

STOCKS		COMMODITIES		ASIAN MARKETS				CURRENCIES			
DSEX	CSCX	Gold	Oil	MUMBAI	TOKYO	SINGAPORE	SHANGHAI	USD	EUR	GBP	CNY
▲ 0.02%	▼ 0.05%	\$1,733.34	\$61.74	▲ 0.56%	▼ 0.61%	▲ 0.12%	▼ 0.93%	BUY TK 83.95	99.12	115.37	12.67
5,413.73	9,453.12	(per ounce)	(per barrel)	50,051.44	28,995.92	3,131.74	3,411.51	SELL TK 84.95	102.92	119.17	13.32



# Star BUSINESS

DHAKA WEDNESDAY MARCH 24, 2021, CHAITRA 10, 1427 BS • starbusiness@thedaily.com

## Apparel exporters in a bind

They face severe financial strain as buyers want to delay payments again

REFAET ULLAH MIRDHA

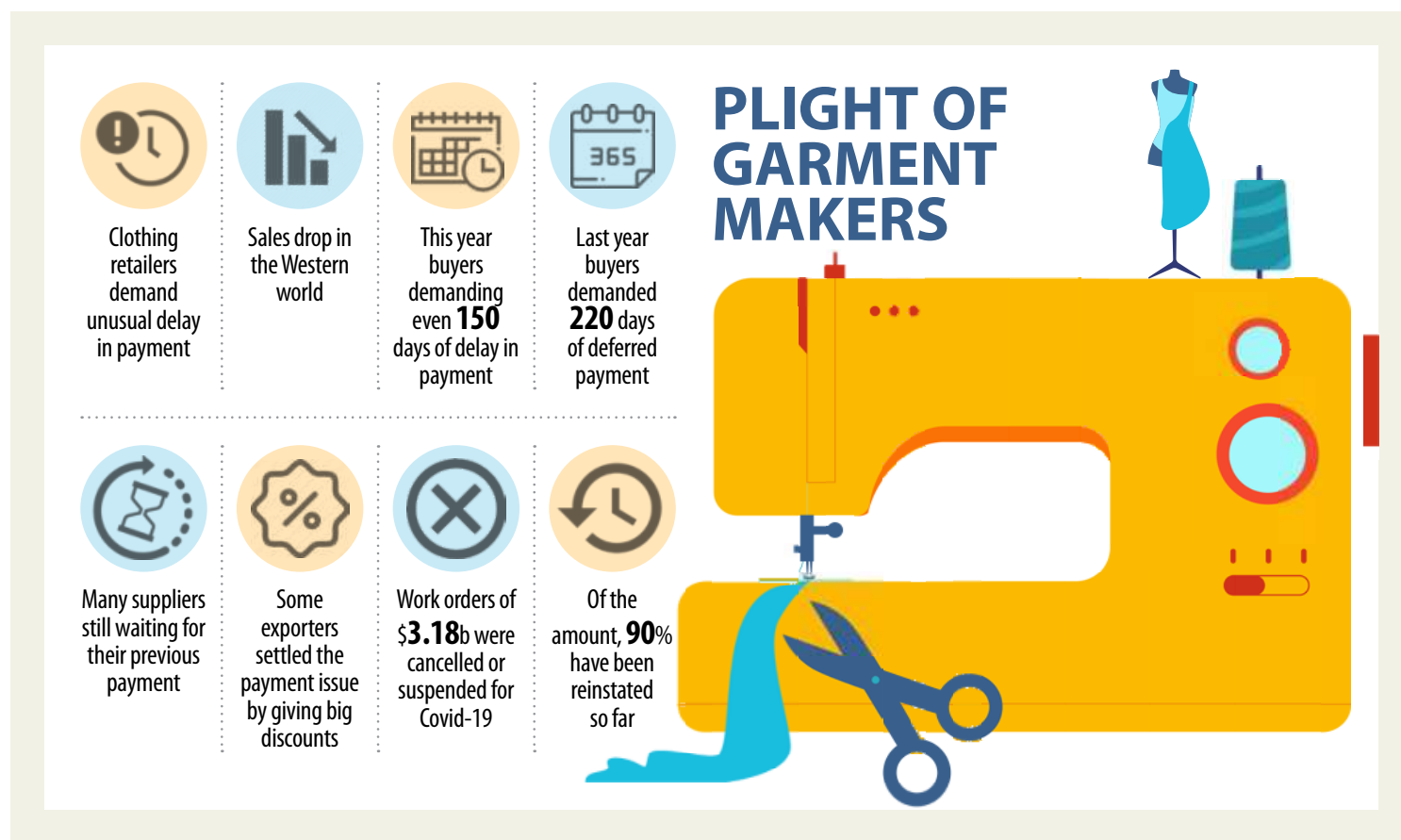
International retailers and brands are again demanding unusual deferral payment from local apparel suppliers, the second time in a year, saying sales have dropped after Western nations reimposed lockdowns and tougher restrictions because of a surge in coronavirus infections.

When international apparel buyers open letters of credit, the repayment period is set at the highest 90 days. But in most cases, the bills are settled between 30 days and 60 days.

Last year, the retailers and brands, hit hard by the pandemic, had sought deferral payments for 120 to 220 days. As a result, local suppliers had faced severe financial strain, forcing many of them to close factories and lay off workers.

During the first wave of Covid-19, buyers had demanded the abnormal deferral of the payment because of lockdowns and massive disruption in the global supply chain due to the fallouts of Covid-19.

With the improvement of the situation in recent months,



the apparel supply chain also recovered a tad bit and, the length of the deferred payment significantly improved as buyers placed work orders with 90 days of LC payments.

But over the last one month, the buyers have been demanding 120 days to 150 days as the payment period as sales of the clothing items

reduced significantly because the sharp rise in coronavirus infections forced many parts of the Western world to impose lockdowns.

"Almost all of our buyers are financially weak now because of the fallouts of the Covid-19," said AK Azad, managing director of Ha-Meem Group, a garment exporter.

"As a result, they are demanding an unusual delay in payment," he said.

The latest blow for the exporters in Bangladesh came even though the arrears stuck by the first wave have not been cleared yet.

Azad did not get \$1.4 million from JC Penney yet as the company was sold out.

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## 300 startups to get up to Tk 10cr each

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

The government will provide up to Tk 10 crore to promising start-ups in Bangladesh, said State Minister for ICT Zunaid Ahmed Palak Yesterday.

The government will give the fund to 300 startups, including 200 this year, in the form of equity investment, he said.

"We will also provide free office space to the startups in 39 hi-tech parks for six months," he said at an event on the inclusion of micro-merchants into the digital marketplace.

The United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF) organised the programme at The Westin Dhaka to share learnings gained from an initiative titled "Merchants Development Driving Rural Markets (MDDRM)".

The initiative was taken in 2017 to support micro, and small retail shops to use technologies and participate in the online marketplace.

Under a European Union-funded initiative, the UNCDF has reached out to 20 lakh retail micro-merchants in Bangladesh, according to a press release.

State-sponsored venture capital company Startup Bangladesh Ltd and local startup Sheba.xyz are going to sign a partnership agreement to provide microloans to small and medium entrepreneurs without collateral, said Palak.

The government is expanding initiatives such as the MDDRM with the help of development partners and investors to ensure that Bangladesh does not lag in the age of digital economy, he said.

Citing the Fourth Industrial Revolution, Palak said the government had formulated five national strategies on robotics, block-chain, Internet of Things, Artificial Intelligence, and microprocessor design capabilities to prepare for that.

"This will help build a solid foundation for our local startups," he said.

Senior Secretary of Financial Institutions Division Md Ashadul Islam, Head of Cooperation of the Delegation of the EU Maurizio Cian, and United Nations Development Programme Resident Representative Nudipto Mukerjee also spoke at the event.

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## Private investors to own 49pc stake in Nagad, govt 51pc

MD says global tech giant keen to invest

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Private investors will hold a 49 per cent stake in Nagad Ltd and the postal department the rest as the government looks to run the mobile financial service as a subsidiary, its top executive said yesterday.

The postal department owns 100 per cent of the shares of Nagad at the moment.

Under a planned new ownership structure, private companies will collectively own 49 per cent shares of Nagad, and the rest will be controlled by the postal department, said Tanvir A Mishuk, managing director of Nagad.

He disclosed this at a discussion with reporters at The Westin Dhaka yesterday.

Third Wave Technologies has been giving technological and logistics supports to the postal division since March 2019, when it rolled out the service commercially.

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## Bike makers seek duty benefits for raw materials

**BUDGET PROPOSALS FOR FY2021-22**

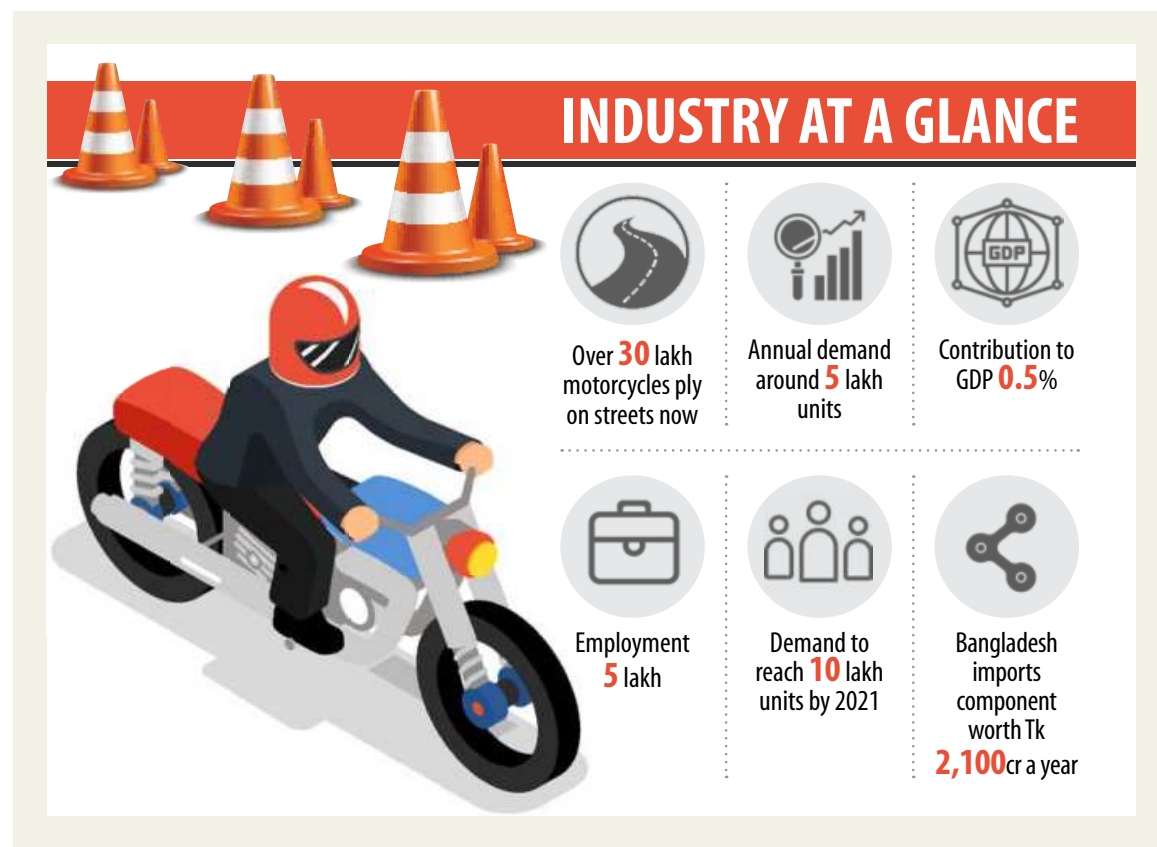
JAGARAN CHAKMA

Motorcycle manufacturers have demanded duty benefits on component and raw material imports in order to reduce the cost of production and develop the local two-wheeler industry.

Motorcycle Manufacturers and Exporters Association of Bangladesh (MMEAB) and Bangladesh Honda Private Ltd (BHL) separately placed this demand yesterday to the National Board of Revenue (NBR) at the budget proposal for next fiscal, held in the first week of March.

In his budget proposal, Himihiko Katsuki, managing director and chief executive officer of BHL, said there is no doubt that the local motorcycle market has great potential to grow through support from the country's large population and steady economic growth.

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## Gamblers at it again, insurance stocks soar on rumours

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Insurance stocks came under the spotlight again yesterday despite generating a lower premium income amid the ongoing coronavirus pandemic.

These stocks are being toyed with by gamblers, so they rose during the last couple of months, a stock broker said.

Prices of many stocks from this sector have more than doubled even though the companies had informed that they had no undisclosed, price sensitive information.

The stock market regulator identified rumours to have fuelled the rise of these companies. The upward trend in the sector has been halted in the last couple of weeks.

Now, they are going to become active again, he added.

DSEX, the benchmark index of the Dhaka Stock Exchange (DSE), rose 1 point, or 0.02 per cent to 5,413 yesterday.

Among 49 listed insurers, 43 rose, five remained the same and the remaining one dropped yesterday, DSE data shows.

Of the total 345 stocks, 41 per cent fell while 26 per cent rose.

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**TOP TEN GAINERS OF DSE**  
SOURCE: DSE

COMPANY	RISE (in %)
Continental Ins	9.96
Nitol Ins	9.83
Prime Ins	9.81
Sonar Bangla Ins	9.57
Provati Ins	9.48
Agrani Ins	9.46
Pioneer Ins	9.42
Premier Leasing	9.25
First Finance	9.09
Islami Ins	8.99

## Kamal 'baffled' by a lack of confidence in market

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

The stock market is suffering from a lack of confidence, according to Finance Minister AHM Mustafa Kamal.

"But why this lacking exists, I do not know," he said, adding that many people even called to inform him about their lack of confidence in this regard.

"For a sustainable economy, a strong stock market is necessary and so we want to make the market popular," Kamal said. "We want to provide anything that might be necessary for the wellbeing of the stock market."

The finance minister made these comments at a virtual seminar organised by the Dhaka Stock Exchange yesterday.

"We provided more support to the capital market than what the stakeholders sought in the last budget."

For instance, people were allowed to invest their undisclosed income while cash dividends were encouraged.

Companies provide stock dividend for one or two years to help expand their businesses.

However, many companies have provided stock dividends year after year in a bid to increase their reserves instead of



AHM Mustafa Kamal

giving cash dividends, Kamal said, adding that most of this was misused.

"So we gave incentives for cash dividends."

Kamal also urged people to come forward if they have any effective recommendations for the betterment of the stock market.

Sometimes a vested group of people cheat investors but digitalisation and information technology can protect small investors' interests, said Prof Shibli Rubayat Ul Islam, chairman of the Bangladesh Securities and Exchange Commission.

"So, we are focusing on it," he said.

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# Powell sees 'strengthening' US recovery but desperation continues

AFP, Washington  
The US recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic "looks to be strengthening," Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell said on Monday, but vowed the central bank would continue its efforts to aid racial minorities and other groups hurt most by the downturn.

Services Committee, Powell underscored that the central bank would continue policies like zero interest rates that it rolled out to aid the economy as the pandemic hit. Those measures, together with massive government spending approved by Congress, have helped keep the US economy from an even worse downturn, though fears that an improving economy could cause the Fed to raise rates have hurt Wall Street stocks in recent weeks.

Powell acknowledged that the economic recovery "has progressed more quickly than generally expected," which he credited to "unprecedented fiscal and monetary policy actions" that kept businesses afloat. "However, the sectors of the economy most adversely affected by the resurgence of the virus, and by greater social distancing, remain weak, and the unemployment rate -- still elevated at 6.2 per cent -- underestimates the shortfall," Powell said. "We welcome this progress, but will not lose sight of the millions of Americans who are still hurting, including lower-wage workers in the services sector, African Americans, Hispanics, and other minority groups that have been especially hard hit. As the Covid-19 pandemic began, the Fed cut its benchmark lending rate to zero and rolled out trillions of dollars in liquidity measures to keep markets afloat."

Powell noted that many of those programs have already closed or "are following suit imminently," while saying one supporting the Paycheck Protection Program of loans and grants to small businesses has been extended for another quarter.

Markets in recent weeks have struggled as traders sold off bonds, sending yields up, amid fears that a \$1.9 trillion stimulus plan President Joe Biden signed earlier this month would overheat the economy and cause inflation, making the Fed raise rates.

Bond yields however pulled back on Monday, sending hard-hit tech stocks higher at the close. In the testimony released after trading finish, Powell signaled no changes to the Fed's policy of letting inflation rise to a sustained 2.0 per cent level before hiking rates, only reiterating that "We are committed to using our full range of tools to support the economy."



Traders work, as a screen shows Federal Reserve Chairman Jerome Powell's news conference on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange.



Mercantile Bank officials attend a virtual training on export trade and shipment declarations recently.

# UK unemployment dips to 5pc

AFP, London  
Britain's unemployment rate dipped to 5.0 per cent in the three months to the end of January, remaining close to five-year highs on the fallout from the coronavirus pandemic, official data showed Tuesday.

The rate compared with 5.1 per cent in the three months to the end of December, the Office for National Statistics said in a statement. "The UK unemployment rate, in the three months to January 2021, was estimated at 5.0 per cent, 1.1 percentage points higher than a year earlier," the ONS said.

**বাংলাদেশ পানি উন্নয়ন বোর্ড**  
Bangladesh Water Development Board

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Memo No. DA-1/1304 Date: 23/03/2021

**Invitation for e-Tender**

Tender ID:	Name of work
Invitation Reference No. DA-1/1303 dt: 23/03/2021 T ID No. 561161	Bank Revetment work along the left bank at Bashtala mosque from km 47.200 to 47.700 500m & Bashtala 47.750 to 48.250 500m in C/W Protection Project at Moulvibazar Sadar Rajnagar & Kulaura Upazilla from erosion of Manu river under Moulvibazar O&M Division BWDB Moulvibazar during the FY 2020-21 & 2021-22. Package No. ML-PW-45

This is an online tender where only e-Tenders will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copy 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 National e-GP System Portal have to be deposited online through any 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](mailto:helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd)) (01762625528-31).

**Mohammad Aktaruzzaman**  
Executive Engineer  
Moulvibazar O&M Division  
BWDB, Moulvibazar

পানি-৬৭২/২০২০-২০২১ (৫'x৩)  
জিডি-৫৯৪

# World's largest coal miner Coal India bets on solar, eyes further mine closures

REUTERS, Chennai

Coal India Ltd, the world's largest coal miner, could venture into solar wafer manufacturing and wants to "aggressively" participate in the country's solar energy auctions, its chairman told Reuters on Tuesday.

Pramod Agarwal said its joint venture with state-run NLC India Ltd plans to invest around 125 billion rupees (\$1.73 billion) in solar power projects with a capacity of 3,000 megawatts, of which Coal India will invest some 60 billion rupees by March 2024.

At the same time, it plans to keep closing small mines and stay away from opening those that would entail mass hiring, Agarwal said. The group closed 82 mines in the three years to March 2020, resulting in cuts to its workforce of 18,600 employees.

"Coal as you know, we're going to lose business in the next two, three decades. Solar will take over (from) coal slowly as a major energy provider in the coming years," Agarwal said in an interview.

"We are just exploring the possibilities where we can invest in solar wafer production, nobody is (currently) there in the country," he said. India, which makes solar cells and modules but not wafers, is planning to levy customs duties on some solar equipment from April 2022 as it looks to expand local manufacturing capacity.

Agarwal said the company's steadily falling headcount would lead to a major reduction in costs. "The net reduction of employees is to the tune of 13,000 to 14,000 per annum," he said.

State-run Coal India will face increased costs due to periodical wage revisions for non-executive employees, effective from July 1, 2021.

"But manpower reduction will have a stabilizing effect, so the wage bill effect may be flat," Agarwal said.

# Gamblers at it again, insurance stocks soar on rumours

FROM PAGE B1  
These stocks have been victimised as there is no significant news for the insurance sector that could have led to the recent rise, said a top official of a merchant bank.

However, the commission income for insurers will rise as they are providing their agents a lower cut on commissions as directed by the Insurance Development and Regulatory Authority (IDRA), he added.

In 2010, the IDRA issued a circular stating that insurance companies could no longer pay more than 15 per cent of the premium as commission to their agents.

But since most insurers disregarded the directive, the IDRA issued another notice in late 2019, urging insurance companies to comply for the sake of the sector's well being.

In the past, many companies offered as much as 60 per cent of the premium as commission in a bid to secure business and this hurt the industry's overall revenue, according to industry insiders.

"But that does not mean that these stocks deserve to rise by around twofold amid the pandemic," the merchant banker said, adding that the pandemic has had a negative impact on their premium.

Premium income of non-life insurers decreased 7.46 per cent year-on-year to Tk 4,366 crore in 2020, according to IDRA data. Similarly, the premium income of life and non-life insurers as a whole fell 3.46 per cent year-on-year to Tk 13,821 crore.

Turnover, an important indicator of the market, dropped more than 8 per cent to Tk 631 crore yesterday. At the DSE, 93 stocks rose, 138 declined and 114 remained unchanged.

Continental Insurance topped the gainers' list followed by Nitul Insurance, Prime Insurance Company, Sonar Bangla Insurance and Provati Insurance Company.

Beximco topped the turnover list with trade worth Tk 61 crore followed by Beximco Pharmaceuticals, Robi Axiata, LankaBangla Finance and British American Tobacco Bangladesh.

Aziz Pipes shed the most, falling 6.64 per cent followed by Rahima Food Corporation, NRB Commercial Bank, Anlima Yarn Dyeing and Fine Foods.

The port city bourse fell yesterday. CASPI, the general index of the Chittagong Stock Exchange, dropped 4 points, or 0.05 per cent, to 9,453.

Among 233 stocks to undergo trade, 77 advanced, 97 dropped and 59 remained unchanged.

**Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh**  
Office of the Divisional Forest Officer  
Social Forest Division, Kushtia

**Invitation for Tenders**

01	Ministry/Division	Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change.		
02	Agency	Bangladesh Forest Department.		
03	Procuring entity name	Divisional Forest Officer, Social Forest Division, Kushtia.		
04	Invitation for	Supply of Services (by manpower) through outsourcing.		
05	Invitation Ref. No.	05/Undevelopment (Revenue) of 2020-2021.		
06	Date	21/03/2021		

**KEY INFORMATION**

07	Procurement method	Open Tendering Method (OTM): National Competitive Tender (NCT).		
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**FUNDING INFORMATION**

08	Budget and source of funds	GOB Budget, (Government of Bangladesh).		
09	Development partners	Not applicable.		

**PARTICULAR INFORMATION**

10	Project/programme name	Divisional Forest Officer, Social Forest Division, Kushtia.		
11	Tender package No.	05/Undevelopment (Revenue) of 2020-2021.		
12	Tender package name	Supply of Services (by manpower) through outsourcing.		
13	Tender publication date	21/03/2021		
14	Tender last selling date	07/04/2021 up to 5.00pm		

Date	Time		
15	Tender closing date and time	08/04/2021	2.00pm
16	Tender opening date and time	08/04/2021	3.00pm
17	Name & address of the office(s)	Address: Divisional Forest Officer, Social Forest Division, Kushtia.	

**INFORMATION FOR TENDERER**

18	Eligibility of tenderer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tenderers will be the firms having required experience of Services by manpower supply through outsourcing.</li> <li>Tenderers shall have the legal capacity to enter into the Contract under the Applicable Law.</li> <li>Tenderers shall be enrolled in the relevant professional or trade organizations registered in Bangladesh.</li> <li>Tenderers shall have fulfilled its obligations to pay taxes under the provisions of laws and regulations of Bangladesh.</li> <li>Others eligibility are mentioned in Standard Tender Document (STD).</li> </ul>		
19	Brief description of services	Supply of Services (by manpower) through outsourcing for the position of 3 Number Mali.		
20	Price of tender document (Tk)	Tk 1000 (one thousand) only (non-refundable).		
21	Lot No.	Identification of lot	Location	Tender security amount (Tk)
22	1.	Supply of Services (by manpower) through outsourcing	Social Forest Division, Kushtia	Tk 22,500.00

23	Name of official inviting tender	Saleh Md. Shoaib Khan.		
24	Designation of official inviting tender	Divisional Forest Officer.		
25	Address of official inviting tender	Divisional Forest Officer, Social Forest Division, Kushtia.		
30	Contact details of official inviting tender	Phone: 880-071-62144, E-mail: dfokushtia@gmail.com		
27	The procuring entity reserves the right to reject all tenders or annul the tender proceedings.			

**Saleh Md. Shoaib Khan**  
Divisional Forest Officer  
Social Forest Division, Kushtia  
E-mail: dfokushtia@gmail.com  
Tel: 071-62114

GD-587

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তারিখঃ ০৮ চৈত্র ১৪২৭  
২২ মার্চ ২০২১

**দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি**

বরিশাল জেলার ১০টি উপজেলার ৭৫২ জন গ্রাম পুলিশের (দফাদার ও মহদাদার) ২০২০-২০২১ অর্থ বছরের জন্য তফসিলে বর্ণিত পোশাক ও সরঞ্জামাদি এবং উন্নতমানের বাইসাইকেল সরবরাহের নিমিত্ত পূর্ব অভিজ্ঞতাসম্পন্ন প্রকৃত সরবরাহকারী/প্রস্তুতকারী ব্যক্তি/প্রতিষ্ঠানের নিকট হতে পাবলিক প্রকিউরমেন্ট আইন, ২০০৬ (সর্বশেষ সংশোধনীসহ) এবং পাবলিক প্রকিউরমেন্ট বিধিমালা, ২০০৮ (সর্বশেষ সংশোধনীসহ) অনুসরণপূর্বক নিম্নলিখিত শর্তসমূহায়া সিলামেরহকৃত খামে দরপত্র আহ্বান করা যাচ্ছে।

ক্র. নং	বিবরণ	বিস্তারিত তথ্য																
০১	মন্ত্রণালয়/বিভাগ	স্থানীয় সরকার বিভাগ, স্থানীয় সরকার, পল্লী উন্নয়ন ও সমবায় মন্ত্রণালয়।																
০২	দস্তাবেজ/প্রতিষ্ঠানের নাম	জেলা প্রশাসকের কার্যালয় বরিশাল।																
০৩	সম্বন্ধকারী সত্তার নাম	জেলা প্রশাসক, বরিশাল।																
০৪	কাজের নাম	২০২০-২০২১ অর্থ বছরে গ্রাম পুলিশদের (দফাদার ও মহদাদার) পোশাক ও অন্যান্য সরঞ্জামাদি এবং উন্নতমানের বাইসাইকেল সরবরাহ।																
০৫	ক্রম প্রক্রিয়া	উন্মুক্ত দরপত্র (ওটিএম) [পাবলিক প্রকিউরমেন্ট আইন, ২০০৬ (সর্বশেষ সংশোধনীসহ) এবং পাবলিক প্রকিউরমেন্ট বিধিমালা, ২০০৮ (সর্বশেষ সংশোধনীসহ) মোতাবেক।]																
০৬	অর্থায়নের উৎস	২০২০-২০২১ অর্থবছরের অনুন্নয়ন বাজেটের মঞ্জুরী নং-৩৪ হিসাবের খাত নং- ১৩৭০০১০১/২০০০১৩০৮/৩৬৩১১০৩ গ্রাম পুলিশদের পণ্য ও সেবা সহায়তা খাত স্থানীয় সরকার বিভাগের স্মারক নং ৪৬.০০.০০০০.০১৮.০২.০০১.২০১৭(অংশ-১)- ৪৬২, তারিখঃ ২২/১০/২০২০খ্রিঃ																
০৭	দরপত্র বিক্রয় ও দাখিল এবং নমুনা দাখিল সংক্রান্ত	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>পর্যায়</th> <th>দরপত্র বিক্রয়ের শেষ তারিখ</th> <th>দরপত্র দাখিলের সময়</th> <th>দরপত্র খোলার সময়</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>১ম</td> <td>১৮/০৪/২০২১ তারিখ অফিস চলাকালীন সময়</td> <td>১৯/০৪/২০২১ তারিখ সকাল ১০.০০ ঘটিকা থেকে বেলা ১.০০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত (সিলাপালাকৃত খামে)</td> <td>১৯/০৪/২০২১ বিকাল ৩.০০ ঘটিকায় জেলা প্রশাসকের কার্যালয়, বরিশাল উপস্থিত দরদাতার সম্মুখে (যদি কেহ থাকে)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>২য়</td> <td>০৩/০৫/২০২১ তারিখ অফিস চলাকালীন সময়</td> <td>০৪/০৫/২০২১ তারিখ সকাল ১০.০০ ঘটিকা থেকে বেলা ১.০০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত (সিলাপালাকৃত খামে)</td> <td>০৪/০৫/২০২১ বিকাল ৩.০০ ঘটিকায় জেলা প্রশাসকের কার্যালয়, বরিশাল উপস্থিত দরদাতার সম্মুখে (যদি কেহ থাকে)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>৩য়</td> <td>১৮/০৫/২০২১ তারিখ অফিস চলাকালীন সময়</td> <td>১৯/০৫/২০২১ তারিখ সকাল ১০.০০ ঘটিকা থেকে বেলা ১.০০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত (সিলাপালাকৃত খামে)</td> <td>১৯/০৫/২০২১ বিকাল ৩.০০ ঘটিকায় জেলা প্রশাসকের কার্যালয়, বরিশাল উপস্থিত দরদাতার সম্মুখে (যদি কেহ থাকে)</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	পর্যায়	দরপত্র বিক্রয়ের শেষ তারিখ	দরপত্র দাখিলের সময়	দরপত্র খোলার সময়	১ম	১৮/০৪/২০২১ তারিখ অফিস চলাকালীন সময়	১৯/০৪/২০২১ তারিখ সকাল ১০.০০ ঘটিকা থেকে বেলা ১.০০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত (সিলাপালাকৃত খামে)	১৯/০৪/২০২১ বিকাল ৩.০০ ঘটিকায় জেলা প্রশাসকের কার্যালয়, বরিশাল উপস্থিত দরদাতার সম্মুখে (যদি কেহ থাকে)	২য়	০৩/০৫/২০২১ তারিখ অফিস চলাকালীন সময়	০৪/০৫/২০২১ তারিখ সকাল ১০.০০ ঘটিকা থেকে বেলা ১.০০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত (সিলাপালাকৃত খামে)	০৪/০৫/২০২১ বিকাল ৩.০০ ঘটিকায় জেলা প্রশাসকের কার্যালয়, বরিশাল উপস্থিত দরদাতার সম্মুখে (যদি কেহ থাকে)	৩য়	১৮/০৫/২০২১ তারিখ অফিস চলাকালীন সময়	১৯/০৫/২০২১ তারিখ সকাল ১০.০০ ঘটিকা থেকে বেলা ১.০০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত (সিলাপালাকৃত খামে)	১৯/০৫/২০২১ বিকাল ৩.০০ ঘটিকায় জেলা প্রশাসকের কার্যালয়, বরিশাল উপস্থিত দরদাতার সম্মুখে (যদি কেহ থাকে)
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**বিশেষ দৃষ্টব্যঃ**  
(ক) কোন কারণে দরপত্র বিক্রয় বা দাখিলের তারিখে সরকারি ছুটি ঘোষিত হলে পরবর্তী কার্যদিবসে দরপত্র বিক্রয় বা দাখিলের দিন নির্ধারিত থাকবে।  
(খ) যে পর্যায়ের টেন্ডার অনুমোদিত হবে তার পরবর্তী পর্যায়গুলো স্বয়ংক্রিয়ভাবে বাতিল বলে গণ্য হবে।  
দরপত্র বিক্রয় এবং দরপত্র ও নমুনা দাখিলের স্থানঃ  
(ক) বিভাগীয় কমিশনারের কার্যালয়, বরিশাল বিভাগ, বরিশাল।  
(খ) জেলা প্রশাসকের কার্যালয়, বরিশাল (স্থানীয় সরকার শাখা)।  
প্যাকেজ-(১)  
০১। হাফ শার্ট ৭৪ এটি এবং ফুল শার্ট ৭৪ এটি (মন্ত্রণালয়ের নমুনা অনুসারে শার্ট নীল রঙের, চাকানসহ ২ পকেট বিশিষ্ট টেক্সটাইলের জন্য লাল রঙের সোভার ব্যাচ, ইউনিয়ন কম্বাডার/দফাদারদের জন্য সোভার ব্যাচে কোনো কাপড়ের একটি স্টারসহ রিবন ২টি), ০২। ফুল প্যান্ট-১৪৯৪টি (খালী রঙের লুপ ও পিছনে ১টি পকেটসহ ৩ পকেট বিশিষ্ট), ০৩। সোভার ব্যাচ-৭৫২ জোড়া (দফাদারেরটিতে স্টার থাকবে), ০৪। রিবন-৭৫২ জোড়া, ০৫। উন্নতমানের ব্রেট (চামড়ার)-৭৫২টি, ০৬। চামড়ার জুতা (উন্নতমানের)-৭৫২ জোড়া, ০৭। মোজা (উন্নতমানের)-৭৫২ জোড়া, ০৮। উন্নতমানের কাপড়ের জুতা ৭৫২ জোড়া, ০৯। লায়নার বাশি ৭৫২টি, ১০। উন্নতমানের ৪.৫০ ডোন্ট চার্জার টর্চ লাইট ৭৫২টি, ১১। ছাতা (মেনোগ্রামসহ) ৭৫২টি, ১২। বৃশ শার্ট (মহিলাদের জন্য)-১০টি, ১৩। জর্জেট শাড়ী (প্রতি জন ২টি হিসেবে মহিলা পুলিশের ন্যায়)-১০টি, ১৪। ব্রাউজ (প্রতি জন ২টি হিসেবে মহিলা পুলিশের ন্যায়)-১০টি ও ১৫। পেটিকোট (প্রতি জন ২টি হিসেবে মহিলা পুলিশের ন্যায়)-১০টি।

০৮। পোশাক ও অন্যান্য সরঞ্জামাদি এবং উন্নতমানের বাইসাইকেল এর বিবরণ

**প্যাকেজ-(২)**  
০১। উন্নত ব্র্যান্ডের বাইসাইকেল-৭৫২টি  
FRAME SIZE: 28" x 21", MATERIALS: STEEL, WHEEL SIZE: 28", SADDLE: PU FOAM, CARRIER: STEEL CARRIER, BRAKE SET: STL-28" CP WITH BRACKET, HANDLE BAR: Handlebar traditional type, RIM: Steel, HUB: Steel 32 & 40 Holes, MUDGUARD & CHAIN COVER: STEEL, FREE WHEEL: 20T, CHAIN: 108 LINK, CHAIN WHEEL: 44 TEETH.  
বিঃদ্রঃ  
০১। কোন টিকাদারি প্রতিষ্ঠান যে কোন একটি প্যাকেজে অথবা দুইটি প্যাকেজেই পৃথক পৃথকভাবে দরপত্র দাখিল করতে পারবে।  
০২। জমাতব্য মালামালের পরিমাণ কম/বেশি হতে পারে।  
কার্যাদেশ প্রদানের তারিখ হতে পরবর্তী ৪৫(পঁয়তাল্লিশ) দিন।

০৯	কাজ শেষ করার মেয়াদ	নগদ ২০০০/- (দুই হাজার) টাকা মাত্র (অফেরতযোগ্য)।
১০	দরপত্রের মূল্য	দরপত্রে উক্ত দরত্রে ৩% টাকা যেকোন তফসিলী ব্যকে হতে ব্যাংক ড্রাফট/পে-অর্ডার এর মাধ্যমে জেলা প্রশাসক, বরিশাল এর অনুমোদিত জমা দিতে হবে। নন-রেসপন্সিভ দরদাতার দরপত্র জামানত ফেরত দেয়া হবে।
১২	বিস্তারিত তথ্যের জন্য যোগাযোগ	স্থানীয় সরকার শাখা, জেলা প্রশাসকের কার্যালয়, বরিশাল। ফোন নং-০৪৩১-৬২৫১৯ (অফিস চলাকালীন) এবং <a href="http://www.barishal.gov.bd">www.barishal.gov.bd</a> ওয়েবসাইট থেকে জানা যাবে।
১৩	বিশেষ শর্তাবলী	সম্ভাব্যক সত্তা কোনো কারণে দর্শনো ব্যতিরেকে যে কোন দরপত্র গ্রহণ ও বাতিল অথবা সকল দরপত্র বাতিল করার ক্ষমতা সংরক্ষণ করেন।

স্বাক্ষরিত  
**জসীম উদ্দীন হায়দার**  
বরিশাল  
ফোন নম্বরঃ ০৪৩১-৬৩৮৬৬

জিডি-৫৮৯



Shakir Amin Chowdhury

## NRB Bank gets new DMD

STAR BUSINESS DESK

NRB Bank has recently appointed a new deputy managing director (DMD). The appointee, Md Shakir Amin Chowdhury, was previously Dhaka Bank's DMD, says a press release.

He started off his banking career as a trainee officer with Arab Bangladesh Bank on graduating in agricultural economics from Bangladesh Agricultural University, Mymensingh.

## Utilise demographic dividend in time

FROM PAGE B4

Almost 68 per cent of Bangladesh's population was between the ages of 15 and 64 years, which is considered the working age, said AmCham President Syed Ershad Ahmed.

"Human capital is one of the key drivers of corporate success and sustained competitive advantage. The value of the knowledge and skills that employees and stakeholders collectively bring to a company is the business' human capital," he said.

Bangladesh sees some 98 per cent of its children get enrolled at the elementary level but there was still room for improving the education quality, said JoAnne Wagner, deputy chief of mission at the US embassy in Bangladesh.

The primary curriculum focuses some 14 per cent on technical education for the creation of skilled manpower, pointed out Industries Minister Nurul Majid Mahmud Humayun. Former AmCham presidents Aftabul Islam and Md Nurul Islam, exporters and businesspeople were present.

## Shasha Garments to invest \$5m in Dhaka EPZ

STAR BUSINESS DESK

Shasha Garments is going to invest \$5 million to establish a garment manufacturing facility in Dhaka Export Processing Zone.

It will be its fourth EPZ-based industry, says a statement. Md Mahmudul Hossain Khan, member for investment promotion of Bangladesh Export Processing Zones Authority (Bepza), and Parveen Mahmud, managing director of the Shasha, signed an agreement at Bepza Complex, Dhaka yesterday.

The company plans to annually produce 6.75 million pieces of trousers and jackets and employ 2,000 people there.

## India market regulator relaxes valuation norms for some bonds after push back

REUTERS, Mumbai

India's market regulator on Monday relaxed new valuation norms that were set to affect certain bonds worth more than \$12 billion after the government flagged concerns of disruption in debt markets.

The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) on March 10 had directed mutual funds to consider the maturity of so-called AT1 bonds as 100 years for valuation and limit exposure to such bonds to 10% of its debt assets, effective April 1.

In a letter sent to SEBI the next day, the finance ministry asked the regulator to withdraw

the valuation rule, saying it will cause "huge" mark-to-market losses, take away the appetite for such instruments and hurt capital raising by state-run banks.

On Monday, SEBI relaxed the rule, saying maturity considered for valuation of AT1 bonds would be 10 years until March 31, 2022. They will be valued as 20-year bonds until Sept. 30, 2022, 30-year papers for the next six months and 100-year papers thereafter.

Currently, the call option date of the bond is considered to calculate the valuation.

Introduced after the 2008 global financial crisis, AT1 bonds have quasi-equity characteristics. They typically carry higher

interest rates than more senior debt as investors accept the risk they can lose their investment at certain pre-agreed points if the funds are needed to bolster a struggling bank's capital.

Of the 900 billion rupees (\$12.36 billion) worth of AT1 bonds outstanding, about 350 billion rupees is held by mutual funds.

Last year, SEBI restricted investments in such bonds to qualified institutional investors and raised their allotment and trading lot sizes to 10 million rupees after a revival plan for debt-laden Yes Bank saw its AT1 bonds fully written down, sending shockwaves through the industry.

## Bike makers seek duty benefits for raw materials

FROM PAGE B1

"We have already started locally manufacturing frames and swing arms in line with the government's localisation policy," Katsuki said.

Besides, as a part of BHL's investment, the company has started a full phase engine assembly line.

From the research and development aspect, BHL has carefully studied the local customers to develop the Dream 110, Honda's first motorcycle designed solely for Bangladesh at Tk 89,900.

The government decided to promote motorcycle production to a prioritised industry considering its socio-economic importance as well as its significance as an easy and cost-effective mode of transportation.

BHL currently imports Completely-Knocked Down (CKD) kits for engine components, which are segregated into more than 200 parts, 32 of which are essential but must be imported separately.

"So we are not getting the required duty benefits," BHL's proposal said.

Under these circumstances, the company is paying comparatively higher duties even though it locally manufactures certain components, such as the chassis and swing arm, as directed by an NBR circular.

This makes BHL's finished product less competitive due to higher production costs.

"For this reason we are facing extra challenges in localising the production of various parts, which are normally manufactured by the original engine maker.

"Besides, we cannot make these parts, such as the fuel tank and various plastic accessories, since our resources are tied up in frame/chassis and swing

arm manufacturing," it added.

To free up some of its own resources, BHL signed a memorandum of understanding with Runner Automobiles Limited (RAL) on February 11 for the latter to produce certain components.

In the MMEAB's proposal, the association said the government did not increase the customs duty on motorcycle components in its budget for fiscal 2020-21.

However, the NBR did withdraw the exemption of value added tax on local manufacturing.

MMEAB President Hafijur Rahman Khan said this decision is detrimental for the motorcycle industry as it would hinder the growth of local vendors.

At present, over 30 lakh motorcycles are plying the streets in Bangladesh while the annual demand has reached around 5 lakh units, according to data from the Bangladesh Road Transport Authority.

The 2018 policy was formulated by the government to attract foreign investment in this industry.

The aim was to increase the sector's contribution to gross domestic product from the existing 0.5 per cent to 2.5 per cent by 2027 by expanding the industry's capacity.

The industry is currently dominated by the assembly of imported components.

The government set a target to enable local manufacturers to produce around 5 lakh motorcycles annually by 2021 and 10 lakh by 2027.

Apart from that, the policy also aimed to increase employment opportunities in the sector to 15 lakh from the existing five lakh.

"This light engineering sector with

its supply of original spare parts is a very important enabler for the local motorcycle industry," Khan said.

Once the policy was formulated, Honda, Bajaj, Yamaha, Hero and TVS started manufacturing motorcycles in Bangladesh, bringing together foreign and local investors.

Local manufacturers like Runner, New Grameen and Roadmaster are also trying to improve their technology and go for exports to Nepal, Bhutan and other countries.

According to the MMEAB president, investment in the sector currently stands at around Tk 8,000 crore.

Policy support from the government helped significantly to cut back the imports of motorcycle components, saving foreign currency and enriching domestic reserves in the process.

But of course, locally assembled motorcycles now dominate the market, he said.

During the previous fiscal, motorcycle makers urged the government to continue exempting VAT on sales of locally-made parts until 2027 to keep prices low.

However, the government did not entertain their request.

Bangladesh needs to import components worth Tk 2,100 crore annually in order to cater to the demand for spare parts and components.

If the government gives policy support to motorcycle makers, they would be able to develop local vendors that supply these components by creating original equipment manufacturers.

Besides, employment in the sector would increase while a number of new entrepreneurs would be introduced as well, Khan added.

## Apple card, underwriter Goldman Sachs committed no fair lending violations

REUTERS, New York

New York's Department of Financial Services on Tuesday said it concluded its investigation of Apple's credit card and its underwriter Goldman Sachs Group Inc and found no evidence of unlawful discrimination against applicants under the state's fair lending law.

New York launched the investigation in late 2019 after a tech entrepreneur alleged on social media that the Apple card's

algorithms committed gender bias because he was given a credit limit that was 20 times what his wife received.

The investigation included a review of thousands of pages of records submitted by Goldman and Apple, interviews with Apple card applicants and data for roughly 400,000 Apple card applicants from New York state.

The Apple Card, launched in 2019, was the first time Goldman Sachs offered a credit card.

## Private investors to own 49pc stake in Nagad, govt 51pc

FROM PAGE B1

The private company now enjoys 49 per cent of the total revenues in exchange for providing technological supports. But it does not own any share at the moment.

Third Wave Technologies has recently been renamed Nagad Ltd, which will operate as a subsidiary of the postal department.

Mishuk also said Bangladesh's financial industry needs investment from global tech giants such as Amazon, Facebook and Google.

"We are in talks with one of the global tech giants. We have completed primary discussions. Due diligence has been completed. We will declare the name of the tech giant once we get the final licence from the central bank."

Contacted, Md Siraz Uddin, director-general of the postal department, said they had not discussed anything with the tech giants. "We don't know anything on the issue," he said.

In March last year, the central bank gave a no-objection certificate (NOC) to Nagad, asking it to take a final licence from it after following all rules and regulations.

But the central bank was forced to extend

the time frame of the NOC by three months as the operator has failed to complete all the procedures. Nagad has been asked to complete the procedures by June.

Mishuk said the government was now amending the Post Office Act 1898 in order to take over 51 per cent shares of Nagad Ltd.

"The draft act is being vetted by the law ministry. We will be able to take the final licence from the central bank once the act is amended," he said.

He expressed hope that Nagad would manage the approval within the latest time frame set by the central bank.

When reporters drew attention to an advertisement broadcast by the company attacking another MFS entity, Rahel Ahmed, chief executive officer of Nagad, said they did not have any intention to attack anyone.

"Broadcasting the advertisement is just our marketing strategy," he said, adding that the MFS company would bring a new version of the advertisement soon.

The carrier is the second-largest MFS provider in Bangladesh after bKash. It has 3.75 crore customers, and Tk 400 crore is transacted through the platform every day on average.

**এসেনসিয়াল ড্রাগস কোম্পানী লিমিটেড (ইডিসিএল)**  
৩৯৫-৩৯৭, তেজগাঁও শিল্প এলাকা, ঢাকা-১২০৮।

**দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি**

১. মঞ্জুরায়/বিভাগ	ঃ	স্বাস্থ্য ও পরিবার কল্যাণ মন্ত্রণালয়
২. সংগ্রহকারী সংস্থার নাম/দপ্তর	ঃ	এসেনসিয়াল ড্রাগস কোম্পানী লিমিটেড
৩. প্রকল্পের নাম	ঃ	গোপালগঞ্জ এসেনসিয়াল ড্রাগস কোম্পানী লিমিটেড এর তৃতীয় শাখা কারখানা স্থাপন প্রকল্প
৪. সম্ভাব্যকারীর নাম ও জেলা	ঃ	প্রকল্প পরিচালক, গোপালগঞ্জ
৫. কাজের ধরণ ও বিবরণ	ঃ	পুস্তক ও সাময়িকী (Book & Journals) সরবরাহ
৬. স্মারক নং	ঃ	ইডিসিএল/পিডি-গোপালগঞ্জ/বুক এন্ড জার্নাল/২০২১/৩৫, তারিখঃ ২২/০৩/২০২১ ইং
৭. সংগ্রহ পদ্ধতি	ঃ	উন্মুক্ত দরপত্র
৮. বাজেট ও অর্থের সংস্থান	ঃ	জিওবি
৯. দরপত্র কাজের নাম	ঃ	পুস্তক ও সাময়িকী (Book & Journals)
১০. প্রকল্পের এলাকা	ঃ	গোপালগঞ্জ সদর, গোপালগঞ্জ
১১. দরপত্র প্রকাশের তারিখ	ঃ	২৪ মার্চ, ২০২১ ইং
১২. দরপত্র বিক্রয়ের শেষ তারিখ	ঃ	১১ এপ্রিল, ২০২১ ইং দুপুর ০২ : ৩০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত।
১৩. দরপত্র গ্রহণের তারিখ ও সময়	ঃ	১২ এপ্রিল, ২০২১ ইং দুপুর ০২ : ০০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত।
১৪. দরপত্র খোলার তারিখ ও সময়	ঃ	১২ এপ্রিল, ২০২১ ইং দুপুর ০২ : ৩০ ঘটিকা।
১৫. অফিসের নাম ও ঠিকানা (দরপত্র দলিল বিক্রয়, জমা দেওয়া ও খোলার স্থান)	ঃ	প্রকল্প ব্যবস্থাপক, ইডিসিএল (তৃতীয় প্রকল্প), গোপালগঞ্জ। প্রযুক্তিঃ এসেনসিয়াল ড্রাগস কোম্পানী লিমিটেড, ৩৯৫-৩৯৭, তেজগাঁও শিল্প এলাকা, ঢাকা-১২০৮।
১৬. প্রাক দরপত্র সভা (স্থান, সময় ও তারিখ)	ঃ	স্থানঃ ব্যবস্থাপনা পরিচালকের সভা কক্ষ। এসেনসিয়াল ড্রাগস কোম্পানী লিমিটেড, ৩৯৫-৩৯৭, তেজগাঁও শিল্প এলাকা, ঢাকা-১২০৮। সময়ঃ সকাল ১১:৩০ মিনিট, তারিখঃ ৩১ মার্চ, ২০২১ ইং।
দরদাতা প্রতিষ্ঠানের যোগ্যতা		
১৭. সাধারণ অিজ্ঞতা	ঃ	ন্যূনতম ১০ (দশ) বছরের পুস্তক ও সাময়িকী সরবরাহের বাস্তব অভিজ্ঞতা থাকতে হবে।
১৮. নির্দিষ্ট অভিজ্ঞতা	ঃ	গত ০৫ (পাঁচ) বছরের মধ্যে ন্যূনতম ১৫,০০,০০০/- (পনের লক্ষ) টাকায় কোনো সরকারি/আধা-সরকারি/স্বায়ত্তশাসিত প্রতিষ্ঠানে একটি চুক্তির মধ্যে পুস্তক ও সাময়িকী সরবরাহের সঙ্গেসঙ্গে সমাপ্তির অভিজ্ঞতা থাকতে হবে।
১৯. কার্যকরী মূলধন	ঃ	ন্যূনতম ২০,০০,০০০/- (বিশ লক্ষ) টাকা কার্যকরী মূলধন থাকতে হবে।
২০. দরপত্রের মূল্য (প্রতি সেট)	ঃ	৩,০০০/- (তিন হাজার) টাকার ব্যাংক পে-অর্ডার "প্রকল্প পরিচালক, ইডিসিএল (তৃতীয় প্রকল্প), গোপালগঞ্জ" এর অনুকূলে জমা দিতে হবে।
২১. দরপত্র নিরাপত্তা জামানত	ঃ	দরপত্র জামানত বাবদ "প্রকল্প পরিচালক, ইডিসিএল (তৃতীয় প্রকল্প), গোপালগঞ্জ" এর অনুকূলে বাংলাদেশের যে কোন তফসিলি ব্যাংক হতে ইস্যুকৃত ৫০,০০০/- (পঞ্চাশ হাজার) টাকার (ফেরতযোগ্য) পে-অর্ডার, দরপত্র এর সাথে জমা দিতে হবে।
২২. কার্যসমাপ্তির সময়	ঃ	৭৫ (পঁচাত্তর) দিন
২৩. দরপত্র আহ্বায়কের নাম, পদবী, ঠিকানা ও যোগাযোগের মাধ্যম	ঃ	অধ্যাপক (ডাঃ) এহসানুল কবির, প্রকল্প পরিচালক, গোপালগঞ্জ এসেনসিয়াল ড্রাগস কোম্পানী লিমিটেড এর তৃতীয় শাখা কারখানা স্থাপন প্রকল্প, ৩৯৫-৩৯৭, তেজগাঁও শিল্প এলাকা, ঢাকা-১২০৮, বাংলাদেশ। পিএবিএক্সঃ ৪৮১১১১০-১১, ৫৮১৫২০৩৮, ৫৮১৫১০৮০, ফ্যাক্সঃ ০৮৮-৫৮১৫৫৪৫৯ ই-মেইলঃ 3rdplant@edcl.gov.bd, ওয়েবসাইটঃ www.edcl.gov.bd
২৪. কোন কারণ দর্শালে বাতিলকরে যে কোন দরপত্র গ্রহণ ও বর্জনের ক্ষমতা কর্তৃপক্ষ সংরক্ষণ করে।	ঃ	
২৫. নিয়োগ সংক্রান্ত যে কোন বিষয়ে কর্তৃপক্ষের সিদ্ধান্ত চূড়ান্ত বলিয়া গণ্য হবে।	ঃ	

**অধ্যাপক (ডাঃ) এহসানুল কবির**  
প্রকল্প পরিচালক  
ইডিসিএল (তৃতীয় প্রকল্প), গোপালগঞ্জ  
ও  
ব্যবস্থাপনা পরিচালক  
এসেনসিয়াল ড্রাগস কোম্পানী লিমিটেড

## Apparel exporters in a bind

FROM PAGE B1

"I have been contacting the new owner that took over the ownership of JC Penney. The management of the new company said it would pay the arrears after the settlement of the transfer of the ownership," Azad said.

So far, the former president of the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry received \$0.7 million from JC Penney before the changeover of the ownership.

Several European countries are extending or reintroducing lockdown measures as a third wave of

the pandemic sweeps the continent fuelled by more contagious new variants of coronavirus, reported the Guardian on Monday.

"It is still uncertain when British upscale retailer Debenhams will complete the payment to 47 Bangladeshi suppliers although both management of Debenhams and suppliers have settled the payment issue at 5 per cent to 25 per cent discount," said Zahangir Alam, the coordinator of Debenhams Vendors Community in Bangladesh.

After the discount, Debenhams owes \$25 million to local suppliers. Of the sum, \$10 million might be paid by the freight forwarding company because of the failure to ship the products on time, he said.

Alam also complained

that buyers were demanding an unusual delay in payment again.

Small and medium enterprises are the worst sufferers of the unusual delay in payment and the non-payment of arrears.

Ahmed F Rahman, managing director of Kappa Fashions Ltd, said nine small and medium-sized garment exporters had together settled payments with their Hong Kong-based buyer at 43.5 per cent discount after nearly a year of negotiation.

As per the final settlement, the Hong Kong-based company was supposed to pay the suppliers \$1.5 million by February 19 this year. But when the time came, the buyer said it was facing problems.

The small factories had sent the goods to the

company in November 2019, and the goods reached the buyer's store in February last year.

Last year, work orders worth \$3.18 billion were either cancelled or suspended because of the severe impacts of the pandemic. Of the sum, 90 per cent has been reinstated so far.

"International retailers and brands are asking for deferment of payments," said Rubana Huq, president of the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association.

"As much as we understand that brands are delayed with payments, the reality of insolvency at our end persists," she said.

Regular demand for discounts and the deferment of payment are critical issues for the sector to deal with, she said.

## Kamal 'baffled' by a lack of confidence in market

FROM PAGE B1

"With digitalisation, stock market gambling could also be curbed, so we are working on it in association with the World Bank," the chairman said.

The commission has also been working to enable the launching of multidimensional products.

"So we have approved many types of bonds." Many of those bonds are going to be traded on the stock exchanges and foreign investors can invest in them as well.

"We are working to improve the situation of listed junk stocks too," the BSEC chairman added.

Salman F Rahman, the prime minister's private industry and investment adviser; Md Ashadul Islam, senior secretary to Financial Institutions Division of the Ministry of Finance; and Md Eunusur Rahman, chairman of the DSE, also spoke at the event.



Mr. Azharul Islam, Honorable Chairman of the Board of Directors of Uttara Bank Limited has inaugurated the banking app of the Bank named 'Uttara eWallet' at an elite hotel, Inox's Bazar, recently. Mrs. Badrunnesa Sharmin Islam Director of the Board, Mr. Mohammed Rabiul Hossain Managing Director & CEO of Uttara Bank, Deputy Managing Directors Mr. Maksudul Hasan, Mr. Md. Abul Hashem & Mr. Md. Ashraf-uz-Zaman with other Executives of the Bank were also present on the occasion.

# Falling prices of onion irk Pabna farmers



The increased supply of onions has led to a decline in its prices for the last few weeks. The photos were taken on Sunday from Sujanagar upazila of Pabna.

PHOTO: AHMED HUMAYUN KABIR TOPI

## DISTRICTS IN FOCUS

AHMED HUMAYUN KABIR TOPI, Pabna

Farmers in Pabna have been left disappointed by the current price of onions as they spent excessively to cultivate the bulbs with hopes of making bumper profits this year. "On Sunday, each maund (37 kg) of onion was sold for around Tk 1,000 in Sujanagar Haat, one of the biggest onion hubs of the district," said Md Kamruzzaman, a farmer of Durgapur village in Sujanagar upazila. "The price per maund was between Tk 1,200-1,300 a couple of weeks ago." Farmers endured increased production costs to cultivate more onions after prices of the popular cooking ingredient went through the roof in the last two years following an export ban by India. Onions were cultivated on around 2.53 lakh hectares of land this year, up 7 per cent year-on-

year, data from the Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE) showed. However, the increased supply of onions has led to a decline in its prices for the last few weeks. During the corresponding period last year, each maund was sold for Tk 1,600-1,800, Kamruzzaman said. Production costs have increased 25 to 30 per cent this year but the falling prices have become a headache for the farmers. Each maund of seed was sold for around Tk 7,000-8,000 this year while labour and irrigation costs were about Tk 20,000-25,000 for cultivating onion on one bigha of land. Last year though, the total production cost for cultivating onion on one bigha of land was just Tk 15,000-16,000, according to Milon Sardar, another farmer from the same upazila. "I cultivated three bighas of onion this year. One bigha produced 30 maunds but I got a profit of just Tk 3,000," Sardar said, adding that if the price fall continues, he will not be able to recover the production cost. Farmers mainly bring their harvest to the haats for sale due to the huge availability of onions in retail markets, Saidur Rahman, an onion trader

of Sujanagar, told The Daily Star. Besides, the availability of imported onions is also causing prices to fall, he added. This year, onion was cultivated on 53,335 hectares of land in Pabna, where 9,305 hectares were used for Kondo onion cultivation, said Md Abdul Kader, deputy director of the DAE office in Pabna. "We expect to produce 6.5 lakh tonnes of onion in the region while another 25 lakh tonnes will likely be produced across the country this year." The district will account for around 25 per cent of the country's total onion production this year. "We have already harvested 1.2 lakh tonnes of onion by March 15," Kader said, adding that farmers should not worry about prices. "If farmers can preserve their stocks for a few months then they can get handsome prices as no onion will be imported for now." Still though, farmers have urged the government to set onion prices for their sake. "If the market price per maund is Tk 1,400 to 1,500, then farmers and traders would profit while consumers would get onions at reasonable prices," said Md Ainul Islam, another farmer of Sujanagar upazila.

# Utilise demographic dividend in time

Experts say at AmCham event

## STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Bangladesh needs to properly utilise its youth population now as the country's demographic dividend is fast waning, said a human resources expert yesterday. By 2040, the demographic dividend will cease to exist as the number of aged people will increase, said Md Musharraf Hossain, president of the Federation of Bangladesh Human Resource Organizations. So the country's young people need to be trained properly with the latest technologies so that they can be utilised for the country, he said. The government allocated Tk 200 crore for making young people skilled but a big gap exists between the education system and job market expectations for which most educated youth cannot be turned into human capital, he said. For instance, Covid-19 was identified at Wuhan but China's business was not that affected and recovered faster compared to that in other countries for the presence

of special kinds of human resources who could manage the fallout, he said. China was able to create a corporate culture with special human resources, he said while giving a virtual keynote presentation on "Human Capital - A Source of Competitive Advantage" organised by the American Chamber of Commerce in Bangladesh (AmCham). Bangladesh's universities churn out 22,000 computer science and engineering graduates every year, said Syed Almas Kabir, president of the Bangladesh Association of Software and Information Services. But not all are skilled, he said, adding that for that they need three to six months' training. This needs to be incorporated in the academic curriculum to save time, he said. Bangladesh's human resources can not still be termed human capital because the education system is still traditional, he added.

READ MORE ON B3



Young people need to be trained properly with the latest technologies so that they can be utilised for the country.

PHOTO: STAR/FILE

## NEWS In Brief

### Futures drop ahead of Powell, Yellen testimonies

US stock index futures slid on Tuesday as energy stocks dropped while investors awaited remarks from Fed Chair Jerome Powell and Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen for clues on the pace of economic rebound. Chevron Corp, Occidental Petroleum Corp and Exxon Mobil Corp shed between 1.5 per cent and 3.5 per cent premarket as oil prices slumped 3 per cent on fears that new pandemic curbs and slow vaccine rollouts in Europe will slow a recovery in demand. Travel-related stocks including United Airlines Holdings, American Airlines, Royal Caribbean Cruises Ltd and Carnival Corp slipped between 1.6 per cent and 3.9 per cent. Wall Street's main indexes rallied on Monday as tech-focused stocks caught a bid after coming under pressure since last month as their valuations looked stretched amid a spike in bond yields. Apple Inc, Facebook Inc and Microsoft Corp eased between 0.2 per cent and 0.7 per cent from the previous session's jump. Powell is expected to reiterate his confidence in the economy's growth while cautioning the recovery is far from complete. Yellen is likely to paint an optimistic picture of the economy before the US lawmakers later in the day. Their congressional hearings begin at 12 p.m. ET (1600 GMT).



People are seen on Wall Street outside the New York Stock Exchange in New York City.

### Microsoft in talks to acquire Discord for more than \$10b

Microsoft Corp is in talks to buy messaging platform Discord Inc for more than \$10 billion, Bloomberg News reported, citing people familiar with the matter. Discord has reached out to potential buyers and Microsoft is one of them, the report said, citing people familiar with the matter. One person said it was more likely to go public than sell itself. Earlier in the day, VentureBeat reported that Discord was exploring a sale and it was in final talks with a party. Microsoft declined to comment, while Discord did not immediately respond to Reuters request. Discord, which is valued at around \$7 billion as of last December, is a platform on which users coordinate group activities such as games, discussions and even virtual parties. The Xbox maker has been seeking to strengthen its video game offerings with \$7.5 billion acquisition of ZeniMax Media last year, its biggest gaming acquisition ever.

## GLOBAL BUSINESS

# Soy, sugar traders fight for space in Latam's largest port; costs jump

REUTERS, Sao Paulo/New York

Soy and sugar traders are fighting for room in Latin America's largest port, rushing to secure loading slots as the slowest Brazilian soy harvest in 10 years pushes the grains export window into the sugar season. Congestion was hitting Brazil's Santos port just as consumers worldwide have been turning to top exporter Brazil for sugar and soybean supplies. The glut of shipments waiting to leave is boosting transport costs and will likely delay arrivals at destinations. Sugar prices hit a four-year high late last month, boosted by supply tightness. Soybean prices, already near seven-year highs, could rise further at a time when Brazil is effectively the world's main supplier. "It is a perfect storm, a combination of factors that are leading to soy and sugar to compete for logistics," said Tiago Medeiros, Brazil head and executive director for Czarnikow Group, a food trader and supply chain services provider. Brazil usually starts soybean exports in January, with volumes



Bulk carriers line up as they wait to dock and be loaded with cargo, amid the coronavirus disease outbreak, near Santos Port in Santos, Brazil.

REUTERS/FILE

increasing in later months. This season, planting was delayed, as was the harvest, pushing that window further out. Shipments from the new sugar crop usually start around April, but companies are still shipping stocks from a bumper crop in 2020. Brazil's Agriculture Ministry

saw sugar stocks at 7.3 million tonnes in mid-February, the highest for the last three years. Market players expect growing delays in coming months, with ships likely waiting several weeks before being able to dock in Santos. Medeiros noted that spot

prices for both sugar and soybean futures are higher than deferred ones. This inverted chart position signals near-term supply tightness, he said, which could mean financial losses for sellers if they fail to deliver on time. "So everyone wants to get products out as soon as possible," he said.

Most crops in Brazil are moved by truck, so truck freight costs spiked due to the rush of goods. Traders said shipowners sharply raised demurrage, the daily fee charged for port delays, from around \$18,000 per day to \$30,000 per day on trips to Brazil. Because of long vessel waiting times, French trader Sudeen said India might be an alternate sugar supplier, but traders said its supply is constrained for several reasons. "Brazil mainly exports raws, while India has surplus of whites. So direct substitution is limited," said a source at a large sugar trader in India. Chinese soy buyers would normally turn to the United States to avoid Brazilian congestion, but US farmers have little to offer. Due to strong demand, the United States will only have about 10 days worth of soybean supplies before the US harvest starts in September. The US Department of Agriculture forecast soybean stocks at the Aug. 31 end of the 2020/21 marketing year at 120 million bushels, down sharply from 525 million a year earlier. It would be the smallest ending stocks since 2013/14.

# Oil prices slump on renewed lockdowns

AFF, London

Oil prices slumped Tuesday on lower demand prospects for crude as Europe's biggest economy Germany said it would reimpose strict containment measures and struggles along with other EU nations to roll out vaccines. European stocks markets fell only slightly after sharp losses in Asia. On currency markets, the Turkish lira stabilised a day after plunging in reaction to news that President Recep Tayyip Erdogan sacked the country's market-friendly central bank chief, raising concerns about another round of financial turbulence. Germany will meanwhile enter a strict shutdown for five days over Easter amid surging virus rates, Chancellor Angela Merkel and regional leaders agreed Tuesday. Neighbouring France should be vaccinating "morning, noon and evening", President Emmanuel Macron said as he tackles criticism that the Covid-19 immunisation drive has been slow. France is facing a third wave of infections



General view of the Imperial Oil refinery, located near Enbridge's Line 5 pipeline, in Sarnia, Ontario, Canada.

REUTERS/FILE

but is lagging behind many Western countries in terms of the number of people vaccinated. Events in Europe are "hurting demand projections for crude oil", noted ThinkMarkets analyst Fawad Razaqzada. "Everything else being equal it means that growth will be slower to pick up and inflationary pressures are likely to be weaker than previously thought. Across the Atlantic, focus is on the first joint congressional testimony by Federal Reserve boss Jerome Powell and Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen, who were due Tuesday to answer questions on their policy response to the pandemic. It comes as markets are rattled by a sharp rise in US Treasury yields in recent weeks that have been fuelled by bets that the forecast strong bounce in economic activity this year will fan inflation and force the bank to lift interest rates before 2024, as it has indicated. The pair have repeatedly said they do not see the spike in inflation lasting and will maintain ultra-loose monetary policies -- including record-low rates -- until they have a grip on unemployment, and price rises are above two percent for an extended period.