

STOCKS		COMMODITIES		ASIAN MARKETS				CURRENCIES				
DSEX	CSCX	Gold	Oil	MUMBAI	TOKYO	SINGAPORE	SHANGHAI	USD	EUR	GBP	CNY	
▲ 0.08%	▼ 0.02%	\$1,744.22	\$70.06	▼ 0.05%	▲ 0.65%	▼ 0.85%	▲ 0.08%	83.95	97.29	115.17	12.71	
6,623.31	11,563.26	(per ounce)	(per barrel)	54,525.93	28,070.51	3,180.00	3,532.62	BUY TK	84.95	101.09	118.97	13.37
								SELL TK	84.95	101.09	118.97	13.37

# Star BUSINESS

DHAKA THURSDAY AUGUST 12, 2021, SRABAN 28, 1428 BS • starbusiness@thedailystar.net

## BB won't budge on deposit rate order

Fixed deposit interest can't go below inflation rate

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

The Bangladesh Bank yesterday refused to revisit its instruction that asked banks to set a higher interest rate on fixed deposits than the inflation rate despite pleas from lenders.

Banks placed the demand at a meeting chaired by BB Governor Fazle Kabir. Managing directors of all lenders were present.

The meeting between lenders and the central bank is usually held every three months to discuss the contemporary issues of the banking sector.

After the meeting, five managing directors told The Daily Star that they had made all-out efforts to change the central bank's stance, but it won't budge.

Syed Mahbubur Rahman, managing director of Mutual Trust Bank, said the central bank had heard all points raised by

banks.

"The banking regulator also responded to the points. But it asked us to follow the latest notice on the issue," he said.

The BB on August 8 asked banks not to fix interest rates on fixed-term deposits below the inflation rate in order to protect depositors from negative returns.

The weighted average interest rate on deposits stood at 4.13 per cent in June while the average inflation rate was 5.56 per cent, showed data from the central bank and the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics.

As a result, depositors are getting a negative return, which is discouraging people from parking their funds with banks.

"The latest decision will create a haphazard situation in the banking sector as the interest rate on the lending is declining. Now, the rate on deposits will go up," said one managing director.

In general, both deposit and lending rates maintain an upward or downward trend in tandem.

"But it will not happen this time. As a result, this will create an abnormal situation in the financial sector," the managing director said.



Farmers transplanting saplings of paddy in Palashbari upazila of Gaibandha for the current Aman cultivation season. The Department of Agricultural Extension targets to ensure cultivation of Aman on 55.77 lakh hectares of land this year. As of August 10, farmers attained 55 per cent of the cultivation target for Aman, the second biggest crop accounting for 38 per cent of the yearly rice production. The photo was taken recently.

MOSTAFA SHABUI

## Bangabandhu sowed seeds of prosperity

Speakers say at FBCCI seminar

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman has not only pulled Bangladesh out of the wreckage caused by the war but took visionary steps to plant the seeds of economic prosperity for the country, said speakers yesterday.

"The philosophy of Bangabandhu was to improve the lot of the ordinary people and ensure their freedom," said Tofail Ahmed, a former commerce minister.

He spoke at a seminar on "Bangabandhu's Economic Philosophy: Bangladesh in Development of Commerce and Industries."

The Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI) organised the event to commemorate the contribution of the Father of the Nation.

Ahmed, who was the political secretary to Bangabandhu, said after the independence, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman tried to rebuild the nation with his economic vision.

Bangabandhu framed the Industrial Enterprise Act and nationalised the industries deserted by their Pakistani owners to rebuild the war-ravaged country.

He nationalised banks and established the jute ministry, the Bangladesh Agricultural Development Corporation, the Bangladesh Chemical Industries Corporation and the Sugar Corporation.

"Even Bangabandhu talked about building the bridge over the Jamuna river with the Japanese government during his visit to Japan," Ahmed said.

READ MORE ON B3

## Nurani Dyeing board to be restructured

Sena Kalyan Ins IPO gets nod

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Within less than five years of getting listed in the stock market, Nurani Dyeing has kept its factory shut for a long time without informing its investors.

As a result, the Bangladesh Securities and Exchange Commission yesterday decided to restructure the company's board of directors.

The dyeing company raised funds of Tk 43 crore when it got listed in 2017.

Officials of the country's two bourses found that the company's factory and corporate office had been shut for a long time and that it was providing financial reports to pretend its operations were still active, the BSEC said.

So, the stock market regulator will take action against the company's auditor.

After getting listed with the bourses, Nurani Dyeing provided just 2 per cent cash dividends in 2018, shows data from the Dhaka Stock Exchange (DSE).

During yesterday's commission meeting, the BSEC approved the initial

READ MORE ON B3

## Walton makes strong comeback

Profits double in FY2021

AHSAN HABIB



### Plan and performance

- Will buy 236 decimals of land at Tk 172cr
- Will change name to Walton Hi-Tech Industries PLC
- Declared 250% cash dividend for general shareholders
- Declared 170% cash dividend for directors, sponsors
- EPS soared to Tk 54.21 from Tk 24.21 a year ago

Walton Hi-tech Industries saw its profits double in the recently concluded fiscal 2020-21, riding on higher sales of air conditioners and refrigerators past an earnings decline for the pandemic.

One of the country's biggest electrical home appliance manufacturers, its profits rose 123 per cent to Tk 1,642 crore year-on-year.

Meanwhile, its earnings per share (EPS) rose near 124 per cent to Tk 54.21. In fiscal 2019-20 it had dropped 47 per cent, according to data from the Dhaka Stock Exchange.

Based on the profit, it announced 250 per cent cash dividends for general public shareholders and 170 per cent cash dividend for directors and sponsors.

The pandemic hit the country mainly at the end of fiscal 2019-20 and last year the company fared comparatively better, said Chief Financial Officer Omar Faruk Ripon.

Demand for products rose in early summer, particularly for air-conditioners, whereas refrigerator sales were also higher during the Eid season, he said.

READ MORE ON B3

## NEWS in brief

### No plan to revise GDP growth target: Kamal

Finance Minister AHM Mustafa Kamal yesterday said that there is no plan to revise the GDP growth target right now as he believes the government will be able to maintain the estimated growth rate for fiscal 2021-22.

"I hope we can maintain the estimate we made," the minister said while responding to a query at a virtual briefing after a meeting of the Cabinet Committee on Purchase.

In the current fiscal, the government set the gross domestic product (GDP) growth target at 7.2 per cent.

According to the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS), the provisional GDP growth was 5.2 per cent and in the final calculation, the country's economy grew 3.51 per cent in fiscal 2019-20.

### Chinese firm to maintain Bangabandhu bridge

China Communications Construction Company will be tasked with ensuring maintenance of the Bangabandhu bridge for the next five years for Tk 170 crore.

The decision was taken at a meeting of the cabinet committee on purchase, chaired by Finance Minister AHM Mustafa Kamal.

"Bangladesh Bridge Authority proposed to hire the Chinese company," said Shamsul Arefin, additional secretary to the Cabinet Division after the meeting.

### South-Bangla bank makes trading debut

South Bangla Agriculture and Commerce Bank (SBAC) debuted on the stock market yesterday and the price of its shares almost immediately soared by 10 per cent as no one was selling the stock.

SBAC raised Tk 100 crore from the market by issuing 10 crore ordinary shares at a face-value of Tk 10 each.

Every general investor got a minimum of 60 shares against the application of Tk 10,000 in the initial public offering (IPO).

### National Fisheries Week from Aug 28

National Fisheries Week will be observed across the country from August 28, according to Fisheries and Livestock Minister SM Rezaul Karim.

He made this announcement at the preparatory meeting of the 2021 National Fisheries Week at a conference room of the Bangladesh Secretariat in Dhaka yesterday, as per a press release.

## SHOW CAUSE Evaly gets three weeks to respond

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Beleaguered e-commerce platform Evaly has been given three weeks to provide a detailed response to the recent show-cause notice it received from the commerce ministry.

"Overall, the company will get three weeks to fully explain its actions," Tapan Kanti Ghosh, secretary of the commerce ministry, told The Daily Star.

The time allotted is divided in different ways.

Evaly has to inform the ministry about its liabilities to customers within five days since this information should be readily available for them.

However, the company will get three weeks to inform us about its dues to merchants, he said.

"A letter will be sent to Evaly tomorrow (today) and the deadline to respond will begin from then," he added.

Within five days, Evaly will have to send details about its assets, Ghosh said.

READ MORE ON B2

## Small traders diversify income to stay afloat



Nurzul Islam, owner of Johnny Telecom and Dry Cleaners, in the extended Pallabi residential area of the capital's Mirpur has diversified into selling groceries to keep his establishment running. A whopping 94 per cent of micro, small and medium enterprises experienced a sharp drop in sales because of the coronavirus pandemic, according to a survey of International Finance Corporation and World Bank last year. The photo was taken recently.

PRABIR DAS

MD ABU TALHA SARKER and SUKANTA HALDER

Shafiqul Islam Ratan has been running a sweet shop with his siblings near a residential area on Kalshi road in the capital's Mirpur for the last six-seven years.

The business was going on well since its inception in 2015. But the onslaught of the coronavirus in Bangladesh in March last year upended everything in the blink of an eye as the government enforced lockdowns and people stayed away.

As educational institutions shut and religious festivals and nuptial programmes were held with limited attendance, the demand for sweets reduced significantly.

The crash in income made it difficult for the family to pay shop rent, electricity, security and other bills.

With little sales and no support from the government, Ratan added grocery items to his shop to make some bucks.

"By selling grocery items, we are making some money. Now I can pay shop rent and other bills," he said.

Nazrul Islam, owner of Johnny Telecom and Dry Cleaners, faced a similar challenge. He has been running the shop in the extended Pallabi residential area in Mirpur since 2005.

He was in trouble when the government slapped movement restrictions to contain the spread of the novel Covid-19, banning non-essential activities and businesses.

For Islam, the only way to get out of the crisis was to sell groceries.

READ MORE ON B2





**M Reazul Karim, managing director and CEO of Premier Bank, and Ahmed Kamal Choudhury, adviser of SSL Wireless, signed an agreement centring the bank's "Digital Account Registration Service" recently. Syed Nowsher Ali, deputy managing director and head of the bank's general service division, Sami Karim and Kazi Ahsan Khalil, deputy managing directors, and Mohammad Anwar Hossain, chief operating officer of SSLCOMMERZ, were present.**

## Small traders diversify income to stay afloat

FROM PAGE B1  
In May 2020, he borrowed Tk 1.5 lakh from three non-government organisations to start his new venture besides keeping the laundry and mobile recharge shop open.

"I have to feed my family. That is why I have taken this path."

People who used to be customers of his laundry and mobile recharge shop are now buying groceries from him regularly.

"Besides, I have got some new customers," Islam said.

Ratan and Islam are just two of the millions of small businessmen in Bangladesh whose earnings fell to "near-zero" at the height of the first wave nearly a year ago.

A whopping 94 per cent of micro, small and medium enterprises experienced a sharp drop in sales because of the coronavirus pandemic, according to a survey of the International Finance Corporation and the World Bank last year.

There are about 56 lakh wholesale and retail establishments in Bangladesh.

Most MSMEs are still struggling as their incomes have not risen to the pre-pandemic level because of the lingering economic slowdown.

The second wave, which compelled the government to reinstate strict lockdowns in April, has shattered their recovery. As a result, they have had to diversify income opportunities.

Sheikh Mohammad Farid, a businessman in the West Tejuri Bazar area, used to sell vegetables before the pandemic.

When he saw that he could not manage the house rent by selling vegetables, he started selling groceries and cosmetics items.

"A shopper gets a lot of things from my store," Farid said.

Rahim Sarkar used to operate a laundry shop in Karwan Bazar area. But his customers also stopped coming. He started selling bananas.

After three months, he saw that his shop had been able to create a customer base. As a result, revenue has started to stream in again.

"I started selling bananas to save my laundry business," Sarkar said.

Mosharraf Hossain, owner of Dhaka Dry Cleaners in Rupnagar area of Mirpur, has been running a laundry shop since 2014. Before the pandemic, he used to earn Tk 20,000-22,000 per month.

When he was able to open the shop in June last year after lockdowns eased, the business had fetched a maximum of Tk 5,000 a month, nowhere near his monthly expenses.

So, Hossain added groceries to his shop in March this year. His income is rebounding.

"Thanks to the two businesses, I can now run my family. However, the business is not as thriving as before."

The policy the shoppers have adopted as part of their coping strategy after being forced into the Covid-induced crisis is very positive, said Sayema Haque Bidisha, a professor of the department of economics at the University of Dhaka.

"But which business (first or second) will be sustained will depend on how well the economy recovers from the Covid-19 crisis."

Hossain Zillur Rahman, executive chairman of the Power and Participation Research Centre, said the people in distress were looking for extra income.

"Income from their main professions collapsed. So, they were forced to find a way to earn extra money. This has increased the labour-hour. The thing is, people are not sitting idle."

However, the former caretaker government adviser said the new income opportunities might not yield the same level of earnings they had before the onset of the pandemic.

"How much state support is there remains to be seen. They are in trouble, and we have to work on how to help them." He called for a separate stimulus package for the small business.

## Evaly gets three weeks to respond

FROM PAGE B1  
On July 19, the commerce ministry sent a letter to Evaly, asking it to explain by August 1 how it would settle its current liabilities to customers and merchants. Evaly's reply came on the last day of the deadline.

In its reply, Evaly said it wanted to have its financial statements audited by a third party and set a valuation of the company. So, it needs six months to provide a full explanation.

The notice ordered the e-commerce site to come up with an explanation why no legal action should be taken against it to protect customers and merchants and prevent the digital commerce sector from any negative impact.

It also inquired about the company's business practices.

Ghosh said a decision will be taken after Evaly replies in full.

The commerce ministry's notice also asked the company to clarify the whereabouts of around Tk 338 crore that the platform owed to customers and merchants. According to an investigation report of Bangladesh Bank, Evaly has a liability of Tk 213.94 crore to customers and Tk 189.85 crore to merchants.

The company has assets worth Tk 91.69 crore, of which its current assets amount to Tk 65.17 crore.

The commerce ministry said it had noticed that Evaly was not delivering products on time despite receiving advance payments from customers.

"The merchants from whom it gets products are also not being paid and as a result, a large number of buyers and sellers are likely to suffer financially," the notice said.

## Cyber security firm Norton buys Avast for \$8b

AFP, London

US cyber security giant NortonLifeLock is to buy Czech rival Avast for over \$8 billion to create a leading consumer business, the pair announced Wednesday after the pandemic fuelled online activity.

The deal, equivalent to more than 6.7 billion euros, "is a huge step forward for consumer cyber safety and will ultimately enable us to achieve our vision to protect and empower people to live their digital lives safely", Norton chief executive Vincent Pilette said in a joint statement.

Ondrej Vlcek, chief executive of London-listed Avast, said that amid increasing global cyber threats, the tie-up would allow for "enhanced solutions and services, with improved capabilities".

More than 500 million users will benefit from the new group's safety offerings, the statement added.

Pilette was set to become chief executive of the expanded group, while Vlcek is to join NortonLifeLock as president and become a member

of the NortonLifeLock board. The combined company, to be listed on the Nasdaq, will be dual headquartered in Prague and Tempe, Arizona.

Businesses worldwide are at threat from an increasingly lucrative form of digital hostage-taking, or ransomware attacks, that typically see hackers encrypting victims' data and then demanding money for restored access. A massive ransomware attack on US tech firm Kaseya in July affected businesses from pharmacies to gas stations in at least 17 countries.

While Kaseya was little known to the public, analysts say it was a ripe target as its software is used by around 40,000 businesses, allowing the hackers to paralyse many companies with a single blow.

"At a time when global cyber threats are growing, yet cyber safety penetration remains very low, together with NortonLifeLock, we will be able to accelerate our shared vision of providing holistic cyber protection for consumers around the globe," Vlcek added Wednesday.

## China's Covid outbreak hitting services sector

REUTERS, Beijing

China's tighter social restrictions to fight its latest Covid-19 outbreak, now in its fourth week and involving more than a dozen cities, are hitting the services sector especially travel and hospitality in the world's second-largest economy.

China has refrained from full lockdowns of major cities such as those seen during the early days of the Covid-19 outbreak in Hubei province, to avoid totally paralysing the economy.

"The current wave has led to the re-imposition of much tighter social distancing measures, which would significantly hurt the transport, tourism, and other service sectors," Citi analysts wrote in a note on Wednesday.

"We now expect full recovery of the service sector to be further delayed to the fourth quarter."

Ding, who operates a 15-room lodge in the western highlands of Sichuan province, said she had expected an occupancy rate of at least 80 per cent on weekdays between late July and early August.

### Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh Directorate General of Family Planning Logistics & Supply Unit 6, Kawran Bazar, Dhaka-1215



#### Invitation for Tenders (Goods)

1	Ministry/Division	Medical Education & Family Welfare Division
2	Agency	Directorate General of Family Planning
3	Procuring Entity Name	Director (Logistics and Supply) and Line Director (Procurement, Storage and Supply Management)
4	Procuring Entity Code	-
5	Procuring Entity District	Dhaka
6	Invitation for	Procurement of 29.76 Million Cycles Oral Pill (3rd Generation)
7	Invitation Ref No	DGFP/L&S-3/Oral Pill (3rd Gen.)/2021-22/02/04
8	Date	11/08/2021
<b>KEY INFORMATION</b>		
9	Procurement Method	Open Tender Method (OTM)(NCT)
<b>FUNDING INFORMATION</b>		
10	Budget and Source of Funds	RPA(GOB) & GOB (Dev.)
11	Development Partner (if applicable)	International Development Association (IDA)
<b>PARTICULAR INFORMATION</b>		
12	Project/ Programme Code (if applicable)	224108600
13	Project/ Programme Name (if applicable)	4th Health, Population & Nutrition Sector Programme (HPNSP)
14	Tender Package No.	FSD/GD-06
15	Tender Package Name	Procurement of 29.76 Million Cycles Oral Pill (3rd Generation)
	Date	
16	Tender Publication Date	12/08/2021
17	Tender Last Selling Date	13/09/2021
	Date	Time
18	Tender Closing Date and Time	14/09/2021 12:00 PM
19	Tender Opening Date and Time	14/09/2021 12:30 PM
20	Name & Address of the Office(s)	Address
	-Selling Tender Document (Principal)	Office of the Director (Logistics and Supply) and Line Director (Procurement, Storage and Supply Management), Logistics & Supply Unit (5th floor), Directorate General of Family Planning, 6, Kawran Bazar, Dhaka-1215
	Selling Tender Document (Others)	Office of the Additional Director (Drugs & Stores) Central Warehouse, Directorate General of Family Planning, Nandipara (Uttargaon) Trimohoni, Union-Nasirabad, Thana-Khilgaon, Dhaka, Bangladesh
	Receiving Tender Document	Room No.-15, Logistics & Supply unit
	Opening Tender Document	Directorate General of Family Planning 6, Kawran bazar, Dhaka-1215
21	Place/Date/Time of Pre-Tender Meeting	The Pre- Tender meeting shall be held at the Conference Room, Room No.-15, Logistics & Supply unit, Directorate General of Family Planning, 6, Kawran bazar, Dhaka-1215 Date: 23/08/2021 & Time: 11:00 AM.

<b>INFORMATION FOR TENDERER</b>				
22	Eligibility of Tenderer	As mentioned in the tender document		
23	Brief Description of Goods	29.76 Million Cycles Oral Pill (3rd Generation) Lot-1 5.952 Million Cycles Oral Pill(COP) 3rd Generation. Lot-2 5.952 Million Cycles Oral Pill(COP) 3rd Generation. Lot-3 5.952 Million Cycles Oral Pill(COP) 3rd Generation. Lot-4 5.952 Million Cycles Oral Pill(COP) 3rd Generation. Lot-5 5.952 Million Cycles Oral Pill(COP) 3rd Generation.		
24	Brief Description of Related Services	Not Applicable		
25	Price of Tender Document (Tk.)	Taka 2000/- (Taka two thousand) only, non- refundable. Mode of payment should be made by Treasury Chalan from Bangladesh Bank/ Sonali Bank Code no: 1-7481-0000-2366 in favor of Director General, Directorate General of Family Planning, 6, Karwan Bazar, Dhaka-1215.Original copy of the Treasury Chalan must be online verification/certified (CTR) by the concerned accounts' office.		
26	Lot No.	Identification of items	Location	Completion Time in Weeks/Months
	Lot-1	5.952 Million Cycles Oral Pill (3rd Generation)	Regional Warehouse, Chattagram	16 weeks from the date of Contract Signing.
	Lot-2	5.952 Million Cycles Oral Pill (3rd Generation)	Regional Warehouse, Khulna.	16 weeks from the date of Contract Signing.
	Lot-3	5.952 Million Cycles Oral Pill (3rd Generation)	Regional Warehouse, Bogra.	16 weeks from the date of Contract Signing.
	Lot-4	5.952 Million Cycles Oral Pill (3rd Generation)	Regional Warehouse, Rangpur.	16 weeks from the date of Contract Signing.
	Lot-5	5.952 Million Cycles Oral Pill (3rd Generation)	Regional Warehouse, Mymensing	16 weeks from the date of Contract Signing.
<b>PROCURING ENTITY DETAILS</b>				
27	Name of Official Inviting Tender	Ratna Talukder		
28	Designation of Official Inviting Tender	Director (Logistics and Supply) and Line Director (Procurement, Storage and Supply Management)		
29	Address of Official Inviting Tender	Logistics & Supply Unit (5th floor), Directorate General of Family Planning 6, Kawran Bazar, Dhaka-1215.		
30	Contact details of Official Inviting Tender	Tel. & Fax No:88-02- 55012349 E-mail: diridsdgp@gmail.com		
31	The procuring entity reserves the right to accept or reject all tenders.			

11/08/2021  
(Ratna Talukder)  
Director (Logistics and Supply) &  
Line Director (PSSM-FP)  
Logistics & Supply Unit  
Directorate General of Family Planning

### Government of the Peoples' Republic of Bangladesh Office of the Project Director Agro-Meteorological Information Systems Development Project Component-C of BWCSR Department of Agricultural Extension Khamarbari, Dhaka-1215.

Memo No. 12.01.0000.018.03.001.21.6035

Date: 11.08.2021

#### Tender Notice

Tender (Ref.: Memo No. 12.01.0000.018.03.001.21.6035, Date:11.08.2021) is invited in the National e-GP System Portal (<https://www.eprocure.gov.bd/>) for the procurement of the following goods/items:

Sl. No.	Package No.	Package Name and Description	Tender ID No.	Tender Publication Date and Time	Tender Closing Date and Time
1.	AMISDP-GD-001	Establishment of Community Radio Center in 12 DAE Regions of Bangladesh	593320	12-Aug-2021 at 16:00	12-Sep-2021 at 14:00
2.	AMISDP-GD-002	Two Rack server with relevant software, 15 KVA Online UPS and 100 KVA Generator for support BAMIS portal data server	593333	12-Aug-2021 at 16:00	02-Sep-2021 at 12:30
3.	AMISDP-GD-007	Upgradation of 160 AGRs and install/setup Special Agromet Weather Station (Ag-AWS) for 160 different location of Bangladesh	593334	12-Aug-2021 at 16:00	12-Sep-2021 at 12:00
4.	AMISDP-GD-012	Installation of Video-Conferencing System in 14 Regional offices, 64 Districts and 3 Research Institutes (BRII, BJRI & BSRI) and Supply of 5 laptops to each of the Research Institute (BARI, BJRI, BRR1 & BSRI)	593379	12-Aug-2021 at 16:00	06-Sep-2021 at 12:30
5.	AMISDP-GD-013	Purchase of Supply, Delivery and Installation of Digital Display Board at 64 Districts & Head Quarter	593382	12-Aug-2021 at 16:00	12-Sep-2021 at 14:30
6.	AMISDP-GD-017	Supply, Delivery and installation of 16 Nos. Photocopier for 16 DD, DAE offices	593383	12-Aug-2021 at 16:00	01-Sep-2021 at 12:30
7.	UNI-GD-01	Automatic Weather Station, Essential Conventional Meteorological Instruments with auto-graphic Instruments; Research instruments and Supply, installation and full functioning of Research based Green House for BAU & BSMRAU	593395	12-Aug-2021 at 16:00	13-Sep-2021 at 12:00
8.	UNI-GD-02	ICT Instruments for Department and Laboratory (Desktop PC, Laptop, Printer, scanner, Projector, photocopier, Video conferencing systems, etc.) for BAU and BSMRAU	593399	12-Aug-2021 at 16:00	07-Sep-2021 at 12:30
9.	UNI-GD-14	Supply and Installation of Air conditioner for BAU & BSMRAU	593530	12-Aug-2021 at 16:00	31-Aug-2021 at 13:00

This is an online tendering process where only e-Tenderer will be accepted in e-GP portal and no hard copy will be accepted. To submit e-Tender please register on e-GP system (<https://www.eprocure.gov.bd/>).

(Dr. Md. Shah Kalam Khan)  
Project Director  
Telephone: +88-02-55028422  
Email: udamisdp@dae.gov.bd





SBAC BANK  
Mosleh Uddin Ahmed, managing director and CEO of South Bangla Agriculture and Commerce Bank, and Abdul Latif, chief regulatory officer of Dhaka Stock Exchange (DSE), signed an agreement on starting trade in the capital market yesterday. M Shaifur Rahman Mazumdar, chief operating officer of the DSE, Mohammad Asadul Haque, head of the bank's treasury, and Md Mokaddes Ali, company secretary, were present.



BENGAL COMMERCIAL BANK  
Tarik Morshed, managing director and CEO of Bengal Commercial Bank, presided over its first "Business Review Meeting" at its Gulshan head office in Dhaka recently. Shahid Hossain, adviser, and KM Awlad Hossain, deputy managing director, were present.

## BB won't budge on deposit rate order

FROM PAGE B1  
"Although the weighted average rate on loans stood at 7.33 per cent in July, it is not the real picture," said Mirza Elias Uddin Ahmed, managing director of Jamuna Bank.  
Banks have to keep a portion of deposits in the central bank in the form of statutory liquidity ratio (SLR) and cash reserve ratio (CRR).  
The interest rate on the government securities purchased by banks to retain the mandatory SLR ratio is very low. At the same time, there is no return on the investment aimed at maintaining the CRR, Ahmed said.  
In addition, there are administrative costs to maintain deposits, he said. "So, the cost of fund is higher than the weighted average on deposits."  
Against the backdrop, the deposit rate may go higher than the lending rate, he said.  
"If banks post a lower profit, this will give a negative signal to the outside world about our financial sector."  
Another CEO said the capital and

provisioning base at some banks were not strong. "So, the instruction will create a problem for them."  
The lower deposit rate is the outcome of the pile-up of excess liquidity in the banking system caused by lower credit demand.  
The excess liquidity reached an all-time high of Tk 231,462 crore in June.  
"In many cases, banks will not feel comfortable in taking deposits from clients," said another managing director.  
Md Serajul Islam, spokesperson and an executive director of the BB, said the central bank had carried out a detailed study on the market before making the decision.  
The volume of fixed deposits is only 30 per cent of the total funds kept by depositors with banks, he said.  
"So, the decision will not adversely impact the profits of the banking sector."  
He said the purchasing power of people had been squeezed alarmingly due to the ongoing economic hardship.  
"The latest measure will give a breathing room to the common people."

## Cryptocurrency platform loses \$600m in cyberheist

REUTERS, Hong Kong  
A cryptocurrency platform has lost an estimated \$600 million in digital tokens after one of the sector's biggest ever hacking attacks, according to details of the heist which emerged on Wednesday.  
Poly Network, a decentralised finance platform (DeFi), announced the hack on Twitter and posted details of digital wallets to which it said the money was transferred, urging people to blacklist tokens from those addresses.  
The value of the tokens in the wallets cited by Poly was just over \$600 million at the time of the announcement, according to crypto trade publication The Block.  
The heist appears to be one of the biggest ever in cryptocurrency markets, and compares with the \$530 million in cryptocurrency stolen from Tokyo-based bitcoin exchange Coincheck in 2018.  
Crypto exchange Mt. Gox, also based in Tokyo, collapsed in 2014 after losing half a billion dollars in bitcoin.  
The latest attack comes as losses from theft, hacks and fraud related to decentralised finance hit an all-time high, raising the risk of both investing in the sector and of regulators looking to shake it down.  
DeFi refers to peer-to-peer cryptocurrency platforms that allow transactions without traditional gatekeepers such as banks or exchanges. Poly Network allows users to swap tokens across different blockchains.

## Bangabandhu sowed seeds of prosperity

FROM PAGE B1  
The community clinics in the rural areas were also established by Bangabandhu.  
The current government guided by the philosophy of Bangabandhu is not only business-friendly but also worker-friendly, Ahmed said.  
While presenting the keynote paper, Mohammed Farshuddin, a former governor of the Bangladesh Bank, said the size of the GDP in 1972 was \$800 crore, and it now reached \$34,500 crore.  
The pre-pandemic economic growth rate was 8 per cent, higher than many peer countries, he said. Per capita income rose to \$2,227, which was \$85 in 1972.  
More than six crore people were living below the poverty line in 1972. It halved to 3.1 crore in the last fiscal year despite the population growth and crises like the coronavirus pandemic, according to Farshuddin, who was also the personal secretary to Bangabandhu.  
Foodgrain production also witnessed significant growth during this time. In 1972, 1.1 crore tonnes of foodgrain were produced. The quantity went past 4.5 crore tonnes in the last fiscal year.  
"In framing the country's industrial base, Bangabandhu also left a space for the growth of the private sector although industries were nationalised," Farshuddin said.  
Nihad Kabir, president of the Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry, said the country's tea industry was developed thanks to the vision of Bangabandhu.  
"Many say that the current Awami League government is not business-friendly. But it is not true."  
Shafiqul Islam Mohiuddin, a former president of the FBCCI, said the formulation of the first five-year plan between 1973 and 1978 by Bangabandhu helped establish the industrial base.  
The total exports were \$377 million in 1972. The receipts surged to more than \$40 billion in the pre-pandemic period, he said.  
AK Azad, another former president of the apex trade body, called for the supply of quality power and human resources to further develop the industrial sector and businesses.  
Salman F Rahman, adviser to the prime minister for private industries and investment, described how Bangabandhu helped his family-run business.  
The company shipped some goods directly to European markets with the help of a Swiss firm, although there was a barter system in the international trading at that time, he recalled.  
Bangabandhu suggested exporting 40 per cent non-traditional items to enjoy the non-barter export facility, he said.  
Planning Minister MA Mannan said Bangladesh might not get rid of bureaucratic tangles entirely, although the government relentlessly works on it.  
"However, the introduction of digital system in every sphere of the government activities might bring a relief from red-tapism," he said.  
Kazi Akram Uddin Ahmed, another former president of the FBCCI, and Md Jashim Uddin, the current president, also spoke.

**শেখ হাসিনার উদ্যোগ**  
বড় বড় বিদ্যুৎ

**Bangladesh Rural Electrification Board**  
Power Division, Ministry of Power, energy & Mineral Resources  
Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

**e-Tender Notice**

An e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP System portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for Transportation of Electrical Materials/Equipments/Pole under "Distribution Network Expansion for 100% Rural Electrification (DMCS) projects." Tender submission deadline is mentioned below:

SI no	Package No.(e-Tender:)	Description	Tender ID NO.	Publishing Date & time	closing Date & time
01	DNE(E)-T&L-45	Transportation of Electrical Materials/Equipments/Pole	596602	17-Aug-2021 10:00 AM	08-Sept-2021 10:00 AM
02	DNE(E)-T&L-46	Transportation of Electrical Materials/Equipments/Pole	596604	17-Aug-2021 10:00 AM	08-Sept-2021 11:00 AM

This is an Online Tender, Where only e-tender will be accepted in the national e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-tender, registration in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required. The fees for downloading the e-Tender documents from the National e-GP System Portal have to be deposited online through any e-GP registered Banks branches up to 07-09-2021 at 05:00 P.M Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP helpdesk (e-mail: [helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd](mailto:helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd)).

K, M, Nayeem Khan  
Director, CS&M  
Bangladesh Rural Electrification Board  
Nikunja-2, Khilkhet, Dhaka 1229 Bangladesh.  
Phone : 02-8900319  
e-mail : [directorcsm@gmail.com](mailto:directorcsm@gmail.com)

বাংলাদেশ পল্লী বিদ্যুতায়ন বোর্ড  
BANGLADESH RURAL ELECTRIFICATION BOARD  
বাপবিবো/জন (২০৮-১৯) ২০২১-২০২২  
GD-1453

## Over 3,000 containers stuck at Indian port

FROM PAGE B4  
In late June, German shipper Hapag-Lloyd, which is tasked with moving the 3,000 TEUs currently stranded, temporarily suspended booking Bangladesh-bound import containers via Singapore due to an acute backlog at the Singaporean transhipment port.  
Colombo and Krishnapatnam are being preferred over the others since June, said Abul Kalam Azad, general manager (operation) of GBX Logistics, Hapag-Lloyd's local agent. But the CPA stopped giving berthing permission to the two vessels since last month, he said.  
SSL Kochi, carrying 793 TEUs of import-laden containers, arrived at the outer anchorage on July 19 and waited for 10 days while SSL Kutich, carrying 987 TEUs of import-laden containers, arrived on July 24 and was denied berthing for six days.  
The official said the CPA gave berthing permission after repeated requests on July 29 and August 1 respectively but informed none would be further provided.  
The two vessels do not operate regularly due to a lack of cargo, said CPA Director (Traffic) Enamul Karim.  
"We asked the operator to follow the procedure for getting the CPA's approval," he said.  
An official of Karnaphuli said they already sent a letter to the CPA on August 2 seeking permission for regular vessel operations but were yet to get a response.

## Walton makes strong comeback

FROM PAGE B1  
Operating costs rose at a slower pace compared to sales, so the profit soared, he added.  
Despite the high profits and dividend declarations, the stock price of the newly listed company dropped 3.87 per cent to Tk 1,417 yesterday.  
Meanwhile, Walton has decided to buy 236 decimals of land for Tk 172 crore, excluding registration cost, at Bashundhara to erect "Iconic Tower" for housing the Walton Corporate Office.  
If needed, the land will be used for other purposes too in the future, said Ripon.  
Company Secretary Md Rafiqul Islam said the purchase would be financed by the company's own sources.  
Moreover, Walton decided to change its name to Walton Hi-Tech Industries PLC in place of Walton Hi-Tech Industries. Islam said the change would come about once the approval came from an annual general meeting.  
The trailblazing homegrown electronics manufacturer raised Tk 100 crore in funds from the stock market in 2020.  
The local electronics giant approved 200 per cent cash dividends for general investors and 75 per cent for directors and sponsors for the year ending on June 30, 2020.

## Nurani Dyeing board to be restructured

FROM PAGE B1  
public offering (IPO) of Sena Kalyan Insurance, which would raise a fund of Tk 16 crore from the market.  
The insurer will issue 1.60 crore shares at face-value to raise the funds.  
With the IPO proceeds, the company would invest in the stock market, keep deposits with banks and buy space for its office, the BSEC said in a press release.  
The insurer's weighted average earnings per share for the last five years was Tk 2.65.  
The BSEC also decided that 7.5 per cent of the fund would be forfeited instead of 15 per cent for those who apply twice for the IPO of Sonali Life Insurance against a bank account.  
Earlier, the regulator confiscated 15 per cent of the applied funds and voided one IPO application for breaching the conditions of the consent letter.  
In response to the investors' pleas, the market regulator decided to reduce the amount forfeited, the BSEC said in the press release.

**Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh**  
Chittagong Hill Tracts Development Board (CHTDB)  
Installation of Solar Photovoltaic System (SPVS) for supply of electricity in remote areas of CHTs Region (2nd Phase) Project  
Rangamati  
[www.chtdb.gov.bd](http://www.chtdb.gov.bd)

Memo No. 29.31.0000.015.11.001.21-08 Date: 10/08/2021 AD

**PROPOSAL INVITATION (2nd Time) for Selection of Firm/Company for Staff Outsourcing of "Installation of Solar Photovoltaic System (SPVS) for supply of electricity in remote areas of CHTs Region (2nd Phase)" Project.**

1. Ministry/Division	: Ministry of Chittagong Hill Tracts Affairs.
2. Executing agency	: Chittagong Hill Tracts Development Board.
3. Procuring entity	: Project Director, Installation of Solar Photovoltaic System (SPVS) for supply of electricity in remote areas of CHTs Region (2nd Phase) Project.
4. Invitation Ref. No. & Date	: 29.31.0000.015.11.001.21-08, Date: 10/08/2021 AD
5. Invitation for	: Proposal (Physical Service).
6. Source of budget	: GOB.
7. Procurement method	: OTM.
8. Project name	: Installation of Solar Photovoltaic System (SPVS) for supply of electricity in remote areas of CHTs Region (2nd Phase).
9. Package No.	: Service-01
10. Package name	: Staff Outsourcing for Installation of Solar Photovoltaic System (SPVS) for supply of electricity in remote areas of CHTs Region (2nd Phase) Project.
11. Last date of proposal submission	: Date: 02/09/2021, Time: 12.30pm.
12. Proposal opening date & time	: Date: 02/09/2021, Time: 1.00pm.
13. Date of proposal selling	: From 12/08/2021 to 01/09/2021 (Office hour).
14. Eligibility of the applicant	: Any reputed Bangladeshi firm/company having at least five years of experience of providing the physical services mentioned below (or relevant position) to any government/non-government office/project or any NGO/Consulting firm having at least five years of general experience.
15. Brief description of the service to be provided	: To provide staff input for the post of (কার্য সহকারী (১৩ জন), গাড়িচালক (০২ জন), দারোগান (০৩ জন) নিরাপত্তা প্রহরী (০৩ জন) for the Office of the Project Director at different locations of the project area.
16. Contract period	: Till June 2023.
17. Address for selling & receiving of proposal documents	: Office of the Project Director, Installation of Solar Photovoltaic System (SPVS) for supply of electricity in remote areas of CHTs Region (2nd Phase), Chittagong Hill Tracts Development Board (CHTDB), Room No. 209, Rangamati.
18. Proposal price	: A non-refundable amount of BDT 1,000 (one thousand) only.
19. Proposal security	: BDT 3.00 lac (Taka three lac) only.
20. Name of the officer inviting proposal	: Dr. Prakash Kanti Chowdhury.
21. Designation of the officer inviting proposal	: Project Director, Installation of Solar Photovoltaic System (SPVS) for supply of electricity in remote areas of CHTs Region (2nd Phase) Project.
22. Contact details	: Office of the Project Director, Installation of Solar Photovoltaic System (SPVS) for supply of electricity in remote areas of CHTs Region (2nd Phase), Chittagong Hill Tracts Development Board (CHTDB), Rangamati, Phone: 0351-63315, E-mail: <a href="mailto:mp@chtdb.gov.bd">mp@chtdb.gov.bd</a>

The procuring entity reserves the right to accept or reject any or all proposals and the whole process without showing any reason.

**Dr. Prakash Kanti Chowdhury**  
Deputy Secretary  
Project Director  
Phone: 0351-63315  
E-mail: [mp@chtdb.gov.bd](mailto:mp@chtdb.gov.bd)

GD-1451

"জীবনের জন্য বিজ্ঞান" **হাইড্রোজেন এনার্জি গবেষণাগার স্থাপন-প্রকল্প**  
বাংলাদেশ বিজ্ঞান ও শিল্প গবেষণা পরিষদ (বিসিএসআইএর)

**Invitation for Tender (OTM)**

1. Ministry/Division	: Ministry of Science & Technology.
2. Agency	: Bangladesh Council of Scientific & Industrial Research (BCSIR).
3. Procuring entity name	: Project Director, Establishment of Hydrogen Energy Laboratory-Project.
4. Invitation for	: Procurement of Laboratory Furniture & Accessories and Analytical Instruments.
5. Invitation Ref. No.	: 39.02.1506.012.07.002.2021/725; Dated: 12.08.2021
<b>KEY INFORMATION</b>	
6. Procurement method	: Open Tendering Method (National).
<b>FUNDING METHOD</b>	
7. Budget and source of fund	: GOB.
8. Project/programme name	: Establishment of Hydrogen Energy Laboratory -Project.
9. Tender package name	: Procurement of Laboratory Furniture & Accessories and Analytical Instruments.
10. Tender last selling date	: 12.09.2021 up to 05.00pm.
11. Tender closing date and time	: 13.09.2021 up to 03.00pm.
12. Tender opening date and time	: 13.09.2021 up to 03.15pm.
13. Name and address of the office: Selling of tender documents	: Office of the Project Director, Establishment of Hydrogen Energy Laboratory-Project, BCSIR Laboratories Chattogram, Chattogram-4220.
14. Name and address of the office: (Receiving & opening tender documents)	: Office of the Project Director, Establishment of Hydrogen Energy Laboratory-Project, BCSIR Laboratories Chattogram, Chattogram-4220.
<b>INFORMATION FOR TENDERER</b>	
15. Eligibility of tenderer	: All terms & conditions will be applicable as per tender document.
16. Brief description of works	: As per schedule specification.
17. Price of tender documents	: 2000.00 (two thousand Taka only), non-refundable.
18. Lot No.	: Identification lot
	: Location
	: Tender security amount (Tk) (refundable)
	: Completion time
<b>ANALYTICAL INSTRUMENTS</b>	
GD-LI/2021-22	: 1. Membrane synthesis set up
	: Chattogram
	: 2% of quoted price
	: Within 03 (three) months from the date of notification of award.
<b>PROCURING ENTITY DETAILS</b>	
19. Name of official inviting tender	: Dr. Md. Abdus Salam.
20. Designation of official inviting tender	: Project Director, Establishment of Hydrogen Energy Laboratory-Project.
21. Address of the official inviting tender	: Office of the Project Director, Establishment of Hydrogen Energy Laboratory-Project, BCSIR Laboratories Chattogram, Chattogram-4220.
22. Contact details of official inviting tender	: Mobile: 01870085657; E-mail: <a href="mailto:hydrogenenergylabbd@gmail.com">hydrogenenergylabbd@gmail.com</a> Web: <a href="http://www.bcsir.gov.bd">www.bcsir.gov.bd</a> ; <a href="http://www.ctghc.gov.bd">www.ctghc.gov.bd</a>
23. The procuring entity reserves the right to accept or to reject any or all tender.	

Dr. Md. Abdus Salam  
Project Director

GD-1448



BANGLADESH-BOUND CARGO

# Over 3,000 containers stuck at Indian port

Berthing permission expires for two ships

DWAIPAYAN BARUA, Ctg

Over 3,000 TEUs (twenty-foot equivalent units) of import-laden containers bound for Bangladesh are stranded at the Indian port of Krishnapatnam as the route's two sole vessels no longer had permission to berth at the Chattogram port.

The permission expired last March and the feeder vessels' operator has not applied for a renewal, said officials of Chittagong Port Authority.

SSL Kochi and SSL Kutch were floated on the Chattogram-Krishnapatnam route in February last year by the Shreyas Shipping and Logistics, a concern of Transworld Feeders.

It came against the backdrop of prospects created through the launching of a Southeast India-Europe Express service by several leading shipping lines on the Krishnapatnam-Chennai-Colombo-Europe route.

Officials of Karnaphuli, the Shreyas' local agent, said they applied to ply the two on the route in October 2019 and got the

CPA's permission in January 2020.

But on March 2, 2020, the CPA in a letter informed the permission was for only two months, a senior official of Karnaphuli told The Daily Star yesterday.

He said in a reply letter they urged extending their permission considering their huge investment.

The CPA officials gave their verbal permission, based on which the vessels had been running for the past 18 months till July this year.

The CPA was yet to give its permission in writing, he said.

Karnaphuli says they ran at least two round trips every month, bringing in 1,000 TEUs and taking away 800 TEUs on an average.

Though there was a lack of cargo at the beginning, the Indian port later became an alternative for many carriers due to acute congestion at the four popular transshipment ports of Colombo, Singapore, Port Klang and Tanjung Pelepas.

READ MORE ON B3



Customer turnout was low at shops, shopping malls and markets which were allowed to reopen yesterday on condition that health guidelines would be maintained. The photo was taken at New Market in the capital.

AMRAN HOSSAIN

# Govt to cut import duty on rice



PALASH KHAN

Rice price edged up 4 per cent in July from Tk 42 a kg in June, data from the Department of Agricultural Marketing shows.

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

The revenue authority is likely to slash import tariffs on rice for nearly three months to October 30 to facilitate private purchases from international sources and contain prices of the staple food in the domestic market.

Total import duty may be reduced to around 25 per cent from the existing 62.5 per cent, in line with a recommendation of the food ministry last month.

The ministry has urged the National Board of Revenue (NBR) to slash the import tariff to allow private businesses to buy 10 lakh tonnes of grain from abroad and increase supply to the local market. The aim is to stabilise the prices as they are well above the international rates.

In July, the average price of the coarse grain of Boro harvest was Tk 44 per kilogram (kg), which would be 38 per cent higher than the price of the grain imported from India.

The price edged up 4 per cent in July from Tk 42 a kg in June, data from the Department of Agricultural Marketing showed.

Market operators blamed the slow release of the staple from the saleable holdings by farmers and increased stocking by seasonal

businessmen, traders and millers for the steady hike in prices.

Prices of coarse rice were up 4 per cent at Tk 46-Tk 50 a kg in the markets in Dhaka yesterday, as against Tk 44-Tk 48 a month ago, according to the state-run Trading Corporation of Bangladesh. Under the circumstances, the food ministry decided to grant permissions to the private sector to import in July earlier.

The rising prices raised questions as government agencies earlier claimed a higher yield in the last fiscal year. Food-grain stocks at public warehouses also increased. Bangladesh produced 6 per cent more rice year-on-year at 3.86 crore tonnes in 2020-21, estimates by the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics and the Department of Agricultural Extension showed.

Officials of the NBR said the revenue authority planned to bring down the regulatory duty and cut customs duty to 15 per cent from 25 per cent currently. In addition, a 5 per cent advance income tax and advance tax will be applied.

The NBR is expected to attach the condition that importers will get the tax benefit upon recommendation from the food ministry.

A notification is likely to be issued soon, an official said.

# Thin turnout as shops reopen

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Malls and markets reopened yesterday after closures for nearly three weeks owing to lockdowns imposed to combat the resurgence of Covid-19 infections.

Customer turnout on the first day had been low. And shop operators say most of the shoppers visited stores to buy essential items.

"We got one-third of the customers we had got during normal business days prior to the lockdowns," said Dewan Aminul Islam Shahin, president of the Dhaka New Market Business Association. On the first day, Abdul Alim, owner of Alim Pushpa Bitan in Shahbag, could sell only Tk 700 worth of flowers since the demand was low.

"The frequency of gatherings and ceremonies has declined because of the pandemic. This has affected our sales," he said. Mosharef Hossain Mojumder, in-charge of Chandrabindu Fashion House in the capital's Mirpur, was mentally prepared that there would not be enough customers on the first day.

"It will take a couple of weeks for the sales to return to normalcy," he said. Only four buyers visited the outlet throughout the day. "They bought clothes for children," he said.

Helal Uddin, president of the Bangladesh Shop Owners Association, said overall sales would be as much as 15 per cent of normal days. There were gatherings at hawkers' shops, he added. Bangladesh has more than 25 lakh wholesale and retail trade units.



## GLOBAL BUSINESS

# China to fund 21 dev projects of Myanmar



REUTERS/FILE

Myanmar's junta chief Senior General Min Aung Hlaing, who ousted the elected government in a coup on February 1.

REUTERS

China will transfer over \$6 million to Myanmar's government to fund 21 development projects, Myanmar's foreign ministry said, in a sign of cooperation resuming under the junta that overthrew an elected government on February 1.

Unlike Western countries that have condemned the junta for cutting short democracy and the killing and imprisonment of its opponents, China has taken a softer line and said its priorities are stability and not interfering in its neighbour.

A foreign ministry statement said the funds were to be transferred from China for projects within the Mekong-Lancang Cooperation framework.

It said those included animal vaccines, culture, agriculture, science, tourism and disaster prevention.

An agreement was signed on Monday with China's ambassador to Myanmar, the statement said. The Chinese embassy's Facebook page confirmed the signing.

Opponents of Myanmar's junta have accused China of supporting the military takeover, in which elected leader Aung San Suu Kyi was ousted and detained. Beijing has rejected such accusations and said it backs regional diplomacy on the crisis.

Western countries have continued to provide some emergency aid to Myanmar, including \$50 million announced by Washington on Tuesday to support relief groups in Myanmar dealing with the fallout from a surge in Covid-19 infections.

China's influence had grown in Myanmar in recent years, with the opening of oil and gas pipelines that cross the country and plans for economic zones and a major port development.

# US Senate approves \$3.5tr spending plan

REUTERS, Washington

The US Senate approved a \$3.5 trillion spending blueprint for President Joe Biden's top priorities early on Wednesday morning in a 50-49 vote along party lines, after lawmakers sparred over the need for huge spending to fight climate change and poverty.

After months of haggling, the Senate on Tuesday passed a \$1 trillion infrastructure bill in a bipartisan 69-30 vote, proposing to make the nation's biggest investment in decades in roads, bridges, airports and waterways.

The measure faces an uncertain future in the House.

Democrats in the Senate then turned to a budget resolution containing spending instructions for the multi-trillion-dollar follow-up package, which includes provisions to create universal preschool, affordable housing and climate-friendly technologies.

The bills have been a top priority for Biden, who has sought to enact sweeping changes during a time when Democrats hold slim majorities in both congressional chambers and where they fear loss of legislative control in the looming 2022 elections.

The Democrats plan to push the package through over the next few months, using a process called "budget reconciliation," which allows them to pass legislation with a simple majority vote.

On Tuesday, the Senate began a "vote-a-rama," a procedure that gave senators the opportunity to propose amendments to the non-binding budget resolution.

It continued early on Wednesday. Debate can run for days unless party leaders agree to a shorter period.

In the free-wheeling process, senators cast votes on nearly 50 amendments, including ones that would have prevented tax increases on

people making less than \$400,000 a year and barred taxpayer funding of abortions. Both of those votes were approved by the chamber.

Republicans have railed against the \$3.5 trillion spending plan.

Senate Republican leader Mitch McConnell, who voted for the \$1 trillion infrastructure bill, called the larger proposal "radical."

Dozens of Republican senators also signed a pledge not to vote to raise the nation's borrowing capability when it is exhausted in the autumn in a bid to curtail Democrats' spending plans.

"They (Democrats) shouldn't be expecting Republicans to raise the debt ceiling to accommodate their deficit spending," Senator Ron Johnson, a Republican who circulated the pledge, told the Wall Street Journal.

Failure to increase or suspend the statutory debt limit - now at \$28.5 trillion - could trigger a federal government shutdown or a debt default.

Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen this

week urged Congress to raise the debt limit in a bipartisan vote.

On Tuesday, Yellen also endorsed moving forward with the larger spending package, saying the \$1 trillion infrastructure plan should have a sequel.

On Tuesday, Biden lauded the 19 Republicans who voted for the bipartisan \$1 trillion infrastructure measure.

"Here on this bill, we've proven that we can still come together to do big things - important things - for the American people," he said.

But it's unclear how soon the House of Representatives will take up the measure.

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi has repeatedly said her chamber will not take up the infrastructure bill or the larger spending package until both are delivered, which will require the Democratic leadership to hold its narrow majorities in Congress together to get the legislation to Biden's desk.



REUTERS/FILE

Vehicles are parked outside the US Capitol building the morning the Senate returned to session in Washington, DC, US on July 31.

## NEWS In Brief

# China auto sales tumble for a third straight month

REUTERS, Beijing

China's vehicle sales slid in July for a third consecutive month, hit hard by flooding in some areas of the country, Covid-19 outbreaks in other areas and the global shortage of semiconductors.

The world's biggest auto market saw sales drop 11.9 per cent from the same month a year earlier to 1.86 million vehicles, according to data from the China Association of Automobile Manufacturers (CAAM).

For the first seven months of the year, China's vehicle sales have jumped 19 per cent as the market recovered from pandemic lows. CAAM said that rebound is set to peter out with sales for the rest of 2021 expected to be below relatively high year-ago levels, although the market is still expected to log growth overall on an annual basis.

Chen Shihua, a senior CAAM executive, cautioned that the global chip shortage, which has led to automakers curtailing production, was unlikely to resolve itself soon as the pandemic rages on in many parts of the world.

One bright spot in July was continued strong sales of new energy vehicles, which more than doubled to 271,000. These include battery-powered electric vehicles, plug-in petrol-electric hybrids and hydrogen fuel-cell vehicles.

The government's promotion of greener vehicles to cut pollution has prompted electric car makers such as Nio Inc, Xpeng Inc and BYD Co Ltd to expand manufacturing capacity in China.

# Chip shortage prompts production halt at Volvo

REUTERS, Stockholm

Volvo Cars, owned by China's Geely Holding, will temporarily stop production at its Swedish plant in Gothenburg due to the shortage of semiconductor chips, it said on Wednesday.

A global chip shortage has hit manufacturing, with automakers cutting down on production and electronic device makers struggling to keep up with a pandemic-led surge in demand for phones, TVs and gaming consoles.

"Production at Torslanda will be paused temporarily from this evening due to a material shortage linked with the semiconductor issue," Volvo Cars said in an emailed statement. "Production will restart as soon as possible, at the latest before next week," the Swedish carmaker, which in June halted production at its Belgian plant in Ghent for a week, said.

Volvo Cars, which last month reported a return to profit in the first half as demand for electric cars grows, is considering listing on the Nasdaq Stockholm stock exchange this year.