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# People's mobility surpasses pre-pandemic levels

Google's community mobility report on Bangladesh shows

#### MD FAZLUR RAHMAN

People's mobility has reached the pre-pandemic level in Bangladesh, according to a new Google report, although the coronavirus pandemic is still prevailing in the country.

Bangladesh is the only country in the world that has shown positive growth in all the six indicators of the Covid-19 Community Mobility Report, which was published on March 2.

The positive growth came compared to the baseline period of January last year. The baseline is the median value, for the corresponding day of the week, during the five-week period from January 3 to February 6

The data set is intended to help remediate the impact of Covid-19 and shows how visits to places, such as corner shops and parks, are changing in each geographic region.

The report shows how visits and length of stay at different places change compared to a





Tourist attractions like Patenga sea beach in Chattogram are witnessing huge turnout amid optimism created by the arrival of coronavirus vaccines. STAR

> baseline. Google calculates these changes using the same kind of aggregated and anonymised data used to show popular times for places in Google Maps.

> In Bangladesh, mobility trends for places such as restaurants, cafes, shopping centres, theme parks, museums, libraries, and cinemas rose 13 per cent on March 2 compared to January year.

The trends for places such as supermarkets, food warehouses, farmers markets, specialty food shops and pharmacies were up 41

per cent compared to the baseline. It rose 12 per cent for mobility trends for places like national parks, public beaches, marinas,

plazas and public gardens. Mobility trends for places that are public transport hubs, such

+13% -41% Supermarket and pharmacy +12% Parks +24%

Public transport

+5%

as underground, bus and train

stations, went up by 24 per cent.

increased 10 per cent, and that

of mobility trends for places of

residence went up 5 per cent

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compared to the baseline.

The visits to places of work

Residential

**MOBILITY CHANGES** 

(Compared to baseline)

Mostafa-Hakim Group expands steel production capacity

#### DWAIPAYAN BARUA, Ctg

Mostafa-Hakim Group yesterday launched a new MS rod production facility to expand its annual production capacity by 4 lakh tonnes.

The move comes just four years after the company set up its first fully-automated rebar manufacturing unit called Golden Ispat.

The group invested Tk 1,000 crore, including Tk 700 crore from United Commercial Bank, to establish the new unit, HM Steel and Industries, in Chattogram's Karnaphuli upazila

Land Minister Saifuzzaman Chowdhury inaugurated the plant through a ceremony chaired by Mohamad Manjur Alam, managing director of Mostafa-Hakim Group and former mayor of Chattogram City Corporation (CCC).

Alam, now the chairman of HM Steel and Industries as well, said Mostafa-Hakim Group currently employs around 4,000 people while the new plant would create jobs for 1,500 more

The group began its journey with ship breaking in the early '80s before stepping into the steel industry in 1984 with a manual rod production plant named Golden Iron. It then set up a semi-automated mill called Golden Steel in 1987.

But after a long gap, the group established Golden Ispat in 2017.

Over the last few decades, the Chattogram-based conglomerate has also invested in a number of ventures, including cement, oxygen, textiles, real estate and bricks, according to Mohamad Sarwar Alam, director of Mostafa-Hakim Group

"A good response for the quality products of Golden Ispat as well as increasing domestic demand for steel encouraged this expansion," he added



# 12 tech startups want to raise funds from public

Twelve technology-based startups are interested to enter the stock

AHSAN HABIB





resident Bangladeshis, individuals having minimum net worth of Tk 1 crore, and other institutions as approved by the commission. Startup companies have huge potential to grow so it is a good initiative for the market to invest in them, said Arif Hossain, a qualified investor.

market in order to raise funds.

The companies Chaldal, Zantrik, Sheba.xvz, Landknock, Hellotask, Bondstein Technologies, Brain Station 23, eCourier, Khaas Food, Divine IT, AnnaNovas IT, and CMED Health. The companies already met

with the stock market regulator last week to discuss the matter.

"We spoke with the startups to boost their confidence and show that we are eager to allow them faster listing on the sme board," said Rezaul Karim, spokesperson of the Bangladesh Securities and Exchange Commission (BSEC).

The small-cap board, called the DSE SME, was rolled out on April 30 of 2019 with a view enterprises raise funds from the unavoidable reasons, he said. market. Companies of this size were previously shut out from the to go public so we met them," he

Chaldal যাঁলিক ANDKNOCK LTD Shellotask bondstein ecourier **BRAIN STATION 23** O. CMED DIVINE IT LIMITED ANNANOVAS IT LTD Khaas food

rules and regulations are ready," Karim said

Some other companies also asked to be listed but the regulator to helping small and medium had to reject those for some

"The tech startups are interested process due to their lower turnover. said, adding that if the companies "The trading board is ready, meet all the requirements, they

A small company should at least have paid-up capital of Tk 5 crore to get listed with the investment scheme country's bourses. After listing, its paid-up capital should be at least Tk 10 crore.

qualified investors are: merchant listed securities, resident or non-

could fast-track the listing process. bankers and portfolio managers, asset management companies, mutual funds and collective (CIS), stock dealers, banks, financial institutions, insurance companies, alternative investment fund Not all investors are allowed managers, alternative investment to trade on the SME board. The funds, market makers, issuer of

Besides, the companies will also get finance as a result.

"However, the companies should have good intentions,' Hossain said, adding that techgiants like Microsoft and Apple were once startups.

Among the 12 startups, some are already major businesses.

For example, Chaldal is now the country's largest online grocery shopping venture while Sheba.xyz, launched in July 2016, provides numerous services and solutions to both service seekers and providers.

Waseem Alim, CEO of Chaldal, said that they are keen to be listed in the stock market but some requirements might not be fit for all startups READ MORE ON B3

Win-win for vegetable growers, consumers

Mostafa Hakim Group invested Tk 1,000 crore to establish the new unit, HM Steel and Industries, in Chattogram's Karnaphuli upazila.

HM Steel has the capacity to produce 4 lakh tonnes of billet, the semi-finished product, to produce MS rods, angles, square bars, flat bars and channels.

Golden Ispat has the capacity to produce 2 lakh tonnes annually. So far, its share of the country's total production capacity of 8 million tonnes is only 2.5 per cent.

Bangladesh Steel Re-Rolling Mills (BSRM), which has two units and can produce a combined 1.6 million tonnes of MS rod each year, currently leads the market.

BSRM is followed by Abul Khair Steel with 1.3 million tonnes, GPH with 0.9 million tonnes and KSRM with 0.6 million tonnes.

Although GPH recently expanded its capacity to 0.9 million tonnes, it is yet to go for full production and has kept the limit at 0.5 million tonnes, according to market insiders

However, the local demand stands at 6.5 million tonnes per year against an annual production capacity of 8 million

## Female garment worker numbers on decline: survey

#### STAR BUSINESS REPORT

The percentage of female workers in the garment industry declined between 2015 and 2000, according to a survey.

In 2020, 59.2 per cent of the 4.22 million workers were female while 40.8 per cent male.

In other words, there were some 24.98 lakh female workers while some 17.22 lakh male.

In 2015, some 65 per cent or 25.91 lakh of the 4 million workers were female while 14.10 million male.

The annual growth rate of female workers witnessed a slowdown of 0.7 per cent.

However, the rate was a positive 4 per cent for male workers. This also means the number of workers increased by only 1.07 per cent every year, said the survey.

The findings were detailed in a report on "Socioeconomic Profile of Garment Workers of Bangladesh", which was made public by AK Enamul Haque, executive director of research firm Asian Centre for Development, at a virtual programme yesterday.

The survey was conducted among 1,119 workers in 160 woven and knit garment and sweater factories in Dhaka, Savar and Chattogram.

It said the female worker ratio declined because of automation and for the nature of the machinery in the sector.

SOHEL PARVEZ

It has become a regular task for Mohammad Monir Hossain. Every Thursday evening, the

small farmer from Savar, located on the outskirts of Dhaka, loads his harvested vegetables onto a refrigerated van of the Department of Agricultural Marketing (DAM) along with some of his peers.

The van arrives at the Bangladesh Agricultural Development Corporation (BADC) in the Manik Mia Avenue of the capital before the

dawn breaks. Hossain and his fellow farmers reach the same place later in the morning to unload and display their fresh produce to customers.

This is the Farmers' Market where Hossain has been coming with his fresh vegetables since the agriculture ministry opened it in December 2019.

The idea was to create a place for growers who produce vegetables and READ MORE ON B3 | seasonal fruits following integrated

pest management (IPM) approach, a method of crop production and protection that combines various management strategies and practices to grow healthy crops and minimise the use of pesticides.

Managed by the DAM, farmers who produce vegetables by following IPM techniques, including biopesticides, bring their crops to the market.

The field offices of the DAE certify the vegetables as safe for human consumption.

The initiative was taken at a time when concerns about the safety of farm produce are high owing to the use of chemical pesticides by farmers to protect crops from the losses resulting from pest attacks.

"We don't use pesticides harmful for human health, and the good thing is that many customers believe in us," said Hossain, who produces vegetables on 12 bigha land. He owns 1.5 bigha of land, and the rest is rented.

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A man is selling his produce to a customer at a farmers' market on the BADC premises on Manik Mia Avenue in Dhaka on Friday. PINAKI ROY

RAJIB RAIHAN

Over 140 steel factories of varying sizes are currently in operation.

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Aziz Al Kaiser, vice chairman of Partex Star Group, attends a sales and distributor conference for 2021 of its concern, Star Adhesive, in Dhaka recently.

## Malaysia's AirAsia Group plans air taxi, drone delivery service

#### REUTERS, Kuala Lumpur

Malaysia's AirAsia Group Bhd plans to launch an air taxi service and the four seats. At the moment, we have airline's logistics unit Teleport, which country's first drone delivery service as the budget carrier seeks to diversify amid the coronavirus pandemic, the company's CEO said on Saturday.

As part of the group's diversification push, it also aims to launch a

COVID-19 continues to hit air travel.

"The air taxi will have a pilot and our team working on this upcoming service by AirAsia," Chief Executive Tony Fernandes said at the Youth Economic Forum 2021, state news agency Bernama reported on Saturday. The service should start operating

ride-hailing service next month as in about 18 months, Fernandes was quoted as saying.

He also announced that the is currently testing an urban drone delivery service with state-backed firm Malaysian Global Innovation and Creativity Centre (MaGIC), would conduct its first commercial delivery by the end of this year.

## Antivirus software pioneer McAfee charged by US with cryptocurrency fraud

#### **REUTERS**, New York/Washington

John McAfee, the antivirus software pioneer whose former company still bears his name, has been indicted on fraud and money-laundering conspiracy charges stemming from two cryptocurrency schemes, the US. Justice Department said on Friday.

Authorities accused McAfee and his bodyguard, Jimmy Gale Watson Jr., of exploiting McAfee's large Twitter following to artificially inflate prices of "altcoins" through a socalled pump-and-dump scheme, and concealing payments McAfee received from startup businesses to promote initial coin offerings.

The Justice Department said McAfee and his accomplices reaped more than \$13 million from the schemes. The charges were brought in Manhattan federal court.

The Commodity Futures Trading Commission filed related civil charges concerning the alleged pump-anddump scheme.

Manhattan US Attorney Audrey Strauss said in a statement: "As



John McAfee

alleged, McAfee and Watson exploited a widely used social media platform and enthusiasm among investors in the emerging cryptocurrency market to make millions through lies and deception.'

Lawyers for McAfee could not immediately be identified. McAfee is being detained in Spain following his arrest there on tax evasion charges announced in October, the Justice Department said.

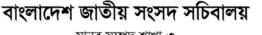
Watson was arrested on Thursday night in Texas, the department added.

Watson's attorney Arnold Spencer said in a statement: "Jimmy Watson is a decorated veteran and former Navy Seal. He fought for other people's rights and liberties, and he is entitled to and looks forward to his day in court to exercise some of those very rights."

Both also face civil charges by the US Securities and Exchange Commission, which in October accused McAfee of concealing more than \$23.1 million he made from boosting seven cryptocurrency offerings on Twitter.

In the cryptocurrency cases authorities said McAfee touted assets including Verge, Reddcoin and Dogecoin as part of a "Coin of the Day" or "Coin of the Week" tweet from around December 2017 through February 2018.

Authorities said McAfee held himself up as an expert on cybersecurity and cryptocurrency through his tweets, speeches and his role as a CEO of publicly traded cryptocurrency а company. They also accused him of telling followers he had no stake in the coins, even as he touted how they "will change the world.



মানব সম্পদ শাখা-৩ শেরেবাংলা নগর, ঢাকা-১২০৭ www.parliment.gov.bd



নম্বর-১১.০০.০০০০.৮০৫.১১.০৩৫.১৯-৬৮

#### নিয়োগ বিজ্ঞপ্তি

বাংলাদেশ জাতীয় সংসদ সচিবালয়ের নিম্নবর্ণিত ২০তম গ্রেডের (প্রাক্তন ৪র্থ শ্রেণী) পদসমূহে সরাসরি নিয়োগের নিমিত্ত প্রকৃত বাংলাদেশী নাগরিকদের নিকট হতে নিমুবণিত শর্ত সাপেক্ষে নির্ধারিত ফরমে http://bps.teletalk.com.bd ওয়েবসাইটে অনলাইনে আবেদন আহ্বান করা যাচ্ছেঃ

ক্রমিক	পদের নাম ও বেতন	পদের সংখ্যা	যোগ্যতা	যে সকল জেলার
নং	(জাতীয় বেতন স্কেল			প্রার্থীদের আবেদন্
	২০১৫ অনুযায়ী)			করার প্রয়োজন নেই
۵.	অফিস সহায়ক	৩৭	কোন অনুমোদিত শিক্ষা প্রতিষ্ঠান হইতে	
	(গ্রেড-২০)	(সাঁইত্রিশ)টি	অন্যূন এস.এস.সি পাস। তবে এই তফসিল	
	টাঃ ৮,২৫০-২০,০১০/-		জারির পূর্বে জাতীয় সংসদ সচিবালয়ে কর্মরত	
			দৈনিক ভিত্তিক সাংবাৎসরিক কর্মচারীদের	
			ক্ষেত্রে শিক্ষাগত যোগ্যতা অষ্টম শ্রেণী পাস।	
<i>ې</i> .	অফিস সহায়ক কাম	৩ (তিন)টি	কোন অনুমোদিত শিক্ষা প্রতিষ্ঠান হইতে	মুন্সীগঞ্জ, নরসিংদী,
	চাবিরক্ষক		অন্যূন এস.এস.সি পাস। তবে এই তফসিল	গোপালগঞ্জ,
	(গ্রেড-২০)		জারির পূর্বে জাতীয় সংসদ সচিবালয়ে কর্মরত	মাদারীপুর,
	টাঃ ৮,২৫০-২০,০১০/-		দৈনিক ভিত্তিক সাংবাৎসরিক কর্মচারীদের	শরিয়তপুর
			ক্ষেত্রে শিক্ষাগত যোগ্যতা অষ্টম শ্রেণী পাস।	জামালপুর, লক্ষীপুর,
৩.	সহকারী ডেসপাস	৬ (ছয়)টি	কোন অনুমোদিত শিক্ষা প্রতিষ্ঠান হইতে	খাগড়াছড়ি, রাঙ্গামাটি,
	রাইডার		অন্যূন এস.এস.সি পাস। তবে এই তফসিল	নাটোর, গাইবান্ধা,
	(গ্রেড-২০)		জারির পূর্বে জাতীয় সংসদ সচিবালয়ে কর্মরত	ঠাকুরগাঁও, খুলনা,
	টাঃ ৮,২৫০-২০,০১০/-		দৈনিক ভিত্তিক সাংবাৎসরিক কর্মচারীদের	ঝিনাইদহ, বাগেরহাট,
	010 0, 40 40,000		ক্ষেত্রে শিক্ষাগত যোগ্যতা অষ্টম শ্রেণী পাস।	বরিশাল, ঝালকাঠি,
			মটরসাইকেল চালনায় বাস্তব অভিজ্ঞতা	পিরোজপুর জেলার
			থাকতে হবে।	প্রার্থানের আবেদন
8. ¢.	কামরা	১২ (বার)টি	কোন অনুমোদিত শিক্ষা প্রতিষ্ঠান হইতে	করার প্রয়োজন নেই।
	পরিচারক/পরিচারিকা	24 (414)10	অন্যূন এস.এস.সি পাস। তবে এই তফসিল	
	(গ্রেড-২০)		জারির পূর্বে জাতীয় সংসদ সচিবালয়ে কর্মরত	তবে এতিম, শারীরিক
	টাঃ ৮,২৫০-২০,০১০/-		দৈনিক ভিত্তিক সাংবাৎসরিক কর্মচারীদের	প্রতিবন্ধী কোটায় প্রতিবন্ধী কোটায়
	010 0,200-20,030/-		ক্ষেত্রে শিক্ষাগত যোগ্যতা অষ্টম শ্রেণী পাস।	সকল জেলার প্রার্থী
	নিরাপত্তা প্রহরী	১৮ (আঠার)টি	কোন অনুমোদিত শিক্ষা প্রতিষ্ঠান হইতে	আবেদন করতে
	ান্যাগড়া এ২্যা (গ্রেড-২০)	20 (MIOIN)10	জন্যন অন্তুমোগেও শিক্ষা আওচান ২২৩ে অন্যূন অষ্টম শ্রেণী পাস। শারীরিকভাবে	আবেদন বন্ধতে পারবেন।
				11767-11
	টাঃ ৮,২৫০-২০,০১০/-		উপযুক্ত হতে হবে। প্রেশাঘার প্রবিদ্যালয় কর্মী (রাগদেনার) করে	
৬.	পরিচ্ছন্নতা কর্মী (পর্বনাম রাগদহার)	৯ (নয়)টি	পেশাদার পরিচ্ছন্নতা কর্মী (ঝাড়ুদার) হতে	
	(পূর্বনাম ঝাড়ুদার)		হবে।	
	(গ্রেড-২০)			
	টাঃ ৮,২৫০-২০,০১০/-			

ঝ. এক জেলার স্থায়ী বাসিন্দা অন্য জেলার বাসিন্দা হিসেবে আবেদন করতে পারবেন না।

- এঃ. উল্লেখ করা হয়নি এমন ক্ষেত্রে সরকারের সর্বশেষ জারিকৃত বিধি-বিধান প্রযোজ্য হবে।
- ট. প্রার্থীর যোগ্যতা যাচাই; প্রার্থী কর্তৃক প্রদত্ত কোন তথ্য বা দাখিলকৃত কাগজপত্র জাল, মিথ্যা বা বিজ্ঞপ্তিতে চাওয়া ন্যূনতম শর্তের সাথে গরমিল/অসামঞ্জস্য পাওয়া গেলে/ভূয়া প্রমাণিত হলে কিংবা পরীক্ষায় নকল বা অসদুপায় অবলম্বন করলে সংশ্লিষ্ট প্রার্থীর প্রার্থীতা বাতিল করা হবে এবং তার বিরুদ্ধে যথাযথ আইনানুগ ব্যবস্থা গ্রহণ করা হবে। ভূল তথ্য/জাল কাগজপত্র প্রদর্শিত হলে পরীক্ষায় উর্ত্তীণ যে কোন প্রার্থীর প্রার্থীতা পরীক্ষা চলাকালীন অথবা পরবর্তিতে যে কোন সময়ে বাতিল করার ক্ষমতা কর্তৃপক্ষ সংরক্ষণ করেন।
- ঠ. নিয়োগকারী কর্তৃপক্ষ বিজ্ঞপ্তিতে উল্লিখিত পদের সংখ্যা হ্রাস/বৃদ্ধি এমনকি বিজ্ঞপ্তি বাতিল করার অধিকার সংরক্ষণ করেন নিয়োগ সংক্রান্ত বিষয়ে নিয়োগকারী কর্তৃপক্ষের সিদ্ধান্ত চূড়ান্ত বলে গণ্য হবে।
- ০৩. অনলাইনে আবেদনপত্র পূরণ সংক্রান্ত নিয়মাবলী/শর্তাবলীঃ
- ক. পরীক্ষায় অংশগ্রহণে ইচ্ছুক প্রার্থীগণ <u>http://bps.teletalk.com.bd</u> ওয়েবসাইটে আবেদনপত্র পূরণ করবেন। আবেদনের সময়সীমা নিম্নুরুপঃ
  - I. Online-এ আবেদনপত্র পূরণ ও পরীক্ষার ফি জমাদান শুরুর তারিখ ও সময় ১০/০৩/২০২১খ্রিঃ সকাল ১০.০০টা।
  - II. Online-এ আবেদনপত্র জমাদানের শেষ তারিখ ও সময়ঃ ০৯/০৪/২০২১খ্রিঃ বিকাল ৫.০০টা।

III. উক্ত সময়সীমার মধ্যে User ID প্রাপ্ত প্রার্থীগণ Online-এ আবেদনপত্র Submit-এর সময় থেকে পরবর্তী ৭২ (বাহাত্তর) ঘন্টার মধ্যে এসএমএস এর মাধ্যমে পরীক্ষার ফি জমা দিতে পারবেন।

- খ. Online আবেদনপত্রে প্রার্থী তার রঙ্গিন ছবি (দৈর্ঘ্য ৩০০ x প্রস্থ ৩০০ pixel) এবং স্বাক্ষর (দৈর্ঘ্য ৩০০ x প্রস্থ ৮০ pixel) স্ক্যান করে নির্ধারিত স্থানে upload করবেন। ছবির সাইজ সর্বোচ্চ 100KB ও স্বাক্ষরের সাইজ সর্বোচ্চ 60KB হতে হবে।
- গ. Online আবেদনপত্রে পূরণকৃত তথ্যই যেহেতু পরবর্তী সকল কার্যক্রমে ব্যবহৃত হবে, সেহেতু Online-এ আবেদনপত্র Submit করার পূর্বেই পূরণকৃত সকল তথ্যের সঠিকতা সম্পর্কে প্রার্থী নিজে শতভাগ নিশ্চিত হবেন।
- ঘ. প্রার্থী Online-এ পূরণকৃত আবেদনপত্রের একটি রঙ্গিন প্রিন্ট কপি পরীক্ষা সংক্রান্ত যে কোন প্রয়োজনে সহায়ক হিসেবে সংরক্ষণ করবেন এবং মৌখিক/ব্যবহারিক পরীক্ষার সময় এক কপি জমা দিবেন।
- ঙ. সহকারী ডেসপাচ রাইডার পদে আবেদনকারীগণকে অনলাইনে আবেদন করার সময় মোটরসাইকেল চালনার লাইন্সেস এর তথ্যাদি উল্লেখ করতে হবে অন্যথায় সহকারী ডেসপাচ রাইডার পদে চূড়ান্তভাবে বিবেচনা করা হবে না।

তারিখঃ <mark>১৮ ফাল্লুন ১৪২৭ বঙ্গান্দ</mark> ০৩ মার্চ ২০২১ খ্রিস্টাব্দ

০২. নিম্নবর্ণিত শর্তাবলী আবেদন ফরম পূরণ এবং পরীক্ষায় অংশগ্রহণের ক্ষেত্রে অবশ্যই অনুসরণ করতে হবেঃ

- ক, নিয়োগের ক্ষেত্রে সরকারের প্রচলিত বিধি-বিধান, কোটা পদ্ধতি এবং পরবর্তীতে এ সংক্রান্ত কোন সংশোধন হলে তা অনুসরণ করা হবে।
- খ. সাধারণ প্রার্থীদের ক্ষেত্রে ০১/০৩/২০২১খ্রিঃ তারিখে বয়স ১৮ হতে ৩০ বছর এবং বীর মুক্তিযোদ্ধা/শহীদ বীর মুক্তিযোদ্ধাদের পত্র কন্যা এবং শারীরিক প্রতিবন্ধী প্রার্থীদের ক্ষেত্রে বয়সসীমা সর্বোচ্চ ৩২ বছর। তবে বীর মুক্তিযোদ্ধা/শহীদ বীর মুক্তিযোদ্ধাদের পুত্র-কন্যাদের পুত্র-কন্যার ক্ষেত্রে বয়সসীমা ৩০ বছর। বয়স প্রমাণের ক্ষেত্রে কোন এফিডেভিট গ্রহণযোগ্য হবে না।
- গ. সরকারি, আধা-সরকারি ও স্বায়ত্তশাসিত প্রতিষ্ঠানে চাকরিরত প্রার্থীদের যথাযথ কর্তৃপক্ষের অনুমতিক্রমে আবেদন করতে হবে।
- ঘ. কোন ব্যক্তিকে জাতীয় সংসদ সচিবালয়ের দৈনিক ভিত্তিক সাংবাৎসরিক কোন পদে নিয়োগ করা হয়ে থাকলে উল্লিখিত ব্যক্তির সাংবাৎসরিক ভিত্তিতে নিযুক্তকালীন কার্যকালের জন্য তার যোগ্যতা সাপেক্ষে সংসদ সচিবালয়ের কোন শৃণ্য পদে সরাসরি নিয়োগের ক্ষেত্রে তফসিলে বর্ণিত সর্বোচ্চ বয়ঃসীমা শিথিল করা যেতে পারে। তবে সেক্ষেত্রে অনলাইন আবেদনপত্রের নির্ধারিত স্থানে সাংবাৎসরিক কর্মচারী হিসেবে নিয়োগের তারিখ ও স্মারক নম্বর উল্লেখ করতে হবে। অন্যথায় আবেদন গ্রহণযোগ্য হবে না।
- ঙ. মাননীয় স্পিকার, ডেপুটি স্পিকার, চীফ হুইপ, সংসদ উপনেতা, বিরোধীদলীয় নেতা, বিরোধীদলীয় উপনেতা ও হুইপগণের কার্যালয়ে কর্মরত প্রিভিলেইজড কর্মকর্তা বা কর্মচারী উক্ত পদের জন্য নির্ধারিত শিক্ষাগত যোগ্যতা ও বয়ঃসীমার মধ্যে নিয়োগপ্রাপ্ত হয়ে থাকলে তার নিযুক্তকালীন কার্যকালের জন্য অন্যান্য যোগ্যতা সাপেক্ষে সংসদ সচিবালয়ের কোন শূণ্য পদে সরাসরি নিয়োগের ক্ষেত্রে তফসিলে বর্ণিত সর্বোচ্চ বয়ঃসীমা শিথিল করা যেতে পারে। তবে সেক্ষেত্রে অনলাইন আবেদনপত্রের নির্ধারিত স্থানে প্রিভিলেইজড কর্মচারী হিসেবে নিয়োগের তারিখ ও স্মারক নম্বর উল্লেখ করতে হবে। অন্যথায় আবেদন গ্রহণযোগ্য হবে না।
- চ. বিজ্ঞপ্তিতে উল্লিখিত পদের জন্য যে শিক্ষাগত যোগ্যতা চাওয়া হয়েছে, কোন প্রার্থী আবেদনপত্র দাখিল করার পূর্বে চাহিত শিক্ষাগত যোগ্যতার অতিরিক্ত শিক্ষাগত যোগ্যতা অর্জন করে থাকলে তা দাখিলকৃত আবেদনপত্রে উল্লেখ করতে হবে, অন্যথায় নিয়োগ প্রাপ্তির পর অতিরিক্ত সনদপত্র গ্রহণযোগ্য হবে না।
- ছ. লিখিত, মৌখিক ও ব্যবহারিক পরীক্ষায় অংশগ্রহণের জন্য কোন প্রকার টিএ/ডিএ প্রদান করা হবে না।
- জ. মৌখিক পরীক্ষার সময় সংশ্লিষ্ট সকল শিক্ষাগত সনদ/অভিজ্ঞতার সনদ/কোটার সনদ বা প্রমাণপত্র, জাতীয় পরিচয়পত্র, লাইসেন্স এর মূলকপি প্রদর্শন করতে হবে এবং পূরণকৃত Application Form সহ আবেদনে দাখিলকৃত সকল সনদ এবং প্রবেশপত্রসহ সত্যায়িত একসেট ফটোকপি দাখিল করতে হবে। এছাড়া জেলার স্থায়ী বাসিন্দার প্রমাণক হিসেবে ইউনিয়ন পরিষদ/পৌরসভা/সিটি কর্পোরেশন কর্তৃক প্রদত্ত সনদ, জাতীয় পরিচয়পত্রের ফটোকপি এবং আবেদনকারী বীর মুক্তিযোদ্ধার পুত্র-কন্যার পুত্র-কন্যা হলে আবেদনকারী যে বীর মুক্তিযোদ্ধা/শহীদ বীর মুক্তিযোদ্ধার পুত্র-কন্যার পুত্র-কন্যা এ মর্মে সংশ্লিষ্ট ইউনিয়ন পরিষদের চেয়ারম্যান/সিটি কর্পোরেশনের ওয়ার্ড কাউন্সিলর/পৌরসভার মেয়র/কাউন্সিলর কর্তৃক প্রদত্ত সনদের সতায়িত ফটোকপি দাখিল করতে হবে। সাংবাৎসরিক/প্রিভিলেইজ কর্মচারী হিসেবে নিয়োগ পেয়ে থাকলে প্রমাণক হিসেবে নিয়োগপত্র দাখিল করতে হবে।

চ. SMS প্রেরণের নিয়মাবলী ও পরীক্ষার ফি প্রদানঃ Online-এ আবেদনপত্র (Application Form) যথাযথভাবে পূরণ করে নিদের্শনা মতে ছবি এবং স্বাক্ষর upload করে আবেদনপত্র Submit করা সম্পন্ন হলে কম্পিউটারে ছবিসহ Application Preview দেখা যাবে। নির্ভুলভাবে আবেদনপত্র Submit করা সম্পন্ন প্রার্থী একটি User ID, ছবি এবং স্বাক্ষরযুক্ত একটি Applicant's copy পাবেন। উক্ত Applicant's copy প্রার্থী রঙ্গিন প্রিন্ট অথবা ডাউনলোড করে সংরক্ষণ করবেন। Applicant's কপিতে একটি User ID নম্বর দেয়া থাকবে এবং User ID নম্বর ব্যবহার করে প্রার্থী নিম্নোক্ত পদ্ধতিতে যে কোন Teletalk Pre-paid মোবাইল নম্বরের মাধ্যমে ০২ (দুই)টি SMS করে পরীক্ষার ফি বাবদ ৫০/- (পঞ্চাশ) টাকা ও Teletalk এর সার্ভিস চার্জ বাবদ ০৬ (ছয়) টাকা, মোট ৫৬/- (ছাপান্ন) টাকা পরবর্তী ৭২ (বাহাত্তর) ঘন্টার মধ্যে জমা দিবেন। বিশেষভাবে উল্লেখ্য, Online এ আবেদনপত্রের সকল অংশ পূরণ করে Submit করা হলেও পরীক্ষার ফি জমা না দেয়া পর্যন্ত Online আবেদনপত্র কোনো অবস্থাতেই গৃহীত হবেনা।

প্রথম SMS: BPS<space>User ID লিখে Send করতে হবে 16222 নম্বরে।

#### Example: BPS ABCDEF

**Reply:** Applicants Name. Tk.56/- will be charged as application fee your PIN is **12345678** দ্বিতীয় SMS: BPS<space>Yes<space>PIN লিখে Send করতে হবে 16222 নম্বরে।

#### Example: BPSYES 12345678

Reply: Congratulation Applicants Name payment completed successfully for BPS Application for post xxxxxxxx user ID is (ABCDEF) and password (xxxxxxxxxxx)

দ্বিতীয় SMS পাঠানোর পর ফিরতি SMS এ password টি Admit card (প্রবেশপত্র) download এর জন্য প্রার্থী সংরক্ষণ করবেন।

- ছ. প্রবেশপত্র প্রাপ্তির বিষয়টি http://bps.teletalk.com.bd অথবা বাংলাদেশ জাতীয় সংসদ সচিবালয় এর ওয়েবসাইট www.parliament.gov.bd এবং প্রার্থীর মোবাইল ফোনে SMS এর মাধ্যমে (শুধু যোগ্য প্রার্থীদেরকে) যথাসময়ে জানানো হবে। Online আবেদনপত্রে প্রার্থীর প্রদত্ত মোবাইল ফোনে পরীক্ষা সংক্রান্ত যাবতীয় যোগাযোগ সম্পন্ন করা হবে বিধায়, উক্ত নম্বরটি সার্বক্ষণিক সচল রাখা, SMS পড়া এবং প্রাপ্ত নির্দেশনা তাৎক্ষণিকভাবে অনুসরণ করা বাঞ্ছনীয়।
- জ. SMS-এ প্রেরিত User ID এবং Password ব্যবহার করে পরবর্তীতে রোল নম্বর, পদের নাম, ছবি, পরীক্ষার তারিখ, সময় ও পরীক্ষার স্থান/কেন্দ্রের নাম ইত্যাদি তথ্য সম্বলিত প্রবেশপত্র প্রার্থী ডাউনলোডপূর্বক রঙ্গিন প্রিন্ট করে নিবেন। প্রার্থী এই প্রবেশপত্রটি লিখিত পরীক্ষায় অংশগ্রহণের সময়ে এবং উত্তীর্ণ হলে মৌখিক/ব্যবহারিক পরীক্ষার সময়ে অবশ্যই প্রদর্শন করেবেন।
- ঝ. শুধু টেলিটক প্রি-পেইড মোবাইল ফোন থেকে প্রার্থীগণ নিম্নবর্ণিত SMS পদ্ধতি অনুসরণ করে নিজ নিজ User ID এবং Password পুনরুদ্ধার করতে পারবেন।

(i) User ID জানা থাকলে BPS<space>Help<space>User<space>User ID & Send to 16222

Example: BPS Help User ABCDEF & send to 16222

(ii) PIN Number জানা থাকলে BPSHelp<space>PIN<space>PIN No. & send to 16222 Example: BPS Help PIN 12345678 & send to 16222

এঃ. অনলাইনে আবেদন এবং টাকা জমার কাজটি প্রার্থী নিজে করবে। এক্ষেত্রে অন্য কোন মাধ্যম থেকে উক্ত কাজটি সম্পন্ন করে প্রার্থী প্রতারিত হলে কর্তৃপক্ষ দায়ী থাকবে না।

Online-এ আবেদন করতে কোন সমস্যা হলে যে কোন টেলিটক মোবাইল নম্বর থেকে ১২১ এ কল করুন। এ ছাড়াও ট. <u>vas.query@teletalk.com.bd</u> এবং recruitment@parliament.gov.bd এই ই-মেইলে যোগাযোগ করা যাবে ৷ (Mail এর Subject-এ Organization Name: BPS, Post Name: \*\*\*\*, Applicant's User ID ও Contact Number অবশ্যই উল্লেখ করতে হবে)। আবেদনকারীদেরকে শেষ তারিখ ও সময়ের জন্য অপেক্ষা না করে হাতে যথেষ্ট সময় নিয়ে রেজিষ্ট্রেশন সম্পন্ন করতে পরামর্শ দেয়া হচ্ছে।

> মোহাম্মদ খালেদুর রহমান সিনিয়র সহকারী সচিব (মাস-৩) অতিরিক্ত দায়িত্বপ্রাপ্ত কর্মকর্তা ফোনঃ ৫৫০২৯০১৪

# **BUSINESS**

# ICMAB elects US agency probes Facebook for 'systemic' top brass racial bias in hiring, promotions



A US agency investigating Facebook Inc for racial bias in hiring and promotions has designated the probe as "systemic," attorneys for three job applicants and a manager who claim the company discriminated against them told Reuters on Friday.

A "systemic" probe means the agency, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, suspects company policies may be contributing to widespread discrimination.

The EEOC typically resolves disputes through mediation or complainants to sue employers. But agency officials designate a few cases "systemic," enabling investigators to rope in specialists to analyze company data and potentially oring a broader lawsuit representing entire classes of workers.

Oscar Veneszee Jr. and two applicants denied jobs brought a charge last July to the EEOC, and a third rejected applicant joined the case in December. They have alleged Facebook discriminates against Black candidates and employees by relying on subjective evaluations and promoting problematic racial stereotypes.

The designation of the EEOC's probe has not been previously reported. The EEOC has not brought allegations

against Facebook. Its investigation, which may last months more, may not result in findings of wrongdoing. The agency declined to comment.

probe or specific allegations but said that "it candidates. is essential to provide all employees with a respectful and safe working environment."

"We take any allegations of discrimination seriously and investigate every case," he said.

The EEOC brought in systemic investigators by last August and received detailed briefing papers from both sides over the last four months, said Peter Romer-Friedman, an attorney at Gupta

declined to comment on the status of the Wessler representing Veneszee and the job

Employment law firms Mehri & Skalet and Katz Marshall & Banks also are helping the workers.

The EEOC's Baltimore, Pittsburgh and Washington offices are involved, attorneys from the firms said. Facebook's counsel, Covington & Burling, did not respond to a request for comment.

Increasing racial and gender diversity has been a persistent challenge for the nation's largest tech companies, which at times have blamed a shortage of qualified candidates from underrepresented groups. But tech workers have grown emboldened to publicly challenge that notion and allege in formal complaints that biased employment practices cause disparities.

Romer-Friedman said he and his colleagues told the EEOC in a submission last month that one such Facebook policy is awarding employees bonuses of up to \$5,000 when a candidate they refer is hired. Referred candidates tend to reflect the makeup of existing employees, disadvantaging Black professionals, he said. Facebook said about 3.9 per cent of its

US employees as of last June were Black.

David Lopez, a former EEOC general counsel now teaching at Rutgers University, said that systemic investigations are significant because of the additional resources involved. When they result in allegations of wrongdoing, multimilliondollar settlements sometimes follow, he said, citing recent cases against Dollar General Corp and Walmart Inc.

In the year ended last Sept. 30, 13 of the 93 EEOC merit lawsuits were systemic, according to agency data.

Last December, the Justice Department accused Facebook of discriminating against US workers broadly, saying it gave hiring preference to temporary workers such as H-1B visa holders.

Alphabet Inc's Google last month agreed to spend \$3.8 million to settle US government allegations that it underpaid women and unfairly passed over women and Asians for job openings.

# REUTERS/FILE Facebook spokesman Andy Stone A 3D-printed Facebook logo is seen placed on a keyboard in this illustration.

Female garment worker numbers

# on decline: survey

In this regard, Arshad Jamal Dipu, vice-president of Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA), claimed that

hikes, the study said.

is 25.9 years (males 27 years and females 25 years).

married and 25 per cent unmarried while 1 per cent is separated.

employed foreign professionals, mainly in managerial, merchandising, cutting and design and for technical

#### Policy Dialogue (CPD).

There has been no major change in purchasing power and savings from earnings by the garment workers even after the hike, he said.

Ahsan H Mansur, executive director of Policy Research Institute, said the number of workers passing out from technical institutions was low in the garment sector.

The reason for workers entering and leaving the sector so young should be unearthed, he said. "Can we make their stay in the sector longer?" he asked.

If international retailers and brands pay proper prices to local garment suppliers, workers will be better off, said BGMEA President Rubana Huq.

Bangladesh needs to put collective pressure on them so that they pay proper prices, she said.

Prices of Bangladeshi garment female garment workers. items declined by 4.78 per cent year-

designing.

It will be very challenging for Bangladesh if the international retailers and brands do not pay proper prices, said KM Abdus Salam, secretary to the Ministry of Labour and Employment.

Khondaker Golam Moazzem, research director of the CPD, suggested having an educational requirement of a certain level for garment worker employment to bring qualitative changes in the sector.

Rensje Teerink, the European Union ambassador to Bangladesh, said the EU has provided assistance to help laid-off workers in Bangladeshi garment factories during this time of Covid-19.

She suggested finding the reasons for the decrease in the number of

Tuomo Poutiainen, country director

Onion prices start rising in Dinajpur, adjoining districts FROM PAGE B4

The soaring prices have also worried the consumers in the districts. Rashed Rahman of the Barabandar area of Dinajpur town said: "The price to increase by Tk 2-3 a kg is reasonable, but I don't know why and how the price can increase by Tk 10 a kg in a couple of days.

He urged the government to start monitoring the markets to keep the onion rates lower. Otherwise, the consumers will suffer during Ramadan.

At the end of December last year, a kilogramme of onion was sold at around Tk 75-80 amid the Indian ban, which was imposed in mid-September last year.

The prices started falling at the markets as imports resumed through various ports across the country on January 1 or 2 this year. Simultaneously, locally produced onion also hit the markets, which brought down the rates to an affordable level for consumers.

Then, consumption of locally produced onion increased despite the adequate supply of Indian onion in the markets. The situation left a huge quantity of imported onion unsold

Later, the importers of Hili land port and other ports

for everyone due to work-from-home practices and online classes, the company is providing the discounts as parts of its efforts to increase functionality in people's lives, says a press release.

## German industrial orders jump on export demand

#### AFP, Frankfurt

New business for German industrial firms climbed in January on strong foreign demand, official data showed Friday, but domestic orders took a hit from fresh coronavirus restrictions.

Orders rose 1.4 per cent month-on-month, federal statistics office Destatis said in seasonally adjusted figures, rebounding from a 2.2 per cent slump in December. Compared with January 2020, new orders were up 2.5 per cent. Destatis said

## ROM PAGE B1

female workers were less tech-savvy. Moreover, males were preferring jobs in the garment sector for salary

The average age of garment workers

Some 74 per cent of workers are

Some 89 per cent of workers migrated from other districts to join workplaces, mostly from Mymensingh and Rangpur.

Some 15 per cent of factories

STAR BUSINESS DESK

The Institute of Cost and Management Accountants of Bangladesh (ICMAB) recently witness the election of its top brass for 2021.

Abu Bakar Siddique, executive vice president and CFO of Kohinoor Chemical Co (BD) and Group Reedisha, and Kazi Muhammad Ziauddin, additional commissioner for customs and VAT, were elected president and secretary respectively.

Md Mamunur Rashid, deputy managing director of X-Index Companies, and Md Munirul Islam, head of human resources of Aristopharma, became vice-presidents, according to a statement.

The ICMAB also elected AKM Kamruzzaman, senior executive vice president and head of operations at LankaBangla Finance, as treasurer.

## Singer announce discounts on laptops

#### STAR BUSINESS DESK

Appliances and electronics retailer Singer Bangladesh has announced discounts of up to Tk 2,600 and eight equal monthly installment facility at zero interest for students and 10 months' for teachers on Dell and HP laptops.

Singer has recently introduced an "11th Gen" Dell laptop in the Bangladesh market.

As laptops have become one of the most crucial devices

Abu Bakar Siddique Kazi Muhammad Ziauddin

allowing Facebook operations program manager



Industrial orders are closely watched as a key indicator of future economic activity, especially in manufacturing powerhouse Germany. The month-on-month January increase was driven by a 4.2 per cent jump in new orders from abroad, particularly outside the eurozone, Destatis said.

Within Germany, new orders plunged 2.6 per cent, reflecting the impact of Covid-19 shutdowns that have sapped demand for consumer goods in Europe's top economy.

German industrial orders plummeted during the first wave of the pandemic last March and April before recovering as global lockdowns eased. However a second wave of cases at the end of last year forced renewed restrictions in Germany, with authorities closing nonessential shops and imposing tighter rules on working from home. "Orders in the manufacturing sector resumed their upwards trend in January," the economy ministry said in a statement, singling out strong demand in car production and machine-tool making.But analysts highlighted the growing gap between the domestic side and demand for "made in Germany" goods abroad. "Today's data suggest that the industrial strength will continue in 2021," said ING Diba bank analyst Carsten Brzeski. "While retail sales took a sharp hit in January, industrial orders improved," he added. "It looks as if at least industry seems to benefit from the fact that some countries are faster and more advanced with their vaccination strategy and reopenings than Germany.

operations.

There has been nomassive improvement in the living standards of garment workers despite the increase in wages between 2015 and 2020, said Mustafizur Rahman, a distinguished fellow of the Centre for

on-vear last year, Hug said.

She also advocated for improving the country's human resources, reasoning that some 15 per cent of garment factory managements hired foreign professionals to cater to jobs in management, merchandising and Tribune, moderated the programme.

of International Labour Organization in Bangladesh, suggested expanding healthcare and welfare services and injury protection schemes for garment workers.

Zafar Sobhan, editor of The Dhaka

## 12 tech startups want to raise funds from public

#### FROM PAGE B1

"As per requirements, the paid-up capital should not be higher than Tk 50 crore but many of us have higher capital than needed to run the business. So, the ceiling should be more than Tk 50 crore," he said.

"As many startups remain in loss for many years, we cannot take part in the main market," he added.

There is a requirement that a company needs to make profits for three years at stretch to be listed in

#### the main market.

"However, this is definitely a good step from the regulator as many startups have partners abroad," Alim said, adding that talks with the BSEC are still in the primary stage.

Startups mainly focus on their activities rather than formal accounting, which is a problem for issue managers, said a merchant banker, preferring anonymity.

the stock market and since they handle pubic funds, they need to be careful on all accounts.

But since some startups have good potential, the BSEC should make considerations and provide facilities to expedite their listing.

So far, two companies have submitted their applications for listing on the SME board but were later rejected, the merchant banker Merchant banks are the issue said, adding that the board is an managers when a company enters opportunity for small companies.

across the country had stopped importing onion from India on January 27. But, the import resumed again after more than a month.

At least 30 tonnes of onions have been imported through Hili land port on March 4, said Sohrab Hossain Pratap, public relation officer of Panama-Hili Port Link Limited at Hakimpur upazila of Dinajpur.

Kamal Hossain, an importer of Hili land port, said the importers of the port started opening letters of credit to import onion from India when onion prices started soaring in the market.

### Mostafa-Hakim Group expands steel production capacity

#### FROM PAGE B1

Alam, also a director of the newly constructed HM Steel, said local demand increases every day.

The country's per capita steel consumption has doubled in the last few years and there is still a huge scope of rural and overall infrastructural development.

The government has also taken a number of mega projects which would need more steel in the coming years, Alam said.

With the new plant, the group's MS rod production capacity would reach 6 lakh tonnes.

"Our two units would combinedly contribute 7.5 to 8 per cent of the country's total capacity," Alam added.

## People's mobility surpasses pre-pandemic levels

#### FROM PAGE B1

"Activities are back," said Zahid Hussain, a former lead economist of the World Bank's Dhaka office.

"Bangladesh has surpassed all pre-pandemic benchmarks," he said, adding that macroeconomic indicators also indicated that there had been a recovery.

In South Asia, India's mobility in the indicators of the supermarket and pharmacy along with that in the residential category is in the positive territory, and the rest are in the negative territory.

Nepal showed positive movements in supermarkets and pharmacy, parks visits and the use of public transport, while it is negative in the indicator of retail and recreation.

Pakistan posted growth in five out of the six indicators. Sri Lanka's mobility grew in the supermarket and pharmacy, and residential categories.

People's mobility increased after the government eased lockdowns in

strict restrictions on the movement of 40 per cent on weekdays people and vehicles in April and May with a view to limiting the spread of the rogue virus.

"The demand for train tickets returned to normalcy from January," said Sardar Sahadat Ali, additional director general for operations of Bangladesh Railways.

Khairul Bashar Arif, hailing from Jamalpur, went to Cox's Bazar with his wife, a son and a daughter on February 25. "There was a lot of guests in the hotel we stayed in. We also went to Saint Martin's island. There were a lot of crowds there as well."

Hotel owners also reported a higher presence of guests, particularly from January.

The occupancy rate goes up to 70 per cent to 75 per cent on weekends, said Abdul Kauiam Chowdhury, managing director of Hotel The Cox Today, in Cox's Bazar.

"We have reached the pre-pandemic level," he told The Daily Star yesterday. June following the enforcement of The occupancy rate ranges from 25 to

Ashfaq Rahman Asif, managing director of Tarka restaurant in Banani, said following the ease of the lockdown, the presence of guests had risen by only 10 to 20 per cent. "But from the second half of February, it has shot up to the range of 60 per cent to 70 per cent.'

He credited the renewed confidence among the people following the countrywide rollout of coronavirus vaccines for the improvement in the situation.

Despite the resumption of economic activities, a significant number of new cases are being reported every day, and people are dying.

At least 540 new infections were recorded in the 24 hours to 8:00am yesterday, taking the total number of people infected by the deadly virus to 549,724, according to the Directorate General of Health Services.

Ten people died during the period. The respiratory illness has so far killed 8,451 people in Bangladesh.

### Win-win for vegetable growers, consumers as farmers' market gains traction

#### FROM PAGE B1

He said customer traffic was gradually increasing in the market, where they sit for two days - Fridays and Saturdays- every week.

During the rest of the week, he sells vegetables to wholesalers in Karwan Bazar and Rayerbazar of Dhaka. But nobody there cares whether he follows IPM to grow crops.

The only difference at the Farmers' Market is growers can sell directly to retail customers which give them better prices.

Touhid Md Rashed Khan, an assistant director of the DAM, said farmers received fair prices for their produce as there were no middlemen. Customers benefit as they get safe vegetables and seasonal fruits

Farmers from the surrounding areas of the capital city-Savar, Dhamrai, Manikganj, Munshiganj, and Narsingdi – mainly come to the market with their produce.

In the initial days after the

opening of the market, customer's presence had been thin. The turnout had tumbled in the early months of the coronavirus outbreak in the country as well.

Sales have begun picking up from November. On Friday, farmers sold produce worth Tk 3.47 lakh.

'We are really happy. The beauty of the market is we can sell our farm produce directly to buyers," said Razia Sultana, who has been selling vegetables in the market since October last year.

She said the market allowed farmers to get better prices compared with what they could get by selling them at the wholesale markets.

"Farmers' market exists in Europe and even in India. The good thing is that we have got one here," said Sultana, who grows diversified vegetables, including capsicum and rock melon, on the 40-bigha area.

She managed to sell vegetables worth Tk 5,000 on her first day in the market. Her sales average Tk 40,000 during the two-day week now.

"Customers' traffic and our sales will increase once there will be a permanent market for farmers," she said.

Despite the increasing turnout of customers at the market, the volume of sales was not enough for Hossain to clear all his vegetables. So, he has to sell some of his produce to wholesalers

"We register good sales on Fridays. But the presence of buyers declines the next day. The general public is aware of the market," he said.

The DAM plans to establish 64 farmers' markets across the country and has submitted a project proposal to the agriculture ministry to this effect, said DAM Director-General Mohammad Yousuf.

As a temporary solution, the agency is going to set up makeshifts markets in 20 districts.

In Dhaka, it is in the process of constructing a permanent structure at Manik Mia Avenue so that 20 to 25 farmers can display their produce all over the week.

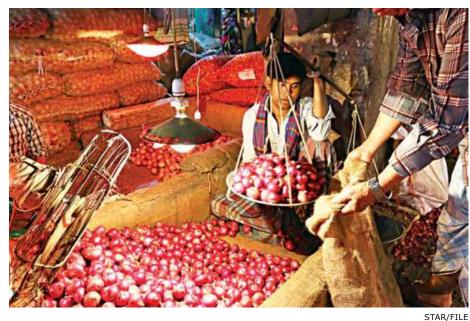
# BUSINESS

# Onion prices start rising in Dinajpur, adjoining districts

The Daily Star

DHAKA SUNDAY MARCH 7, 2021, FALGUN 22, 1427 BS

Each kg becomes Tk 10 costlier in five days



#### **OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpun**

Onion prices have started soaring in the wholesale and retail markets in Dinajpur and adjacent districts due to scarcity of the vegetable's local variety.

On the other hand, traders of Hili land port, who have been refraining from importing Indian onions due to its low demand in the local market, restarted bringing in the Indian variety on March 4.

According to the traders, the prices of a kilogramme (kg) of onions shot up by Tk 10 within five days. A kg of local onion is now sold at Tk 35-40, up from Tk 25-30. Indian onions are currently not available

in local markets.

Hasinur Rahman, a retailer of Biral upazila in Dinajpur, said he had been selling onion at Tk 25 per kg, which has increased to Tk 35 now.

"The wholesalers of Bahadurbazar in Dinajpur town have been selling onions at

an increased rate, he added

Mazedur Rahman, a wholesale onion trader of Bahadurbazar, said the price had been stable in January and February as the markets were flooded with local onions. But, suddenly the collection dropped,

which pushed up the prices to a great extent.

"The rate was Tk 22-23 per kg just five days ago, which hit Tk 32 now," he said.

Mazedur also said onions produced in Dinajpur and other close districts have already been consumed and now they are procuring it from various districts, including Pabna, Sirajganj, Bogura, Natore, Kusthia and Jamalpur districts.

The traders in these districts have charged them at higher rates and the transportation cost has been higher too, he said.

"Onion prices will become unstable ahead of Ramadan if the upward trend continues this way."

READ MORE ON B3

# Lemon prices go up amid immunity boosting efforts

#### MINTU DESHWARA

Amidst heightened health consciousness for the pandemic, lemon prices are skyrocketing in its present off season, benefitting a huge number of farmers in Sylhet division, especially those in Moulvibazar's Sreemangal upazila. So much so that the cost of each

'hali", the Bangla for four pieces of something, has gone up four or fivefold to around Tk 100.

"Unimaginable...I haven't een anything like it," says Shaymal Debborma, who has been cultivating the citrus fruit in Tiprachherra since the time of his forefathers.

A lot of people, especially marginal farmers, have been largely dependent on cultivating lemons in the area even before Bangladesh gained independence, he said.

During the harvest season from April to September, every four lemons usually fetch around Tk 20, said farmer Md Sadek Mia of Jamburachherra.

With the onset of the coronavirus pandemic last year, a single lemon was selling for Tk 10-Tk 15, he said.

Demand was driven up by the fact that lemon juice is a substantial source of vitamin C, which ensures healthy immune systems.

The average man needs 40 milligrammes a day, said the Kulaura upazila health and planning officer, Dr Nurul Haque. Vitamin C helps to heal wounds

and prevents kidney stone disease while the inner lining of lemon peels protects veins and arteries, he said.

Local healthcare officials advised drinking lemon juice to prevent coronavirus, said Abul Kashem, a resident of Purbasha village.

He was frustrated at the prices, saying even the small-sized ones being met from Sreemangal, stated which were yet to mature were the DAE Moulvibazar unit's deputy each being sold at Tk 9 while the director, Kazi Lutful Bari.



Kagoji, Jara, Jhuta, China, Elachi,

region are available year round but

the peak harvest season starts in

July and continues till September,

said Dilip Kumar Adhikary, additional director of the DAE's

only a few wholesalers are offering

winter even a few years ago but now

due to the application of advanced

technologies and cultivation of

high-yield varieties, the citrus fruit

is produced round the year, said

farmer Shamsul Haque.

it in the markets lately, he added.

It is high in demand in cities but

Lemons were unavailable in

Different varieties of Sylhet

Beej-Shunya and Sharboti, he said.

Demand was driven up by the fact that lemon juice is a substantial source of vitamin C, which ensures healthy immune systems.

Sylhet division unit.

medium ones at Tk 15.

Meanwhile, farmers were in for a surprise bumper harvest in the off season, thanks to the availability of water, favourable weather conditions, suitable land and cheap labour, according to farmer Milon Sheikh of Jamburachherra village.

"Buyers have placed orders of huge volumes," he said.

There are 1,751 orchards on 1,675 hectares of land in Moulvibazar, according to the Department of Agricultural Agricultural Extension (DAE). In 2020, 26,800 tonnes were produced.

A lot of the country's demand is

The most popular varieties are deprived of his fair share from market prices.

> Farmers have to pay 5 per cent of sales to wholesalers and it is not possible to run business bypassing them, he said.

> Normally during this season, every 1,000 lemons fetch Tk 1,500-Tk 2,000 at wholesale but now it is Tk 7,000-Tk 10,000, said the president of the area's lemon and pineapple wholesalers' association, Hazi Jasim Uddin.

> The supply is low, said trader Mizanur Rahman of Notunbazar area to this correspondent.

> Demand has been high for the past few months and even the small ones which have very little juice inside are each selling for Tk 8 on

He, however, claimed of being an average, he said.

**GLOBAL BUSINESS** China wants economy to grow over 6pc in 2021

China's leaders said Friday they





REUTERS

This could be because Beijing does not want to slash its growth target next year, when distortions

Unfazed by bond market, Fed sets course for

PHOTO: STAR

had set a target for GDP to grow more than six percent this year, as the world's second largest economy surges out of a pandemic-induced slump.

The global growth powerhouse stuttered in 2020, logging its slowest expansion in four decades as strict virus containment measures at home collided with a freeze in international trade.

The slowdown raised doubts about the Communist Party's ability to deliver on its pledge of continued prosperity in return for unquestioned political power. But with the coronavirus largely brought under control domestically, analysts expect a strong comeback, with some suggesting the economy could expand by as much as nine percent this year.

Beijing usually sets a target it feels it can exceed. It did not set one at all last year. Announcing the figure at the start of the annual legislative session, Premier Li Keqiang said the government had "taken into account the recovery of economic activity". The target of over six percent also dovetails with future goals, Li said, and these



An elderly woman pushes a cart after searching through rubbish bins to collect recyclable items to sell, along a street near the Great Hall of the People in Beijing on March 5.

include reform, innovation, and "high-quality development".

Authorities say they want to create 11 million new urban jobs this year, and keep urban unemployment around 5.5 per cent. Outside observers caution as deliberately cautious. "The bar that China's unemployment figures is set too low... (it's) as if there is may not tell the whole story, with no target," ING chief economist for many people across the vast nation

involved in the informal workforce. Analysts had widely predicted the continued global uncertainty would make it tricky for China to post positive figures in a year lost to set a GDP target again this year, and greeted the six percent figure Greater China Iris Pang told AFP.

from the pandemic subside, added Nomura chief China economist Lu Ting.The figure also reflects "the shifting focus from quantity to quality of economic growth", said Zhu Chaoping, a strategist at JPMorgan Asset Management.

That could include resources being allocated to long-term initiatives like environmental protection, Zhu added.Leaders also did not specify a growth target in its new five-year plan draft published Friday, as is its usual custom, only saying it would be "maintained within a reasonable range".

China has been trying to rebalance the economy from its export- and investment-led economic model to one driven by consumer spending and high-quality development.The post-Covid economic rebound saw China's GDP growth recorded at about two percent last year, which made it the only major economy to

the virus. With weakness around the world caused by the prolonged pandemic shutdown, capitals around the globe will be watching China's economic performance eagerly.

## More than 20,000 US organisations compromised through Microsoft flaw

#### **REUTERS**, Washington

More than 20,000 US organizations have been compromised through a back door installed via recently patched flaws in Microsoft Corp's email software, a person familiar with the US government's response said on Friday.

The hacking has already reached more places than all of the tainted code downloaded from SolarWinds Corp, the company at the heart of another massive hacking spree uncovered in December.

The latest hack has left channels for remote access spread among credit unions, town governments and small businesses, according to records from the US investigation.

of Tens thousands of organizations in Asia and Europe are also affected, the records show.

Microsoft on Tuesday.

Microsoft, which had initially said the hacks consisted of "limited and targeted attacks," declined to comment on the scale of the problem on Friday but said it was working with government agencies and security companies to provide help to customers.

It added, "impacted customers should contact our support teams for additional help and resources."

One scan of connected devices showed only 10 per cent of those vulnerable had installed the patches by Friday, though the number was rising. Because installing the patch does not get rid of the back doors, US officials are racing to figure out how to notify all the victims and guide them in their hunt.

All of those affected appear to The hacks are continuing despite run Web versions of email client actor. A Chinese government

emergency patches issued by Outlook and host them on their spokesman said the country was own machines, instead of relying

on cloud providers. That may have spared many of the biggest companies and federal government agencies, the records suggest.

The federal Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency did not respond to a request for comment.

Earlier on Friday, White House press secretary Jen Psaki told reporters that the vulnerabilities found in Microsoft's widely used Exchange servers were "significant," and "could have far-reaching "We're concerned that impacts." there are a large number of victims," Psaki said.

Microsoft and the person working with the US response blamed the initial wave of attacks on a Chinese government-backed

not behind the intrusions.

What started as a controlled attack late last year against a few classic espionage targets grew last month to a widespread campaign. Security officials said that implied that unless China had changed tactics, a second group may have become involved.

More attacks are expected from other hackers as the code used to take control of the mail servers spreads.

The hackers have only used the back doors to re-enter and move around the infected networks in a small percentage of cases, probably less than 1 in 10, the person working with the government said. "A couple hundred guys are exploiting them as fast as they can,' stealing data and installing other ways to return later, he said.

### sustained, easy policy

#### REUTERS

US central bankers on Friday signaled they do not plan to touch the dial on their super-easy policy for some time, expressing little concern over the rapid rise in US Treasury yields in recent weeks, and hope for a robust recovery.

A drop in infections, accelerating vaccinations and likely passage of a \$1.9 trillion pandemic relief package have driven a surge in bond yields. Some who worry about inflation have speculated the Fed would act to bolster its current bondbuying program to push down long-term borrowing costs.

Fed officials are not biting.

"If we were seeing a real uptick in real yields, that would give me pause, that would give me concern that the amount of accommodation we are providing to the economy is reducing, and that might warrant us considering a policy response," Minneapolis Federal Reserve Bank President Neel Kashkari said. "We are not seeing much movement in real yields" he added, but rather an increase in what bond investors are demanding in compensation to reflect rising inflation expectations.

St. Louis Fed President James Bullard agreed the Treasury market moves do not require more Fed easing."It's not matching up right now that we need to be more dovish than we already are," Bullard said in an interview on SiriusXM Radio.

The remarks from the Fed's arguably most-dovish policymakers were in line with those of Fed Chair Jerome Powell, who on Thursday said the current policy stance was appropriate, and rejected concern that the recent rise in 10-year yields could impede the Fed's work.

Under a new policy framework adopted last year, the Fed has promised to keep rates at near-zero level until the economy reaches full employment and inflation hits 2 per cent and looks headed above it. It is also buying \$120 billion in bonds a month to further pin down borrowing costs.

Bullard dismissed the need for the Fed to adjust those purchases to cap the rise in yields. He said he would watch for disorderly behavior in the Treasury market.

"Something panicky would catch my attention, but we're not at that point," he said. The 10-year US Treasury note which rose above 1.62 per cent on Friday before falling back to about 1.58 per cent - is just returning to the level consistent with the six months before the pandemic, Bullard said, a "still quite low level of yields.

Bullard reiterated his recent forecast for the US jobless rate, now at 6.2 per cent, to end the year at around 4.5 per cent, and that gross domestic product growth could be around 6.5 per cent.

Nonetheless, he said, we "still need a lot of repair" in the labor market.

The Fed's policy-making panel next meets on March 16-17. Fed rules prohibit policymakers from making public comments starting Saturday in the runup to the meeting as they engage in intense analysis of economic conditions, revise forecasts, and model what they believe is the proper Fed response.

A US government report Friday showing bigger-than-expected job gains in February shows the recovery is headed in the right direction, Cleveland Fed President Loretta Mester told CNN International, but "we are still very far from our goals" of full employment and price stability.



A man walks past the Federal Reserve Bank in Washington, DC.