



Organic duck farming for eggs is widespread among women in Atrai upazila of Naogaon, thanks to numerous water bodies scattered throughout the region. Bangladeshi farmers mostly raise an indigenous “Deshi” duck alongside other breeds including Khaki Campbell, Indian Runner and Jinding. While the Deshi ducks average 60 to 70 eggs per year, the Khaki Campbell ducks are the most prolific layers, becoming mature at approximately 7 months and averaging 300 eggs per year. There were 617.46 lakh domesticated ducks in Bangladesh in fiscal year 2020-21, according to the Department of Livestock Services. The photo was taken at Patisar village recently.

PHOTO: MOSTAFA SHABUJ

# Global gas rally to kickstart long-stalled US LNG projects

REUTERS, Houston

High global natural gas prices are breaking a two-year logjam of new US liquefied natural gas (LNG) projects with at least three of the multibillion-dollar proposals likely achieving enough supply contracts to start construction this year, said developers and industry experts.

A Louisiana project that received a green light in 2019 was the last wholly new US plant to receive a go-ahead, benefiting from then-strong demand from China and utilities swapping to LNG from coal. A dozen others were stalled, first by the China-US trade war and then by the Covid-19 pandemic and environmental concerns.

But super-hot demand for the fuel in northern Europe and China have pushed global gas prices to near record highs, reviving financing prospects for plants that chill natural gas into liquid for transport by seaborne tankers.

A key benchmark price for natural

gas deliveries in northern Europe has more than quadrupled from a year ago, to about \$30 per million British thermal units per day (mmBtu).

Europe’s declining gas production and increased dependency on Russia for its supplies also has driven worldwide LNG prices higher and focused attention on the need for new LNG plants in the United States and Asia.

China stopped taking most US LNG by imposing a 25 per cent tariff on imports in mid-2019 at the height of a US-China trade war. But in November, top Chinese energy companies agreed to buy more US gas than ever before through long term contracts.

Such contracts are key to winning financing for these \$4 billion to \$8.5 billion projects and breaking the development logjam, said Carlos Sole, an attorney at law firm Baker Botts who has been involved in the development and financing of multiple US LNG export projects.

“Last year capital was not willing

to deploy itself on a speculative basis without long-term contracts,” Sole said. “Assuming those are achieved, which is the general expectation given current market conditions, then capital should be available.”

Atop the list of proposals likely to get financial approval are Venture Global and Tellurian Inc plants, both in Louisiana, and a Cheniere Energy Inc project in Corpus Christi, Texas, said Craig Pirrong, a finance professor at the University of Houston and commodity trading expert.

“The banks are finally realizing that this is an existential issue,” said Tellurian Executive Chairman Charif Souki, referring to the recent lack of energy investments.

Construction on the first phase of Tellurian’s Driftwood project that would export about 11 million tonnes per annum (MTPA) of LNG, or around 1.5 billion cubic feet per day (bcfd) of natural gas, could start this summer once financial hurdles are cleared, he

said earlier this month.

The three new projects would increase US export capacity by about a third at mid-decade. Plants already under construction should lift peak US capacity to 13.9 bcfd by the end of this year, estimates the US Energy Information Administration, a figure surpassing Qatar and Australia, now the two largest LNG exporters.

“This is the best macro environment that the LNG business has ever seen,” Delfin LNG Chief Executive Dudley Poston said in an interview, adding he was “very confident” that Delfin’s project off the Louisiana coast would be approved for construction this year.

Still, optimism has never been in short supply among project developers despite repeated setbacks.

Financial go-aheads for projects including Tellurian’s Driftwood, NextDecade Corp’s Rio Grande and Semptra Energy’s Port Arthur LNG plants were promised and delayed last year, in some cases for a second time.

## bti bringing housing solutions for ultra-rich

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

In order to cater to the growing demand for luxury apartments in Bangladesh, building technology and ideas (bti) ltd is developing spacious housing solutions with high-end features in Dhaka’s Gulshan.

For example, THREE is an upcoming residential complex in the area that is all about living an elite lifestyle in fully automated units, according to Asif Iqbal, chief executive officer (CEO) of bti.

The project, driven by contemporary living concepts designed by bti experts in line with international trends, aims to cater to the country’s ultra-rich who will consider the aesthetics, functionality, and concept of their apartments.

“So, bti is providing the finest in the luxury sector,” he said.

Iqbal went on to say that the 7,000 square feet (sqft), five-bedroom units available at THREE facilitate the smooth flow of light and air as full-height windows and doors promise an unobstructed view of the locality. THREE is set to be handed over by June 2022 with most units already sold out.

Customers will have to spend up to Tk 25,000 per sqft to purchase an apartment at THREE, according to bti sources.

“With only 14 units in the large complex, two elevators for the residents and a separate staff lift, the building gives an idea of the kind of luxury that can be enjoyed by those who can afford it,” Iqbal said.

The project is located in north Gulshan, where THREE’s magnanimous facade is easily recognisable from Kemal Ataturk Avenue, towering over Gulshan Lake.

In addition, the facility will feature a green manicured lawn with a BBQ zone cleverly merged with the meet and greet lounge, and a semi outdoor infinity pool and jacuzzi, all of which will overlook the lake.

“Besides, a fully-equipped gymnasium and dedicated wi-fi zones instantly give this residence the feel of a five-star luxury hotel,” he added.

Regarding the security measures in place at THREE, he said each corner of the building, from its entrance to the units itself would be fully covered by various security measures.

Apart from 24-hour surveillance, THREE has an automated entry bar at the entrance connected to the security room as well as apartments so that residents can view and speak with anyone entering the premises, Iqbal said.

Each unit will be allotted three parking spots in a highly secured parking zone with automated garage doors.



Elite Hitech Industries, master distributor of Midea Air Conditioner and manufacturer of Elite Air Conditioner, organised a “5th Dealer Conference” with the theme of “Moving Forward” at a local hotel in Dhaka on Saturday. The best dealers were awarded in presence of Managing Director Md Shafiqul Islam and Deputy Managing Director Md Noor A Alam.

PHOTO: ELITE HITECH INDUSTRIES

## Dhaka 4.0: Towards a more

FROM PAGE B4  
Availability of healthcare for residents of Dhaka will continue to influence the city’s liveability.

Bangladesh has made great strides in controlling and eradicating some of the diseases that spread due to poor sanitation and drinking water. However, tropical diseases such as seasonal surges in dengue remain an important health issue.

The city has already demonstrated its willingness to adopt contemporary technologies such as drone-powered surveys to understand the risk of dengue spread. Dhaka 4.0 needs to increase such adoption of new technologies and incorporate them into regular health services to improve liveability.

However, there are other areas beyond health services. Liveable infrastructure is one of those important

components. While development of the mass rapid transit system like metro rail is ongoing, telecommunication infrastructure in Dhaka needs improvement. A more liveable city should have robust infrastructure to facilitate telecommuting.

New generation technologies such as 5G are expected to close the infrastructural gaps in this area. While the trial run started with one mobile network operator in December 2021, the spectrum auction is likely to happen in 2022, followed by a rollout for the public.

A more liveable city also focuses on environment-friendly infrastructure to keep the city greener. Adoption of green tech in all programmes would help achieve this.

For example, increasing the adoption of electric vehicles (EVs) would help curb carbon emissions, thereby

air quality. The apex regulatory body, the Bangladesh Road Transport Authority, has started finalising the EV policy to expedite the import and manufacturing of EVs in Bangladesh. Leveraging these new climate-friendly policies to improve the city’s infrastructure will enhance its liveability.

Another critical component of a liveable city is the availability of education infrastructure. With the onset of the pandemic, educational institutions have been largely shut down for two consecutive years. While the government has taken many effective measures to facilitate remote learning, the overall impact on children’s education has been significant.

According to a situational analysis report published by the Unicef and the Unesco, the education of 37 million children in Bangladesh

has been disrupted due to the pandemic-induced lockdown of educational institutions. Being an urban area with higher affordability of smartphones for education, children in Dhaka have probably had better access to remote education. A more liveable city should ensure uninterrupted education for all categories of students living there.

As the city is passing through the third wave of the pandemic, the aspirations towards making Dhaka 4.0 a more liveable city must factor in the current circumstances.

The authorities responsible for the development of Dhaka should also start assessing their ongoing and upcoming development initiatives and reconfigure their plans towards the goal of greater liveability.

The writer is a partner at PwC. Views are personal.

## bKash honours top 10 agents

STAR BUSINESS DESK

bKash awarded motorcycles to its top 10 agents in recognition of catering outstanding bKash services to the customers.

Ali Ahmed, chief commercial officer of bKash, handed over the motorcycles to the agents at the mobile financial service (MFS) provider’s head office on Saturday, a press release said.

The awarded agents are: Helal Uddin (Barishal), Mohammad Kader (Bogura), Ali Hosan (Chattogram), Mashud Alam (Cumilla), Shib Shanker Halder (Dhaka North), Md Omar Faruk (Dhaka South), Md Wahiduzzaman (Khulna), Kawsar Akbar (Mymensingh), Md Sharik Alam (Rangpur) and Nazmul Alam (Sylhet).

bKash, a subsidiary of Brac Bank, conducts its nationwide MFS through nearly 300,000 agents, who have been playing a pivotal role in moving the sector forward for the last 10 years since its inception.

The agents are known as “Human ATMs” as they facilitate financial services to customers who heavily depend on them for having uninterrupted financial services in any need, including emergencies.



Chowdhury Nafeez Sarafat, chairman of Padma Bank Ltd, virtually inaugurates the bank’s Town Hall Meeting 2022 under the banner of “Power of Performance, Shaping the future” at the lender’s corporate head office in Gulshan, Dhaka on Saturday. Faisal Ahsan Chowdhury, acting managing director of the bank, presided over the meeting. The members of the management team, managers of branches and officials of various departments from the head office and branches were also present.

PHOTO: PADMA BANK



Salim Rahman, chairman of Al-Arafah Islami Bank, virtually inaugurated an “Annual Business Development Conference 2022” on Saturday. Farman R Chowdhury, managing director, presided over the programme. The lender’s total deposit stood at Tk 37,963 crore and it invested Tk 34,443 crore at the end of 2021, according to unaudited accounts. Import and export through the bank stood at Tk 26,157 crore and Tk 13,579 crore respectively.

PHOTO: AL-ARAFAH ISLAMI BANK