

Go on with policy

second wave: IMF

support to fight

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\$66.59

Turkey farming drops as demand crashes

Akanda Muhammad Jahid

Mizanur Rahman sometimes takes a look at some photographs on his mobile phone. Those are a bit old, taken about a year ago.

After a while, he stops looking at them with a deep sigh. These pictures reminded him of his dream of making it big in turkey farming.

Watching inspiring stories of turkey farming on YouTube, Rahman bought 50 American variety of turkey chicks for Tk 60,000 in early 2019. Within six months, they weighed around five kilogrammes (kg).

The farmer in South Jhawgara village in Melandah upazila of Jamalpur made a good profit by selling them between Tk 500 and Tk 600 per kg.

Buoyed by the initial success, he expanded the sheds and bought 500 more chicks. Within one and a half years, the number of birds rose to

Rahman's story was not just of merely turkey farming -- it was a story of love, affection, sacrifice, and hard work.

NEW

HOTLINE NUMBER

(16704



these birds very much. I also adored them. In fact, I saw my daughter's future among these birds.

He worked tirelessly at the farm for more than a year. He was confident "My school-going daughter loved that if he sold these turkeys, he would earn about Tk one

> But when his poultry matured for sale, the price dipped sharply. He sold the birds for a paltry Tk 150 and Tk 160

"There was a

pandemic when no one wanted to take it for free," Rahman said.

He spent Tk 1,000 to Tk 1,500 to feed a turkey until it weighed up to three to five kg in six months. The cost of meat production was Tk 350 to Tk 450 per kg.

"The day I sold the last flock of turkeys, my daughter cried a lot. I couldn't hold myself either. Some sort of affection was created for them but I no longer had the ability to bear their

"But at this moment, these are just memories. When I look at these pictures, my heart aches. I can't hold back my tears.

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Bankers' families to get up to

Tk 50 lakh STAR BUSINESS REPORT

The central bank yesterday asked banks to pay cash compensation to the families of bankers in the event of death from coronavirus infections.

The special compensation will range from a minimum of Tk 25 lakh to a maximum of Tk 50 lakh, according to a central bank notice.

The new instruction came as the central bank has kept banks open amid the countrywide lockdown, which was imposed to curb the alarming rise of

The families of the first-class officers, senior officers, probationary officers, management trainee officers, or bankers holding equivalent posts will get a maximum of Tk 50 lakh in case of the death of the employees.

Tk 37.50 lakh will be given to the families of the bankers who hold positions from the trainee assistant official to the one just below the first grade.

Staff and sub-staff members have been brought under the scheme.

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IMF observations

- >> Second wave of pandemic creates risks for growth
- >> Policy support should continue for vulnerable groups
- >> Farm sector must be given continued focus
- >> Fiscal revenue capacity has to be strengthened
- >> Led by Bangladesh, South Asia is recovering despite the second wave

professionals have gone through their worst-ever crisis because of the first wave of the coronavirus, the implementation rates of the stimulus packages dedicated to them are not satisfactory.

As of March 18 this year, banks disbursed about Tk 13,011 crore among 89,892 borrowers under the stimulus package worth Tk 20,000 crore earmarked for the SME sector, data from the central bank showed.

Despite extending the deadline thrice by the central bank, many banks showed unwillingness to disburse loans to the SME sector, which is considered the bedrock of the economy.

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Ctg port deliveries slow amid lockdown

DWAIPAYAN BARUA, Ctg

There has been a sharp fall in delivery of imported goods from the Chittagong port in the last six days since the countrywide lockdown was imposed on April 14 as importers are not taking the deliveries timely.

Overall container occupancy at the port yards is still at a comfortable level, sans those dedicatedly used for storing import laden containers.

But the port officials and users apprehend a possible container congestion if the deliveries do not gain pace in the coming days as the lockdown has been extended for one more week.

The port authority has already started knocking business bodies to take steps for taking delivery of goods everyday of the week aiming at expediting the process.

As of yesterday morning, there were 35,138 TEUs (twenty feet equivalent units) of all types of containers lying at the port yards, which was around 72 per cent of the port's total capacity of storing 49,018 TEUs.

But concerns remain over the situation at the yards dedicated for storing import laden containers.



Port officials and users apprehend a possible container congestion if the deliveries do not gain pace in the coming days as the lockdown has been extended.

A total of 33,244 TEUs of dedicated yards covering around 93 per cent of their capacity of

Overall, daily delivery from containers were lying at these the port before the lockdown was over 5,000 TEUs on an average whereas it came down to only 3,100 TEUs per day in the last five

days till yesterday morning.

The overall delivery is a total calculation of different types of deliveries. A good portion of import goods are taken away

right from the port yards on being unstuffed from containers.

AKM Zamir Uddin

Monetary Fund has said.

of its Spring Meetings.

phase of the crisis.

challenge," he said.

Bangladesh faces challenges in sustaining

the effective response it unveiled in the

initial phase of the pandemic last year as

it grapples with a devastating second wave

of the deadly pathogen, the International

"Bangladesh is in the throes of another

wave of the pandemic, and this is presenting

challenges and downside risks to growth,

said Jonathan D Ostry, deputy director for

the Asia and Pacific Department of the IMF,

The multilateral lender had organised

When asked about the types of fiscal

measures the government needs to take to

address the pandemic-induced economic

downturn, Ostry said that the challenge for

policy was to sustain the effective response

that Bangladesh made during the initial

its support to the vulnerable groups

through social safety nets and its support

for the agriculture sector. So, this is the

Since Covid-19 hit Bangladesh on March

8 last year, the government has announced

23 stimulus packages involving Tk 124,053

crore, which is more than 4 per cent of the

Although key contributors to the

economy such as small and medium

enterprises, farmers and lower-income

country's gross domestic product.

"The government will have to continue

the press conference on the economic

situation of the Asia-Pacific region as part

at a virtual press briefing recently.

A portion of import containers carrying 37 types of goods as well as empty containers are taken out to 19 privately owned inland container depots (ICDs) from where the deliveries are made.

Consignees also take delive of a portion of loaded import containers from the port, which is called on-chassis delivery.

The direct delivery of goods from the yards also saw a sharp fall in the last five days.

It was possible to deliver goods of around 3,000 TEUs on April 13, the day before the lockdown was imposed. But the figure came down sharply to 1,200 TEUs on the following day.

Chittagong Port Authority (CPA) on Saturday in an urgent letter to the president of Bangladesh Inland Container Depot Association (BICDA) requested for taking steps for the speedy removal of around 4,800 TEUs of ICD-bound import laden and empty containers from

In the letter, the CPA mentioned that some 1,469 TEUs of empty containers and 1,363 TEUs of import laden containers bound for the ICDs were lying at the port.

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LOW GAS PRESSURE

60 textile mills suffer in Gazipur

A group of primary textile mills in the industrial belt in Gazipur is in fear of losing export-oriented work orders and sales ahead of Eid-ul-Fitr due to a disruption in production caused by low gas pressure.

The gas pressure at more than 60 spinning, dyeing, finishing, printing and weaving mills in Madhabkhola, Sreepur, Baniachala, Bhabanipur, and Gazipur went down to three pounds per square inch (PSI) instead of the required 15 PSI. Many of these units are engaged in producing raw materials for export-oriented garment factories and local markets.

"The affected mills have been unable to operate in full swing for many months now. As a result, many annot execute work orders on time," the Bangladesh Textile Mills Association (BTMA) said in a statement yesterday.

"If low gas pressure continues, paying the workers'wages will be difficult for industry owners.

In a letter on April 7, the BTMA urged state-run Titas Gas Transmission and Distribution Company to supply gas with adequate pressure to some mills in Madhabkhola, Sreepur, Baniachala, Bhabanipur, and Gazipur.

However, the gas pressure in these areas has deteriorated rather than improve, the statement said.

Production at mills and factories in the areas has declined by 75 per cent because of falling gas pressure. If the mills can't run properly, there is a possibility of a liquidity crisis at the factories as their business has also declined, the BTMA added. Ali Iqbal Mohammad Nurullah, managing director of

Titas Gas, could not be reached by phone for comments.

Pandemic gives a boost to ambulance business

JAGARAN CHAKMA

The number of ambulances hitting the streets is on the rise as businesses are spending more on import amid an increase in its demand during the ongoing

Some 788 units of ambulances got registered in 2020, up 18 per cent year-onyear, according to data from Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA).

"Businesses invested more in ambulance import last year after the Covid-19 outbreak, when the demand for the vehicle started increasing," said Mohammad Shahidul Islam, secretary general of the Bangladesh Reconditioned Vehicles Importers and Dealers Association (Barvida)

The demand for ambulance service increased as attendants of patients now prefer using the automobile to reach hospitals smoothly, said Md Monsurul Mamun Khan, in-charge of the ambulance service of Addin Hospital. He said the hospital provides 24-hour service for patients at Tk 350 per

trip inside Dhaka city. "The charge is Tk 520 per trip for carrying patients to hospitals other than Ad-din. For places outside Dhaka, an additional payment of Tk 30 per kilometre will be applied."

Khan said his company provides ambulance services to financially insolvent patients for free. "We have reserved two ambulances for transporting patients infected with coronavirus.'

Around 613 private ambulance service providers are now operating in Dhaka city, according to Dhaka Metropolitan Ambulance Owners' Association.

The demand for ambulance services more than doubled in the last six months, said Alamgir Hossain, president of the association. "Now there is an acute scarcity of freezer vans in the country, which has also played a role in increasing the demand for ambulances.

Sometimes, ambulance drivers charge Tk 500 extra along with the regular fare to clean and sanitise the vehicles after carrying patients infected with Covid-19, he said.

The customs duty for customised ambulances stands at around Tk 4 lakh to Tk 5 lakh while it can be as much as Tk 15 lakh for passenger cars of the same capacity, said Mannan Chowdhury Khasru, owner of Nippon Autos Trading and a former president of Barvida.



Businesses invested more in ambulance import last year after the Covid-19 outbreak. The photo was taken in front of Holy Family Red Crescent Medical College Hospital in Dhaka recently.

Toyota to review climate stance as investors turn up the heat

Japan's Toyota Motor Corp signalled a shift in its climate change stance on Monday, saying it would review its lobbying and be more transparent on what steps it is taking as it faces increased activist and investor

The carmaker came under scrutiny after siding with the Trump administration in 2019 in a bid to bar the state of California from setting its own fuel efficiency rules.

Toyota "will review public policy engagement activities through our company and industry associations to confirm they are consistent with the long-term goals of the Paris Agreement," it said in a statement, adding that actions will be announced by the end of this year.

The automaker also said it will "strive to provide more information so that our stakeholders can understand our effort to achieve carbon neutrality.

A company spokeswoman, who confirmed that "public policy engagement activities" includes lobbying, was not able to respond immediately to questions about pressure from investors.

Four funds with about \$235 billion in assets under management are pressuring Toyota before its annual shareholder meeting in June to draw a line under its lobbying against international efforts to prevent catastrophic global warming.

This move must not be a PR exercise but instead signal a clear end to its role in negative climate lobbying which has given it a laggard status," Jens Munch Holst, chief executive officer of Danish pension fund AkademikerPension, told Reuters.

AkademikerPension has "escalated via intense direct engagement" with Toyota after a decade of communicating with the automaker through a third party, Troels Børrild, spokesman at the Danish fund, told





REUTERS

Staff members stand at the Toyota booth during a media day for the Auto Shanghai show in Shanghai, China yesterday.

AkademikerPension will consider preparing a shareholders resolution to submit at next year's annual general meeting if "Toyota fails to deliver on its commitment," Børrild said.

The fund would consider selling its Toyota holding if there is no change, but the spokesman said fund officials did not believe it would come to that.

repeatedly undermined climate action,

on internal combustion engines by 2030 to opposing car fuel economy standards in the US," Munch Holst said.

The Toyota spokeswoman told Reuters that it would need more time to respond to Munch Holst's comments.

The other investors are Church of England Pensions Board, Sweden's AP7 and Norway's Storebrand.

Toyota was among major automakers "Right up until now, the company has that supported the Trump administration Department civil probe into its delayed in its attempt to bar California from from opposing the U.K. government's ban setting its own fuel-efficiency rules or zero-

emission requirements.

They have since dropped that support in a "gesture of good faith in to find a constructive path forward" with the Biden administration.

With pressure growing on carmakers to slash emissions, Toyota is also scrambling to produce EVs that can compete globally with rivals' models.

Toyota this year settled a lengthy Justice filing of emissions-related defect reports

Lack of access to finance big barrier to farm mechanisation

The government is subsidising harvester purchases so its use has risen. However, mechanisation in some other aspects of cultivation is yet to begin.

We need to start mechanisation in transplanting, rice

drying, and vegetable growing," he said.

Once upon a time, people dried paddy in their homes but now due to a scarcity of space, rice driers have become an upcoming need in Bangladesh.

Similarly, potato has become a major crop and so the planting and plucking now needs to be mechanised in

order to reduce farming costs.

"We should not wait till mechanisation in rice farming is complete as mechanisation in potato farming also needs to start simultaneously," Das said.

Vegetables such as onion also need mechanisation in cultivation and harvesting. Onion transplanting and plucking machines are available but farmers are still dependent on manual labour.

The ACI brings a new dimension to farm mechanisation because people did not know about other similar companies. "But our company has goodwill in the market,"

In 2021, ACI Motors became the country's highest taxpayer in the engineering sector among 55 companies.

ACI Motors has a dedicated app where they deliver agromachinery services within six hours through its 400 field

"We are monitoring it continuously," Das said, adding that they have a call centre for customer grievances.

The company's new smart Yanmar harvester can be monitored by a smartphone. The owner can monitor where the harvester is and how much it harvested, how many times it was on the road and how many times it was on the field.

"This is the latest version of digital agriculture in developed countries.'

Das thanked the government for providing incentives on big harvesters from last year as it helped farm

mechanisation in the country gain pace. Big harvesters are necessary in the country because smaller ones cannot properly operate on the muddy fields

prevalent in Bangladesh. "We have already established a factory at Manikganj where some varieties of power tillers and dairy production

mechanisms are being produced," he said. "Our main problem of producing machines here is the market size. The local market size is so small that production is not profitable," he added.

Still though, ACI Motors, which also retails Yamaha motorcycles, is trying to produce agro-machinery here.

"Our banks are not giving loans for buying motorcycles even though two-wheelers have become a need for urban people, so they should lend here too," Das said.

Canada to roll out big spending in pandemic recovery budget

Canada is expected to channel funds into childcare, wage subsidies and other pandemic recovery measures as the government presents its new budget Monday ahead of possible snap elections.

The 2021 budget is the first full fiscal plan from Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's administration since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic and is expected to outline Canada's recovery as virus infections surge.

Finance Minister Chrystia Freeland has promised Ottawa "will continue to do whatever it takes" to fight the spread of the coronavirus and support the economy as it emerges from a recession.

"We have a plan for jobs and robust growth," she told parliament last month.

Canada entered the pandemic in a strong fiscal position relative to other G7 nations after decades of belt-tightening, she said, allowing it to dole out hundreds of billions of dollars in Covid-19 emergency aid.

Critics have warned against piling on too much debt, after Ottawa's budget deficit exploded over the past year to an estimated Can\$382 billion (US\$305 billion), according to an update issued in November.

Spending on health care, as well as on support for households, firms and vulnerable groups through cash



Justin Trudeau

transfers, already soared to record levels, amounting to almost 15 per cent of GDP. Now, the government is keen to remake the economy with a further cash outlay.

Freeland has signaled she would earmark funds for a national childcare program to help women -- who have suffered significant pandemic job losses -- get back to work.

Funding is also expected to be set aside for a "green new deal", pinning Canada's recovery on renewable energy investments.

Canadian media has reported that the government intends to set aside funds to extend wage and rent subsidies through the fall. At a recent Liberal Party convention, delegates endorsed a universal basic income.

According to the parliamentary budget officer, instituting such a

program could almost halve Canada's poverty rate within one year. In prebudget consultations with opposition leaders, Prime Minister Trudeau "highlighted the importance of continuing to support vulnerable people and address inequalities.

"According to his office, he said "fighting climate change remains a focus of the government as it works to create jobs and ensure a recovery that benefits everyone

"The leftist New Democrats have said they would vote with the minority Liberal government through the pandemic. But Trudeau -- leading in the polls -- might be tempted to call an early election in hope of regaining a majority in parliament.

It's been only 18 months since the last ballot and Trudeau has said he wants to wait until the Covid-19 threat subsides before seeking a new mandate.

So far, just over 23 per cent of the population has received at least one vaccine dose, according to the site Covid-19 Tracker Canada.

A new wave of infections led by variants, however, has forced some regions to re-impose health restrictions through April.

The government's last budget was presented in March 2019, when it projected a Can\$19.8 billion deficit for 2019-2020. It did not present one last year, Trudeau said, because of uncertainties of the pandemic.

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার

বাংলাদেশ পুলিশ পুলিশ সুপারের কার্যালয়

দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি নং-০১/২০২১-২০২২



স্মারক নং-২১৬৫/ই

তারিখঃ ১৯-০৪-২০২১খ্রিঃ ফরিদপুর জেলা পুলিশের ২০২১-২০২২ অর্থ সালে নিমুলিখিত আইটেমের বাৎসারিক/পার্শে বর্ণিত মেয়াদকালের ঠিকাদার নিয়োগের নিমিত্তে পাবলিক প্রকিউরমেন্ট

আইন/২০	০৬ ও পাবলিক প্রকিউরমেন্ট বিধিমালা/২০০৮ (সংশো	ধনসহ) অনুসারে নিম্নবর্ণিত শর্ত সাপেক্ষে সীলমোহরকৃত দরপত্র আহবান করা যাচ্ছে।		
٥٥	মন্ত্রণালয়/বিভাগ	স্বর্ট্র মন্ত্রণালয়, জননিরাপত্তা বিভাগ।		
૦ર	সংস্থা/বিভাগ	বাংলাদেশ পুলিশ।		
০৩	ক্রয়/সংগ্রহের স্বত্তাধিকারীর নাম ও জেলা	পুলিশ সুপার, ফরিদপুর।		
08	দরপত্রের স্বাক্ষর নং ও তারিখ	স্মারক নং-২১৬৫/ই, তারিখ ১৯-০৪-২০২১খ্রিঃ।		
90	দরপত্রের বিষয়	২০২১-২২ অর্থ বছরের জন্য নারায়ণগঞ্জ জেলা পুলিশ বাহিনীর জন্য ক্রমিক নং-১৭ এর গ্রুপ অনুযায়ী		
		মালামাল সরবরাহ।		
০৬	ক্রয় পদ্ধতি	উনুক্ত দরপত্র পদ্ধতি (OTM)		
०१	বাজেট ও তহবিলের উৎস	পুলিশ হেডকোয়ার্টার্স কর্তৃক প্রাপ্ত বাজেট বরাদ্দ হতে।		
оъ	দরপত্র প্রকাশের তারিখ	২১-০৪-২০২১খ্রিঃ তারিখের মধ্যে।		
০৯	দরপত্র দলিল বিক্রয়ের শেষ তারিখ ও সময়	১৮-০৫-২০২১খ্রিঃ ১৭.০০ ঘটিকায় অফিস চলাকালীন সময় (ছুটির দিন ব্যতিত)।		
20	দরপত্র দালিল গ্রহণের শেষ তারিখ ও সময়	১৮-০৫-২০২১খ্রিঃ ১০.০০ ঘটিকা হতে ১২.০০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত।		
22	দরপত্র খোলার তারিখ ও সময়	১৯-০৫-২০২১খ্রিঃ ১২.৩০ ঘটিকা।		
25	দরপত্র দালিল প্রাপ্তির স্থান	রেশন সামগ্রীর ক্ষেত্রে		
1		১। ডিআইজি, ঢাকা রেঞ্জ, বাংলাদেশ পুলিশ, ঢাকার কার্যালয়।		
1		২। পুলিশ সুপারের কার্যালয়, রাজবাড়ী/ফরিদপুর।		
		১। পুলিশ সুপারের কার্যালয়, ফরিদপুর (সকল আইটেম)।		
১৩	দরপত্র দলিল গ্রহণকারীর নাম ও ঠিকানা	পুলিশ সুপারের কার্যালয়, ফরিদপুর।		
78	দরপত্র দলিল খোলার অফিসের নাম ও ঠিকানা	পুলিশ সুপারের কার্যালয়, ফরিদপুর।		
26	দরপত্র দলিল খোলার সময় উপস্থিত	দরপত্রদাতা ও প্রতিনিধিদের সম্মুখে (যদি কেহ উপস্থিত থাকেন) দরপত্র বাক্স খোলা হবে।		
১৬	দরপত্রদাতার যোগ্যতা	দরপত্রদাতা কর্তৃক হালনাগাদ নবায়নকৃত ট্রেড লাইসেন্স, ব্যাংক এস্টেটমেন্ট, আয়কর, ভ্যাট নিবন্ধন		
1		সার্টিফিকেট, নাগরিককত্বের সনদ, ০৩ বছরের অভিজ্ঞতা সনদপত্র থাকতে হবে ও অন্যান্য শর্তসমূহ		
		দরপত্র সিডিউলে উল্লেখ রয়েছে।		
59)	বাৎসবিক ক্রয়/বিক্রয়/মেবামত কাজ			

28	দরপত্র দালল খোলার আফসের নাম ও ঠিকানা	ু পুলিশ সুপারের কার্যালয়, ফার্দপুর।					
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১৬	দরপত্রদাতার যোগ্যতা	দরপত্রদাতা কর্তৃক হালনাগাদ নবায়নকৃত ট্রেড লাইসেন্স, ব্যাংক এষ্টেটমেন্ট, আয়কর, ভ্যাট নিবন্ধন					
	দরপত্র সিডিউলে		রিককত্বের সনদ, ০৩ বছরের অভিজ্ঞতা সনদপত্র থাকতে হবে ও অন্যান্য শর্তসমূহ উল্লেখ রয়েছে।				
							(۹۷
গ্ৰুপ	কাজের বিবরণ			সিডিউলের মূল্য	দরপত্র জামানত	মেয়াদকাল	
ক	ফরিদপুর জেলা ও পুলিশ হাসপাতালের জন্য স্বাস্থ্যবিধান সামগ্রী সরবরাহ		চাহিদা মোতাবেক	१৫०/-	80,000/-	৩০শে জুন/২০২ পর্যন্ত	
খ	ফরিদপুর জেলা ও পুলিশ হাসপাতালের জন্য ব্যবহার্য দ্রব্যাদি সরবরাহ		চাহিদা মোতাবেক	\$000/-	\$,00,000/-		
গ	ফরিদপুর জেলা ও পুলিশ হাসপাতালের জন্য অন্যান সরবরাহ	চাহিদা মোতাবেক	१৫०/-	৬৫,০০০/-			
ঘ	ফরিদপুর জেলা পুলিশ হাসপাতালের দেশি/বিদেশী ও	চাহিদা মোতাবেক	¢00/-	೨ 0,000/-			
E	পুলিশ হাসপাতালের রোগীদের পথ্য সরবরাহ	চাহিদা মোতাবেক	800/-	@,000/-			
চ	ফরিদপুর জেলা পুলিশের কম্পিউটার ও কম্পিউটার ২	চাহিদা মোতাবেক	¢00/-	00,000/-			
ছ	ফরিদপুর জেলা পুলিশ সদস্যদের পোশাক সেলাই কা	হরিদপুর জেলা পুলিশ সদস্যদের পোশাক সেলাই কাজ (রিবনসহ)			90,000/-	1	
জ	ফরিদপুর জেলার কর্মরত কর্মকর্তাগণের জন্য টি (পুলিশ পরিদর্শক হতে তদৃর্দ্ধ)	চাহিদা মোতাবেক	\$000/-	২০,০০০/-			
ঝ	ফরিদপুর পুলিশ সদস্যদের জন্য শুকনা খাবার (কুক্ড	চাহিদা মোতাবেক	800/-	\$6,000/-			
এঃ	ফরিদপুর জেলা পুলিশের জন্য আউটসোর্সিং (জনবল নিয়োগ)		চাহিদা মোতাবেক	২০০০/-	\$,00,000/-		
ট	ফরিদপুর পুলিশের মোটরযান মেরামত এবং খুচর যন্ত্রাংশ ও কাঁচামাল ক্রয়		চাহিদা মোতাবেক	২০০০/-	@o,ooo/-		
ঠ	ফরিদপুর জেলা পুলিশের সরকারি কাজে ০৯ আস আসন বিশিষ্ট মাইক্রোবাস (নোহা/হাইস) ড্রাইভারসং (জ্বালানি ব্যাতীত)	চাহিদা মোতাবেক	9 &0/-	80,000/-			
ড	ফরিদপুর জেলা পুলিশের জলযান মেরামত ও রক্ষণা	ফরিদপুর জেলা পুলিশের জলযান মেরামত ও রক্ষণাবেক্ষণ		800/-	8,000/-		
ঢ		নির্দপুর পুলিশ রেশন ষ্টোরের জন্য উন্নতমানের সয়াবিন তৈল ক্রয়		3000/-	3,30,000/-	জুলাই/২০২১	
ণ	ফরিদপুর পুলিশ রেশন ষ্টোরের জন্য উন্নতমানের মঙর ডাল (ছোটদানা) ক্রয়		চাহিদা মোতাবেক	\$000/-	3,50,000/-	হতে সেপ্টেম্বর/২০২:	
ত	ফরিদপুর পুলিশ রেশন ষ্টোরের জন্য জ্বালানি কাঠ ক্র	* · · · · · /		800/-	b,000/-	পর্যন্ত	
থ	ফ্রিদপুর পুলিশ রেশন ষ্টোরের জন্য গম পেষাই		চাহিদা মোতাবেক চাহিদা মোতাবেক	960/-	২০,০০০/-	1	
দ	ফরিদপুর পুলিশ রেশন ষ্টোরের জন্য পোলাও চাল		চাহিদা মোতাবেক	800/-	\$0,000/-	1	
ধ	ফরিদপুর পুলিশ রেশন ষ্টোরের জন্য কুলি (লোড-আনলোড) কাজ		চাহিদা মোতাবেক	800/-	\$0,000/-	1	
ন	ফরিদপুর পুলিশ রেশন ষ্টোরের জন্য পরিবহন (চাল, গম ও চিনি)		চাহিদা মোতাবেক	960/-	\$6,000/-	1	
প	ফরিদপুর পুলিশ রেশন ষ্টোরের জন্য খালি বস্তা		সিডিউলে বর্ণিত	800/-	\$0,000/-	জুন/২১ পর্যন্ত	
70	দরপত্র তথ্যাদি প্রসঙ্গে	দরপত্রের বিস্তারিত তথ্যাদি পুলিশ সুপারের কার্যালয়, ফরিদপুর এর নিকট হতে অফিস চলাকালী সময়ে জানা যাবে।					
১৯	দরপত্র আহ্বানকারী কর্মকর্তা নাম, পদবী ও ঠিকানা	মোঃ আলিমুজ্জামান, বিপিএম-সেবা, পুলিশ সুপার, ফরিদপুর।					
	14 14 41 THE	িনাও সালেপ্রজানান, বিশিষ্পর্যার, মুলাল খুলার, বারগমুর।					

১) উপরে বর্ণিত দরপত্রের জমানতের টাকা, ব্যাংক ড্রাফট/পে-অর্ডারসহ দরপত্রের সকল শর্তাবলী পরণ করে নিমুস্বাক্ষরকারী অনুকলে দাখিল করতে হবে

পালনে ব্যর্থ হলে কাগজপত্র বাছাইকালে তা বাতিল বলে গণ্য হবে। দরপত্র তপসিল ব্যতিত কোন দরপত্র দাখিল করতে পারবেন না।

৩) দরপত্র বিক্রয় বা দাখিলের শেষ দিন যদি সরকারি ছুটি থাকে সে ক্লেত্রে উক্ত দিন বলতে পরবর্তী কার্যদিবসকে বুঝাবে

কোন কারণ প্রদর্শন ব্যতিরেকে যে কোন অথবা সকল দরপত্র বাতিল বা গ্রহণ করার ক্ষমতা সংরক্ষণ করেন

২) দরপত্রের সহিত সকল কাগজপত্রের ছায়ালিপি ১ম শ্রেণীর গেজেটেড কর্মকর্তা কর্তৃক সত্যায়িত হতে হবে। সংখ্রিষ্ট কাগজপত্র ও দরপত্রের নিয়মাবলী

Litchi growers fear record low yield this year

Litchi production will hit a record low this year, Rafiqul, who has 30 years of experience, told The Daily Star.

"I have 400 litchi trees on my 4.5-

acre land in Madhabbati. Among them, only 20 trees budded. It is quite frustrating," he added. Rafigul said he suffered massive

losses last year when the government imposed a countrywide lockdown to curb the spread of coronavirus. "Litchi production will see a 75 per

of Madhabbati who purchased five large litchi orchards from the growers on contract this year. Bedana and Bombai, China,

cent year-on-year fall this year," said

Anwarul Islam, a litchi businessman

Madrazi varieties of litchis are grown widely in Biral upazila, he said. There will be a massive shortfall

of Bombai and Bedana litchis, but production of other varieties like China 1, 2 and 3, and Madrazi will be moderately well, Anwarul said.

"I incurred huge losses last year for the Covid-19 outbreak and would incur massive losses this year also."

The grower said he sold litchis worth Tk 30 lakh from five orchards in 2019. But this year he does not think it would be possible to sell litchis worth even Tk 5 lakh from the same

Investors will lose their capital if

the situation remains the same for the whole year, he said.

In attempts to raise litchi production and recover losses, the growers are now deploying additional labour to nurture the existing trees.

In Dinajpur, Mashimpur has done better than other villages. Most of the litchi trees were found filled with buds there. However, growers think the buds may fall from the trees if there is no rain in the days to come.

Azizar Rahman, another grower of the village, said litchi production will be 50 per cent lower than last year because of the bad climate.

The spiralling cost of inputs is also a reason for the losses, he said.

"I was hoping to recover the lockdown losses of 2020, but low production has made it impossible this year."

Only 10 per cent of the flowers of Bombai litchi trees turned into buds in the area. The rate increased to 50 per cent in case of Madrazi, China and Bedana varieties.

Every year, flowering of the litchi trees begins in mid-February and the fruit hits the market at the end of May or early June.

Last year, 221,830 tonnes of litchis were grown in 31,690 hectares of land in the country, according to data of the Department of Agricultural Extension

Touhidul Iqbal, deputy director of the DAE office in Dinajpur, also blamed the adverse weather conditions and excessive rainfall for the fall in litchi production.

But he was confident that growers will get a better price, which may help them recover some losses.

This seasonal litchi production creates enormous job opportunities in the district every year and the whole district becomes vibrant during the

Litchi is produced commercially in 26 districts of the country, including Thakurgaon, Panchagarh, Rajshahi, Panba, Natore and a few hilly districts. In 2018-19, around 2.30 lakh

tonnes of litchi was produced in the country and a lion's share of that came from Dinajpur and Pabna districts. Litchi growers of other districts also

fear to see a drastic fall in production. "Only 30 per cent of my 800 litchi trees flowered this season," said Md Shajahan Ali, a litchi grower at Kadimpara village under Ishwardi upazila in Pabna.

The rate of transformation of the flowers to bud was also bad and most of the buds dropped few days after their transformation, he said.

Ali earned Tk 8 lakh in 2019, the earnings were poor in 2020 due to the pandemic and he can hardly think of earning even Tk 1 lakh this year.

মোঃ আলিমুজ্জামান, বিপিএম-সেবা

বিপি-৭৬০৩০২৭৮৪৪ পুলিশ সুপার, ফরিদপুর **જ** ০৬৩১-৬৩০৭৭, 🖃 -৬৩০৮৯ E-mail: spfaridpur@police.gov.bd

BB sets rules for banks to disburse Tk 500cr fund for start-ups

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Bank vesterday set Bangladesh eligibility requirements for banks to disburse loans from the Tk 500 crore fund aimed at helping start-ups expand and flourish, according to a central bank circular.

As per the prerequisites, all stateowned and private commercial banks or specialised banks can avail the refinancing facility.

However, their classified loans cannot be more than 10 per cent.

The lenders will also have to maintain regulatory requirements in the form of their cash reserve rate (CRR) and statutory liquidity ratio (SLR) with Bangladesh Bank.

Besides, they must have a minimum one-year of banking experience to manage the funds, the central bank said.

decided to form a Tk 500 crore fund to help start-ups smoothly secure

As per the draft guideline, it would be disbursed through a refinance scheme, meaning that banks would first disburse loans among clients and the central bank would later reimburse the fund to banks.

Entrepreneurs aged 21 years and older will be eligible to avail a maximum of Tk one crore from the fund with the highest interest rate set at four per cent while banks will get it from the central bank at 0.50 per cent

The repayment tenure will be a maximum of five years.

Entrepreneurs with innovative ideas will get top priority while their educational qualification, technical expertise, experience

On March 12, Bangladesh Bank and social acceptance will be cided to form a Tk 500 crore fund considered the same way as collateral would.

> Banks will be allowed to keep lower provisioning against the loans compared to that required for regular

> Currently, 20 per cent of a classified loan of sub-standard category has to be kept as provisioning.

But lenders will be allowed to keep 5 per cent in provisioning against the start-up loans.

Banks will have to keep 30 per cent provision for doubtful loans and 50 per cent for bad loans under the startup fund whereas it is 50 per cent and 100 per cent respectively for the two types of general loans.

Keeping lower provisions against the start-up fund will encourage banks to disburse loans to new entrepreneurs, the central bank said.



Bangladesh High Commissioner to Malaysia Md Golam Sarwar, Standard Chartered Malaysia CEO Abrar A Anwar, Standard Chartered Bangladesh CEO Naser Ezaz Bijoy, Rizwan Rahman, president of the Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Ahsan Khan Chowdhury, chairman and CEO of PRAN-RFL Group Bangladesh, and Bitopi Das Chowdhury, head of corporate affairs, brand and marketing, Standard Chartered Bangladesh, attended a webinar titled "Halal360: Connecting your business to the halal ecosystem" jointly organised by Standard Chartered Bangladesh and Standard Chartered Malaysia yesterday.

India may build new coal plants due to low cost despite climate change

REUTERS, India

India may build new coal-fired power plants as they generate the cheapest power, according to a draft electricity policy document seen by Reuters, despite growing calls from environmentalists to

Coal's contribution to electricity generation in India fell for the second straight year in 2020, marking a departure from decades of growth in coal-fired power. Still, the fuel accounts for nearly three-fourths of India's annual power

Environmental activists have long rallied against India adding new coal-fired capacity. Solar and wind energy prices are falling to record lows, which would help the world's third-largest greenhouse gas emitter cut emissions.

U.S. Special Presidential Envoy for Climate John Kerry this month said India was "getting the job done on climate, pushing the curve," as he began talks with government leaders aimed at cutting carbon emissions faster to slow global

But a 28-page February draft of the National Electricity Policy (NEP) 2021 - which has not been made public - showed India may add new coal-fired capacity, though it recommended tighter technology standards to reduce pollution.

"While India is committed to add more capacity through non-fossil sources of generation, coal-based generation capacity may still be required to be added in the country as it continues to be the cheapest source of generation," the NEP draft read.

All future coal-based plants should only deploy so-called "ultra super critical" less polluting technologies "or other more efficient

State-run NTPC Ltd, India's top electricity producer, said in September it will not acquire not invested in new coal-fired plants for years saying they were not economically viable.

A source with direct knowledge said a government panel of various power sector experts and officials will discuss the draft and could make changes before seeking cabinet approval. India's power ministry did not immediately respond to a request for comment on Sunday.

The draft document also proposed trade of renewable energy in day-ahead markets, creating separate tariffs for electric vehicle charging stations and privatizing electricity distribution companies. The NEP 2021 is India's first attempt at revising its electricity policy enacted in 2005, when the country produced negligible renewable

Experts say phasing in renewable energy

and many run by states across the country have sources and phasing out conventional sources such as coal and natural gas rapidly could lead to instability in the electricity grid, potentially causing blackouts.

While suggesting flexible use of coal-fired and natural gas-fired power to ensure grid stability in the coming years, the draft policy lists promoting clean power as its primary objective. The policy draft suggested expediting adoption of "cost effective" pumped hydro storage to support the electricity grid, adding that only 4.8 gigawatts of a potential 96.5 GW of pumped storage capacity has been developed so far.

The policy also recommends compensating natural gas-fired plants for operating at reduced efficiency to ensure grid stability, and for suffering higher wear and tear due to fluctuations



REUTERS/FILE

land for new coal-fired projects. Private firms Chimneys of a coal-fired power plant are pictured in New Delhi, India.

My dream was shattered in the middle of my journey," Rahman said.

The loss was so profound that he lost the ability to try to make a turnaround again, said the 35-year-old. All in all, he suffered a loss of

Zakir Hossain Palash, a turkey farmer from Jashore, has had a similar story to share.

The proprietor of Bismillah Turkey invested Tk 1 crore and reared 1,000 chicks, building three sheds on one acre of land. He also rented a showroom in the district town to sell frozen

The monthly cost of the farm averaged Tk 40,000 but he was compelled to sell the meat for Tk 250 per kg against a production cost of Tk 450 to Tk 500

"In the beginning, people bought it out of curiosity. At one stage, the demand almost evaporated, and the market went down

completely," Palash said. Moreover, the price of turkey was much higher than that of broiler chicken. It was beyond the

reach of the common people, he said. In Bangladesh, turkey farming started in 2002 when some varieties of the bird was brought in

from India. It then became popular in 2016. Two and a half years ago, there were 250,000

Milon, president of the Turkey Bird Development Association, Bangladesh.

Turkey farming drops as demand crashes

He started his turkey farm in 2003.

"The industry is now ruined. Most of the farmers have shut their farmhouses. Some have converted into native chicken, layer or broiler

At present, there are no more than 20 to 30 farmers who are only raising turkeys, according to Milon.

He blamed the obstacles from various syndicates, including a section of businesspeople involved in poultry and other chicken varieties, profiteering mentality among a section of farmers and middlemen, and the lack of a proper market chain for the ruin of the industry.

He conducted many seminars, workshops and other programmes across the country to revive the industry. His efforts did not give much yield, leading him to give up in despair.

Milon now has only 35 turkey birds out of 2,500 chickens on his farm, Sundarbans Agro,

A number of farmers from different parts of the country said they had shut their business due to the higher cost of production.

This correspondent went to visit a farm in to 300,000 turkey farmers. About 2,500 farms Keraniganj recently. But no sign of the farm

sold their products online, said Shakil Mahmud could be found as construction work was going on there.

> Locals said the farm was shut a couple of months ago as it was not running well.

Debashis Das, director for extension of the Department of Livestock Services, said the farming began as part of an individual

In the beginning, many people became enthusiastic and bought the chicken at higher prices. Initially, they got a better price, he said. A turnkey egg was sold for Tk 200 to Tk 250, a

turkey chick for Tk 400 to Tk 500, and the meat was retailed at Tk 800 to Tk 1,000 per kg. But when the demand dwindled, farmers

could not continue anymore, Das said. The taste for turkey has not developed in

Bangladesh in the way people eat poultry or other varieties of chicken. As a result, there is no market for turkey birds right now. "There is no commercial future for the

industry at the moment. Some people are mainly doing the farming as a hobby. According to the Bangladesh Bureau of

Statistics, the turkey population in Bangladesh was estimated at 1.44 million.

The main impediments to the turkey industry are price falls, substandard feed at a higher price, and a lack of proper marketing facilities, the livestock department said in a study.

European shares hit highs as markets upbeat about recovery prospects Later in the week, American Airlines and

World shares traded near record highs on Monday, as markets were generally upbeat about the prospects for a global economic recovery from COVID-19, ahead of a busy week for earnings

Europe's STOXX 600 reached a record high and was up 0.2 per cent at 0736 GMT. Asian shares hit one-month highs

MSCI world equity index, which tracks shares in 49 countries, was flat on the day, having come close to but not surpassed Friday's record high. MSCI's main European Index was up 0.1 per cent.

Matthias Scheiber, global head of portfolio management at Wells Fargo Asset Management cited low interest rates, the rollout of COVID-19 vaccines and the fiscal stimulus package in the United States as reasons for his bullish stance on equities.

"Risk is coming down, volatility is coming down we see the slow reopening of global economies, the rollout of the vaccine and the huge catch-up in demand so from that perspective it should be positive for economic growth." "We had a strong rally in cyclical and value stocks since the start of this year - we would like to see confirmation in the earnings." Earnings from IBM and Coca-Cola are due later in the session. Netflix reports on Tuesday. Southwest will be the first major post-COVID cyclicals to post results. The European Central Bank meeting

on Thursday will also be in focus this week. ECB President Christine Lagarde said last week that the euro zone economy is still standing on the "two crutches" of monetary and fiscal stimulus and these cannot be taken away until it makes a full

Euro zone government bond yields were lower, with the benchmark German 10-year yield down one basis point at -0.27 per cent.

The benchmark US Treasury yield, which dropped as low as 1.528 per cent last Thursday, was at 1.5606 per cent.

The US economy is set to take off this year as more Americans get COVID-19 vaccinations and become comfortable engaging in a wider range of activities, but any accompanying spike in inflation is likely to be temporary, the Federal Reserve's newest board member said on Friday.

In currency markets, the dollar index was down 0.4 per cent at its lowest levels in more than a month, at 91.259, having weakened since its recent peak of 93.439 at the end of March.

Dollar-yen was also down 0.5 per cent, changing hands at 108.250 . The euro was up 0.3 per cent versus the dollar at

Go on with policy support to fight second wave: IMF

The Bangladesh Bank has recently asked banks to disburse the fund by June.

Banks have disbursed 72 per cent of the stimulus package for the farm sector, which received Tk 5,000 crore.

Like the SME stimulus package, the BB was also forced to push back the deadline of the scheme due to the lukewarm response from banks. It directed lenders to disburse the targeted fund under the package by

The implementation rate is also feeble when it comes to Tk 3,000 crore scheme for low-income professionals, small businesses, and marginal farmers. Banks disbursed 52 per cent of the fund through microfinance institutions as of March.

But the picture is quite different for the stimulus fund introduced for the large borrowers: banks lent 95 per cent of the fund, amounting to Tk 33,000 crore.

The BB also expanded the fund to Tk 40,000 crore to provide loans to the large businesses located at economic and export processing zones. "Going forward, there is always the need

to strengthen the fiscal revenue capacity of the economy to support expenditures,

Working with development partners will also help fiscal cushioning, he said.

Earlier, the IMF said despite the recent spike in Covid-19 infections, South Asia, excluding India, was recovering, led by

The higher-than-expected exports and remittances are playing a positive role in boosting the growth, it said The lender revised its GDP projection

for Bangladesh upwards to 5 per cent in 2021, up from October's projection of 4.4 per cent.

The economy is expected to grow 7.5 per

Bankers' families to get up to Tk 50 lakh

Each family will receive Tk 25 lakh if they pass away after catching the deadly pathogen. The compensation scheme will be

applicable for the bankers and employees who have died since March 29 last year. It will be in addition to other existing financial benefits or incentives for the death while on the job. The compensation will have to be

given to the spouse and son or daughter of the expired employees. If the expired

employees are single, the fund will go to their parents.

Banks will not be allowed to adjust the

payout with the previous liabilities of the employees, said the BB notice. In April last year, the central bank

announced health insurance coverage for both infected and expired employees. Yesterday discarded the instruction and replaced it with the new policy yesterday.

Now, bankers will not get any compensation if they get infected and

Pandemic gives a boost to ambulance business

Ambulance sales may fall this year, as businesses imported more than the requirement in 2020, he said.

The drivers under our association have slowly learned how to handle patients infected with coronavirus during their journey to the hospitals," said Md Liton Ali Sarder, publicity secretary of Dhaka Metropolitan Ambulance Owners "We regularly clean the vehicles and

use sanitisers to ensure health safety of the drivers and passengers. Sarder said vehicles under his association

provide other emergency services.

"We also work under the government's national emergency services, for which people have to dial 999.

According to the BRTA data, there are 4,702 registered ambulances in the capital and 6,938 in the entire country.

The rise in the number of coronavirusinfected patients has given a boost to the demand for ambulance services, said Md Billal Hossen, owner of Alamin Ambulance

"We did not carry Covid-19 patients last year. But this year we have ensured foolproof health safety for the patients, their attendants, drivers and helpers in our ambulances.

Moreover, some 1,927 TEUs of ICD-bound import containers were on board different vessels anchored at the port jetties.

These containers need to be removed within four days in order to keep the port's operational activities smooth and active, the letter stated.

The CPA also sent separate letters to eight private ICDs where these containers were bound

On Sunday the CPA sent separate letters to leaders of the Chittagong Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCCI), Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA) and Bangladesh Knitwear Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BKMEA).

It requested to give directives to their members

who were importers to fast take deliveries in delaying the activities related to release of order to avoid a possible container congestion and keep the vessels' turnaround time normal.

Ctg port deliveries slow amid lockdown

Timely and fastest deliveries will help loading and unloading of containers to and from the vessels smooth, it said. Syed Nazrul Islam, newly elected first vice

president of the BGMEA, told The Daily Star that the deliveries from the port remained slow as the work schedules have been reduced in all related offices due to the lockdown and Ramadan.

Overall work usually slows in the early week of Ramadan but this time both office hours and manpower have been reduced for the Covid lockdown, he said.

Office hours and manpower in all the related offices like that of shipping agents, banks, customs house and others have been reduced

consignments from the port, he informed.

But all the stakeholders including the port authority are giving much effort to bring pace, he said. CPA Secretary Md Omar Faruk said experience from last year's severe congestion prompted them to take different preventive measures from the very beginning to expedite daily deliveries and as a result the overall occupancy at the port was still tolerable.

Sources said the port authority also sent a proposal to the shipping ministry to pursue the National Board of Revenue (NBR) to take step for taking all types of import containers to the private ICDs for delivery from there for an interim period.

Faruk said the ministry had sent a recommendation to the NBR in this regard.

Litchi growers fear record low yield this year

Unfavourable climate to blame



Litchi growers suffered massive losses last year when the government imposed a countrywide lockdown to curb the spread of coronavirus.

KONGKON KARMAKER, Dinajpun

Litchi growers in Dinajpur fear a record low production this year because of unfavourable climate, absence of bees and high temperature during the last winter

Horticulture experts in the district said the consumers will have to spend high to taste the mouth-watering fruit

Many varieties of litchis are produced in Dinajpur. Among them, Madrazi, Bombai, China-1, 2 and 3, and Bedana are the most popular ones, which are grown in Mashimpur, Madhabbati, Moheshpur, Korola, Robipur, Birganj, Chirirbandar and Khansama villages.

Litchi was cultivated on 5,390 hectares this year, slightly higher than last year's

5,293 hectares.

But the growers have set a much lower production target of 45,000 tonnes, down from 54,164 tonnes last year.

There are around 4,000 commercial orchards in 13 upazilas inside the district. Around 20,000 litchi trees died for excessive rainfall last year, according to farmers in the district.

Only 70 per cent of the litchi trees of the existing 4,000 orchards flowered in the last flowering season, which is quite unexpected and frustrating, said Rafiqul Islam, a litchi farmer of Madhabbati.

"Of the 70 per cent, 40 per cent of the flowers died due to bad climate. The growers are now pinning their hopes on the rest 30 per cent and fearing to count heavy

READ MORE ON B2

Lack of access to finance big barrier to farm mechanisation

Says Subrata Ranjan Das, executive director of ACI Motors

Access to finance is a big challenge for farm mechanisation in Bangladesh and so the country's lenders should do more for the agriculture sector, according to Subrata Ranjan Das, executive director of ACI Motors.

ACI Motors began its journey in 2007 with a tractor business but has since included 15 more products to its portfolio, most of which deals with farm mechanisation.

The government provides farmers subsidies of up to 40-50 per cent on the price of a machine while the rest needs to be paid by the buyer.

But since agro-machinery is quite expensive, it is tough for them to arrange the fund, Das said in an interview with The Daily Star last

avail the government subsidy, banks could help expedite farm mechanisation by providing loans.

Some agro-machinery producers supply their products on credit. However, they cannot meet the needs of every single farm.

ACI Motors' revolving loan portfolio currently stands at about Γk 500 crore, shows the company

"We are satisfied with our loan repayment but it is tough to give much more as a mechanisation company. Banks could do that though," Das said.

"If the government makes mechanisation loan a top priority agricultural loan, then banks will be prompt to provide the funds and mechanisation would be faster," he

Farm mechanisation is a national service as farmers do not work to feed only themselves but the entire nation. "But still, no banks is giving

loans for farm mechanisation," Das

Regarding the advantages of elsewhere," Das said.



And since not all farmers can mechanisation, the executive director said if a farmer uses a harvester, crop wastage goes down to less than one per cent while it was around 12 per cent in the manual harvesting system.

If farmers use transplanters, yields increase by 20 per cent to 30 per cent as it increases efficiency, allowing the delicate process to be carried out at least 15 day earlier than it would have been done by hand.

So, mechanisation in harvesting and transplanting could give the same output of current times albeit using at least 20 per cent less land.

This helps save water, fertiliser, and pesticides, he said, adding that the best benefit was that the land unused can be repurposed for other

However, the country was lagging behind in farm mechanisation due to a lack of affordable solutions.

that a country like Bangladesh was unlikely to face a labour crisis.

"However, farming is a very tough job so people don't enter the

As a producer of agro-machinery, ACI Motors learned early on the

importance of farm mechanisation. "We realised in 2007 that mechanisation would be a crying need for the sector due to a labour shortage that many people didn't even consider," he added.

With this backdrop, the government initiated a project for farm mechanisation worth Tk 3,020 crore last year.

Of the amount, around Tk 2,200 crore was allotted as subsidy for agro-machinery purchases.

"But I recommend launching a financing project so that farmers can afford their share of the machine's cost," Das said.

"I think if the farm mechanisation project is implemented properly, then our harvesting mechanisation would be fully covered," he added.

Responding to a question A previous common belief was regarding the current standard of agro-machinery available in the country, he said that ACI maintains global standards.

"If you want to mechanise industry if they find employment farming, you have to choose highstandard machinery and so we

brought the top Japanese brand, Yanmar, to Bangladesh," he said.

When Yanmar was first made available in the country, its competitors also rushed in.

"So, ACI is playing a big role in the country's farm mechanisation, he said.

Around one-third Bangladesh's farmland is being cultivated with the ACI's machines.

"We have the biggest after-sales service in the country. We also monitor customer feedback in order to help ensure high yields for

farmers," Das said. The ACI ensures delivery of quality products, which helps buyers secure bank loans when making a purchase.

The company has a clear vision to help the country on its farm mechanisation journey, so it focuses on maintaining standards while also making the machines

affordable. "Our teamwork and good marketing effort gives confidence to farmers. When you have some happy customers, they contribute towards marketing," he said.

This is because when a newcomer intends to buy a machine, he will ask other people in the trade about brands which give a better performance.

"It is then that our users give the best feedback, which is the best marketing policy," he added. Responding to a question about a

new product, the executive director said the ACI has already brought in maize harvesting machines, which were now under trial. "Apart from this, we are

launching potato harvesters, drier and vegetable mechanisation," he In the agricultural mechanisation

segment, the ACI is the market leader in tractor sales. "We sell around 3,500 tractors every year while total sales in the

country are about 4,500," he said. READ MORE ON B2

GLOBAL BUSINESS

US banks deploy AI to monitor customers, workers amid tech backlash

REUTERS

Several US banks have started deploying camera software that can analyze customer preferences, monitor workers and spot people sleeping near ATMs, even as they remain wary about possible backlash over increased surveillance, more than a dozen banking and technology sources told Reuters.

Previously unreported trials at City National Bank of Florida and JPMorgan Chase & Co as well as earlier rollouts at banks such as Wells Fargo & Co offer a rare view into the potential US financial institutions see in facial recognition and related artificial intelligence systems.

Widespread deployment of such visual AI tools in the heavily regulated banking sector would be a significant step toward their becoming mainstream in corporate America

Bobby Dominguez, chief information security officer at City National, said smartphones that unlock via a face scan have paved the way.

recognition on mobile," he said. shut a nationwide face recognition

"Why not leverage it in the real

City National will begin facial recognition trials early next year to identify customers at teller machines and employees branches, aiming replace clunky and less secure authentication measures at its 31 sites, Dominguez said. Eventually, the software could spot people on government watch lists, he said.

JPMorgan said it is "conducting a small test of video analytic technology with a handful of branches in Ohio." Wells Fargo said it works to prevent fraud but declined to discuss how.

Civil liberties issues loom large. Critics point to arrests of innocent individuals following faulty facial matches, disproportionate use of the systems to monitor lower-income and non-white communities, and the loss of privacy inherent in ubiquitous surveillance.

Portland, Oregon, as of Jan. 1 banned businesses from using facial recognition "in places of public accommodation," and "We're already leveraging facial drugstore chain Rite Aid Corp



Cameras are seen on the exterior of a Chase Bank branch in New York City US.

and other bank executives said their deployments are sensitive to the issues.

"We're never going to compromise our clients' privacy," Dominguez said. "We're getting off to an early start on technology already used in other parts of the world and that is rapidly coming to the American banking network."

Still, the big question among

program last year. Dominguez banks, said Fredrik Nilsson, vice president of the Americas at Axis Communications, a top maker of surveillance cameras, is "what will be the potential backlash from the

public if we roll this out?"

Walter Connors, information officer at Brannen Bank, said the Florida company had discussed but not adopted the technology for its 12 locations. "Anybody walking into a branch

expects to be recorded," Connors said. "But when you're talking about face recognition, that's a larger conversation." JPMorgan began assessing

the potential of computer vision in 2019 by using internally developed software to analyze archived footage from Chase branches in New York and Ohio, where one of its two Innovation Labs is located, said two people including former employee Neil Bhandar, who oversaw some of the effort at the time.

Chase aims to gather data to better schedule staff and design branches, three people said and the bank confirmed. Bhandar said some staff even went to one of Amazon.com Inc's cashier-less convenience stores to learn about its computer vision system.

Preliminary analysis by Bhandar of branch footage revealed more men would visit before or after lunch, while women tended to arrive mid-afternoon. Bhandar said he also wanted to analyze whether women avoided compact spaces in ATM lobbies because they might bump into someone, but the pandemic halted the plan.

In Brief

Investor group calls for banks to set tougher climate targets

REUTERS, London

A group of investors managing \$11 trillion in assets has called on banks to set tougher emissions targets ahead of a meeting of world leaders aimed at accelerating efforts to fight climate change.

The group, which includes Pimco, the world's biggest bond investor, and Britain's biggest asset manager, Legal & General Investment Management, said they wanted lenders to set 'enhanced' pledges to decarbonise their lending books. While a number of the world's biggest banks have already said they have an 'ambition' to reach net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050, many have yet to specify how they plan to do so and continue to fund heavy emitting activities.

"The problem we face today is that too many banks are failing to consider climate harm when they make financing decisions, and too much money is being ploughed into carbon-intensive activities that we so desperately need to move away from," said Natasha Landell-Mills, Head of Stewardship at Sarasin & Partners.

As the United States gears up to host the April 22-23 Leaders Summit on Climate, the investor group said it wanted banks to speed up their efforts, including by setting interim targets to get to net-zero emissions by mid-century or sooner. Bank remuneration committees should also ensure that variable pay is tied to hitting the targets, they added, while material climate risks should be included in the lenders' published accounts.

Microsoft to invest \$1b in Malaysia to set up data centres

REUTERS

Microsoft Corporation will invest \$1 billion over the next five years in Malaysia as part of a new partnership programme with government agencies and local companies, the Southeast Asian nation's prime minister said on Monday.

The announcement on what would be the U.S. tech giant's biggest investment in Malaysia comes after the country in February gave conditional approvals for Microsoft, Google, Amazon and state telecoms firm Telekom Malaysia to build and manage hyper-scale data centres and provide cloud services.

It also comes after the country saw foreign direct investments (FDI) plunge by 68 per cent last year, the biggest decline in Southeast Asia.

Malaysia has defended itself as an investment destination, with the finance minister recently saying it was looking at incentives to help attract more FDI. read more It has said the investments from these cloud service

providers will total between 12 billion ringgit and 15 billion ringgit (\$2.91 billion-\$3.64 billion) over the next five years. As part of the Bersama Malaysia initiative, Microsoft

will establish its first "datacentre region", which consists of multiple data centres, in Malaysia to manage data from various countries, Prime Minister Muhyiddin Yassin told an event marking the launch of the programme.

China plans to raise minimum renewable power purchase to 40pc

China will force regional grid firms to buy at least 40 per cent of power from non-fossil fuel sources by 2030 in order targets, according to a new governmentdocument seen by

Grid companies will steadily increase the amount of power purchased from clean generation sources from 28.2 per cent in 2020 to 40 per cent by 2030, according to a draft policy from the National Energy Administration (NEA), verified by a person with direct stakeholders until Feb. 26. knowledge of the matter.

share of non-fossil fuels in in recent years. primary energy consumption to around 25 per cent by 2030 from China will boost its installed a previous commitment of 20 per cent. read more

"To ensure President Xi's to meet the country's climate climate targets...(China) will set more stringent targets for nonfossil fuel consumption," the NEA document said.

Power procured from nonhydropower renewable sources will reach a minimum of 25.9 per cent by 2030, up from 10.8 per cent last year, according to the draft plan, which has been opened up for consultation with

The targets suggest China will President Xi Jinping pledged rely on solar and wind to meet its last year to make China "carbon renewable goals, and move away neutral" by 2060, and said in from the construction boom of

In December, Xi also said that

to more than 1,200 gigawatts (GW) by 2030.

The targets set out in the capacity of wind and solar power NEA document are based on

Employees row a boat as they examine solar panel boards at a pond December it would boost the large-scale hydroelectric projects in Lianyungang, Jiangsu Province, China. REUTERS/FILE

estimates that China's total power consumption will reach 11 trillion kilowatt-hours and primary energy consumption will hit 6 billion tonnes of standard coal equivalent by 2030, according to the policy draft.

The NEA did not immediately respond to Reuters' request for

China's renewable energy law

compels local grid firms to "fully acquire" all power generated by renewable sources. But grids have been accused of prioritising coal-fired power, and

inadequate transmission capacity has also hindered the uptake of renewables. China built 38.4 gigawatts (GW) of new coal-fired power capacity in 2020, more than three

times the rest of the world.