

STOCKS		COMMODITIES		ASIAN MARKETS				CURRENCIES			
DSEX	CSCX	Gold	Oil	MUMBAI	TOKYO	SINGAPORE	SHANGHAI	USD	EUR	GBP	CNY
▲ 0.79%	▲ 0.65%	\$1,894.27	\$71.69	▼ 0.10%	▼ 0.19%	▼ 0.27%	▼ 0.54%	BUY TK 83.95	101.18	117.98	12.90
6,023.15	10,504.57	(per ounce)	(per barrel)	52,275.57	28,963.56	3,167.14	3,580.11	SELL TK 84.95	104.98	121.78	13.57



Star BUSINESS

DHAKA WEDNESDAY JUNE 9, 2021, JAISHTHA 26, 1428 BS • starbusiness@thedailystar.net

549 BSCIC plots left unused BB buys record \$7.7b to keep taka stable

Owners fail to set up factories within deadline

SUKANTA HALDER

A total of 549 plots in various industrial estates of the Bangladesh Small and Cottage Industries Corporation (BSCIC) are lying unused as the owners did not set up plants within the deadline.

The non-use of the plots is depriving the government of revenue, people of job opportunities, and the real small and medium enterprises (SMEs) of serviced land.

The information came up in a report of the BSCIC for the period up to April of fiscal year 2020-21.

According to rules, a factory must be built within 18 months after securing the allotment of a plot. But many leases have not set up factories as per their plans within the stipulated time, said an official of the

BSCIC: AT A GLANCE

- 10,922 plots in 76 industrial estates
- 10,379 plots allotted
- 549 plots remain unused
- Highest unused plots in Barishal at 48
- 4,570 factories are in production
- Jobs created for 67 lakh people
- Tk 63,318 cr invested



The partial view of an industrial estate of BSCIC in Kawnia, Barishal. The photo was taken yesterday.

TITU DAS

BSCIC. In 1960, the agency was set up to develop industrial plots equipped with utility connections and better transport connectivity for SMEs to spur industrialisation.

Today, there are 10,922 plots in 76 industrial estates of the BSCIC across the country. Of them, 10,379 plots have been distributed so far. Currently, 4,570 factories are in production and 901 are export-

oriented. The highest number of unused plots is located in the Barisal industrial estate at 48. The Bhola estate came second with 32 vacant plots.

Twenty-nine plots are not in use in Shariatpur, 28 in Rangamati, 27 in Noakhali, 22 in Netrokona, 20 in Meherpur, and 32 in the leather estate in Savar.

READ MORE ON B3

AKM ZAMIR UDDIN

The central bank purchased \$7.68 billion from the banking system in the first 11 months of the current fiscal year, the highest on record, to contain any abnormal appreciation of the local currency.

The previous highest was posted in 2013-14 when Bangladesh Bank bought \$5.15 billion.

The regulator was forced to smash the previous record between July and May because of a higher flow of remittance

and lower imports caused by the business slowdown amid the coronavirus pandemic.

The central bank needs to continue the intervention until the economy recovers from the slowdown, analysts and businesspeople say.

The US dollar purchase is helping the export sector as local products become cheaper in foreign markets. It is also swelling the foreign exchange reserves. But it has flooded the financial sector with excess liquidity.

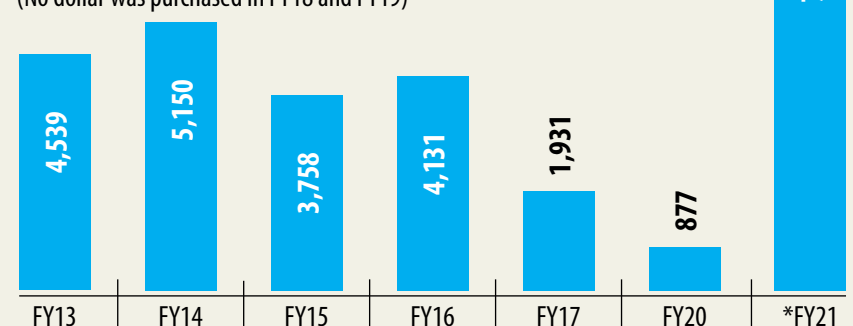
READ MORE ON B3

DOLLAR PURCHASED BY BB

In millions of \$

*Till May

(No dollar was purchased in FY18 and FY19)



SOURCE: BB



Businesses demand reforms in tax system

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Chattogram

Business leaders in Chattogram have stressed the need for reforms in the tax system, such as policies that do not require frequent changes, as well as waiving advance tax in order to boost both domestic and foreign investment in Bangladesh.

They made these comments while addressing a post-budget dialogue held virtually by the Chattogram Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCCI) yesterday.

CCCI President Mahbulul Alam moderated the dialogue, which featured the leaders of various business associations as panel discussants.

Sheikh Fazle Fahim, president of the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI), hailed the government for reducing corporate tax, providing waivers on value added tax (VAT) and a tax holiday in the proposed budget for fiscal 2021-22.



But considering that all businesses have been hurt by the ongoing coronavirus pandemic, Fahim demanded the complete withdrawal of advance income tax (AIT) and advance trade VAT (ATV), which he claimed increases the cost of business while bringing little to no benefit for the government.

"If the AIT is returnable then why should the government even take it," he said, adding that it is difficult to get the AIT back from the National Board of Revenue (NBR) once paid.

CCCI President Alam emphasised on the need to widen the tax net while reducing the tax rate on existing taxpayers.

READ MORE ON B3

Exporters may lose \$18.7b a year if carbon goals not met

StanChart study finds

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Local suppliers are at risk of losing \$18.7 billion worth of exports a year if they can't reduce carbon emissions in line with the plans of their major clients, according to a study by Standard Chartered.

The study -- Carbon Dated -- looks at the risks and opportunities for suppliers in emerging and fast-growing markets as large corporates transition to net-zero emission.

It says MNCs expect to exclude 35 per cent of their current suppliers as they transition away from carbon.

Supply chain emissions account for an average of 73 per cent of MNCs' total emissions. So, 67 per cent of MNCs say tackling supply chains emissions is the first step in their net-zero transition, rather than focusing on their own carbon output, the study said.

Suppliers in 12 key emerging and fast-growing markets can share in \$1.6 trillion worth of business if they can remain part of the MNC supply chains, said a press release of Standard Chartered Bangladesh, citing the study.

READ MORE ON B3



Telcos seek corporate tax cuts

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Telecom operators yesterday placed a slew of demands before the government, including slashing corporate tax from 40 per cent and 45 per cent to 25 per cent and 32.5 per cent for listed and non-listed entities respectively.

"Corporate tax for mobile operators is too high which needs to be brought down to a rational level," said SM Farhad, secretary general of the Association of Mobile Telecom Operators of Bangladesh (AmtoB), at a post-budget press conference. "Mobile network operators are suffocating due to high taxation. Without rationalisation of taxation, this sector will not be able to contribute to its full potential," he added.

According to the AmtoB, corporate tax is 29 per cent in Pakistan, 28 per cent in Sri Lanka, 30 per cent in Nepal, 25 per cent in Myanmar.

The operators' also demanded withdrawal or rationalisation of the minimum 2 per cent turnover tax imposed on unprofitable carriers and withdrawal of

supplementary duty and surcharge from direct operator billing.

They sought amortisation facilities on all intangible assets and abolishment of a Tk 200 tax on mobile SIM purchases.

They also want the government to reduce the existing 33.25 per cent and 21.75 per cent VAT, SD, and surcharge over Tk 100 talk time and Tk 100 internet usage respectively to a reasonable level.



"While mobile market revenue accounted for 1.1 per cent of the country's GDP in 2019, the sector's tax and fee payments accounted for around 4.4 per cent of total government tax revenue," said Farhad.

"This means that the mobile tax contribution is 4.2 times its size in the economy," he said.

READ MORE ON B3

MFS transactions hit all-time high

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Transactions through mobile financial services hit an all-time high of Tk 63,479 crore in April as both individuals and businesses used the digital channel to transfer funds for celebrations of Eid-ul-Fitr and Pehela Baishakh.

The previous highest was recorded in July last year when people settled transactions worth Tk 62,999 crore, showed data from Bangladesh Bank.

April's figures are 6.4 per cent higher than that a month earlier and 11.9 per cent higher than that recorded in the same month a year ago.

The latest record has given an indication that people from all walks of life are increasingly embracing the MFS platform, said Kamal Quadir, chief executive officer of bKash, the country's largest MFS provider in terms of transaction and number of accounts.

There were two festivals in April, which have had a great impact on creating the record, he said.



Many businesses, including readymade garment industries, provided salaries and festival bonuses through the MFS channel.

On top of that, people now spend a large amount of money to celebrate Pehela Baishakh, the first day of a

Bangla new year, which happened in April.

Although Eid-ul-Fitr, the largest religious festival for Muslims, was celebrated in May, many people completed their shopping in April.

READ MORE ON B3

Non-food inflation at 11-month peak

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Consumers had to spend more to buy products and services other than food in May compared to April owing to the increasing prices of non-food items.

Data from the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS) showed that non-food price inflation rose to 5.86 per cent, the highest in 11 months, in May.

In April, non-food price inflation was 5.55 per cent.

Non-food price inflation has been rising gradually since February 2021 after touching 4.69 per cent in January, the lowest in nearly two-and-a-half years.

Despite the spike, consumers felt less pressure on their wallets in May than April because of a decline in food price inflation.

Food inflation dipped 4.87 per

cent in May from 5.57 per cent the previous month.

Overall inflation dropped to 5.26 per cent in May from 5.56 per cent, the BBS data shows.

"It is good news," said Planning Minister MA Mannan at a briefing yesterday after a meeting of the National Economic Council.

The decline in food inflation will ease pressure on the poor and low income people, he added.

DHAKA STOCK EXCHANGE LIMITED

DSE Tower, House No. 46 (level 3), Road No. 21, Nikunja, Dhaka-1229
PABX: +88-02-41040189-200, Fax: +88-02-41040096, 41040097

Appointment of MANAGING DIRECTOR

Dhaka Stock Exchange Limited (DSE), established in 1954, is the leading Stock Exchange of the country having automated trading system that helps people make their investment decisions easier and lives better. DSE is a self-regulated and private sector entity under regulatory framework of Bangladesh Securities and Exchange Commission (BSEC).

DSE is searching for the position of the Managing Director with proven leadership skills, experience on capital market products and technology, as well as a robust track record of success and achievements. The incumbent will be responsible to the DSE Board of Directors for overall Management.

Compensation Package: Attractive compensation package will be offered to the really deserving candidate.

Instruction: The appointment will be contractual basis and a term of contract will not be exceeding 3 years, which may be renewed for another term.

For details including Academic Qualification, Professional Experience and Roles/Responsibilities, please visit DSE Website or web-link: <http://www.dsebd.org/MD/career.php>

Candidates having required qualification, experience and competency are requested to forward an application with full resume along with two passport size photographs by **June 20, 2021** to the **Head of HR** of Dhaka Stock Exchange Limited, DSE Tower, House No. 46 (level 3), Road No. 21, Nikunja, Dhaka-1229.

Please mark the envelope as **"Application for the position of Managing Director"**. The recruitment of MD of DSE will be guided by the Regulation 10 of Dhaka Stock Exchange (Board and Administration) Regulations, 2013.

www.dsebd.org



Islami Bank Bangladesh Chairman Prof Md Nazmul Hassan presided over a virtual meeting of the Board of Directors recently. Vice chairmen Yousif Abdullah Al-Rajhi and Md Shahabuddin, Managing Director and CEO Mohammed Monirul Molla, and Deputy Managing Director JQM Habibullah attended the meeting.



ACI Motors Managing Director FH Ansarey and Executive Director Subrata Ranjan Das launched ENI Lubricants for automotive and manufacturing sectors in Bangladesh at ACI Centre recently. Kushal Desai, chairman and managing director of lubricant manufacturer Apar Industries, and Paolo Puglisi, area manager (Asia Pacific), ENI, attended virtually.

Standard Chartered 'Best International Bank'

STAR BUSINESS DESK
Standard Chartered Bank Bangladesh said to have been recently recognised as "Best International Bank" at FinanceAsia Awards 2021. This is the 11th time the bank has been recognised since 2009 while the fifth major international award in the first quarter of 2021, says a press release.

"As the longest-serving financial institution of Bangladesh, we have a unique perspective on the amazing growth story of Bangladesh," said Naser Ezzaz Bijoy, chief executive officer, Standard Chartered Bangladesh.

"After a decade of stellar progress, this is the time for Bangladesh to embark on the next phase of its journey of progress and prosperity," he said. In 2020, the bank secured 25 major international awards.

Maddhapara Granite posts record sales

FROM PAGE B4
"Such technical problems exist all over and are common," he added. A former official of Petrobangla who served at a top position at Maddhapara Granite Mining Company said the performance of the GTC in the last two years was good.

Considering the performance, Maddhapara Granite Mining Company signed another one-year agreement with the GTC to keep production running.

Under the contract, the company extracted 1.1 million tonnes of rock and developed two stopes, which are a step like excavation underground.

The one-year contract of the GTC would come to an end on September 2 this year.

"We are likely to produce more rock against the given target during this one-year agreement," said Siddiqui, adding that if such a trend continued, the mine would turn profitable.

Pran widening global footprint

FROM PAGE B4
The company currently exports around 500 types of products, including juice and drinks, spices, biscuits and other confectionery items that account for nearly 70 per cent of its export basket.

Pran's brands even occupy the shelves in some chain stores such as Carrefour in Saudi Arabia and Oman, Poundland and 99p stores in the UK, and Reliance Fresh and City Mark in India.

"We are doing well in the frozen food market," said Chowdhury, adding that they plan to do better in spices as well.

But among all of its international destinations, India remains the biggest market for Pran, which began its journey in 1981 under the stewardship of Amjad Khan Chowdhury.

Today, PRAN-RFL Group has an annual turnover of around \$2 billion.

Pran's first shipment to Tripura, which consisted of a traditional snack called chanachur, went out in 1997.

But now, the company exports its products all over the neighbouring nation.

"Business is going very well in India, where

we have a presence in 25 states," he said.

The agro-processor's export basket consists of more than 150 products, including fruit drinks, chips, biscuits, candy, ketchup, noodles, jelly, and spices while its shipments to India have been increasing by around 10 per cent each year.

India accounts for nearly 35 per cent of the company's total exports.

Pran said it exports its products through 20 importers in India who handle the marketing through 2,000 sales agents throughout the country.

Among the Indian importers, one established factories in the country to locally produce Pran's food products.

So, Pran exports semi-processed raw materials to this importer and through this arrangement, the company's products are manufactured and marketed in India, according to PRAN-RFL Group.

The country's biggest agro-processor has a similar arrangement with an importer in Nepal to produce its products in the Himalayan country.

"The facility in Nepal is under development

and so, we will soon also work for the farmers in the country," said Chowdhury, who took the helm of PRAN-RFL Group after the demise of his father, the group's founder, in July 2015.

The group also has a strong presence in the plastic industry.

Today, it employs about 110,000 people directly.

"You can even get our yogurt drink at 7-Elevens in the Philippines," he added.

Pran recently entered the South American countries of Bolivia and Fiji.


"In today's world, the main barrier to export is not the market anymore. Exports depend on how much you produce," Chowdhury said.

He went on to say that when Pran first began exporting, it was heavily dependent on Bangladeshis living abroad.

Over the years though, it could reduce this dependence as it focused more on winning the hearts of locals.

"We will do better the more we do business in the non-ethnic market," Chowdhury added.

(Pallab Bhattacharya, our correspondent in New Delhi, contributed to the report)




Dhaka Power Distribution Co. Ltd.
ঢাকা পাওয়ার ডিস্ট্রিবিউশন কোম্পানি লিমিটেড (ডিপিডিসি)
(An Enterprise of the Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh)
বিদ্যুৎ ভবন (৩য় তলা), ১ আব্দুল গণি রোড, ঢাকা-১০০০।
Web site : www.dpdc.gov.bd



Invitation for International Bids

1.	Ministry/Division	Ministry of Power, Energy & Mineral Resources/ Power Division
2.	Agency	Dhaka Power Distribution Company Limited (DPDC)
3.	Procurement Entity Name	Project Director "Construction and Augmentation of Substation, Installation of Capacitor Bank and Introduction of Smart Grid in Power System under DPDC Area (CSCSG Project)."
4.	Invitation for Bids for (Package-1: Lot-1)	Design, Supply, Installation, Testing and Commissioning of 02(Two) New 132/33 kV, 80/120 MVA and 33/11 kV, 28/35 MVA GIS Substation at Mohammadi Steel and Shyampur including civil works with source cable on Turnkey basis
5.	Invitation for Bids (IFB) No	87.139.103.00.00.2021.38 Date: 06.06.2021
6.	Loan Agreement No	CBD 1023 01 T
7.	Reference Identification No & Date	87.402.105.00.00.182.2017.920 (139) Date: 06/06/2021
8.	Procurement Method	Bidding will be conducted through procedures in accordance with the applicable Guidelines for Procurement under AFD Loans, and is open to all Bidders from eligible source countries, as defined in the Loan Agreement. International Competitive Bidding will be conducted in accordance with AFDs Single-Stage Two Envelope Method.
9.	Budget and Source of Funds	AGENCE FRANCAISE DE DEVELOPPEMENT (AFD) and Government of Bangladesh (GoB)
10.	Deadline for submission of Bid, Time and Place	Date: September 06, 2021, Time: 11 : 00 AM (Bangladesh Standard Time) Address: Biddut Bhaban (3 rd Floor), Office of the Superintending Engineer (Contract & Procurement Circle, DPDC), 1-Abdul Gani Road, Dhaka, Bangladesh Email: cscsg@dpdc.org.bd; Mobile: +8801730335207; +8801730335268
11.	Bid Opening Date, Time and Place	Bids will be opened in the presence of Bidders' representatives [limited two members from each Bidder who submitted the bids and the bid security acceptable to representative of DPDC] at the following schedule: Date: September 06, 2021, Time: 12 : 30 PM (Bangladesh Standard Time) Address: Biddut Bhaban (3 rd Floor), Office of the Superintending Engineer (Contract & Procurement Circle, DPDC), 1-Abdul Gani Road, Dhaka, Bangladesh Email: cscsg@dpdc.org.bd; Mobile: +8801730335207; +8801730335268
12.	Project Background	The Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh has received a loan from AGENCE FRANCAISE DE DEVELOPPEMENT (AFD) towards the cost of "Construction and Augmentation of Substation, Installation of Capacitor Bank and Introduction of Smart Grid in Power System under DPDC Area (CSCSG Project)." It is intended that part of the proceeds of this loan will be applied to eligible payments under the Contract for the project named "Design, Supply, Installation, Testing and Commissioning of 02(Two) New 132/33 kV, 80/120 MVA and 33/11 kV, 28/35 MVA GIS Substation at Mohammadi Steel and Shyampur including civil works with source cable on Turnkey basis" with the objective of improving electric supply reliability and electric power supply and demand balance by constructing two 132/33 kV & 33/11 kV substation in the location of Mohammadi Steel and Shyampur under DPDC area. This project consists of the following main components: • Construction of two new 132/33 kV & 33/11 kV substation building and related civil works; • Installation of electrical equipment for those two Substation; • 132 kV Bay extension on source substation for the Shyampur (pagla)-2 Substation, if applicable; • Construction of 132 kV Underground Transmission Line • Construction of 33 kV & 11 kV Distribution Line facilities in the Substation sites up to the feeder starting pole through the underground cable tunnel/Jacking pipe/Cable shaft;
13.	Other Details:	
14.	i)	A complete set of the Bidding Documents can be purchased by interested Bidders on the submission of a written application to the following address and upon payment of a non-refundable fee of Bangladeshi Taka 10,000.00 (Ten Thousand) in the form of Pay Order issued by the scheduled bank in Bangladesh in favor of Dhaka Power Distribution Company Limited: Address: Biddut Bhaban (3 rd Floor), Office of the Superintending Engineer (Contract & Procurement Circle), 1-Abdul Gani Road, Dhaka, Bangladesh; Email: cscsg@dpdc.org.bd; Mobile: +8801730335207; +8801730335268;
	ii)	The bidding document can be purchased after 03 (three) days of publishing Tender Notice (Invitation for Bids).
	iii)	The Bidding Documents shall not be sent through a courier for an additional fee even so requested.
	iv)	Invitation for Bids (Tender Notice) along with Project Information & General Scope are posted on DPDC website: www.dpdc.gov.bd and CPTU website: www.cptu.gov.bd and hard copy of the same are available from the office address above mentioned.
	v)	Interested eligible Bidders may obtain further information at the above mentioned address during the office hours (9:00 to 17:00 hours BST).
	vi)	DPDC reserves the right to accept/reject one or all Bids or stop the process of approval at any stage, at its sole discretion without assigning any reasons and shall bear no liability whatsoever consequent upon such a decision.
15.	Name of Official Inviting the Bids:	Md. Asaduzzaman
16.	Designation of Official Inviting the Bids:	Company Secretary, DPDC
17.	Address of Official Inviting the Bids:	Office of the Company Secretary, DPDC, Biddut Bhaban (2 nd Floor) 1 Abdul Gani Road, Dhaka-1000, Bangladesh. Email: cscsg@dpdc.org.bd; Mobile: +8801730335207; +8801730335268

Md. Asaduzzaman
Company Secretary, DPDC



Dhaka Power Distribution Co. Ltd.
ঢাকা পাওয়ার ডিস্ট্রিবিউশন কোম্পানি লিমিটেড (ডিপিডিসি)
(An Enterprise of the Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh)
বিদ্যুৎ ভবন (৩য় তলা), ১ আব্দুল গণি রোড, ঢাকা-১০০০।
Web site : www.dpdc.gov.bd



Invitation for International Bids

1.	Ministry/Division	Ministry of Power, Energy & Mineral Resources/ Power Division
2.	Agency	Dhaka Power Distribution Company Limited (DPDC)
3.	Procurement Entity Name	Project Director "Construction and Augmentation of Substation, Installation of Capacitor Bank and Introduction of Smart Grid in Power System under DPDC Area (CSCSG Project)."
4.	Invitation for Bids for (Package-1: Lot-2)	Design, Supply, Installation, Testing and Commissioning of 04 (four) New 33/11 kV, 28/35 MVA GIS Substation at Kamrangirchar, Kalyanpur, Madartek and Lalbag including civil works with source cable on Turnkey Basis.
5.	Invitation for Bids (IFB) No	87.139.103.00.00.2021.39 Date: 06.06.2021
6.	Loan Agreement No	CBD 1023 01 T
7.	Reference Identification No & Date	87.402.105.00.00.182.2017.921(139); Date: 06/06/2021
8.	Procurement Method	Bidding will be conducted through procedures in accordance with the applicable Guidelines for Procurement under AFD Loans, and is open to all Bidders from eligible source countries, as defined in the Loan Agreement. International Competitive Bidding will be conducted in accordance with AFDs Single-Stage Two Envelope Method.
9.	Budget and Source of Funds	AGENCE FRANCAISE DE DEVELOPPEMENT (AFD) and Government of Bangladesh (GoB)
10.	Deadline for submission of Bid, Time and Place	Date: August 16, 2021, Time: 11 : 00 AM (Bangladesh Standard Time) Address: Biddut Bhaban (3 rd Floor), Office of the Superintending Engineer (Contract & Procurement Circle, DPDC), 1-Abdul Gani Road, Dhaka, Bangladesh Email: cscsg@dpdc.org.bd; Mobile: +8801730335207; +8801730335268
11.	Bid Opening Date, Time and Place	Bids will be opened in the presence of Bidders' representatives [limited two members from each Bidder who submitted the bids and the bid security acceptable to representative of DPDC] at the following schedule: Date: August 16, 2021, Time: 12 : 30 PM (Bangladesh Standard Time) Address: Biddut Bhaban (3 rd Floor), Office of the Superintending Engineer (Contract & Procurement Circle, DPDC), 1-Abdul Gani Road, Dhaka, Bangladesh Email: cscsg@dpdc.org.bd; Mobile: +8801730335207; +8801730335268
12.	Project Background	The Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh has received a loan from AGENCE FRANCAISE DE DEVELOPPEMENT (AFD) towards the cost of "Construction and Augmentation of Substation, Installation of Capacitor Bank and Introduction of Smart Grid in Power System under DPDC Area (CSCSG Project)." It is intended that part of the proceeds of this loan will be applied to eligible payments under the Contract for the project named "Design, Supply, Installation, Testing and Commissioning of 04 (four) New 33/11 kV, 28/35 MVA GIS Substation at Kamrangirchar, Kalyanpur, Madartek and Lalbag including civil works with source cable on Turnkey Basis" with the objective of improving electric supply reliability and electric power supply and demand balance by constructing four 33/11 kV substation in the location of at Kamrangirchar, Kalyanpur, Madartek and Lalbag under DPDC area. This project consists of the following main components: • Construction of four new 33/11 kV substation building and related civil works; • Installation of electrical equipment for those two Substation; • Construction of 33 kV Underground Source Line • Construction of 11 kV Distribution Line facilities in the Substation sites up to the feeder starting pole through the underground cable tunnel/Jacking pipe/Cable shaft;
13.	Other Details:	
14.	i)	A complete set of the Bidding Documents can be purchased by interested Bidders on the submission of a written application to the following address and upon payment of a non-refundable fee of Bangladeshi Taka 10,000.00 (Ten Thousand) in the form of Pay Order issued by the scheduled bank in Bangladesh in favor of Dhaka Power Distribution Company Limited: Address: Biddut Bhaban (3 rd Floor), Office of the Superintending Engineer (Contract & Procurement Circle), 1-Abdul Gani Road, Dhaka, Bangladesh; Email: cscsg@dpdc.org.bd; Mobile: +8801730335207; +8801730335268;
	ii)	The bidding document can be purchased after 03 (three) days of publishing Tender Notice (Invitation for Bids).
	iii)	The Bidding Documents shall not be sent through a courier for an additional fee even so requested.
	iv)	Invitation for Bids (Tender Notice) along with Project Information & General Scope are posted on DPDC website: www.dpdc.gov.bd and CPTU website: www.cptu.gov.bd and hard copy of the same are available from the office address above mentioned.
	v)	Interested eligible Bidders may obtain further information at the above mentioned address during the office hours (9:00 to 17:00 hours BST).
	vi)	DPDC reserves the right to accept/reject one or all Bids or stop the process of approval at any stage, at its sole discretion without assigning any reasons and shall bear no liability whatsoever consequent upon such a decision.
15.	Name of Official Inviting the Bids:	Md. Asaduzzaman
16.	Designation of Official Inviting the Bids:	Company Secretary, DPDC
17.	Address of Official Inviting the Bids:	Office of the Company Secretary, DPDC, Biddut Bhaban (2 nd Floor) 1 Abdul Gani Road, Dhaka-1000, Bangladesh. Email: cscsg@dpdc.org.bd; Mobile: +8801730335207; +8801730335268

Md. Asaduzzaman
Company Secretary, DPDC

Japan upgrades Q1 GDP growth on smaller hit to domestic demand

REUTERS, Tokyo
Japan's economy shrank less than initially reported in the first quarter on smaller cuts to plant and equipment spending, but the coronavirus pandemic still dealt a huge blow to overall demand.

Separate data showed growth in bank lending slowed sharply in May, while real wages posted the biggest monthly jump in more than a decade in April, in signs that the world's third-largest economy was gradually overcoming last year's pandemic hit.

Among the mixed indicators are some reassuring signs for policymakers, who are worried Japan's recovery will lag major economies that have rolled out Covid-19 vaccines much quicker and are able to reopen faster.

The economy shrank by an annualised 3.9 per cent in January-March, not as bad as the preliminary reading of a 5.1 per cent contraction, but still posting the first fall in three quarters, Cabinet Office data showed Tuesday.

The reading, which beat economists' forecast for a 4.8 per cent decline, equals a real quarter-on-quarter contraction of 1.0 per cent from the prior quarter, versus a preliminary 1.3 per cent drop.

The revised gross domestic product (GDP) decline was mainly due to a smaller fall in public and capital spending, which both eased less than initially thought, offsetting a slightly larger fall in private consumption.

"Overall, capital spending and private consumption remained weak, which showed weakness in domestic demand," said Takeshi Minami, chief economist at Norinchukin Research Institute.

"The vaccine issue is the most important thing for the (economic) recovery," he said, adding that the vaccination rate would need to come to about 50 per cent to boost economic recovery prospects.

Capital spending shrank 1.2 per cent from the prior quarter, better than a preliminary 1.4 per cent decrease, and matching the median

forecast for a 1.2 per cent loss. Government consumption fell 1.1 per cent, a smaller drop than a preliminary 1.8 per cent decline.

Private consumption, which makes up more than half of gross domestic product, dropped 1.5 per cent from the previous three months, worse than the initial estimate of a 1.4 per cent drop. However, Economy Minister Yasutoshi Nishimura said spending could recover as consumers return to the streets.

"If infections subside, there'll be pent-up demand from not having been able to go eating out or travelling," Nishimura told reporters after the release of the data.

Net exports — or exports minus imports — subtracted 0.2 percentage point from growth, while the hit to domestic demand pulled it down by 0.8 percentage point, not as bad as a preliminary contribution of minus 1.1

percentage point.

The better-than-expected revision comes after household spending and exports jumped in April, though the gains were inflated largely by the comparison to last year's deep pandemic-driven plunge.

Total lending by Japan's banks grew 2.9 per cent in May from a year earlier, slowing at a record pace from a 4.8 per cent increase in April, Bank of Japan data showed on Tuesday.

Inflation-adjusted wages, a barometer of household purchasing power, rose 2.1 per cent in April on a year-on-year basis, the government said.

The bank lending slowdown was due largely to the base effect of a Covid-driven surge last year, while a drop in consumer prices and rebounds in overtime pay and compensation for part-time workers helped lift wages.



A shopper wearing a protective mask pushes a shopping cart at Japan's supermarket group Aeon's shopping mall as the mall reopens amid the coronavirus disease outbreak in Chiba, Japan on May 28, 2020.

Exporters may lose \$18.7b a year if carbon goals not met

FROM PAGE B1
Racing against the clock to hit the net-zero carbon goals, MNCs are piling pressure on their suppliers to become more sustainable, with companies based in emerging and fast-growing markets facing the biggest challenge.

Sixty-four per cent of MNCs believe emerging market suppliers would struggle more than their peers in the developed markets to meet the emission reduction targets. A further 57 per cent is prepared to replace emerging market suppliers with developed market suppliers to aid the transition.

MNCs are concerned that emerging-market suppliers are failing to keep pace with for two key reasons: insufficient knowledge and inadequate data.

Fifty-six per cent of MNCs say the lack of knowledge among the emerging market suppliers is a barrier to decarbonisation.

With MNCs struggling with the quality of data, two-thirds are using secondary sources for data to plug the gap left by supplier emissions surveys.

A further 46 per cent say unreliable data from suppliers is a barrier to reducing emissions.

In the press release, Bill Winters, group chief executive of Standard Chartered, said: "It's no surprise that as multinational companies transition to net-zero, they will have to ask their suppliers to evidence their own transitions."

However, suppliers, especially those in emerging and fast-growing markets, cannot do it alone. MNCs need to incentivise the suppliers to help them kick-start the transition journey, he said.

Governments and the financial sector have a role to play by creating the right infrastructure and offering the necessary funding, he said.

"We must work together to ensure the supply chain is decarbonised in a way that delivers shared prosperity across the world."

The study surveyed 400 sustainability and supply chain experts at MNCs across the globe.

MFS transactions hit all-time high

FROM PAGE B1
The government also provided cash assistance to the poor in the last week of April through the MFS channel, putting a positive impact on the MFS transactions, Quadir said.

Around 35 lakh people employed in the informal sector received Tk 2,500 each through the MFS channel from the government's social protection scheme.

The daily average transaction was up 10 per cent to Tk 2,116 crore in April compared

to March.

Abul Kashem Md Shirin, managing director of Dutch-Bangla Bank, said transactions through MFS would increase more in the days ahead as the government had recently taken steps to disburse funds of social safety net programmes through the MFS channel.

In April, the bank also enjoyed robust transactions through Rocket, which is the MFS brand name of the bank, he said.

Telcos seek corporate tax cuts BB buys record \$7.7b to keep taka stable

FROM PAGE B1
He said despite the expansion of mobile coverage, about half of Bangladesh's population (46 per cent unique-subscriber penetration) remains to be connected to the mobile network. Reforming mobile taxation is therefore key to accelerating digital inclusion, he said.

"According to the International Telecommunication Union, a 10 per cent increase in mobile broadband penetration would yield 2.43 per cent increase in GDP per capita in the developing countries. Therefore, the government can easily catalyse GDP growth by lowering the taxation structure," he said.

Taimur Rahman, chief corporate and regulatory affairs officer at Banglalink, said, "We are disappointed to see that our reasonable demand for a few revisions has not been addressed in the announced budget."

"If these tax rates are reduced significantly, our investors will feel more encouraged to invest in this telecom market, which is a good sign from the FDI perspective as well," he said.

Hossain Sadat, director and head of public and regulatory affairs, Grameenphone, said rationalising the taxation systems would accelerate the digital journey as the telecom sector has been considered an emergency service during the pandemic.

Shahed Alam, chief corporate and regulatory officer at Robi, said, "Despite making our demands based on thorough analysis, we, as an industry, are continuing to get deprived from the budget every year."

"We would urge the government to undertake a comprehensive study on the taxation structure for the industry, so that we can have a healthy dialogue and arrive at decisions that will truly unlock the digital potential of the country," he said.

FROM PAGE B1
But a lower credit demand has adversely impacted the cost of funds for banks as liquidity has largely remained idle. The excess liquidity in the banking industry stood at around Tk 200,000 crore in April.

Despite the massive dollar purchase, the central bank has failed to devalue the taka against the US currency.

Since July, the central bank has been intervening in the foreign exchange market after the local currency began strengthening.

The interbank exchange rate has been hovering around Tk 84.80 per USD since July. The rate was Tk 84.95 on June 2 last year.

Had the central bank had not intervened in the exchange market, local currency would have appreciated.

Ahsan H Mansur, executive director of the Policy Research Institute of Bangladesh, said the central bank's stance in purchasing the dollar

was appropriate to contain the appreciation of the local currency.

"The central bank has to maintain the intervention until normalcy returns."

The intervention means Bangladesh will have more dollars than required during the pandemic.

The current business slump might continue until the end of the next fiscal year, given the weak vaccination programme, said Mansur, also a former official of the International Monetary Fund.

Although import payments have recently gone up to some extent due to the price hike in the global commodity market, this has not positively impacted the investment sector.

The volume of the imported products has not increased significantly, he said.

"The central bank's intervention is time-befitting as it is playing a strong role in protecting the interest of exporters from the slowdown," said Kutubuddin Ahmed, chairman of Envoy

Group, a garment exporter. Despite Bangladesh Bank's move, the exchange rate of the taka is still comparatively stronger than those in peer nations. For instance, the currencies of India, Sri Lanka and Pakistan fell against the US dollar earlier.

"So, we are facing a competitiveness crisis due to a stronger taka. The authorities should give more efforts to devalue the local currency in the coming days to shield the interest of exporters."

Md Arfan Ali, managing director of Bank Asia, said Bangladesh would continue enjoying the excess dollar in the coming days due to the higher flow of remittance.

Between July and May, Bangladesh received \$22.8 billion in remittance, already the highest in a single year.

The pile-up of US dollars will help the country to a large extent when imports start picking up.

Foreign reserves stood at \$45.08 billion on June 2, up 34.70 per cent year-on-year.

549 BSCIC plots left unused

FROM PAGE B1
Asaduzzaman Shamim, owner of Jaman Metal Works in Rajbari, took the allotment of a plot in 2018 to build a factory to produce household items made of aluminium and steel.

"Though it was allotted in 2018, there were some official procedures. It took a long time to complete the procedures. In the meantime, Covid-19 arrived."

Because of the pandemic, the setting up of the factory has gotten stuck, he said. However, he bought the machinery for the factory and now plans to resume construction in July.

BSCIC Chairman Md Mostaque Hassan said it had taken a strong step against the leasees who had left the plot unused after taking the allotment.

"It can't go on like this. Work is underway to lease out these plots anew."

"Many entrepreneurs have shown interest.

Now, the plots will be handed to the real entrepreneurs so that industries can be set up there," Hassan said.

There is a tendency among some district-level entrepreneurs to not stick to the plans cited in their proposals. Instead, they want to set up factories as per their wish. When they cannot do so, they leave the plots deserted, said an official of the BSCIC.

After receiving proposals from the applicants, the BSCIC carries out feasibility studies before awarding the plots. If anyone does not build the factory within the deadline, the allotment can be cancelled.

"We also cancelled allotments in the past," said Nasrin Rahim, deputy general manager of the industrial estate division at the BSCIC.

Each plot is leased out for 99 years. Entrepreneurs can pay the full amount of the lease price in a single payment. Also, they can

pay it in 10 instalments in five years.

Many entrepreneurs do not want to build factories in the Rangamati industrial estate because of an absence of a good communication system, said another official of the corporation.

He said if the BSCIC had prepared the plots in the hilly areas through proper planning, the plots would not have remained unused.

Some 543 plots in the industrial estates across the country are yet to be awarded. Of them, 367 are ready to be allotted.

Normally, big factories take multiple plots. So, there is a difference between the number of plots allotted and the number of industries developed. The factories at the BSCIC estates are employing more than 67 lakh people. A total of Tk 63,318 crore have so far been invested.

Some 112 industrial units, which were earlier sick, have reopened since the beginning of the current fiscal year.

Advertisement for DEKKO ISHO GROUP signing ceremony. The image shows four men in suits standing on a stage during a signing ceremony. The background features logos for DEKKO ISHO GROUP and EcoVia. Text on the stage includes "SIGNING CEREMONY", "INVESTMENT STRATEGIC CAPITAL COMMITMENT BETWEEN DEKKO ISHO GROUP & ECOVIA LTD.", and "2021 ISHO GROUP".

DEKKO ISHO Group has signed a monetary and strategic capital investment agreement on 5th June 2021 with Eco Via, a bioplastic initiative with its own innovation in compostable polymer, led by three young entrepreneurs from Dhaka, Bangladesh. The signing ceremony took place on World Environment Day.

Businesses demand reforms in tax system

FROM PAGE B1
He also urged the leaders of different business associations, including the FBCCI, to push the government to expedite the different priority projects in Chattogram, including ending waterlogging in the city, dredging the Karnaphuli river and constructing the Bay Terminal at the Chattogram port.

"If the Bay Terminal is not complete by 2024, foreign trade through the country's premier port will be hampered," Alam said.

Rupali Chowdhury, president of the Foreign Investors Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FICCI), said foreign direct investment in Bangladesh was very low compared to neighbouring countries such as India.

Although the government is undertaking a number of infrastructure development projects, more work needs to be done in terms of legal and policy support to attract foreign investment.

Besides, many policies are inconsistent, she said.

For example, there was no regulation regarding paying 15 per cent VAT when investors first started buying land in the country's economic zones.

However, the NBR suddenly decided to impose this charge, which is discouraging, Chowdhury said.

With regard to the 10-year tax holiday for different industries outside the economic zones, she said the facility means that these companies basically enjoy the same benefits that companies inside the zones do.

"So what extra benefit are we going to offer the investors inside the economic zones," she asked.

Faruque Hassan, president of the Bangladesh Garments Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA), echoed the same.

Terming frequent policy changes as discouraging for investment, Hassan said any new tax or policy should remain the same for at least five years.

He went on to say that the proposal to continue providing 1 per cent additional cash incentive for the garments industry in the new budget would help the sector in terms of increasing cash flow.

Hassan hoped that Bangladesh's exports will return to pre-pandemic levels by October this year, on condition the Covid-19 situation does not worsen.

Alamgir Kabir, president of Bangladesh Cement Manufacturers Association (BCMA), demanded the complete withdrawal of non-adjustable AIT for cement industries.

Although the AIT has been reduced from 3 to 2 per cent in the proposed budget, it is still a burden for the import dependent sector, he said.

Besides, Tk 500 needs to be paid as import duty per tonne of clinker, the main raw material of cement, he said.

"So, the average import duty stands at 10 to 11 per cent, which makes it difficult for the highly competitive sector to survive," Kabir said.

Lauding the proposal to reduce corporate tax in the new budget, Chittagong Stock Exchange Chairman Asif Ibrahim proposed to increase the tax gap between listed and non-listed companies so that good companies get encouraged to come to the capital market.

The EC Committee Chairman of Islami Bank Bangladesh, Professor Md Selim Uddin, said in case of low tax collection, the pressure would increase for loans to be taken from domestic sources.

Advertisement for ESSENTIAL DRUGS COMPANY LIMITED. The ad includes the company logo (EDCL), address (395-397, Tejgaon Industrial Area, Dhaka-1208), and a "LOCAL PRESS TENDER NOTICE".

Well reputed authorized Vehicle dealers/importers/ Sole distributors are invited for submission of best competitive price offer for supply of following vehicles on urgent basis.

SL no.	Tender No. Date	Description	Earnest Money	Tender Schedule price per set	Tender Opening & Closing date
01	EDCL(ELPP)/Pur Qty. 01 No /LT/2021/216 dt. 08/06/2021	Micro Bus (Reconditioned).	@2.5% of total quoted value	Tk. 1250.00 (Non-refundable)	Closing : 24/06/2021 At 12.00 Noon Opening : 24/06/2021 At 12.30 PM
02	EDCL(GP)/Pur/C over Van /LT/2021/217 dt. 08/06/2021	Cover Van (Brand New) Qty.: 01 No.	@2.5% of total quoted value	Tk. 1250.00 (Non-refundable)	Closing : 28/06/2021 At 12.00 Noon Opening : 28/06/2021 At 12.30 PM

Tender schedule will be sold from the Accounts Department of Essential Drugs Company Limited, Dhaka on payment as stated above during office hours on all working days (except Friday, Saturday and Govt. Holidays). No tender schedule will be sold on the opening date of the tender.

The tender will be accompanied by an amount of Earnest Money as mentioned above in the form of Bank Draft/Pay Order from any Schedule Bank of Bangladesh in favor of "Essential Drugs Co. Ltd." without which the tender will be considered as non-responsive.

EDCL authority reserves the right to accept or reject any or all the tenders without assigning any reason whatsoever.

(5"x4)

General Manager,
Procurement Deptt.
For : Managing Director.

Pran widening global footprint

SOHEL PARVEZ

For around two decades, Swapan Debnath has operated a convenience store called Narayan Varieties in the Keprampara area of Agartala, the capital of the northeastern Indian state of Tripura.

His shelves are adorned with various Indian food and beverage brands but between some of the items on display, one can find mango flavoured drinks, potato crackers, and other goods mainly produced by Pran, Bangladesh's biggest food processor.

"Customers seem to be preferring Pran's mango beverage while the potato crackers are also popular here," Debnath told The Daily Star.

"I once travelled miles away just to collect some potato crackers for my store," he added.

According to Ashish Majumdar, who works at a corner store in Kolkata, Pran's mango drink and potato crackers have turned out to be a hit among local consumers, going as far as to



Products of Pran are on display at a shop in Nepal.



Ahsan Khan Chowdhury

compete with brands such as Real, Maza, Lays, and Haldiram.

And so, Tripura has become one of Pran's main markets in India.

The company's brands are also available in other parts of the country, such as the northeastern state of Assam, West Bengal, Karnataka, Himachal Pradesh, and Haryana.

However, its expedition abroad is not limited to just India as Pran's products can be found in parts of Africa, Latin America and even Tonga, an archipelago found in the South Pacific.

As such, the subsidiary of Pran-RFL Group has been exporting food items to 144 countries to bring home more than \$300 million annually for the past three years.

The company made its initial foray into the international market by shipping canned pineapple slices, pickle and puffed rice to France in 1997. The value of this first consignment was \$11,000.

But despite the growth in exports since then, Pran holds an insignificant share of the immense global food market, according to Ahsan Khan

Chowdhury, chairman and chief executive officer of PRAN-RFL Group.

"So, there is no room for complacency and we are trying to bring further improvement. We have done well in agricultural production but have to advance in agro-processing," he said.

"There will be a revolution for mango in the future. We only export flavoured drinks for now but in the future, we will ship pulp. For this we need a variety of improvements," Chowdhury added.

READ MORE ON B2

Stocks bounce back led by insurance

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

The stock market managed to stay in the positive yesterday thanks to stocks of insurers and banks.

The DSEX, the benchmark index of Dhaka Stock Exchange (DSE), rose 47 points, or 0.79 per cent, to 6,023.

The movement of the broad index was versatile as the market fluctuated between the positive and negative index to finally close in the positive, said LankaBangla Securities in its daily market analysis.

Insurance stocks led the market which ultimately gave a boost to the market index where banking stocks also contributed, said a stock broker.

All the general insurance stocks rose 7.43 per cent on an average and banking stocks soared 1.54 per cent, according to the LankaBangla data.

Turnover, another important indicator of the market, fell around 1 per cent to Tk 2,065 crore. In the turnover, insurance stocks contributed 26 per cent or Tk 528 crore.

At the DSE, 181 stocks advanced, 145 fell and 43 remained unchanged.

Market analysts are saying that some investors bought shares as many stocks fell in Monday's profit booking session when the DSEX dropped 62 points.

The Islamic Finance & Investment topped the gainers' list that rose 10 per cent followed by the National Housing Finance and Investments, Gemini Sea Food, Asia Insurance and Phoenix Insurance.

Stocks of Beximco was traded the highest, worth Tk 154 crore, followed by Pioneer Insurance, Fortune Shoes, LankaBangla Finance and National Feed Mills.

MI Cement shed the most, losing 4.28 per cent, followed by BD Welding Electrode, First Finance, GQ Ball Pen Industries and Square Textiles.

Chittagong Stock Exchange (CSE) also went up. The CASPI, the general index of the port city bourse, rose 113 points, or 0.65 per cent, to 17,431.

Among 300 stocks to witness trade, 148 rose, 111 fell and 41 remained unchanged.

Maddhapara Granite posts record sales

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

Maddhapara Granite Mining Company earned Tk 256 crore by selling at least 11.12 lakh tonnes of rock in the ongoing fiscal year, the highest sale in three years.

The sales took place between August last year to May 31 this year.

Germania Trest Consortium (GTC), the company hired on contract by Maddhapara Granite Mining Company, produced at least 9.25 lakh tonnes of rock during the same period.

The hired company produced at least 10.67 lakh tonnes of rock in fiscal 2018-19, of which, 7.31 lakh tonnes were sold for Tk 163.41 crore the same year.

Although rock extraction got stalled for four months due to the Covid-19 restrictions in the country, the mine produced at least 8.23 lakh tonnes in the last fiscal year. Of this amount, 8.64 lakh

tonnes were sold at Tk 207.81 crore.

So far, Maddhapara Granite Mining Company sold rock of Tk 627.22 crore since mid-2018. Private companies and government entities, including the roads, highways and bridge authority, railways and water development board, local government and engineering department, power development board and the Rooppur nuclear power plant project in Pabna are using the rock.

Bangladesh's annual demand is around 80 lakh tonnes, which is mostly met locally. Whenever there are shortages, it is met with imports from countries such as India and Bhutan.

Zabed Siddiqui, chief executive officer of the GTC, said over 20 lakh tonnes of rock could have been extracted during the six-year contract tenure if there had been no disruptions for two years for various reasons, including equipment failures.

READ MORE ON B2

Farmers get barely a quarter of what consumers spend: global study

AFP, Paris

Farmers worldwide receive barely a quarter of what consumers spend at the grocery store, and even less for food consumed outside the home, researchers reported yesterday.

Beyond the question of whether farmers get their fair share, the multi-step processing from farm to table may not be compatible with sustainable development, according to a study in the journal Nature Food.

"People do not recognise how much of what we pay for in our meals is not the physical food," Cornell University's Chris Barrett, senior author of the study, told AFP by email.

"Most of the value addition in the global

or lost," he added. "These are all factors that have major public health implications.

"Building on a method originally applied to the US, the researchers developed a standardised approach to estimate the importance of food value chains between farmers and consumers.

They applied this yardstick to data from 2005 to 2015 on 61 middle- and high-income countries that cover 90 per cent of the global food economy.

They found that, on average, farmers receive 27 per cent of what is paid for foods consumers eat at home. The study focused on the three-quarters of food that is consumed in the same country where it is produced.

For the other 25 per cent, "the farmer



Farmers sort out harvested potatoes at a field in the Bardarash district, near the Kurdish city of Dohuk, in Iraq's autonomous Kurdish region yesterday.

food economy is not on farm but rather is the processing, manufacturing, distribution and service activities closer to the consumer.

"This highly segmented value chain creates employment and provides convenience for the consumer, whether in the form of bagged salads, frozen dinners or a meal at the mall.

But these consumer advantages should also be measured against the impact on health and the environment, the authors argue. "Greenhouse gas emissions is a good example," said Barrett, pointing to the carbon pollution generated by all the steps in the value chain.

"So is water use."

"There is also the question of where desirable attributes of foods -- such as minerals, vitamins, fibre -- and undesirable attributes ('bad' fats, salt, sugar) are added

share of consumer expenditures on imported foods is almost surely even less," said Barrett. The already vast proportion of food dollars going to post-farm activities is only likely to increase, the study concluded.

Farmers in fast-growing economies like China and India will earn more as their populations get richer, but their share of food spending is likely to shrink as demand for convenient consumption grows.

The study points to the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) -- adopted in 2015 and set for 2030 -- as a way to measure the impact of the vast and growing food value chain sector.

What happens to food between farm and consumer will be critical to many SDGs including those targeting poverty, hunger and "responsible consumption and production".

GLOBAL BUSINESS

US must work with allies to secure electric vehicle metals: White House

REUTERS, Washington

The United States must work with allies to secure the minerals needed for electric vehicle batteries and process them domestically in light of environmental and other competing interests, the White House said on Tuesday.

The strategy, first reported by Reuters in late May, will include new funding to expand international investments in electric vehicles (EV) metal projects through the US Development Finance Corporation, as well as new efforts to boost supply from recycling batteries.

President Joe Biden's administration will also launch a working group to identify where minerals used in EV batteries and other technologies can be produced and processed domestically. It was not immediately clear what that meant for existing EV minerals projects.

Securing enough copper, lithium and other raw materials to make EV batteries is a major obstacle to Biden's aggressive EV adoption



General Motors assembly workers connect a battery pack underneath a partially assembled 2018 Chevrolet Bolt EV vehicle on the assembly line at Orion Assembly in Lake Orion, Michigan, US on March 19, 2018.

plans, with domestic mines facing extensive regulatory hurdles and environmental opposition.

The White House acknowledged China's role as the world's largest processor of EV metals and said it would expand efforts to lessen that dependency. "To secure a reliable, sustainable supply of critical minerals and materials, the United States

must work with allies and partners to diversify supply chains away from adversarial nations and sources with unacceptable environmental and labor standards," it said in a statement.

The White House also said the Department of the Interior and others agencies will work to identify gaps in mine permitting laws to ensure any new production "meets strong standards" in terms of both the environment and community input.

The steps come after Biden, who has made fighting climate change and competing with China centerpieces of his agenda, ordered a 100-day review of gaps in supply chains in key areas, including EVs.

Democrats are pushing aggressive climate goals to have a majority of US-manufactured cars be electric by 2030 and every car on the road to be electric by 2040.

As part of the recommendations from four executive branch agencies, Biden is being advised to take steps to restore the country's strategic mineral stockpile and expand funding to map the mineral resources available domestically.

Bank of England launches climate stress test for banks and insurers

REUTERS, London

The Bank of England on Tuesday set out its first comprehensive stress test of the ability of the British financial system to cope with climate change, saying the results will not be used to determine capital requirements.

The test will scrutinise the resilience of the country's biggest banks and insurers to stresses from the shift to a net zero-carbon economy over coming decades as well as the impact of extreme weather.

"The end result will be more robust management of climate related financial risks across the sector," BoE Governor Andrew Bailey said in a statement.

The results of the test are due to be published in May 2022.

The test is based on three



The Bank of England and Royal Exchange are reflected in a puddle as a pedestrian walks past, amid the coronavirus disease outbreak in London, Britain on November 19, 2020.

scenarios that span 30 years: early action by governments to deal with climate change, action that is late, and taking no additional action.

Each scenario will be applied to two main risks: physical such as fires and floods due to temperature changes, and risks from transitioning to a more climate-friendly business that could bring sudden changes in asset values.

"This is the first time we are testing both banks and insurers to allow us to capture interactions between them and understand the risks presented by climate change across the financial system," the BoE said.

The exploratory exercise will not be used by the BoE to set capital requirements, but will shape how regulators do their work and help financial firms to model climate risks better.