



Md Ashadul Islam, senior secretary to the Financial Institutions Division, speaks virtually at the closing event of the Microfinance Credit Information Bureau (MF CIB), organised by the Business Finance for the Poor in Bangladesh (BFP-B) yesterday. From March this year, the Microcredit Regulatory Authority will operate MF CIB. Afsana Islam, deputy team leader of the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office of the UK Government for Bangladesh, and Kazi Sayedur Rahman, deputy governor of Bangladesh Bank, were present.



Tipu Munshi, commerce minister, hands over a trophy to Md Sajedul Haque, chief financial officer of Reliance Insurance Limited, as the insurer was awarded with the "7th ICSB National Award 2019" for corporate governance excellence at an event at Radisson Blu Dhaka Water Garden on Saturday.

Launch owners not worried over Padma bridge opening

FROM PAGE B1
The number of passengers increases by up to 5 times during the Eid and other festivals, he said.

About 35 launches with nearly 2,000 cabins are there to cater for about 2,000-3,000 passengers a day in the domestic route, he said.

Every day, 10 launches travel to Dhaka from Barishal and the number of trips doubles during Eid, Rahman told The Daily Star.

"As per our calculations, we could witness a maximum 20 per cent reduction in the number of passengers," said Saidur Rahman Rintu, owner of the Sundarban Navigation Company.

Besides, no mode of transportation is cheaper when it comes to shipping goods while road transport is very expensive, he said.

It takes just Tk 200 to transport goods by launch, which are also perfectly safe and comfortable for travel, Rintu added. "So even if the number of passengers on the launch deck decreases slightly, the number of passengers in the cabins and VIP cabins will not fall while goods transportation will mark a rise."

"We are trying to provide better services to encourage more people to use the waterways," said Rejin-ul-Kabir, owner of a Dhaka-Barishal passenger ferry named Surovi.

According to the Sundarban authorities, the Sundarban-18 will be launched within six months, which will include new facilities such as VIP cabins, general cabins and lifts.

The water vessel owners also believe the passengers will prefer using the water routes than the bridge or road transports, as launches offer comfortable beds to the commuters during the journey.

"I love to travel by launch because of the comfort it offers," said Ali Jasim, who has been a regular passenger of water vessels for a long time.

"I sleep the whole time since boarding the vessel at 8pm from Barishal to reaching Dhaka terminal in the morning. The routine remains the same on my way back to home. The journey is so comfortable that I never feel tired."

At present, about 3,000 people travel from Barishal to Dhaka by road every day and this number increases by 4 to 5 times during Eid.

If comfortable and fast-moving buses are introduced on the route, many people would start taking their service, said Kishore Kumar Das, secretary of the Barishal Bus Owners' Association.

As a result, at least 5 times more people could use the road every day, Das added.

Small firms to get stimulus funds at 4pc interest

FROM PAGE B1
Small and Cottage Industries Corporation (BSCIC) do not get loans from banks due to lack of necessary documentation.

Farmers will also get loans from this fund as they cannot get bank loans for the same reason as micro businesses. Each representative organisation will prepare a list according to the rules to disburse the loans, Kamal said.

It is a good initiative to reach out to those who do not have access to credit support, said Zahid Hussain, former lead economist at the World Bank Dhaka office.

"We hope the institutions, such as the SME Foundation, with demonstrated ability to efficiently reach the unbanked

population will get preference over institutions such as the BSCIC, where governance has been challenging," Hussain said.

However, these poor and distressed entrepreneurs will still have to pay 4 per cent interest and many of them are currently not in a position to take on additional debt as business is still dull. "It is perhaps better than in the first half of 2020 though," he added.

Hussain recalled that the garment industry got emergency financial support at 2 per cent interest and from this perspective, the 4 per cent for micro and cottage entrepreneurs is too high.

He suggested that the entire package could be disbursed as grants for micro and cottage

enterprises that are facing existential threats but are fundamentally viable. A one shot infusion of grant money would help recapitalise, and thereby keep these enterprises afloat, he said.

PKSF disbursed Tk 250 crore of a Tk 500 crore stimulus package for its beneficiaries. Of the total disbursement, 77 per cent was loaned to marginalised and small farmers, 16 per cent to the micro industry and the remaining 7 per cent went to the youth and unemployed. PKSF provided this loan at 18 per cent interest while its usual loan interest rate is 24 per cent. The loans were refundable within one year but borrowers were allowed to make early settlements within a month

at 1.5 per cent interest.

Under the first package of Tk 1,500 crore, the government will give loans to micro and cottage entrepreneurs through various government and semi-government agencies like the SME Foundation, BSCIC and Bangladesh NGO Foundation to infuse dynamism into the rural economy amid the ongoing coronavirus pandemic.

Of the amount, Tk 300 crore will be provided to the SME Foundation for expanding its operations for the cottage industry and SMEs alongside helping female entrepreneurs. The SME Foundation will disburse loans among small businesses and entrepreneurs hit hard due to the economic downturn caused by the

pandemic, ministry officials said. Besides, the BSCIC will get Tk 100 crore under the package.

The state-run corporation, established to support small initiatives across the country, will provide loans to small entrepreneurs and industrial units set up in the BSCIC estates under its existing credit programmes.

The package also includes financial support for business initiatives by women who suffered due to the economic slowdown.

Joyeeta Foundation, a government initiative to support women's ventures and empower women financially, will get Tk 50 crore. Apart from the loans, the foundation will provide training to women entrepreneurs.

Fuel, power companies lose profitability

FROM PAGE B1
In some cases, many factories are yet to go into full operation, he said, adding that industrial power usage accounts for a lion's share of their income.

"We normally do not see profits from residential use," Rahman said.

Interest expenses against loans and payroll expenses also increased, he added.

Desco shares dropped 2.26 per cent to Tk 35 yesterday from Tk 35.80 the previous day.

However, MJL Bangladesh posted increased earnings and profits thanks to the higher import duty imposed by the government to discourage imports.

"Our profit rose despite the economic slowdown mainly because of government measures to reduce imports of low quality lubricants," said Md Rokibul Kabir, company secretary of MJL Bangladesh.

The marketer of Mobil recorded 14.5 per cent higher profits year-on-year to hit Tk 120 crore in the first half of FY21.

"Besides, the drive by law enforcement agencies to stop sales of fake lubricants also had a positive effect on our sales," he said, adding that around 30 per cent of local demand for mobile is met by non-branded

lubricants. Bangladesh was not so badly impacted by the pandemic but many other countries are still struggling.

"We need around six more months to return to the growth rate we achieved in the pre-pandemic era," said the official of MJL, which holds around 40 per cent of the local lubricant market. Share prices of MJL remained unchanged yesterday at the DSE.

Meanwhile private power producer Doreen Power, the state-owned Power Grid Company of Bangladesh and Jamuna Oil also saw higher profits.

Intraco Refuelling and state-owned Meghna Petroleum booked lower profits.

Power Grid and Intraco ended marginally lower while Doreen and Meghna gained yesterday at the DSE.

Abdul Hadi, a stock investor who completed his post-graduation in the business faculty of the University of Dhaka, said the reduced profit of power and fuel companies was expected as demand is yet to fully recover. "Fuel and power sector companies will book higher profits again once the economy recovers fully," he added.

Garment makers turning to artificial fibres

FROM PAGE B1
Since MMF is used as a substitute for cotton fibre, all of the imported MMF is used by local millers.

The demand for casual wear went through the roof for the longer stay of people indoor worldwide because of Covid-19.

People are buying more MMF-based apparels as they are durable, recyclable and re-useable. MMF also meets the criteria for sustainable clothing compared to cotton-based fibre. Moreover, due to lifestyle changes, consumers are looking for products that are easy to care for. MMF adds to that convenience, spinners say.

Nearly 30 per cent out of \$8 billion investment in the primary textile sector in Bangladesh took place in the MMF segment, up from 20 per cent three years ago, spinners said.

"The investment in MMF is growing as people are choosing the fabric as a substitute to cotton fibre," said Md Khorshed Alam, chairman of Little Star Spinning.

The use of MMF increased because of higher production of value-added garment items, he said.

The concentration in cotton in terms of garment items produced and exported increased from 68.67 per cent in fiscal 2008-09 to 74.14 per cent in 2018-19, according to a study of the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA).

The global trade of cotton-based apparel stands at around 35 per cent. It shrank by 0.5 per cent annually between 2007 and 2017.

The share of MMF-based garments in the global apparel trade is around 45 per cent, and it grew at 5 per cent compound annual growth rate during the decade.

In 2017, the global trade of MMF-based apparel was \$150 billion. Bangladesh had a 5 per cent share in the segment, compared to 10 per cent of Vietnam.

Industry people say Bangladesh has clear potential in the global market of MMF-

based clothing.

"The potential is very high as we are getting a lot of work orders of MMF-based apparels. We need to capture this global market," said Syed Shafiqat Ahmed, managing director of Saiham Knit.

Currently, more than 120 spinning mills out of a total of 500 have the production facility for PSF and VSF, said Monsoor Ahmed, secretary of the BTMA.

Member factories of the BTMA are expanding the production facility of PSF and VSF every year as the demand is increasing worldwide, he said.

Since setting up a separate spinning mill dedicated to PSF and VSF yarn production is expensive, most producers make yarn from MMF in the same mill with separate lines.

It costs Tk 80 crore to Tk 120 crore to set up a medium-sized MMF spinning mill in Bangladesh, Alam said.

Out of 2,052,000 tonnes fibre import of Bangladesh in 2018, the share of cotton was 93.57 per cent, which highlighted the country's reliance on the natural fibre.

"While we can't ignore the importance of the cotton-based market, the MMF-based clothing market bears strategic significance as far as our product diversification and higher-value-addition-led growth strategy is concerned," said BGMEA President Rubana Huq.

BTMA President Mohammad Ali Khokon said the import of MMF needed to be duty-free like cotton as the demand of yarn was increasing.

The imposition of 5 per cent VAT on the sales of yarn is a discouraging factor for the sector, he said.

The price of MMF has increased because many mills were shut in China and India during the peak of Covid-19 last year.

Three months ago, PSF was sold between \$0.70 and 0.72 per kilogram. It went up to \$1.30 to \$1.40.

VSF was priced between \$1.15 per kg and \$1.18 per kg three months ago. The prices now vary between \$2.50 and \$2.54.

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অকেজো গাড়ি বিক্রয় বিজ্ঞপ্তি

সরকারি যানবাহন অধিদপ্তরে রক্ষিত বিভিন্ন প্রস্তুতকারক কোম্পানি ও মডেলের অকেজো যোষিত ১৩টি সনাতা, ২৪টি জাস/সাস/অজ ও ০৫টি নম্বরবিহীন মোট ৪২টি (লেট ভিত্তিক) এবং ০৬টি কার, ১১টি জীপ ও ০৯(নয়)টি মাইক্রোবাস মোট ২৬(ছাকিশ)টি (একক ভিত্তিক) গাড়ি 'যেখানে যে অবস্থায় আছে' এবং একক ভিত্তিক গাড়ির ক্ষেত্রে উহার রেজিস্ট্রেশন সনদ, ট্যাক্স টোকেন ও ফিটনেস সনদ 'যে অবস্থায় যে পর্যন্ত নবায়ন আছে' ভিত্তিতে নিলামে বিক্রয়ের জন্য বাংলাদেশের প্রকৃত নাগরিক/প্রতিষ্ঠান ও অগ্রহী ক্রেতাদের নিকট থেকে সীলমোহরকৃত খামে দরপত্র আহ্বান করা যাচ্ছে। দরপত্র সিডিউলের মূল্য নগদে ১,০০০/- (এক হাজার) টাকা (অফেরতযোগ্য) জমা দিয়ে নিম্নবর্ণিত স্থান হতে অকেজো গাড়ির দরপত্র সিডিউল গ্রহণ করতে হবে। প্রথম তারিখের টেন্ডারের অবিক্রিত গাড়ি পরবর্তী তারিখের টেন্ডারে বিক্রি করা হবে।

২। অকেজো যোষিত গাড়ির দরপত্র সিডিউল বিক্রি ও দাখিলের শেষ সময়, দরপত্র বাজ খোলার সময় ও স্থান নিম্নরূপঃ

ক্রম	অকেজো যোষিত গাড়ির টেন্ডারের বিবরণ	দরপত্র সিডিউল বিক্রির শেষ তারিখ ও সময়	দরপত্র সিডিউল দাখিলের শেষ তারিখ ও সময়	দরপত্র সিডিউল বিক্রয়কারী ও গ্রহণকারী প্রতিষ্ঠানের নাম, ঠিকানা	দরপত্র বাজ খোলার তারিখ ও সময়
১।	প্রথম টেন্ডার (১ম রাউন্ড)	২৩-০২-২০২১ তারিখ ১৭:০০ ঘটিকা	২৪-০২-২০২১ তারিখ ১১:০০ ঘটিকা	পরিচালক (সড়ক) এর কার্যালয়, সরকারি যানবাহন অধিদপ্তর, সচিবালয় লিংক রোড, ঢাকা	২৪-০২-২০২১ তারিখ ১১:৩০ ঘটিকা
২।	দ্বিতীয় টেন্ডার (২য় রাউন্ড)	১৫-০৩-২০২১ তারিখ ১৭:০০ ঘটিকা	১৬-০৩-২০২১ তারিখ ১১:০০ ঘটিকা	ঐ	১৬-০৩-২০২১ তারিখ ১১:৩০ ঘটিকা
৩।	তৃতীয় টেন্ডার (৩য় রাউন্ড)	৩০-০৩-২০২১ তারিখ ১৭:০০ ঘটিকা	৩১-০৩-২০২১ তারিখ ১১:০০ ঘটিকা	ঐ	৩১-০৩-২০২১ তারিখ ১১:৩০ ঘটিকা

৩। দরপত্রের শর্তাবলী নিম্নরূপঃ
(ক) দরপত্র সিডিউল ক্রয় ব্যতীত কোন দরপত্র/দরপত্র সিডিউলের ফটোকপি গ্রহণযোগ্য হবে না।
(খ) বিস্তারিত শর্তাবলী দরপত্র সিডিউলে উল্লেখ থাকবে।
(গ) বিজ্ঞপ্তিতে বর্ণিত সকল অকেজো গাড়ির বিক্রয় প্রক্রিয়া সম্পন্ন না হওয়া পর্যন্ত টেন্ডার সূচি মোতাবেক টেন্ডার প্রক্রিয়া চলমান থাকবে।
(ঘ) কর্তৃপক্ষ কোন কারণ দর্শানো ব্যতিরেকে যে কোন দরপত্র গ্রহণ বা বাতিলের ক্ষমতা সংরক্ষণ করেন।

মোহাম্মদ মাহবুব শাহীন
পরিচালক (সড়ক)
সরকারি যানবাহন অধিদপ্তর
ফোনঃ ৯৫৬২১২৫

জিডি-১৯৫

Bangladesh to outperform Asian peers in economic recovery

FROM PAGE B1
Ministers, diplomats, businessmen of Bangladesh and Germany, trade body leaders and exporters took part in the discussion moderated by Shahed Akhtar, executive adviser to the BGCCI.

Commerce Minister Tipu Munshi said a high-powered trade delegation will visit Germany this year to increase bilateral trade and investment.

The minister invited German businesses to invest in Bangladesh's special economic zones as the government is developing 100 economic zones across the country.

Germany is the only country where Bangladesh's exports grew post-June 2020 and the majority of shipments was based on manmade fibre-based products, said Rubana Huq, president of the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association.

She urged the German companies to invest in local manmade fibre, polyester staple fibre and light engineering sectors as those are growing rapidly in Bangladesh.

The German economy is set to rebound in 2021 and 2022, said Mustafizur Rahman, distinguished fellow of the Centre for Policy Dialogue.

"Bangladesh will also see a rise in export to Germany." German investment in Bangladesh is low, he said, adding that the western European country still has a huge opportunity here and it should take steps to make proper use of the preferential access Bangladesh enjoys in the EU.

He also mentioned about setting up country-specific economic zones in Bangladesh, which will help to increase foreign direct investment in the country.

When buying slows down in Germany, it affects consumers' buying behaviour in other countries because Europe buys as a whole, said Syed Nasim Manzur, managing director Apex Footwear.

He also stated that Bangladesh will definitely outperform and is already outperforming thanks to the bold leadership of the government and resilience of Bangladeshi workers.

Nasir Ezzaz Bijoy, CEO of Standard Chartered Bangladesh, stressed the need for smooth export financing, introduction of export credit guarantee scheme and aggregation of large project for faster recovery of Bangladesh.

Jan Moritz, managing director of Julius Hüpeden, discussed how the coronavirus pandemic has affected the buying behaviour of consumers and made a significant downward trend on apparel turnover.

Germany is the largest export destination of Bangladesh in Europe, said Mosharrif Hossain Bhuiyan, Bangladeshi ambassador in Germany. He also shed light on his meetings with various heads of the foreign trade departments, according to a statement of the BGCCI.

Some are coming forward, as a German garment maker is planning to establish a manufacturing plant inside Adamjee EPZ, Bhuiyan said.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Ministry of Labour and Employment
Bangladesh Secretariat, Dhaka-1000
Common Service Section-1
Reference: 40.00.0000.038.07.008.18-29

e-Tender Notice

e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for the procurement of following work:

e-Tender ID No.	Name of the goods	Scheduled tender/proposal publication date and time	Tender/proposal closing date and time
540599	Purchase of 03 (Three) Laptop	26-Jan-2021 12:00	10-Feb-2021 12:00

This is 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 System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required. The fees for downloading the e-Tender documents from the National e-GP System Portal have to be deposited online through any e-GP registered bank's branches. Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).

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