmental groups.

The Alliance to End Plastic Waste, a Singapore-based nonprofit group set up two years ago by big oil and chemical companies, said on its website in November 2019 that its partnership with Renew Oceans would be expanded to the world's most-polluted rivers and "ultimately could stop the flow of plastic into the planet's ocean."

Exxon Mobil Corp, Royal Dutch Shell Plc, Dow Inc, Chevron Phillips Chemical

Co and about 50 other companies committed to spend \$1.5 billion over five years on the Alliance and its projects. The Alliance has not said publicly how much money it has raised from its members or what it has spent overall.

The Alliance confirmed to Reuters that Renew Oceans had stopped operating, partly due to the new coronavirus, which had halted some work.

"Without any foreseeable time frame for restarting, combined with other implementation challenges, the Alliance and Renew Oceans jointly decided to a mutual termination agreement in October 2020," Alliance spokeswoman Jessica Lee told Reuters.

Anne Rosenthal, counsel at US law firm Hurwit & Associates, representing Renew Oceans, also said it expects the project to fold.

"While it has made important progress in tackling the problem of plastic waste, the organization has come to the conclusion that it simply does not have the capacity to work at the scale this problem deserves," she said.

The Alliance, with a staff of about 50, mostly based in Singapore, has other projects in the pipeline, but they are small, community-based endeavours or have not yet come to fruition.

Foreign-owned firms can get funds from abroad easily

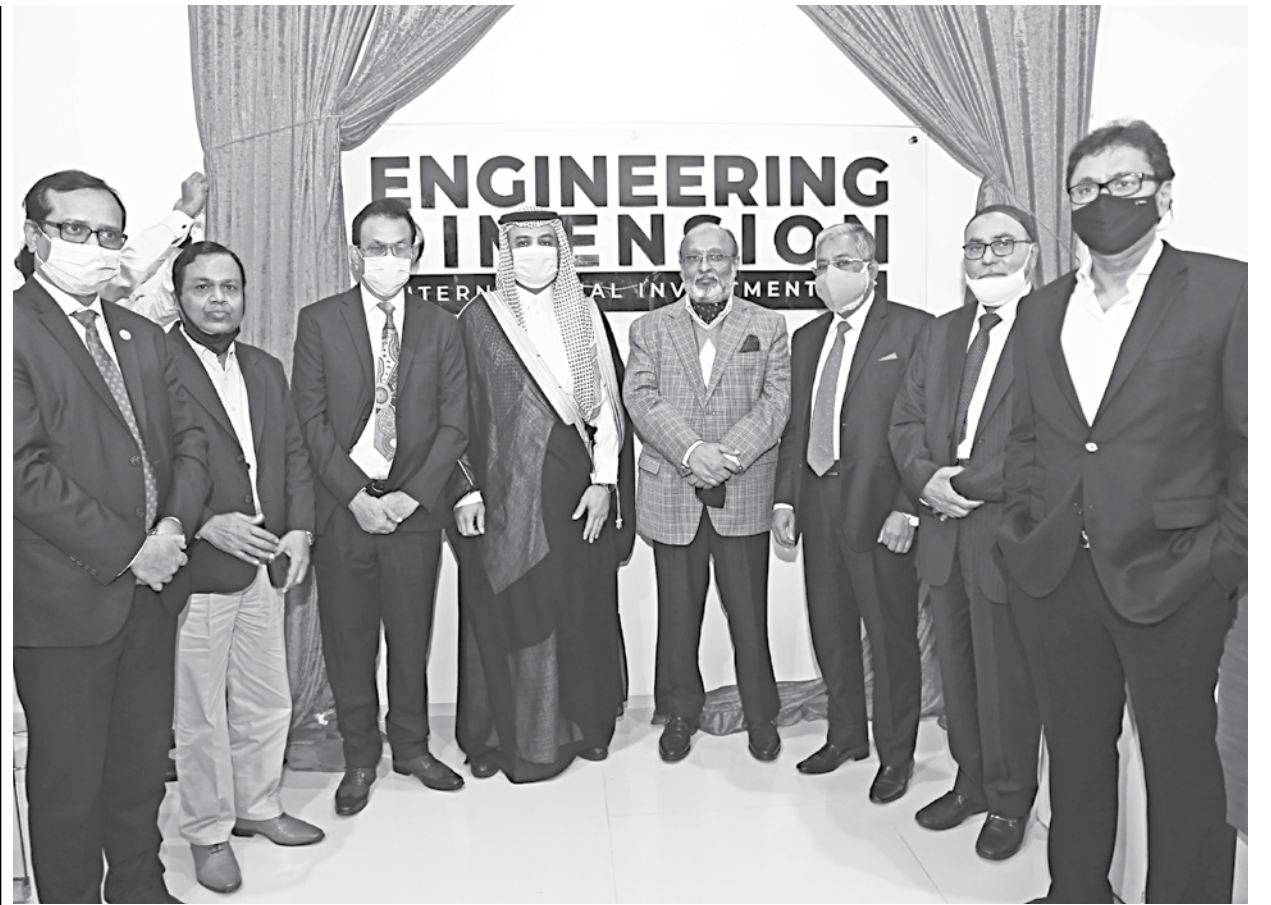
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The maximum interest rate is set at 3 per cent and since it will be received as foreign currency, the loans will be disbursed after being converted into taka.

The foreign companies earlier paid interest given the rate of 3-month fixed deposit schemes (FDRs) of local banks.

Repayment of the loan is remittable after the principal and interest amounts are converted into dollar.

Bangladesh Bank has been continuously updating its regulations to facilitate business, including foreign investment, a central bank official said. The new rules will help foreign owned and controlled companies to get short term external loans to a wider extent, he added.



ENGINEERING DIMENSION INTERNATIONAL INVESTMENT
Issa bin Yousef bin Al-Duhailan, Saudi ambassador to Bangladesh, and Sirazul Islam, chairman of Bangladesh Investment Development Authority, attend the opening of an office of Engineering Dimension International Investment (EDII) in Dhaka recently. The EDII and Bangladesh Chemical Industries Corporation will jointly set up an integrated clinker and cement plant in Bangladesh.

Export potential in China market remains untapped for pandemic

FROM PAGE B1

Every year, China imports \$2.1 trillion worth of goods from all over the world and the amount is expected to double within the next seven to 10 years.

"If we can increase our export contribution to China to 1 per cent, Bangladesh's export to China will be \$26 billion in a year," said Razzaque.

"So, retaining the duty-free access in this market is very important."

The duty benefit was extended to Bangladesh at a time when China's consumer market is set to expand by 12 per cent every year to reach \$8.4 trillion by 2022. Studies suggest that because of its vast population, the Chinese consumer market will overtake America's by 2034.

But Bangladesh's export to China does not reflect the startling transformation the world's second-largest economy is currently going through, although the country is an old and has been a promising trading partner for years.

Bangladesh's contribution to China's annual import is only 0.05 per cent compared to 3 per cent of Vietnam.

In 2000, China contributed 7 per cent to the annual growth in consumer spending worldwide.

By 2040, China will contribute 44 per cent of the global figure, which is 3.5 times the expected contribution of the US, and 2.7 times the combined contribution of the whole of the rest of Asia, according to Oxford Economics, a

research firm.

Razzaque said Bangladesh should proactively seek Chinese investment along with technological knowhow.

If Bangladesh can strengthen the bilateral trade, exploiting the potential in other member countries of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) will also be possible as China is leading the trade bloc, he said.

After the Covid-19-induced supply chain shocks, for which heavy dependence on China was identified as a key reason, Chinese entrepreneurs are exploring other investment destinations to keep their access to the global market open.

"This could be an opportunity," Razzaque said.

Foreign direct investment stocks in Vietnam and Indonesia rose rapidly to \$161 billion and \$232 billion, Razzaque said.

"Investment saturation points are being reached because of a shortage of cheap labour and a lack of generous policy support. Therefore, investors are looking for other countries with potentially large supply-side capacities."

"In this context, the duty-free market access will be a great advantage for Bangladesh. Bangladesh should have a special focus eyeing Chinese investment," he added.

Bangladesh is yet to raise its export to China to \$1 billion whereas the shipment to Japan and India has crossed the mark.

Historically, the export to China is very low. For instance, exports to China from Bangladesh were \$746.2 million in the fiscal year of 2013-14. The amount reached to its highest level of \$949.41 million in 2016-17. It dropped to \$694.97 million in 2017-18.

The export of garment, the main items going to China, is still very slow although it is growing.

In 2008-09, Bangladesh shipped \$9.49 million worth of garment to China. It rose to \$506.51 million in 2018-19.

Annual average growth of garment export to China was 48.85 per cent between 2008-09 to 2018-19. It fell in 2019-20 due to the pandemic as export came down to \$330 million, according to data from Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA).

"We are greatly thankful to the government of China for extending the duty-free access to 97 per cent of the tariff lines to the least-developed countries," BGMEA President Rubana Huq said.

The duty-exempted products include 299 garment items.

"The export of garment to China can't be said slow as progress is happening. However, the enhancement of product coverage appears to be insignificant in terms of our trade coverage," she said.

Under the Asian Pacific Trade Agreement (APTA), Bangladesh used to get duty-free access for 226 products. So, only 73 products

are newly added, Huq said.

Bangladesh exported 151 types readymade garment items to China in 2019-20 worth \$330 million. Of them, 89 types of products worth \$185 million had duty-free access under the APTA.

The latest duty-free access has granted the tariff-free market access to 19 types of RMG items. There are 43 items that need to pay duty at varying rates.

"Given the limitation of our product basket, we would only be able to take more benefits of the duty-free access to China if we can diversify products, or enhance our exports within the duty-free covered items which is already happening," Huq also said.

Bangladesh imports almost half of its raw materials and capital goods from China.

It imported \$10.84 billion worth of textile and textile articles in 2018-19. China's share was 46.31 per cent, or \$5.02 billion, BGMEA data showed.

Only for cotton, the country brought in \$2.2 billion worth of the raw material from China, which 31.84 per cent of the total of \$6.9 billion.

"We need to pursue Chinese investment. There is a pledge of Chinese investment worth \$27 billion in Bangladesh in different sectors, but so far only \$3 billion was invested in," Razzaque said.

Leather and leather goods are a potential sector that can attract Chinese investment. China could be a very good export destination

for the country's leather and leather goods export.

Md Saiful Islam, president of the Leathergoods and Footwear Manufacturers and Exporters Association of Bangladesh, said the 97 per cent package included local leather and leather goods but the value-addition is very high, an area where Bangladeshi manufacturers have to face difficulties.

Since China is trying to make the most of Bangladesh's market access to the world, investment from the country is gradually coming to Bangladesh.

"We encourage Chinese investment in the leather and leather goods sector as it will create jobs, transfer technology and know-how and brand Bangladesh," Islam said.

Azizul Akil David, senior vice-president of the Bangladesh China Chamber of Commerce and Industry, said the duty-free package is a big opportunity for Bangladesh.

The package also includes agricultural and fish products.

"The export of agricultural and fish items means more local value-addition. We need to explore and exploit Chinese markets sincerely," he said, adding that the wide trade gap will narrow if Bangladesh can export more.

Currently, China is the largest sourcing destination for Bangladesh, which buys \$14 billion worth of industrial raw materials and food items every year. Md Jafar Uddin, commerce secretary, said: "We have started enjoying the duty benefit from China."

Royal Enfield bikes may hit Dhaka roads soon

FROM PAGE B1

"In this context, the market size is not small for the high-end segment," Ahmed said. He hopes the government will issue a circular to allow the import of high-capacity engine bikes.

The demand for high-end motorcycles will increase gradually in Bangladesh as the economy is growing and per capita income is rising, he said.

In August 2018, the government gave the go-ahead to Runner Automobiles to import raw materials and components to make motorcycles with a capacity of 165cc to 500cc.

Royal Enfield is expanding aggressively as it aims to tap into the world's biggest motorbike-buying market in Asia, according to the BBC. Recently, it announced plans to open a new factory in Thailand. Sales for Royal Enfield grew 88 per cent across the region in 2019.

BSEC to ensure proper distribution of dividends

FROM PAGE B1

It should be paid off directly to the bank account of the entitled shareholders as available in the BO account maintained with the depository participant.

The listed companies, upon receiving the claim on cash dividend from a stock broker or merchant bank for the margin client who has debit balance or margin loan, shall be paid to the consolidated customers' bank account of the stock broker or separate bank account of the merchant bank.

They should inform shareholders through a text message or email immediately after any disbursement of cash dividends, Islam added.

Prof Abu Ahmed, a stock market analyst, said unclaimed dividends should be open for their owners so that whenever they want to get the money back, they can.

"At first, a huge advertisement should be published to seek the shareholders who did not claim the dividends," he said, adding that the fund should be available on demand.

"Many families do not even know that their guardians bought shares before their demise so dividends remain unclaimed," said Ahmed, former chairman of the economics department at the University of Dhaka.

"We want to see that companies are disbursing dividends properly and timely so we issued the order," said a top official of the BSEC preferring anonymity.

"Even after that, if dividends remain unclaimed, we want to use it properly. So, the fund would be given to a fund manager," he said.

However, a top official of an asset management company said the fund should not be given to the ICB alone.

Some of the fund should be given to private fund managers on the basis of their performance as it would ensure proper utilization of the fund, he added.

Runner to bring KTM motorcycles

FROM PAGE B1

"The young generation loves new features and new models of motorcycles, for which Runner Automobiles decided to take on the distributorship," he said.

Runner, which already has its own line of motorcycles and also markets American brand UM and Italian brands Vespa and Aprilia, has started the process for upgrading its assembly plant in Bhaluka of Mymensingh for which KTM motorcycles were to be made available from this month.

Japanese companies Yamaha and Suzuki are also selling premium motorcycles in Bangladesh.

The current market share of premium motorcycles is about 15 per cent whereas it was only 5 per cent just four years ago.

Just two years ago, Bangladesh

was dependent on imports to meet 95 per cent of its demand for motorcycles.

But the situation has completely reversed: today, about 96 per cent of the two-wheelers plying on the roads are either locally manufactured or assembled, according to the industry people.

Seven firms -- Japanese brands Honda, Suzuki and Yamaha, India's Bajaj, TVS and Hero, and Runner Automobiles of Bangladesh -- have made the country almost self-sufficient in motorcycle manufacturing or assembly in the fast-growing market.

Operators now predict that the market would grow manifold in the next two-three years because of rising incomes, steady growth of the economy and favourable policy and tariff structures despite the pandemic

hampering production and sales in the last four months.

About 1,600 motorcycles are sold every day in the country, nearly doubling from 900 in 2016, according to market players.

In 2018, about 480,000 motorcycles were sold, up from 387,000 in 2017 and 270,000 in 2016.

Bajaj is the market leader with a 40 per cent share. It sold about 2.25 lakh units in 2018. It churns out 12,000 units per day at its Zirani factory in Savar.

Bajaj Auto, the world's third-largest motorcycle manufacturer and second-largest in India, originally acquired a 14 per cent stake in KTM in 2007 and has subsequently raised it to 48 per cent.

Currently, it exclusively manufactures the Duke range of KTM motorcycles.

Jute prices go thru the roof

FROM PAGE B1

This year, jute prices will be the highest in the history of Bangladesh, said Md Khokon Matabbar, another jute trader of Kanaipur bazar.

"Tk 3,000 a maund was the highest price I have ever seen since my entry into the business in 1993. That happened nearly a decade ago. I think the price will rise to Tk 5,000 a maund this year."

Jute was cultivated on about 85,000 hectares of land last year in nine upazilas in Faridpur from where 171,700 tonnes of jute were produced, said Md Hajrat Ali, deputy director of the Department of Agricultural Extension in the district.

Low production and raw jute export have played a vital role in creating the price spiral, said Morium Begum, regional assistant director of the Department of Jute in Faridpur.

Last year's jute production was 30 per cent lower than the previous year and a huge amount of raw jute was exported during the harvesting season, which created a shortage of supply in the market, she said.

"We conducted several drives throughout the district to catch the dishonest businessmen who sell jute by mixing it with water and sand. We don't have enough manpower to monitor the market properly."

Jute exports on the mend

FROM PAGE B1

"Export value has increased mainly because of prices of raw jute," said Sheikh Nasir Uddin, chairman of Akij Jute Mills, one of the world's biggest jute yarn makers in terms of processing capacity.

He said prices of raw jute, the key ingredient of jute yarn, almost doubled from around Tk 2,200 per maund (around 37 kilogrammes). And this is being reflected in the export receipts, he said.

Citing jute yarn, which accounts for more than three-fourth of the country's export proceeds from jute and jute goods, he said average monthly shipment from the Chattogram port was 36,704 tonnes in 2020, up 3 per cent from that in the previous year.

"Applications or uses of jute yarn have not increased. Uses of jute and market of jute would have increased had we been competitive in prices," he said.

This is the highest ever export growth in value registered by millers and exporters in recent years. Jute and jute goods exports rebounded in fiscal 2019-20 after a 20 per cent dip the previous year.

And this year, export earnings continued to stay in the positive thanks to production shortages in two major jute producing nations, Bangladesh and India, and

relatively good demand for jute goods and yarn.

Just after the harvesting of raw jute in the July-August period last year, prices of raw jute began rising.

Prices crossed previous record highs by the end of September amid middlemen increasing their stocks and slow release by farmers to cash in on supply shortages resulting from a flood-induced production fall.

The spiralling prices alarmed millers and they demanded that the government curb exports of raw jute to ensure increased availability in the domestic market.

Khondaker Golam Moazzem, research director of the Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD), said this has been an unusual year for the jute sector.

"It is an exceptionally good year for jute exports as shipments have not declined. Instead, it has increased," he added.

Moazzem went on to say that prices of raw jute will decline if there is good crop in the coming season.

The finest raw jute is trading at Tk 4,000-4,200 per maund, said millers, who doubt estimates of total jute yields citing spiralling prices.

The Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE) estimates that farmers

bagged 72.86 lakh bales last season after counting flood related losses.

Md Zahid Miah, chairman of the Bangladesh Jute Spinners Association (BJSAs), said jute mills require 55 lakh tonnes of raw jute to make yarn and other jute goods.

"But we are not getting jute and prices are going up," he said, citing that increased prices of raw jute are adding to the cost of production of jute goods, including yarn.

Miah, also managing director of Karim Jute Spinners, another leading exporter, said the demand for jute yarn increased in countries specialising in making carpets, such as Turkey.

Having to stay back at home owing to Covid-19 has led to a rise in demand for new carpets in western markets. That is why there is some increased demand for yarn, he said.

However, the volume of growth is not significant, he added.

He said high prices of raw jute were affecting mills and many of them were on the verge of suspending production as current prices were too high to draw in buyers in the coming month.

"Our exports in terms of volume is likely to decline by the end of fiscal 2020-21," said Zahid, adding that they had already

reduced production.

"Buyers are making inquiries but we are turning them down because of high prices," he said.

Mahmudul Huq, chief executive officer of Janata Jute Mills, said in the past there usually had been carry-over stocks of jute. This year, there is no carry-over stock, he said.

"It will be tough for financially distressed factories to continue production," he said, citing increasing prices of raw jute.

Huq said the volume of export of jute goods rose this fiscal year because of sales of 100,000 bales of jute sacks by the BJMC.

Also because of lockdowns and people in the west increasing the time they spend at home, the well-off and middle class are increasing spending for home décor, including new carpets.

As a result, demand for yarn has risen among carpets makers, particularly in Turkey, he said.

Giridhari Lal Modi, chairman of Uttara Jute Mills, said exports were likely to suffer badly in the coming months owing to high prices of raw jute.

"We are getting a lot of inquiries. But they are not responding after we answer their queries," he said.

Sea tourism gets a boost Patuakhali farmers content with paddy prices

Karnafuly Ship Builders launches cruise ship on Ctg-Saint Martin's route

But concerned over govt decision to import 10 lakh tonnes of rice



KHONDOKER MD SHOYEB

The cruise ship MV Bay One is getting ready to set sail from Saint Martin's island to Chattogram.

KHONDOKER MD SHOYEB

Karnafuly Ship Builders launched a luxury cruise ship—MV Bay One—on January 14 for the travellers to go from Chattogram to Saint Martin's Island with ease.

The ship capable of carrying 2,000 people at a time started its inaugural journey from the port city's Patenga Water Bus Terminal with over 800 passengers.

"The 400-foot cruise ship is 55 feet wide and 5.4 metres in depth. It has an average speed of 16.1 nautical miles per hour," said MA Rashid, managing director of Karnafuly Ship Builders Ltd.

"However, the ship is equipped with state-of-the-art 11,200 brake horsepower main propulsion engine, which can help it to go as fast as 24 nautical miles per hour," he said.

Once, the ship used to travel to different destinations from Tokyo. The name of the vessel was changed from Salvia Maru to Cruise Ship Bay One when Karnafuly Ship Builders imported it from Japan.

The multi-floored ship built by Mitsubishi Heavy Industries in Japan's Kobe city reached Chattogram port on September 19 last year through Andaman sea and the Bay of Bengal.

The ship was brought in to travel between Cox's Bazar to Saint Martin's Island. But the company had to change the route and start its journey from Chattogram to the island due to lack of jetty facilities in Cox's Bazar.

Steps are now ongoing to build a jetty for the berthing of the ship at Darianagar in Cox's Bazar, the managing director of the company said.

"We are planning to add international routes soon, as our ship is registered with the International Maritime Organisation as a Star Class sea vessel."

The vessel run by a team of 167 crew members has a total of 2,000 seats of different categories, including presidential suites, bunk bed cabin, twin bed cabin and comfortable chairs.

Each return ticket in the ship from Chattogram to Saint Martin's Island

will range between Tk 3,000 to Tk 50,000.

The economy class seats will cost the travellers Tk 3,000 each and Tk 4,000 for business class seats.

Tk 50,000 will be charged if anyone wants to complete the journey occupying a cabin under the VVIP package. There is also a family package, under which the travellers can book special class bunkers for four at Tk 50,000.

The royal suites will cost Tk 45,000, presidential suites Tk 30,000 and single bunker beds Tk 10,000.

For one-way travels, both the VVIP and family packages seats will cost Tk 25,000 each while the royal suites Tk 20,000, presidential suites Tk 15,000 and single bunker beds Tk 7,500 each.

The ticket prices for economy and business class seats will be Tk 2,000 and Tk 2,500 each.

Primarily, the ship will start from Chattogram on every Thursday at 11pm from January 21 onwards and will leave Saint Martin's Island at 11am on every Saturday.

Aman paddy growers in Barishal's Patuakhali district are very pleased with current prices as each maund (about 37 kilogrammes) is fetching about Tk 400-500 more than that last year.

"Following a few years of losses, we are finally getting good prices," said farmer Md Zafar Hawlader of Lohanlaya village under Patuakhali sadar upazila.

The district's farmers had struggled to meet production expenses in the last couple of years due to poor prices prevailing in local markets, discouraging them from increasing their cultivation areas.

"Now though, our financial stability has improved," he added.

However, Hawlader is concerned about a government decision to import at least 10 lakh tonnes of rice from abroad this year in a bid to boost the country's food grain reserve amid the ongoing coronavirus pandemic.

"The decision to import rice will likely reduce the market price and lead to losses," he said.

Echoing the same, Anwar Hossain Talukder, another farmer from the same village, said the government should consider the interest of local farmers when taking such decisions.

"Otherwise, the farmers will lose interest in cultivation in the face of gradual losses," Talukder added.

During a visit to the Dhankhali market in Kalapara upazila, this correspondent found local farmers measuring paddy on digital scales before filling those into sacks and piling those up by the road for sale.

Going round them were dozens of wholesale traders from different parts of the country seeking to make purchases.

In 2020, aman paddy sold at Tk 700 to 800 per maund even though the production cost was around Tk 800 per maund, according to farmer Abul Hossain of Dhankhali village.

"But now, the situation is very good as I can sell paddy at Tk 1,100-1,200 per maund," Hossain said.

"This year, I grew paddy on 6 acres



SOHRAB HOSSAIN

The district's farmers had struggled to meet production expenses in the last couple of years due to poor prices prevailing in local markets. The photos were taken from Dhankhali market in Kalapara upazila.

of land and earned about Tk 2 lakh from it," he added.

Farmer Abdul Mannan of the same village said he grew aman on 5 acres of land and was able to sell the paddy for Tk 1 lakh.

Besides, Mannan also had enough stock left over to feed his six-member family for the whole year.

Motaleb Khan, a farmer from Chandradwip village in Baufal upazila, said the current prices were very good and they would benefit if such rates prevailed throughout the year.

Wholesaler Abul Hashem from Kushtia said good prices were prevailing at the local markets since the very beginning of the year.

"Aman paddy was sold at Tk 700-Tk 800 last year but this year, we have to

buy paddy at Tk 1,100-Tk 1,200," he said.

Paddy bought from Patuakhali is supplied to rice mills in Kushtia and the finished product is then sold in different parts of the country, Hashem added.

Contacted, Hridayeshwar Dutta, deputy director of Patuakhali's Department of Agricultural Extension, said farmers were able to get what they had desired for this year. In the last couple of years, somewhat of a frustration had been prevailing among the farmers.

"But this time, that frustration is gone," he said, adding that aman paddy has been planted on 2.02 lakh acres of land in the district this year with a target to produce 4.37 lakh tonnes of rice.

NEWS In Brief

Europe auto sales post record fall

AFP, Paris

New car sales in Europe last year suffered a record fall of nearly 24 per cent due to the coronavirus pandemic, the European Automobile Manufacturers' Association (ACEA) said Tuesday.

"The EU passenger car market contracted by 23.7 per cent to 9.9 million vehicles as a direct result of the Covid-19 pandemic," the ACEA said in a statement. "Containment measures -- including full scale lockdowns and other restrictions throughout the year -- had an unprecedented impact on car sales across the European Union," it said. "2020 saw the biggest yearly drop in car demand since records began (in 1990)... all 27 EU markets recorded double-digit declines," it added.

The ACEA said that among the biggest auto markets, Spain recorded the sharpest fall at 32.3 per cent for the year, with Italy down 27.9 per cent and France 25.5 per cent.

IEA trims 2021 oil demand forecast

AFP, Paris

The International Energy Agency (IEA) trimmed its 2021 global oil demand forecast Tuesday as fresh coronavirus lockdowns cloud the outlook but said mass vaccination programmes should help bolster a second half rebound.

"Global oil demand is expected to recover by 5.5 million barrels per day (mbd) to 96.6 mbd in 2021, following an unprecedented collapse of 8.8 mbd in 2020," the IEA said in its latest monthly report.

"For now, a resurgence in Covid-19 cases is slowing the rebound but a widespread vaccination effort and an acceleration in economic activity is expected to spur stronger growth in the second half of the year," it said. "This recovery mainly reflects the impact of fiscal and monetary support packages as well as the effectiveness of steps to resolve the pandemic," it added.

The IEA said it now expected demand in the first quarter of this year to be 0.6 mbd less than previously forecast, with the full-year outcome revised down by 0.3 mbd. On the supply side, the IEA said that after "falling by a record 6.6 mbd in 2020, world oil supply is set to rise by over 1.0 mbd this year." "There may be scope for higher growth given our expectations for further improvement in demand," the IEA added.

It said that its forecasts assume that in the second half this year, Opec+ -- that is Opec members plus non-cartel producers, principally Russia -- will continue to rein in output, withholding 5.8 mbd of oil from the market in line with their April 2020 agreement.



GLOBAL BUSINESS

Pandemic reveals hidden poverty in wealthy Japan

AFP, Tokyo

Yuichiro welled up as he collected a food parcel at a Tokyo outreach event offering help to the growing number of Japanese pushed into poverty by the coronavirus pandemic.

"There is no work. Absolutely none," said the 46-year-old, until recently a construction worker, while clutching a small plastic bag of essentials on a cold winter street in the capital.

"This doesn't get reported much in the media, but many people are sleeping at train stations and in cardboard boxes.

Some are dying of hunger. "The world's third-largest economy has seen a relatively small coronavirus outbreak so far, with around 4,500 deaths and largely without the drastic lockdowns seen in other countries.

With an unemployment rate below three percent and a reputation for a strong social safety net, Japan also appears well placed to weather the pandemic's economic fallout.

But campaigners say the most vulnerable have still been hit hard, with statistics masking the high rate of underemployment and poorly paid temporary work. "The pandemic, rising joblessness and falling wages have directly hit the working poor, people who were barely getting by before," said Ren Ohnishi, who heads the Moyai Support Centre for Independent Living, an anti-poverty group.

Around 40 per cent of workers are in vulnerable "non-regular" jobs with lower wages and contracts that can be terminated easily.

Many also struggle to access welfare. Yuichiro, who did not give his last name to AFP, said he was sent from one government office to another before being told assistance was only for those



Volunteers and staff of non-profit organisation Tenohasi preparing food handouts for people in need at a park in the Ikebukuro district of Tokyo.

REUTERS/FILE

with children. "But there are lots of adults who aren't able to eat," he said.

More than 10 million people in Japan live on less than \$19,000 a year, while one in six lives in "relative poverty" on incomes less than half the national median.

Economists say that half a million Japanese lost their jobs in the past six months, and campaigners say the ripple effects are spreading across the population. "I know for certain the middle class is collapsing," said Kenji Seino, who heads the

non-profit relief group Tenohasi. Around 250 people were lined up in Tokyo's bustling Ikebukuro district to receive food, clothes, sleeping bags and medical help from Tenohasi's volunteer team, who also give free advice on job-hunting and government services.

"People who were already struggling were confronted with the coronavirus. They were on a tightrope and the rope just snapped," he added.

Experts warn the economic pain may be contributing to a rise in the suicide rate seen towards

the end of last year.

A one percent point rise in Japan's unemployment rate translates into roughly 3,000 additional suicides a year, according to Taro Saito of the NLI Research Institute.

Women in particular are facing economic hardship because many work on temporary contracts in retail, restaurants and hotels -- all industries hit hard by the pandemic. Experts say women often hesitate to seek help or to join men in queues for food, but even so, they are now seeing more

women and mothers with small children at outreach events.

Seino said less than 20 percent of the people he helps are women, but he believes "many more" have not come forward.

"Some women feel that their children won't be able to walk with their heads high if they are on welfare," he added.

While statistics show rising applications for public assistance, Ohnishi of the Moyai Support Centre said the shame and stigma of being a welfare recipient made many reluctant to seek help.