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An aerial view of Plummy Fashions Ltd, the greenest knitwear factory in the world, located in Narayanganj. It is one of the 157 green apparel factories in Bangladesh certified by the United States Green Building Council. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: SANAD SAHA

# Green garment efforts not yielding better prices

Manufacturers express disappointment at CPD event

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Entrepreneurs yesterday expressed disappointment as their green operations are not fetching better prices although the costly move has allowed buyers to source products from eco-friendly factories and benefit from the improving image of the whole supply chain.

Garment exporters in Bangladesh have pumped hundreds of crores of taka into setting up the green factories, which are helping them consume 30 per cent less energy and water and have brightened the image of the industry.

The move is also helping international buyers and retailers as consumers globally are increasingly becoming conscious about the sustainability of the supply chain.

"However, we are not getting premium prices from retailers and brands," said Md Fazlul Hoque, managing director of Narayanganj-based Plummy

Fashions Ltd, the greenest knitwear factory in the world.

He said many developments had taken place in the garment sector in recent years as per the demands of buyers. But the green garment factories get only a 2 per cent rebate on the final settlement of income tax, he said.

The entrepreneur was speaking at the launching programme of an initiative of the Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD) and the embassy of Sweden in Bangladesh at the Brac Centre Inn in Dhaka.

The initiative – Securing Green Transition of the Textile and Readymade Garments Sector in Bangladesh – aims to contribute towards the enhancement of environmentally sustainable and climate-neutral growth with productive employment opportunities for women and youth.

In recent years, Bangladesh has made impressive strides in improving working conditions. The country is now home to the highest number of green garment factories in the world.

Currently, the number of green apparel factories stands at 157 as the United States Green Building Council yesterday awarded the certification to two more factories. Nearly 500 more garment factories are waiting to

should also pay attention to the welfare of the workers, especially to female workers, she said.

Shams Mahmud, managing director of Shasha Denim, said he had partnered with Turkey investors to secure better prices.

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Nazma Akter, founder and executive director of the Awaj Foundation, a labour rights organisation, suggested buyers pay fair prices for the garment items produced at the green factories since manufacturers have spent hugely to build them.

The green factories

Mohammad Hatem, executive president of the Bangladesh Knitwear Manufacturers and Exporters Association, said although consumers were paying more for the goods produced in the green garment factories, exporters were not getting the prices accordingly.

He demanded the government waive the duties

on the imported chemicals used in the garment factories and reduce the source tax to encourage more green initiatives.

Faruque Hassan, president of the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association, said the sector was ready to change a lot if needed, but buyers are not paying better prices.

"Cleaner and greener production can't come free of cost."

Christine Johansson, deputy head of mission at the embassy of Sweden, called for marketing drives to get better prices.

Swedish companies account for 10 per cent of Bangladesh's annual garment exports.

Saber Hossain Chowdhury, a lawmaker and the chairman of the parliamentary standing committee on the environment, forest and climate change ministry, called for taking measures for increasing the prices of garment items in order to solve the problems facing the industry.

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With Covid-19 making digital shopping more popular than ever, e-commerce platforms such as Chaldal have stepped up their efforts to ensure fast and safe deliveries both in and around Dhaka city. Here, a Chaldal deliveryman is seen wading through traffic. The picture was taken recently.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

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INVESTMENT ABROAD

## Scope aims at curbing capital flight: Kamal

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Finance Minister AHM Mustafa Kamal yesterday said the government has granted the scope to businesses to invest abroad in order to curb the transfer of money out of the country through illegal channels.

"It is not wrong to invest abroad. If you don't allow it, it will go to different countries through hundi. It is better to do it officially," he said, responding to a query during a media briefing after the meeting of the cabinet committee on purchase.

His comment came days after the finance ministry issued rules on equity investment abroad, allowing Bangladeshi exporters to invest a portion of their overseas sales in other countries.

Now, businesses will be able to invest abroad 20 per cent of their average exports in the previous five years or 25 per cent of net asset values based on the latest audited reports, whichever is lower.



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## Freelancers to get 4pc incentive for software export

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

There is good news for about six lakh freelancers in the country as they now will get a 4 per cent incentive against export of software or IT-enabled services.

Freelancers who work at 55 marketplaces and have been selected by the ICT ministry will get the incentive, according to a Bangladesh Bank circular issued yesterday.

A freelance services marketplace is an online site where businesses or individuals find and hire individuals to do work remotely.

Popular marketplaces such as Upwork, Fiverr,

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	0.51% 6,991.55	0.46% 12,308.31

	COMMODITIES		AS OF FRIDAY
	Gold ▼	Oil ▲	
	\$1,792.11 (per ounce)	\$87.40 (per barrel)	

	CURRENCIES				STANDARD CHARTERED BANK
	BUY TK	85.05	94.10	113.16	13.13
	SELL TK	86.05	97.90	116.96	13.80

	ASIAN MARKETS				FRIDAY CLOSINGS
	MUMBAI	TOKYO	SINGAPORE	SHANGHAI	
	▼ 0.13% 57,200.23	▲ 2.09% 26,717.34	▼ 0.42% 3,246.33	▼ 0.97% 3,361.44	

## Chaldal on expansion spree

MAHMUDUL HASAN

Local online grocery store Chaldal is expanding at a faster clip outside of Dhaka to cater to customers who have become habituated with digital shopping throughout the coronavirus pandemic.

In the past few months, it expanded its footprint in two cities: It started its operation in Khulna on November 10 and in Sylhet on January 18, taking the number of big cities covered by the company to six.

It expanded to Chattogram in March last year, Jashore in April and Narayanganj towards the end of 2020. It has partial operations in Tangail and Cox's Bazar.

"We are now prioritising expansions due to the increased demand for online purchase across the country," Waseem Alim, chief executive officer of Chaldal, told The Daily Star.

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