NCC BANK

Khairul Alam Chaklader, a director of National Credit and Commerce (NCC) Bank Ltd, inaugurates the bank's 124th branch at Chandina, Cumilla recently. Khondoker Nayeemul Kabir, managing director of the bank, Syed Tofail Ali, Mohammed Mizanur Rahman, and Md Mahbub Alam, senior executive vice-presidents, Muttakim Ashraf Titu, a former vice-president of the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry, Tapan Bakshi, chairman of Chandina Upazila Parishad, and Md Shawkot Hossain Bhuiyan, mayor of Chandina municipality, were also present.

UNION BANK

ABM Mokammel Hoque Chowdhury, managing director of Union Bank Ltd, virtually inaugurated the bank's Satkhira branch recently. Md Habibur Rahman, additional managing director of the bank, Hasan Iqbal and Md Nazrul Islam, deputy managing directors, Md Abu Hasan, managing director of Impex Private Ltd, and Md Akhtaruzzaman Kajal, owner of KATS Multiplex, were present.

Hong Kong retailers forge new path without mainland Chinese tourists

AFP, *Hong Kong*

Three years of democracy protests followed by a pandemic have devastated Hong Kong retailers who had grown used to relying on cash from mainland Chinese tourists.

In a city that once boasted some of the world's highest retail rents, the market has cratered.

But a border town has seized the chance to evolve its local economy.

Sheung Shui is the first town from the main overland border crossing and once thrived as a place where tax-free goods could be snapped up for resale back in mainland China -- a process known as parallel trading.

"People's impression of Sheung Shui is of parallel traders and mainland China," said Eugene Chan, 22, who has lived in the neighbourhood since childhood. Chan recalled pavements swamped by people filling their luggage with cosmetics, baby formula or household supplies to meet huge demand across the border.

But all that vanished in the wake of huge democracy rallies followed by pandemic-related border closures.

In January 2019, just before the protests began, arrivals from the mainland reached an all time high of 5.5 million, a remarkable figure given Hong Kong's population is 7.5 million.

Two years later that figure fell below 3,000. "That's a huge loss of demand," Simon Smith, senior director of research and consultancy at Savills, told AFP.

"That wave of mainland spending, particularly focused on luxury, watches, jewellery, designer goods, it really propelled rents to world-beating levels.

"Hong Kong's popular shopping districts previously boasted "golden streets" where store rents were more expensive than those in New York City's Fifth Avenue.

Now, Smith said, shop rents in prime locations have undergone a "substantial correction" and regressed to 2003 levels, down more than 75 per cent from peak levels in 2013.

Analysts have noted a rebalancing to more local consumption, with some prime location stores in shopping areas taken over by more budget-friendly businesses.

At one large location in Hong Kong's Central district -- which commands some of the highest retail rents in the world -- luxury brand MCM was replaced last year by sporting goods chain Decathlon, which snapped up the storefront for HK$800,000 ($103,000) a month -- a 70 per cent discount, according to local media reports.

Similar rent falls have been documented in Causeway Bay, another once eye-wateringly expensive shopping district.

In Sheung Shui, entrepreneurs like Dream Law have seized the opportunity to start businesses that cater more to locals -- in his case a grocery store.

"During the boom of (mainland tourists), 80 to 90 per cent of businesses in the Sheung Shui market area catered to parallel traders," Law told AFP.

The inflated rents meant that community businesses -- such as hardware stores, bookstores and cinemas -- were priced out, he said.

US weapons exports fall 21pc to $138.2b in fiscal 2021

REUTERS, *Washington*

Sales of US military equipment to foreign governments fell 21 per cent to $138 billion in the latest fiscal year, the US State Department said on Wednesday, as the Biden administration shifts away from some of the more aggressive arms sales practices under former President Donald Trump.

The US State Department disclosed military sales figures for the 2021 fiscal year, which ended on September 30. Sales included $3.5 billion worth of AH-64E Apache attack helicopters to Australia and $3.4 billion worth of CH-53K helicopters to Israel.

Sales of US military equipment in the prior fiscal year had totaled $175 billion.

President Joe Biden's administration shifted away from selling offensive weapons to Saudi Arabia, due to civilian casualties in Yemen and intends to announce a new weapons export policy that emphasizes human rights when evaluating an arms sale.

The 2021 dip comes after high one-time sales of fighter jets and guided missiles in the final year of the Trump administration.

Major fiscal 2020 deals included Japan's purchase of 63 F-35 fighter jets from Lockheed Martin accounting for as much as $23 billion of that year's total.

There are two major ways foreign governments purchase arms from US companies: direct commercial sales negotiated between a government and a company; and foreign military sales in which a foreign government typically contacts a Defense Department official at the US embassy in its capital.

Both require US government approval.

The direct military sales by US companies fell 17 per cent to $103 billion in fiscal 2021 from $124 billion in fiscal 2020, while sales arranged through the US government fell 31 per cent to $34.8 billion in 2021 from $50.8 billion the prior year, the State Department said.

In 2018 the Trump administration rolled out a "Buy American" program that relaxed restrictions on military sales while encouraging US officials to take a bigger role in increasing business overseas for the US weapons industry.

Russia denies withholding gas supplies to Europe

AFP, *Moscow*

Russian energy giant Gazprom has rejected accusations that Moscow is limiting gas deliveries to Europe and denounced Germany's resale of gas to Poland amid soaring prices.

Poland this week accused Moscow of having stopped its deliveries via the Yamal-Europe pipeline that sends Russian gas to Western Europe, accusing Gazprom of "manipulation".

The pipeline was operating in reverse mode this week, sending gas from Germany to Poland, public data showed, as European gas prices ticked up.

President Vladimir Putin on Friday denied that the flow direction was a political move and said that Poland had "sidelined" Russia in managing the pipeline.

"All accusations against Russia and Gazprom that we are not supplying enough gas to the European market are absolutely groundless and unacceptable and untrue," Gazprom spokesman Sergei Kupriyanov said late Saturday, calling the accusations "lies".

ACI FORMULATIONS

M Anis Ud Dowla, chairman of ACI Formulations Ltd, virtually presides over the company's 25th annual general meeting yesterday. The audited financial statements for the year ended on June 30, 2021 together with reports of the directors and auditors of the company were approved by the shareholders. They also approved 30 per cent cash dividend and 5 per cent stock dividend for the financial year. Shusmita Anis, managing director of the company, was present.

Pabna farmers turning to vegetable cultivation

FROM PAGE B4

After buying the vegetables from local producers for cheap, the wholesalers sell them to big markets across the country with prices soaring by Tk 5 to Tk 10 along the way, Badsha added.

Md Monirul Islam, a local wholesaler, told this correspondent that transporting the vegetables to big cities or even nearby towns raises another heacache as syndicates prevail among truckers as well.

"Truckers often charged double the cost for transporting vegetables in the peak season due to the truck syndicates," Islam said.

"So, we need to spend Tk 30,000 to Tk 35,000 to transport each truck of vegetables to Dhaka and Chattogram and due to the excessive transportation cost, vegetable prices soar," he added.

Echoing the same, the DAE's Latif said middlemen eat up most of the profits as a result.

"We need to set up a supply chain, and control and monitor the vegetable market for the sake of farmers," he added.

ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়

UNIVERSITY OF DHAKA: Applications in prescribed form, obtainable from the office of the Registrar, are invited from the Bangladeshi nationals for filling up 1 (One) permanent post of Assistant Professor in the Department of Pali and Buddhist studies. In the pay scale of Tk. 35,500-67,010/- (National Pay scale-2015)

QUALIFICATIONS FOR ASSISTANT PROFESSOR:

Candidates must have at least first class/ in case of CGPA 3.50 out of 4.00 scale in Honours and Master's degree in Pali and Buddhist studies or an equivalent degree from any foreign university with at least 1st division/ in case of GPA 4.25 out of 5.00 in S.S.C. and H.S.C. examinations. They should have at least 03 (three) years of teaching and research experience in a university with 03 (three) research publications in standard journals. Publication in the predatory journal will not be accepted. Experience and performance as a teacher as well as significant contribution to different areas of University activities especially in guiding the overall educational and co-curricular activities of the students will also be treated as qualifications. Other qualifications being equal preference may be given to those who earned Ph.D degree.

Eight copies of application together with attested copies of certificates, testimonials, grade sheets/mark sheets and proof of experience along with a Pay Order / Bank Draft of the value of Tk. 750/- (Seven hundred fifty) only, payable to the Registrar, should reach him on or before 17/01/2022. Candidates already in service must apply through proper channel.

GD- 2393

BANGLADESH ELECTION COMMISSION
Identification System for Enhancing Access to Services (IDEA) Project (2nd Phase)
Nirbachan Bhaban (Floor-8)
Agargaon, Dhaka-1207.

Invitation for Tenders

GOVERNMENT OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF BANGLADESH

1	Ministry/Division		Bangladesh Election Commission		
2	Agency		Election Commission Secretariat		
3	Procuring Entity Name		represented by Project Director, Identification System for Enhancing Access to Services (IDEA) Project (2nd Phase), Bangladesh Election Commission.		
4	Procuring Entity District		Dhaka		
5	Invitation for		Computer Related: **Desktop Computer, Laptop** etc.		
6	Invitation Ref. No. & Date		17.14.0000.240.07.057.2021-1708	Dated: 26 December, 2021	
KEY INFORMATION					
7	Procurement Method		Open Tendering Method (OTM)		
FUNDING INFORMATION					
8	Budget and Source of Funds		GoB (Development Budget)		
PARTICULAR INFORMATION					
9	Project / Program Code (if applicable)		224331200		
10	Project Name (if applicable)		Identification System for Enhancing Access to Services (IDEA) Project (2nd Phase)		
11	Tender Package No.		GD-03		
12	Tender Package Name		Computer Related: **Desktop Computer, Laptop** etc.		
			Date	**Time**	
13	Tender Publication Date		27 December, 2021		
14	Pre-Tender Meeting Date and Time		06 January, 2022	11:00 A.M.	
15	Tender Last Selling Date and Time		23January, 2022	05:00 P.M.	
16	Tender Closing Date and Time		24 January, 2022	02:00 P.M.	
17	Tender Opening Date and Time		24 January, 2022	02:30 P.M.	
18	Name & Address of the office(s)		**Address**		
	Selling Tender Document (Principal)		Identification System for Enhancing Access to Services (IDEA) Project (2nd Phase), Nirbachan Bhaban (Floor-8), Room No. 814, Agargaon, Dhaka-1207.		
	NO CONDITIONS APPLY FOR SALE ,PURCHASE OR DISTRIBUTION OF TENDER DOCUMENTS				
19	Pre-Tender Meeting		Conference Room No. 721, IDEA Project (2nd Phase), Nirbachan Bhaban (Floor-7), Agargaon, Dhaka-1207.		
20	Receiving Tender Document				
21	Opening Tender Document				
INFORMATION FOR TENDERER					
22	Eligibility of Tenderer		1. Tender shall have the legal capacity, enrolled and have to fulfil its obligation/obligations to pay taxes under the provisions of laws and regulations of Bangladesh. 2. Detail information has been provided in the tender document.		
23	Brief Description of Services		Computer Related: **Desktop Computer, Laptop** etc.		
24	Price of Tender Document (Tk.)		BDT 2500.00 (Two thousand Five Hundred only) Non-refundable.		
25	Package No.	Identification of Package	Location	Tender Security Amount (Tk)	Completion Time in Weeks
	GD-03	Computer Related: **Desktop Computer, Laptop** etc.	Dhaka	8,50,000.00Tk (Eight lac Fifty thousand taka) Only	12 (twelve) weeks from the date of signing contract.
PROCURING ENTITY DETAILS					
26	Name of Official Inviting Tender		Brigadier General Abul Kashem Md Fazlul Kader		
27	Designation of Official Inviting Tender		Project Director		
28	Address of Official Inviting Tender		Identification System for Enhancing Access to Services (IDEA) Project (2nd Phase), Nirbachan Bhaban (Floor-8), Agargaon, Dhaka-1207.		
29	Contact details of Official Inviting Tender		Telephone: 00-88-02-55007571; e-mail address: pd.idea2.bd@gmail.com		
30	The Procuring Entity reserves the right to reject all the tenders or annul the tender proceedings.				

Abul Kashem Md Fazlul Kader
Brigadier General
Project Director
IDEA Project (2nd Phase)

GD-2396