

STOCKS		COMMODITIES		ASIAN MARKETS				CURRENCIES			
DSEX	CSCX	Gold	Oil	MUMBAI	TOKYO	SINGAPORE	SHANGHAI	USD	EUR	GBP	CNY
▲ 0.48%	▲ 0.52%	\$1,743.55	\$68.75	▲ 0.23%	▲ 0.33%	▲ 0.07%	▲ 1.05%	BUY TK 83.95	97.62	115.52	12.73
6,628.14	11,574.22	(per ounce)	(per barrel)	54,402.85	27,820.04	3,177.18	3,494.63	SELL TK 84.95	101.42	119.32	13.38

Star BUSINESS

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Tk 2,140cr project to revive Teletalk

Operator plans 5G launch by 2023

REJAUUL KARIM BYRON and MAHMUDUL HASAN

The government is set to give a lifeline to Teletalk as the loss-making mobile phone operator looks to make a turnaround by winning customers through modernisation, network expansion and the launch of 5G technology.

It may provide Tk 2,140 crore, under a project, to take the state-owned operator's 4G network to villages and upgrade the existing core and transmission networks to make it ready for the launch of fifth-generation technology (5G) by 2023.

The total cost of the project has been estimated at Tk 2,200 crore. Teletalk will chip in with Tk 60.33 crore.

The project will be placed at the regular weekly meeting of the Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (Ecne) for final approval today. The project will be



AT A GLANCE

Service launched in 2005 | 4G launched in 2018
3G rolled out in 2012 | Market share: 3.35%
INCURRING LOSSES SINCE FY15

completed by November 2023.

"Teletalk has no 4G network in villages, so we want to take it to the rural areas," Md Shahab Uddin, managing director of Teletalk, told The Daily Star.

It has 4G services in all areas of Dhaka and Chattogram and all district headquarters.

The operator is going to get the financing on the basis of 20 per cent equity and 80 per cent loan. The interest rate will be set at the Ecne meeting, he said.

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PALASH KHAN

Little activity stirs these piles of sand and gravel brought for sale by traders at Gabtoli in the capital amidst a downturn in sale for the lockdown. The ingredients are essential for construction, be it the government's development projects or privately-owned buildings, especially considering the fact that the real estate sector has become an industry of around Tk 60,000 crore, and in the past couple of years before the Covid-19, there was around 15 to 20 per cent annual growth. The photo was taken yesterday.

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Green chilli being imported from India

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Local traders have started importing green chilli from India after the commerce ministry granted permission in this regard in a bid to bring down the skyrocketing prices of the widely used spice in Bangladesh.

Green chilly prices rose four times to around Tk 200 per kilogramme in different markets across Bangladesh amid a sudden supply shortage.

Prices of the popular vegetable was Tk 40-Tk 60 per kilogramme a week ago in Dhaka, data from the Department of Agricultural Marketing showed.

Unfavourable weather and problems in transportation due to lockdown are blamed for the spiralling prices of green chilli.

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Computer services export on the rise

MAHMUDUL HASAN

Computer services export from Bangladesh is rising in sync with global demand for data processing, hosting and consultancy services as many people are working from home while companies are outsourcing amidst the lingering coronavirus pandemic.

The industry fetched \$270 million in the first 11 months of 2020-21, up 6.64 per cent year-on-year, showed data from the Export Promotion Bureau (EPB).

The higher earnings were driven by computer services such as data processing, hosting, consultancy, installation, and maintenance.

Full fiscal year data from the state agency is yet to be available.

The receipts from the sales of IT-enabled services such as data processing and hosting increased 23 per cent to \$193.09 million.

Computer consultancy services raked in \$24.07 million, up from \$17.91 million during the same 11-month period a year earlier.

"Global companies are outsourcing data processing services amidst the pandemic," said Syed Almas Kabir, president of the Bangladesh Association of Software and

EXPORT OF SERVICES (In dollar)

FY17: 194m
FY18: 182m
FY19: 225m
FY20: 276m
FY21 (Jul-May): 270m

SOURCE: EPB



Information Services (BASIS).

Thanks to the growing export orders, many companies involved in data processing and graphic design hired many new employees as the tasks do not require much skills, he said.

For IT-enabled services, local freelancers' reputation has grown phenomenally. "Besides, our connectivity to outside of the country has solidified," Kabir said.

According to him, the growth was high as banks and hospitals had remained open amidst lockdowns and data processing continued.

However, computer software export suffered a blow as it dropped 30 per cent year-on-year to \$47.44 million

between July and May. The earnings stood at \$73 million in the same period in 2019-20.

Kabir said software exports mainly declined due to the closure of offices in the European nations amid lockdowns.

"Many work orders were cancelled and suspended. Payments were not cleared, so many local companies were hit," he said.

However, some big software exporters are receiving an increasing number of orders during the pandemic thanks to their reputation and the mushrooming of e-commerce platforms during the pandemic.

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ABSORBING EXCESS LIQUIDITY

BB not sticking to its words

AKM ZAMIR UDDIN

Bangladesh Bank yesterday showed little interest in mopping up excess liquidity from the banking system as it withdrew only 38 per cent of funds attracted from banks through an absorbent instrument.

Some 21 banks placed bids worth Tk 6,875 crore at the Bangladesh Bank auctions for BB Bill, which was relaunched yesterday after more than three years.

On August 5, the central bank said it would revive the BB Bill, an instrument that was last used in March 2018 to keep the money market stable.

Analysts said the central bank's stance contradicted its previous declaration that it would absorb the excess money.

On top of that, this has given a negative signal to banks, which will discourage them from taking part in the auctions in the days ahead.

The central bank mopped up Tk 2,605 crore as a good number of banks shied away from investing their funds at low rates quoted by the BB.

Auctions of two kinds of the BB Bill -- one of a 7 day period and another of 14 days -- were held yesterday, where the cut of yield of the former was fixed at 0.52 per cent and the latter 0.75 per cent.

Banks, however, offered a maximum interest rate of 2.97 per cent but the central bank did not accept the rate. Ahsan H

Drawing in the excess fund is the best way to push up the interest rate on deposits at this moment, an expert says

Mansur, executive director of the Policy Research Institute of Bangladesh, said the BB should have accepted all bids placed by the banks in the interest of the financial sector.

The central bank could have even offered a higher rate than what it had fixed yesterday to mop up the excess funds, he said.

Drawing in the excess fund is the best way to push up the interest rate on deposits at this moment, Mansur said.

The excess liquidity in the banking system stood at Tk 231,462 crore as of June, up 66 per cent year-on-year and 9 per cent from that a month ago.

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Govt to build Tk 1,511cr solar power plant

Biggest ever; will produce 100MW

REJAUUL KARIM BYRON and MAHMUDUL HASAN

The government is going to set up the country's biggest solar power plant in Madarganj upazila of Jamalpur, in a move to

raise the share of renewable energy in total power generation to 10 per cent by 2025.

The 100-megawatt Sheikh Hasina Solar Park will cater to the needs of its locality and channel the surplus electricity to the national grid.

To be implemented by Rural Power Company by December 2023, the project will be placed before the Executive Committee of the National Economic Council for final approval.

Its total expenditure has been estimated at Tk 1,511 crore.

Of it, Tk 1,115 crore will be provided by India at one per cent interest rate, according to Md Ferdaws Rahman, executive engineer of Rural Power Company.

"The main objective of the project is to increase power generation from renewable (solar) energy sources, diversify energy in power generation and reduce carbon emissions," he said.

The development comes amid Bangladesh's failure to achieve its target to raise renewable energy's share in total power generation to 10 per cent by 2020 due to a lack of resources, technologies and policies.

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COLLECTED

Bangladesh's main source of renewable energy is the sun, according to industry people.

Regular banking hours from tomorrow

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Banks and the stock market will return to their normal activities from tomorrow as the government looks to partially reopen the economy despite a surge in coronavirus infections.

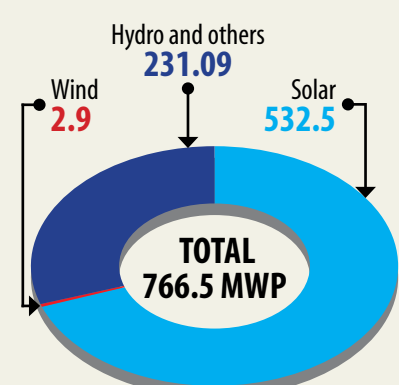
All the branches and offices will be kept open from Wednesday, said Bangladesh Bank (BB) in a circular yesterday.

Clients will be able to conduct transactions from 10:00am to 4:00pm through banks, which will remain open until 6:00pm from tomorrow.

Banks had to reduce opening hours in April this year after the caseloads of Covid-19 patients began rising alarmingly, forcing the government to impose a countrywide strict lockdown.

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RENEWABLE ENERGY TECH



SOURCE: SREDA