

STOCKS		COMMODITIES		ASIAN MARKETS				CURRENCIES				
DSEX	CSCX	Gold	Oil	MUMBAI	TOKYO	SINGAPORE	SHANGHAI	USD	EUR	GBP	CNY	
▼ 0.18%	▼ 0.18%	\$1,871.59	\$69.90	▲ 1.24%	▲ 2.09%	▲ 2.04%	▲ 0.32%	83.95	101.07	118.09	12.82	
5,829.23	10,183.02	(per ounce)	(per barrel)	50,193.33	28,406.84	3,142.63	3,529.01	BUY TK	84.95	104.87	121.89	13.48



Star BUSINESS

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Crises in India, Myanmar diverting export orders to Bangladesh

REFAJET ULLAH MIRDHA

Myanmar's deepening political crisis and India's grave coronavirus situation are prompting international retailers and brands to divert work orders to Bangladesh because of its stability and milder-than-expected impacts of the second wave of the infections.

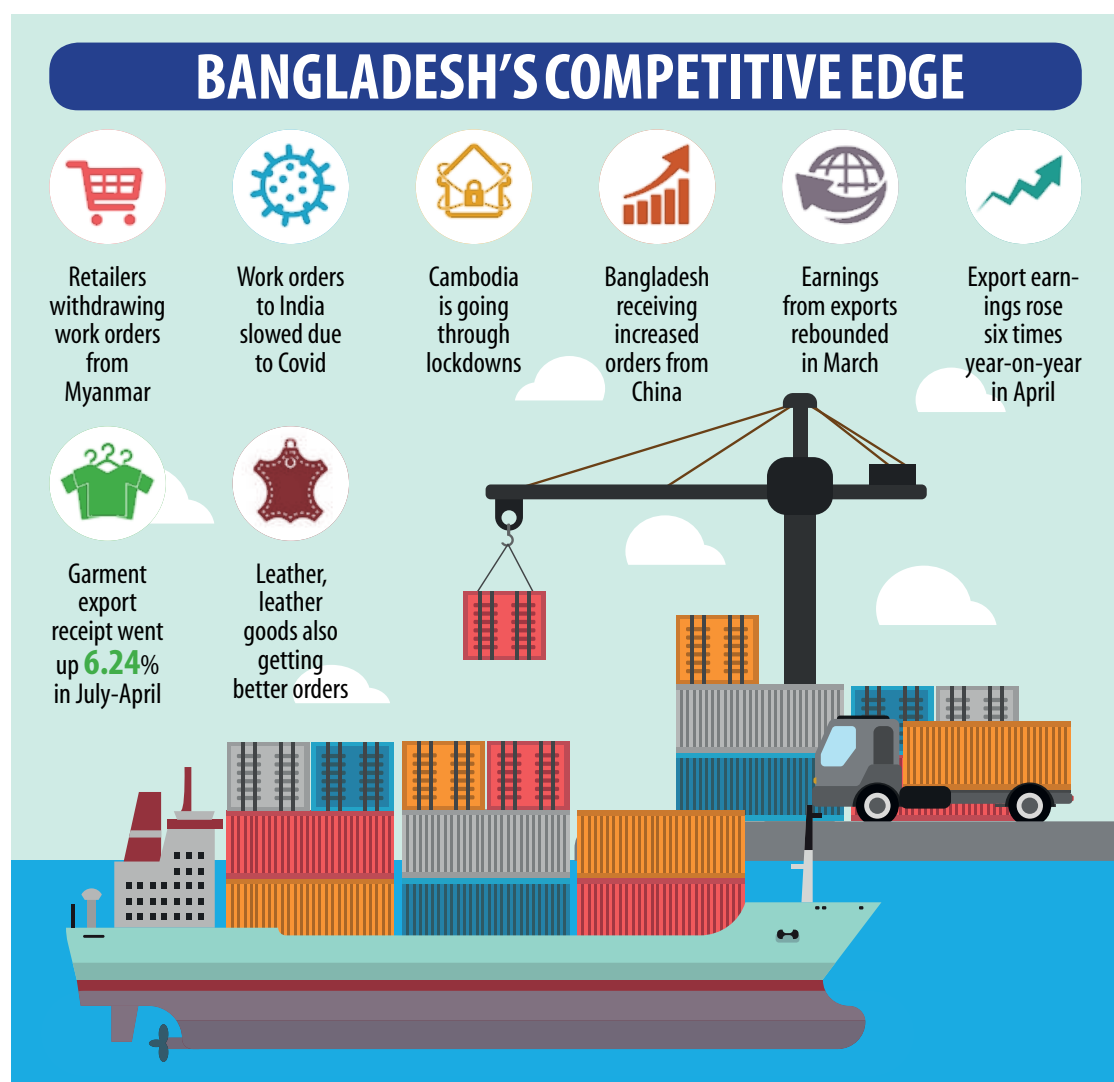
After a record spike in Covid-19 caseloads and deaths linked to the virus in recent months, Bangladesh is now witnessing a relatively calm situation than many other countries in the region, including India, thanks to the nationwide partial transport lockdown.

And due to political stability, the country has turned into a safer place for international retailers and brands to produce goods at cheaper rates, keeping the global supply chain unaffected.

Mass protests have been taking place across Myanmar since the military seized control on February 1. Elected leader Aung San Suu Kyi and members of her National League for Democracy party are among those detained. Hundreds of people, including children, have been killed, reports the BBC.

In India, a devastating second Covid-19 wave has overwhelmed the country's hospitals and crematoriums, and there have been widespread shortages of oxygen and medicines.

India's total tally of coronavirus cases now stands at 25.23 million, health ministry data showed, following 263,533 new infections over the past 24 hours, while fatalities rose by a record 4,329.



The official total death toll is now 278,719, Reuters reported yesterday. One indication of work orders shifting from the neighbouring countries has become apparent in export earnings of Bangladesh

between July and April of the current fiscal year. Receipts from merchandise exports rebounded in March, rising 12.59 per cent year-on-year to \$3.07 billion. This was also mainly

on the back of relaxed lockdowns in the West, leading to a slow recovery in garment shipments over the preceding few months. The recovery of export continued in April, with earnings

from merchandise shipment logging a significant rebound.

Export earnings rose six times year-on-year to hit \$3.13 billion in April this year, thanks to the rebound of apparel shipment after the reopening of the US and European economies.

In the 10 months to April this fiscal year, garment shipment increased by 6.24 per cent year-on-year to \$26 billion, showing resilience against the Covid-19 pandemic.

Of the total earnings from the garment sector, \$13.99 billion came from the export of knitwear items, which registered a 15.34 per cent year-on-year growth. Earnings from woven shipment fell 2.71 per cent to \$12 billion.

"It is true that work orders are shifting to Bangladesh from Myanmar," said a European buyer in Bangladesh, asking not to be named.

His company does not want to continue business in a country governed by a military dictator, so for the political tension and on humanitarian grounds, it was relocating orders to other countries and would continue doing so in the long run.

He could not state the exact percentage of work orders that had shifted in favour of Bangladesh. However, he said Bangladesh was receiving a major share of such contracts.

Speaking about India, the buyer said the diversion of orders to Bangladesh had been a temporary measure in response to the Covid-19 fallout as India was a major sourcing hub for his company.

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ADP gets 14pc bigger

REJAUJ KARIM BYRON and DWAIPAYAN BARUA

It may take four to 12 years to complete 1,426 ongoing development projects because of slow implementation and meagre allocation, highlighting the need for the government to prioritise works and accelerate execution to avoid cost and time overruns.

The grim scenario was painted in a presentation of the planning ministry at a meeting of the National Economic Council (NEC) yesterday.

The meeting approved a Tk 225,324 crore annual development programme (ADP) for the next fiscal year of 2021-22, which is up 14 per cent from the revised budget in the outgoing fiscal year.

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Top 10 projects with highest allocation

Fiscal year: 2021-22
SOURCE: PLANNING MINISTRY

PROJECTS	SIZE (IN CRORE TAKA)
Rooppur nuclear power plant	18,426
Matarbari coal-fired power project	6,160
Fourth primary education development project	5,050
Metro rail	4,800
Padma bridge rail link	3,820
Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib railway bridge	3,580
Padma bridge	3,500
Dhaka-Ashulia elevated expressway	3,230
Expansion of power system network under DPDC	3,050
Expansion of Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport	2,830

Traders breathe a sigh of relief for better Eid sales

SUKANTA HALDER and MD ABU TALHA SARKER

Brisk business during the just concluded Eid shopping season helped traders breathe a sigh of relief amid the ongoing nationwide lockdown and other measures in place to curb the spread of Covid-19.

Following requests from various economists and trade bodies, the government relaxed its hardline stance on public restrictions, allowing traders to reopen their stores 15 days ahead of Eid-ul-Fitr, the biggest religious festival in Bangladesh.

All types of businesses enjoyed

good customer turnout during this period, which came as a much-needed respite following a year of poor sales due to the advent of Covid-19 in March last year.

Traders had bet big on this year's Pahela Baishakh and Eid celebrations after watching their business evaporate last year, when the government imposed lengthy lockdowns to control the spiralling coronavirus situation.

This year too, Covid-19 laid waste to Pahela Baishakh sales and so Eid became their last resort.

Sales for Aarong, which has 21 outlets across the country, reached 70 per cent of its pre-pandemic levels

during the lead up to Eid this year.

Mohammad Ashraf Alam, chief operating officer of the lifestyle brand, said they are grateful to the government for acting for the betterment of businesses by relaxing the restrictions.

"Had the second wave of Covid-19 not taken place, business would have been even better," he added.

However, the positive thing is that people turned up to shop even amid the current crisis.

"So, every business benefitted more or less," added Alam, who had urged the government to allow stores to remain open for extended hours ahead of Eid in order to log adequate sales.

The Daily Star talked to Alam and officials of some other renowned brands and outlets before and after Eid to get a better idea about their sales.

According to Raihan Kabir, head of marketing at Yellow, the fashion brand operated by Beximco, saw better business than expected within the short span of time.

"Yellow's online sales have increased greatly and many of our products even ran out of stock," he said, adding that their new outlet in Khulna registered sales equal to those in Dhaka.

When customer turnout started to slowly increase in the 15-day lead-up, Kabir had attributed the increased sales to brand value and a loyal customer base.



Shoppers coming out of a shopping mall in the capital. The photo was taken before Eid-ul-Fitr. AMRAN HOSSAIN

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Stocks break 8-day gaining streak

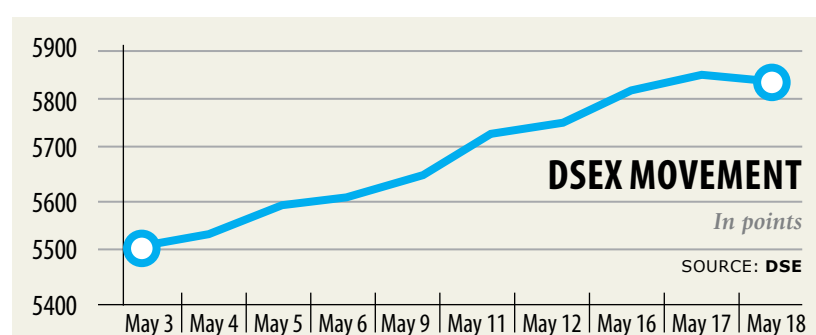
STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Stocks dropped yesterday after rising for eight consecutive days thanks to a profit booking tendency among investors.

The DSEX, the benchmark index of Dhaka Stock Exchange (DSE), fell 10 points, or 0.18 per cent, to stand at 5,829.

As the market was on a rising trend the last couple of days, most stocks were up by at least 8 per cent to 15 per cent, so investors are taking in their profits now, said a stock broker.

This is a positive thing because when investors make profit, they get the confidence to invest more,



he said, adding that the market's turnover was rising, which meant that investors' participation was still strong.

The premier bourse's turnover, an important indicator of the stock market, rose 12 per cent to Tk 1,719 crore.

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