Star BUSINESS

Rent can soar for excess port stays of containers

DWAIPAYAN BARUA, *Ctg*

Container storage rent at the Chattogram port from tomorrow could quadrupled for stays of excessive periods as Chittagong Port Authority (CPA) looks to force importers to promptly take deliveries and free up space.

Over the past couple of weeks, importers had been apparently slow in picking up their goods every day, said port officials.

This was especially evident among importers who use whole containers as opposed to those who share the space inside containers.

Since early last month, the designated space for those using whole containers had started to get packed.

On March 1, there were 36,397 TEUs (twenty-foot equivalent units) of containers in that designated space, way more than its limit of 35,868 TEUs.

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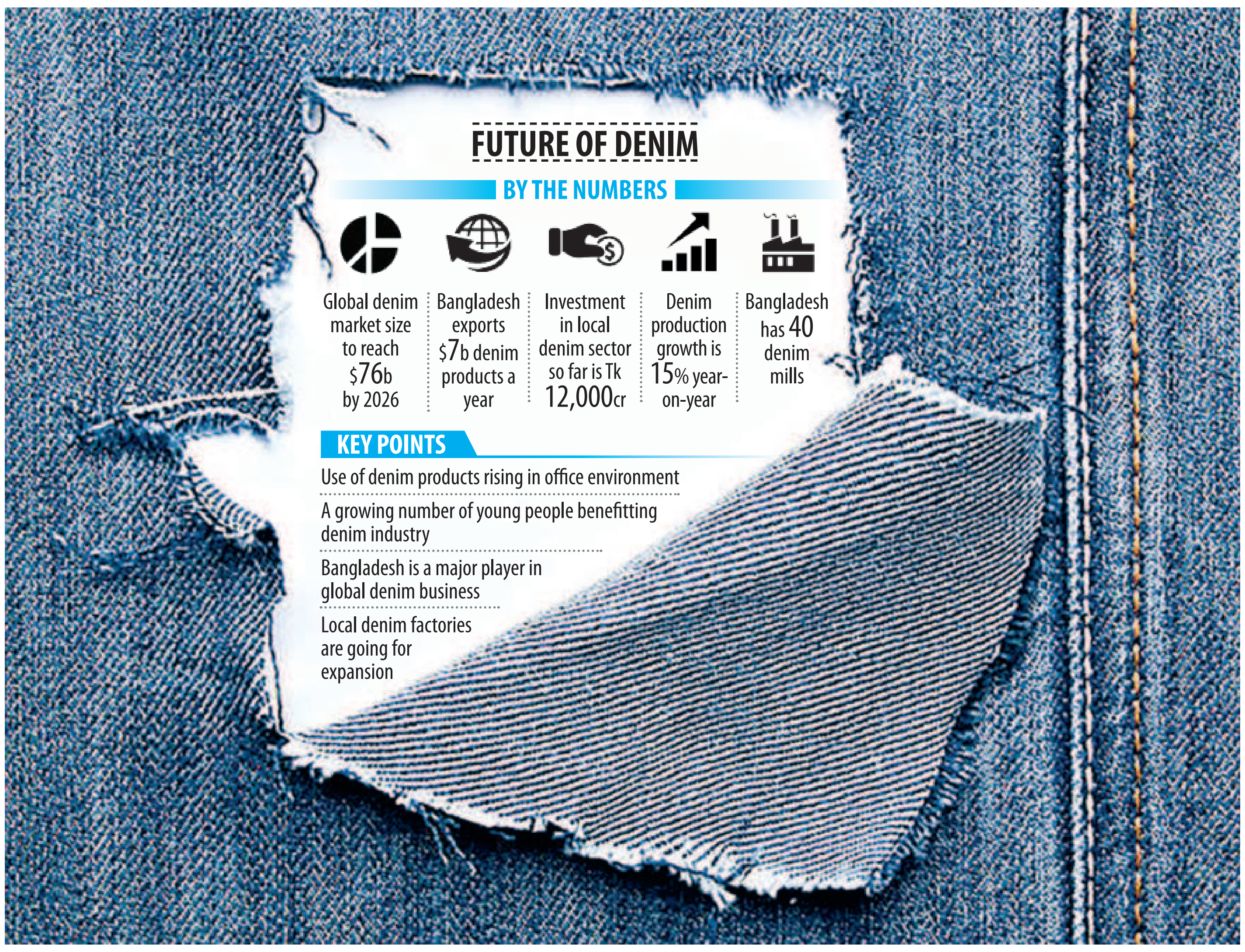


Denim mills expand as global market booms

REFAYET ULLAH MIRDHA

Fabric makers in Bangladesh have embarked on a massive expansion to capture more share of the fast-growing global denim market keeping pace with the changing fashion and styles.

Bangladesh, the second-largest apparel exporter in the world, is already a top denim products supplier in the US and European markets. In fact, one in every three denim items sold in Europe is actually made in the country.

Currently, 40 denim mills are producing 280 lakh metres of denim fabrics in Bangladesh, up 40 per cent from five years ago. Denim fabrics makers have appetite to grow further. And their ambition was fittingly brought up in the report of the Research and Markets, a global market research firm, last week.

"Bangladesh seeks bigger roles in denim jeans production," it said.

The global denim jeans market will spike to $76.1 billion by 2026, up from $57.3 billion in 2020, according to the analysis.

The firm attributed the anticipated success to a number of factors, including the casualisation movement that has infiltrated the workplace, where jeans are becoming increasingly commonplace.

A growing army of young people entering the workforce has fueled the growth of the denim industry as the demographic largely opts for more casual office attire.

The projection echoes recent data from retail intelligence platform Edited, which shows denim sales were up 10 per cent in 2021 from a year ago.

It rose 27 per cent in the first week of 2022 compared to the same period last year, the analysis said.

In Bangladesh, denim fabrics producers and exporters also acknowledged the research findings as they are reaping the benefit of the expanding global denim business.

For instance, Envoy Textile Ltd produces 4.42 million metres of denim fabrics a month, up from 3.5 million metres two years ago.

"Currently, we are fully booked with orders from the international retailers and brands," said Kutubuddin Ahmed, chairman of Envoy Textile. "The business is reviving at a faster rate from the severe fallouts of Covid-19."

Envoy Textile ships more than $120 million worth of denim products a year to Europe and the US and is bringing diversification to denim products with new investment to meet the growing demand for the items.

Amber Denim Ltd has expanded its capacity to make the most of the growing demand. Currently, it is producing nearly 40 lakh metres of denim fabrics a month, which was 35 lakh metres two years ago.

"The denim sector is growing at 15 per cent as people are investing in the promising sector," said Showkat Aziz Russell, chairman of Amber Denim.

Mostafiz Uddin, managing director of Denim Expert, calls denim the future of business for Bangladesh.

Currently, local millers are capable of supplying denim fabrics as per the demand of exporters as they have invested a lot of money over the last few years. This has pushed up the exports from the segment.

READ MORE ON B3

NBFIs asked to stop spending on deposit collection

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Bangladesh Bank yesterday asked non-bank financial institutions (NBFIs) in the country to refrain from spending to collect deposits from people and organisations.

The central bank's directive came after it found that some NBFIs were spending money to mobilise deposits by showing the expenses on various names such as commission, development and business development expenses.

"This is unethical and unacceptable," Bangladesh Bank said in a circular issued to NBFIs.

Such activities are causing unreasonable increases to the cost of funds of organisations, which fuels the interest rate for lending, the central bank said.

READ MORE ON B3

PRIZE BONDS

Tk 35cr winnings remain unclaimed

SUKANTA HALDER *and* ASIFUR RAHMAN

Have you ever bought a national prize bond? If you have, then please match your bond numbers with the draw results again as you could be one of those lucky few who are yet to claim their prize despite winning the lottery.

Recent data from the Department of National Savings showed that about 23 per cent of the winners did not claim their prizes in the last three-and-a-half years.

As such, a total of Tk 34.68 crore in prize money remains undisbursed for this period, according to the department.

People whose prize bond numbers matched with the draw results can claim their prize money within two years after the results are published.

If you do not want to participate in the draw, you can recollect the bond's value at any time.

The Bangladesh government initiated such prize bonds in 1974. Each bond had cost between Tk 10 and Tk 50 back then, but the price was revised to Tk 100 in 1995.

Commercial banks, Bangladesh Bank and local post offices sell the prize bonds.

Officials of the savings department said ever since the prize bond lottery was launched, a good amount of prize money has remained undisbursed.

Earlier, the lottery results used to be published only in newspapers. Then a search option was added to the Bangladesh Bank website.

As such, many people were not aware of the announcement date and a portion of them did not even come to know that they had won.

To reduce the hassle of searching for prize bonds results in newspapers or websites, the government has developed a software called "the Prize Bond Result Inquiry Software (PBRIS)".

READ MORE ON B3

STOCKS

DSEX ▲	CSCX ▲
1.46%	1.21%
6,765.73	11,879.72

COMMODITIES (AS OF FRIDAY)

Gold ▼	Oil ▲
$1,987.99 (per ounce)	$109.09 (per barrel)

CURRENCIES (STANDARD CHARTERED BANK)

	$USD	€EUR	£GBP	¥CNY
BUY TK	85.05	91.90	110.38	13.15
SELL TK	86.05	95.70	114.18	13.82

ASIAN MARKETS (FRIDAY CLOSINGS)

MUMBAI	TOKYO	SINGAPORE	SHANGHAI
▲ 0.15%	▼ 2.05%	▲ 0.28%	▲ 0.41%
55,550.30	25,162.78	3,249.66	3,309.75

Winners of the 2nd HSBC Business Excellence Awards pose with Commerce Minister Tipu Munshi at the Radisson hotel in Dhaka yesterday. Robert Chatterton Dickson, British high commissioner, Amanda Murphy, head of commercial banking at HSBC South and Southeast Asia, Md Mahbub ur Rahman, CEO of HSBC Bangladesh, and Md Jashim Uddin, president of FBCCI, were also present. PHOTO: STAR

HSBC honours businesses

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Eight business entities and a government app were crowned at the 2nd HSBC Business Excellence Awards for their role in promoting Bangladesh and contributing to the sustainable growth of the economy during the challenging time brought on by the coronavirus pandemic.

The Hong Kong and Shanghai Banking Corporation in Bangladesh, one of the world's largest banking and financial service organisations, recognised the winners at a programme at the capital's Radisson Blu Dhaka Water Garden Hotel, in association with the commerce ministry of Bangladesh and the British High Commission in Dhaka.

Commerce Minister Tipu Munshi handed over the crests to the winners.

Pacific Jeans Group won the award in the

READ MORE ON B3

A Bombardier Global 7500 business jet is pictured during a presentation of the brand new aircraft from the global business aviation company at Geneva airport on March 3. Airlines may find themselves swept up in unprecedented turbulence, with air travel shunned over climate concerns, plagued by pandemic shutdowns and soaring oil prices, but for private jet operators, business is booming.

PHOTO: AFP

China to face consequences if it helps Russia evade sanctions over Ukraine

White House adviser says

REUTERS, *Washington*

US National Security Adviser Jake Sullivan, who is due to meet with China's top diplomat Yang Jiechi in Rome on Monday, warned Beijing that it would "absolutely" face consequences if it helped Moscow evade sweeping sanctions over the war in Ukraine.

Sullivan told CNN the United States believed China was aware that Russia was planning some action in Ukraine before the invasion took place, although Beijing may not have understood the full extent of what was planned.

Now, he said, Washington was watching closely to see to what extent Beijing provided economic or material support to Russia, and would impose consequences if that occurred.

"We are communicating directly, privately to Beijing, that there will absolutely be consequences for large-scale sanctions, evasion efforts or support to Russia to backfill them," Sullivan said. "We will not allow that to go forward and allow there to be a lifeline to Russia from these economic sanctions from any country, anywhere in the world."

A senior administration official said the war in Ukraine would be a "significant topic" during Sullivan's meeting with Yang, which is part of a broader effort by Washington and Beijing to maintain open channels of communication and manage competition between the world's two largest economies.

"This meeting is taking place in the context of Russia's unjustified and brutal war against Ukraine, and as China has aligned itself with Russia to advance their own vision of the world order, and so I expect ... the two of them will discuss the impact of Russia's war against Ukraine on regional and global security," the source said.

No specific outcomes were expected from the meeting, the source added, speaking on condition of anonymity.

The United States on Saturday said it would rush up to $200 million worth of additional weapons to Ukrainian forces as they try to defend against Russian shelling in the largest war in Europe since World War Two.

The Russian assault, which Moscow calls a "special military operation," has trapped thousands of civilians in besieged cities and sent 2.5 million Ukrainians fleeing to neighboring countries.

The United States and its allies have imposed sweeping, unprecedented sanctions against Russia and banned its energy imports, while providing billions of dollars of military and humanitarian assistance to Ukraine.

Individually and together they have appealed to China, Gulf nations and others that have failed to condemn the Russian invasion to join in isolating Russia from the global economy.

Beijing, a key trading partner of Russia, has refused to call Russia's actions an invasion, although Chinese President Xi Jinping last week did call for "maximum restraint" in Ukraine after a virtual meeting with German Chancellor Olaf Scholz and French President Emmanuel Macron.

Xi also expressed concern about the impact of sanctions on global finance, energy supplies, transportation and supply chains, amid growing signs that Western sanctions are limiting China's ability to buy Russian oil.

Hu Xijin, former editor-in-chief of the state-backed Chinese Global Times newspaper, said on Twitter: "If Sullivan thinks he can persuade China to participate in sanctions against Russia, he will be disappointed."

The International Monetary Fund last week said the crisis could also see China miss its 5.5 per cent growth target this year, and its chief said she had spoken with China's top central banker and expected mounting pressure on Russia to end the war.

While in Rome, Sullivan will also meet with Luigi Mattiolo, diplomatic adviser to Italian Prime Minister Mario Draghi to continue coordinating the strong global response to Russian President Vladimir Putin's "war of choice," the source said.

SIBL wins Bangladesh Innovation Award-2022

STAR BUSINESS DESK

Social Islami Bank Ltd (SIBL) won the Bangladesh Innovation Award-2022 in the category of "Best Innovation–Finance Innovation in Banks" by Bangladesh Innovation Conclave recently.

Zafar Alam, managing director of the bank, received the award from Salman F Rahman, private industry and investment adviser to the prime minister at Le Meridien in Dhaka, a press release said.

SIBL received this award for innovating "International Insta Remit" (money in minutes), an outward remittance product which makes money transfers easier and safer from Bangladesh to over 200 countries and territories through Western Union within Bangladesh Bank's purview.

International Insta Remit is a unique money transfer service comprising Insta Edu Remit (student file facility), Insta Family Remit (family remittance facility), and Insta Medi Remit (medical file facility).

Abu Reza Md Yeahia, additional managing director of SIBL, and Md Akmal Hossain, executive vice-president, were present.

Premier Bank honours SME women entrepreneurs

STAR BUSINESS DESK

Premier Bank honoured women entrepreneurs for their contribution to the small and medium-sized enterprise (SME) sector on the occasion of the International Women's Day at the Renaissance Dhaka Gulshan Hotel last week.

Md Obaidul Hoque, executive director of the SME and special programmes department at the Bangladesh Bank, and Muhammed Ali, adviser of Premier Bank, handed over the crests of the SME Women Entrepreneurs Award to the winners, a press release said.

Jahanara Begum of Suntex International won the award in the trading category, Sharmin Akter of Material Handling Solution in the service category and Saria Hossain of Knots Logistics Ltd in the service category.

M Reazul Karim, managing director of Premier Bank, presided over the programme.

Md Jaker Hossain, general manager of the SME and special programmes department at the BB, Liza Fahmida, Rozina Akhter Mostafi, deputy general managers, and Afsana Choudhury, deputy director, and Syed Nowsher Ali, Shamsuddin Choudhury, Shahed Sikandar, Kazi Ahsan Khalil, Syed Abul Hashem, deputy managing directors of Premier Bank, were also present.

Qu Dongyu, director general of the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations, visits an exhibition stall showcasing various fruits developed by the Bangladesh Agricultural Research Institute (BARI) at the Institute's Kazi Badruddoza Auditorium in Gazipur on Saturday. Muhammad Abdur Razzaque, minister for agriculture, and Debasish Sarker, director general of the BARI, were present.

PHOTO: BARI

Fed set to hike

FROM PAGE B4

Prior to Russia's invasion of Ukraine, some economists -- and even some Fed officials -- said the first move in the tightening cycle could be a half point increase to send a strong signal to markets that the central bank was committed to keeping inflation from raging out of control.

But Fed Chair Jerome Powell last week declared his intention to call for a quarter-point increase -- a stunningly direct comment from a central bank chief, who typically keeps their plans close to the vest.

Wilcox said he was "thunderstruck" by the statement which tamped down speculation of a more aggressive move.

While Wilcox remains cautiously optimistic that inflation will come down, he stressed that the Fed will have to be "absolutely clear" that it will act as forcefully as necessary should price pressures accelerate.

And in the short term, economists warn that things will get worse before they get better.

"The disruptions we are seeing are adding fuel to a well kindled inflation fire that goes well beyond the energy sector and could touch much more of our daily lives," Swonk said. "The timing couldn't be worse for the Federal Reserve, which is already chasing inflation for the first time since the 1980s."

Supply chain snarls caused shortages of key products as the global economy was returning to normal from the pandemic, and while the increases initially were driven by cars and housing, energy prices have spiked as well, especially in the past month. The annual consumer price index in February hit 7.9 per cent.

"Just about everything that makes up inflation is going bonkers to the upside," Adam Sarhan of 50 Park Investment told AFP, adding he fears it's the kind of rapid increase that can lead to a recession.

Adoption of UN Convention on sale of goods to benefit Bangladesh

Speakers say at webinar

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Bangladesh will greatly benefit from adopting the UN Convention on Contracts for the International Sale of Goods (CISG) as it provides a uniform regime for out of court dispute settlement for the international sale of goods.

Mahbubur Rahman, board chairman of Bangladesh International Arbitration Centre (BIAC) and president of International Chamber of Commerce-Bangladesh, said this while speaking at a webinar on "Alternative Dispute Resolution and International Sale of Goods: Time to Benefit from CISG".

The BIAC and the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL) - Regional Centre for Asia and the Pacific (RCAP) jointly organised the event on Thursday.

Addressing the programme, Kaiser A Chowdhury, chief executive officer of BIAC said hosting such a webinar should lead us to take the initiative to establish an efficient framework for dispute resolution and work to ensure that the government considers this Convention to improve supply chain management efficiency and boost the usage of alternative dispute resolution (ADR).

Athita Komindr, head of UNCITRAL RCAP, provided an overview of her organisation's mandate on furthering the progressive harmonisation and modernisation of international trade and commercial law and how the UNCITRAL RCAP promotes the mandate to public and private stakeholders in the approximately 60 jurisdictions that it serves.

Luca Castellani, legal officer of UNCITRAL RCAP, discussed the basic features of the CISG, stressing its flexibility and ability to adjust to superveninig circumstances. Noting the economic importance of the export of manufactured goods, he invited Bangladesh to consider the adoption of the Convention to increase governance and legal predictability in cross-border supply chains and to reduce transaction costs.

Sherlin Tung, partner of Withersworldwide in Hong Kong, discussed the benefits of the CISG for commercial parties involved in international commercial transactions and gave insight on the situation of implementation of the CISG in Hong Kong.

Sajjadul Hasan, chairman of Biman Bangladesh Airlines, inaugurates Pubali Bank's Gobindasree sub-branch at Madan, Netrakona, which aims to provide online banking facilities for its customers in the haor area. Safiul Alam Khan Chowdhury, managing director of Pubali Bank, Mohammad Ali, additional managing director, Mohammad Manirul Islam, deputy general manager, and Kazi Md Abdur Rahman, deputy commissioner of Netrakona, were present.

PHOTO: PUBALI BANK

Mohammed Monirul Moula, managing director of Islami Bank Bangladesh Ltd (IBBL), virtually inaugurates the bank's Business Development Conference for Rajshahi zone at Victoria Convention Hall in Rajshahi recently. Md Omar Faruk Khan, additional managing director of the bank, Md Altaf Hossain, deputy managing director, Md Siddiqur Rahman, senior executive vice president, ASM Rezaul Karim, Md Mizanur Rahman Bhuiyan and Miftah Uddin, executive vice presidents, Khaled Mahmud Raihan, senior vice-president, and Md Mizanur Rahman Mizi, head of Rajshahi zone, were present.

PHOTO: IBBL

Dairy farmers struggle

FROM PAGE B4

president of the Feed Industries Association of Bangladesh.

He said the prices of raw materials have soared since the beginning of the pandemic.

The freight cost has rocketed six times for the supply chain disruption in the aftermath of the crisis.

The prices of maize, which accounts for more than half of the feed ingredient, usually hover around Tk 20 per kg. The grain is selling at Tk 33 per kg now.

Soybean meal makes up one-fourth of the feed and it has also become expensive.

"But we can't raise prices to the extent of the increase in the raw material prices as rising costs will lead to the closure of many farms," said Shahjahan, adding that many mills are incurring losses now.

Manzur new president of leather goods exporters' assoc

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Syed Nasim Manzur, managing director of Apex Footwear Ltd, has been elected as the new president of the Leathergoods and Footwear Manufacturers and Exporters Association of Bangladesh (LFMEAB).

Manzur was declared as the president of the LFMEAB on Saturday as the post fell vacant when Md Saiful Islam, the immediate past president of the association, was elected the president of the Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MCCI). While taking the charge at a programme in Dhaka, Manzur emphasised taking steps for market diversification.

He said Bangladesh's leather products and synthetic footwear export industry have high prospects particularly in the US market, according to a statement from the LFMEAB.

Oil settles up

REUTERS, *Bengaluru*

Oil prices settled higher on Friday but posted their steepest weekly decline since November, as traders assessed potential improvements to the supply outlook that has been disrupted by Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

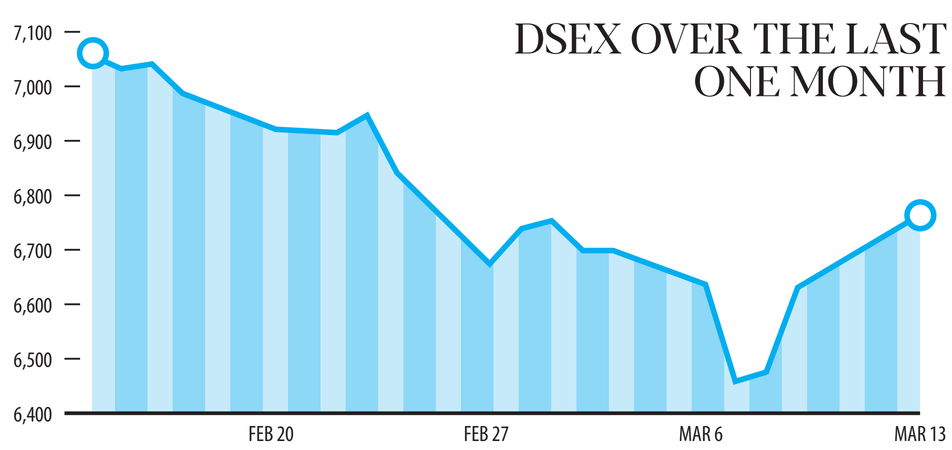
Crude prices have soared since the invasion, which Moscow calls a "special military operation. "This week, futures benchmarks hit their highest levels since 2008, then pulled back sharply as some producing countries signalled they may boost supply.

Onion seed cultivation has turned lucrative as prices of the bulb skyrocketed in the past couple of years following an export ban by India. Bangladesh's annual demand for onion seed is around 1,100 tonnes. Some 19.53 lakh tonnes of onion were produced in fiscal year 2019-20, according to the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics. The photo was taken last week at Barendra village in Nachol upazila of Chapainawabganj district, where onion seed is being cultivated on some 11 hectares of land with hopes for a yield of 12 tonnes.

PHOTO: RABIUL HASAN

Stocks stretch gaining streak

STAR BUSINESS REPORT



Stocks continued to rise for a fourth consecutive day riding on the market regulator's policy intervention to halt the falling trend of share values.

The DSEX, the benchmark index of the Dhaka Stock Exchange (DSE), rose 97 points, or 1.46 per cent, to close at 6,765 yesterday. With this, the index gained a total of 309 points in the last four days.

Meanwhile, turnover at the country's premier bourse dropped 6 per cent to Tk 998 crore while it was Tk 1,061 crore a day earlier.

The stock market extended its gaining streak for the fourth straight session as buoyant investors are putting fresh bets on lucrative issues riding on the regulatory steps, International Leasing Securities said in its daily market review.

Among the sectors, ceramic rose 3.9 per cent, cement edged up 3.3 per cent, and services and real estate increased 2.8 per cent while the tannery and general insurance sectors dropped 0.4 per cent each.

The investors' attention was mainly concentrated on textiles (15.4 per cent), engineering (13.4 per cent), and pharmaceuticals and chemicals (13.1 per cent).

Beximco Ltd remained the most traded stocks with shares worth Tk 72 crore changing hands followed by Bangladesh Building Systems, BDCOM Online, Dragon Sweater and Spinning, and Orion Pharmaceuticals.

At the DSE, 273 stocks advanced, 87 declined and 20 remained unchanged.

S Alam Cold Rolled Steels topped the gainers list, rising 9.92 per cent, followed by BDCOM Online, Reliance First Mutual Fund, Shurwid Industries, and Advent Pharmaceuticals.

United Insurance shed the most, dropping 5.19 per cent, followed by Libra Infusion, Tamijuddin Textiles, Linde Bangladesh, and Anwar Galvanizing.

The Chittagong Stock Exchange (CSE) also rose yesterday. The Caspi, the main index of the CSE, added 238 points, or 1.21 per cent, to reach 19,799 at the end of the day.

Among the 293 traded stocks, 211 rose, 65 fell and 17 remained the same.

Reckitt announces highest dividend among listed firms

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Society's heightened awareness of maintaining hygiene in the pandemic's aftermath has come to reflect in profits of Reckitt Benckiser Bangladesh, so much so that it announced 1,650 per cent cash dividend for shareholders last year, the highest among listed companies.

The health and hygiene product manufacturer's profits rose 9.36 per cent year-on-year to Tk 80.8 crore in 2021.

Based on the higher profits, the multinational's board of directors announced a dividend of Tk 165 against each share whose face value is Tk 10.

This is the biggest dividend to be announced in the history of Reckitt Benckiser Bangladesh, which sells Dettol, Harpic and Lizol.

The company disbursed cash dividend of 1,400 per cent in 2020, 1,250 per cent in 2019 and 700 per cent in 2018, according to the Dhaka Stock Exchange (DSE) data.

Due to the pandemic, people became more cautious about maintaining hygiene so the use of its products rose and it contributed to the profits, said a top official of an asset management company having investments in the shares.

Though demand for the products comparatively fell last year, the profit rose as net operating cost dropped, he said.

The payment of such a big dividend by a listed company is a good sign for the market, he said, adding that when listed companies disburse good dividends, it attracts investors.

However, stocks of Reckitt Benckiser Bangladesh dropped 1.66 per cent to Tk 5,372 yesterday at the DSE. People's increased awareness and use of hygiene products translated to its sales growth of 29 per cent to Tk 533 crore in 2020, he added.

Its paid-up capital is Tk 4.72 crore.

Sponsors and directors of the company hold 82.96 per cent shares of the company.

Another 3.77 per cent is held by the government, 4.28 per cent institutional investors, 2.94 per cent foreign investors and 6.05 per cent general investors, according to the DSE data.

France to offer fuel rebate

REUTERS, *Paris*

France is to introduce a rebate of 0.15 euros ($0.16) per litre of transport fuel to help drivers cope with soaring pump prices, Prime Minister Jean Castex said in an interview with daily newspaper Le Parisien. The measure, to apply for four months from April 1, is expected to cost the government just over 2 billion euros, he said.

Retail gasoline and diesel prices soared to record highs in many countries across the world this week as Russia's invasion of Ukraine added to market tensions, after economies had begun recovering from the coronavirus pandemic.

A gesture of support for French motorists had been flagged by President Emmanuel Macron, who is campaigning for a second term in elections next month.

Tk 35cr winnings

FROM PAGE B1

By logging onto http://www.irdbd.online/, prize bond owners can search single or multiple numbers at a time.

"The trend is continuing as lots of money remains unclaimed," said the savings department Director Shah Alam.

About the cause, he said since matching the seven-digit prize bond number with draw results was an arduous job, people were often disinterested.

"Sometimes they couldn't match it the right way. Sometimes they even forgot to check the results at all or lost the prize bonds themselves," he added.

Rashidul Hasan, an employee of a private company, is one such person who lost interest in checking the results.

"I bought four prize bonds worth Tk 100 each some years earlier. At the time, the prize announcement was published in newspapers only but it was hard to know when exactly the announcement would come," he said.

"I do not regularly read newspapers...on hearing that results have been announced I had to buy newspapers, even if it was two to four days old. After checking in this manner several times, I stopped searching and sold off the prize bonds," he added.

The savings department announces 3,082 prizes of a total value of Tk 10.88 crore at the end of every quarter (January 31, April 30, July 31, and October 31).

The first prize is worth Tk 6 lakh and second prize Tk 3.25 lakh. There are two third prizes of Tk 1 lakh each, two fourth prizes of Tk 50,000 each and 40 fifth prizes worth Tk 10,000 each. So the total value of prizes given out annually stands at Tk 43.55 crore.

But the savings department said they only disbursed Tk 30.25 crore in FY 2018-19.

In FY 2019-20, the amount disbursed was Tk 27.17 crore while it was Tk 40.41 crore in FY 2020-21.

In the first half of FY 2021-22 ending in December, the disbursements amounted to Tk 19.91 crore.

"So, Tk 1.86 crore is yet to be claimed," said the savings department officials.

According to Banglapedia, prize bonds are a public savings scheme introduced by the government in 1974 to mobilise domestic resources and providing incentives to small savers.

All the bonds issued under this scheme so far are "bearer" in nature and as such, the holders are treated as the owners of the bonds.

These bonds are in fact government debt and on behalf of the government, Bangladesh Bank is responsible for the entire management of the scheme.

Prize bonds do not bear any interest, it added.

Prizes had been exempt of income tax up to 2011, when the government levied 20 per cent income tax on the prize money.

HSBC honours businesses

FROM PAGE B1

readymade garments industry category for an annual export turnover of $50 million, while Envoy Textiles received it in the Supply Chain and Backward Linkage category for an annual export turnover of $10 million and above.

Pran-RFL Group, one of the largest conglomerates, took home the accolade in the nontraditional and emerging sectors for netting an annual export turnover of more than $3 million.

Hatil Complex Ltd, one of the largest furniture makers in Bangladesh, clinched the accolade for substituting imports to a value of $10 million and above.

Summit Corporation Ltd, the trailblazer in the power and energy sector, has been recognised thanks to its leadership in inbound investment and infrastructure.

In recent years, the group has attracted investments of over $1.1 billion from various international lenders and renowned financial institutions.

Malek Spinning Group, one of the oldest apparel manufacturing conglomerates that exports to large global retailers, was handed the award for its efforts to achieve better results in environmental, social and governance parameters.

The Best in Innovation & Technology Category Award went to BiBEAT Ltd, which has taken healthcare and other appropriate technologies to the doorsteps of the common people in Bangladesh and other third world countries.

ement award went to City Group, which has made an exemplary contribution to socio-economic growth through excellence in innovation, job creation and supporting the community in the last five decades.

Surokkha App, the coronavirus vaccine registration platform of the government that has already paved the way for a sizeable population of the country to access Covid-19 jabs, secured the Jury Award.

Speaking at the event, Tipu Munshi congratulated the winners.

He said at the beginning of Covid-19, Bangladesh was on the brink of losing businesses regarding international trade due to countrywide lockdowns and restrictions.

"However, we have showed strong resilience, fought back and survived," he said, adding that the government took many major initiatives to protect industries and businesses.

"The Business Excellence Awards is well-aligned with our intention to recognise successful businesses and entrepreneurs who have significantly contributed to the country's growth."

In a pre-recorded video speech, Zunaid Ahmed Palak, state minister for information and communications technology, said the Surokkha system is ensuring smooth vaccination for mass people.

Robert Chatterton Dickson, the British high commissioner, said he was delighted that the British High Commission is once more able to join HSBC in honouring the best of Bangladeshi business as part of the awards initiative.

"Highlighting the achievements and potential of Bangladesh's innovative and resilient private sector is an excellent way to attract foreign capital, which will sustain growth through and beyond LDC graduation."

Amanda Murphy, head of commercial banking at HSBC South and Southeast Asia, said that as the leading international bank in Bangladesh, HSBC is strongly committed to the development of the country and helping its clients connect with sustainable growth opportunities.

"We are pleased to celebrate their winning journeys. We are proud of the many ways we have supported our clients as we work together to build a thriving, stronger future for Bangladesh and its business community."

Md Mahbub ur Rahman, chief executive officer of HSBC Bangladesh, said the bank has been supporting and enabling businesses in Bangladesh to connect with global opportunities for the last 25 years.

"Businesses and entrepreneurs have been resilient throughout the pandemic and are fueling the economic growth of Bangladesh. We are proud to recognise and encourage them for their perseverance and hard work."

Md Jashim Uddin, president of the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industries, said: "The award will motivate other companies to achieve excellence."

He said the global economy is growing slowly, but Bangladesh is doing better.

K Siddique-e-Rabbani, founder president of BiBeat, Azizur Rahim Chowdhury, a director of Malek Spinning, Selim H Rahman, managing director of Hatil Furniture, Syed M Tanvir, managing director of Pacific Jeans, Kutubuddin Ahmed, chairman of Envoy Textiles, Uzma Chowdhury, director for finance at Pran-RFL Group, Latif Khan, vice-chairman of Summit Group, Fazlur Rahman, chairman of City Group, and Md Rezaul Maksud Jahedi, acting director-general of the Department of ICT, received the awards on behalf of their organisations.

NBFIs asked

FROM PAGE B1

As such, Bangladesh Bank directed NBFIs not to bear any implicit expense under any name except for declared interest rate on deposits or profit rate.

The NBFIs will regularly publish their interest rate for deposits on their websites, it added.

An official of Bangladesh Bank said deposits should come to the NBFIs because of their goodwill.

Deposits should not be collected by paying commission, he added. Bangladesh has 35 NBFIs.

Total deposits of NBFIs rose 0.42 per cent to Tk 44,121 crore during July-September compared to the April-June quarter of the same year, according to central bank data.

NBFIs' advances decreased 0.79 per cent to Tk 70,608 crore during the July-September quarter of 2021 compared to the April-June period the same year.

Rent can soar

FROM PAGE B1

A senior official at the port's traffic department said some of these containers remain lying there for nearly a month.

Every year many importers who bring goods targeting the month of Ramadan effectively use the port as a warehouse, taking deliveries only when market prices turn favourable for them, he said.

This unnecessarily eats up space and eventually causes container congestion, hampering port operations at a time when the month of fasting sees an influx of commodities, he added.

To avert this, the CPA director (traffic) recently sent notices to stakeholders urging importers to fast take deliveries. He warned that if the situation did not improve, the storage rent would go up.

There is no storage rent for the first four days starting from the time a ship is relieved of all cargo meant to be unloaded.

From the 5th day to the 11th day, the daily charge is $6 for a 20-foot container and from the 12th day to the 24th day, the rate is $12. From the 25th day, the charge is $24 per day till it is taken away.

For a 40-foot container, the charge is double at every slab.

If the new rate comes into effect, importers will have to pay $96 for a 20-foot container from 25th day.

CPA Secretary Md Omar Faruk yesterday said through the decision was yet to be finalised, the hike could come about to speed up deliveries.

Denim mills expand

FROM PAGE B1

In the fiscal year of 2013-14, the export of denim products was worth nearly $1 billion. Now it has crossed $7 billion and most of the raw materials are supplied by local millers.

"The global denim market size will increase every year and Bangladesh's market will also grow. It is not unexpected," said Mostafiz, who organises an exhibition in Dhaka to show denim products.

Tk 12,000 crore has already been invested in the denim segment, an increase of 40 per cent from five years ago, according to Monsoor Ahmed, chief executive officer of the Bangladesh Textile Mills Association, the platform for the primary textile sector.

"Denim millers have also brought a lot of product variations to meet the demand of international retailers and brands."

The global market for denim jeans was estimated at $64.5 billion in 2022 and is projected to reach a revised size of $76.1 billion by 2026, growing at 4.8 per cent annually.

The denim jeans market in the US, the single largest apparel destination of Bangladesh, is estimated at $15.8 billion this year. The country currently accounts for a 24.6 per cent share in the global market.

China is forecast to reach an estimated market size of $15.5 billion in 2026, with an annual growth of 7.2 per cent, the analysis said.

The prices of grass, straw, bran and salt have gone up in Bangladesh recently, making it difficult for dairy farmers to rear cattle. Owing to the price spiral, the cost of producing milk has outpaced the price growers get. The photo was taken from Ramkharua village in Sirajganj's Shahjadpur upazila recently.

PHOTO: AHMED HUMAYUN KABIR TOPU

Dairy farmers struggle as production costs jump

AHMED HUMAYUN KABIR TOPU, *back from Sirajganj*

The price of dairy feed has climbed rapidly in recent months keeping pace with the price spiral of essential commodities, making farming costlier and raising milk production costs for the millions of farmers in Bangladesh.

The animal feed has become dearer after the price of maize and soybean meal -- the key ingredients for feed-- went up in the global market in recent months, owing to demand recovery from the coronavirus pandemic and supply disruptions.

Besides, the price of grass, straw and bran, which are used by many farmers to feed their cattle, has surged, handing a blow to the dairy industry in Pabna and Sirajganj, one of the biggest milk-producing hubs in Bangladesh.

For example, each 50-kilogramme bag of wheat bran is retailing at Tk 1,400 to Tk 1,450, up from Tk 1,050 to Tk 1,100 three months ago.

The pulse bran is selling at Tk 1,500 to Tk 1,550, which was Tk 1,250 to Tk 1,300. The price of complete ready feed has jumped by Tk 250 to Tk 300 per 50kg bag, according to farmers and traders.

"The price of essential commodities has soared in recent times. Due to the price hike of solid materials, the price of bran used in dairy feed has also gone up," said Johurul Islam, a feed trader in Pabna Boro Bazar.

Besides, solid feed, grass and straw have also become costlier.

The price of a bundle of Napier grass

has doubled from Tk 12-15 to Tk 20-25 in a span of a month, according to Manik Ratan, a grass trader in Pabna's Bera Haat.

Each maund of paddy straw is selling at Tk 500 whereas it was Tk 300 to Tk 350 a month ago, while each kg of oil cake costs Tk 50 at the retail level, up 43 per cent from Tk 35 in February.

Dairy farmers in Pabna and Sirajganj say the price of dairy feed has jumped 30 per cent to 40 per cent in the last few weeks. As a result, they are incurring losses for milk production.

The cost of producing milk has gone up to Tk 48 to Tk 50 a kg due to the soaring feed price. "But we are bound to sell it at Tk 41 to Tk 50 a kg," said Md Raju Ahmed, a dairy farmer in Ramkharua village in Sirajganj's Shahjadpur upazila.

Ahmed owns 17 cows, with nine of the cattle giving 80 to 90 litres of milk a day collectively.

But he has to spend Tk 28,000 to Tk 30,000 every week to rear the cattle. Of the expenses, the feed cost accounts for Tk 23,000 to Tk 25,000 alone.

But he gets Tk 24,000 to Tk 26,000 by selling milk, meaning Ahmed has to suffer a loss of Tk 3,000 to Tk 4,000 per week.

Rubia Khatun, a female dairy farmer in the same village, has five cows. But she is now planning to sell one of them as she can't afford to bear the excessive expenses of rearing.

"Throughout the pandemic, we have experienced huge losses. Now, farming has become tough due to the price hike. If the price hike continues, I have to sell all of the cows."

Farmers say they don't want milk prices to go up; they just want the government to rein in the runaway feed market.

"If milk price increases, it will be an extra burden for consumers. But if the feed price comes under control, we will be able to make a profit," said Raju Ahmed, president of the Ramkharua Purbopara Milk Co-operative Association.

According to the livestock offices of Pabna and Sirajganj, 28 lakh litres of milk are produced every day in the two districts, which are home to more than 16.28 lakh cattle.

"The feed price has gone up. But we have no market monitoring authority," said Gouranga Kumar, district livestock officer of Sirajganj.

Md Al Mamun Hossain, district livestock officer in Pabna, thinks the price of dairy feed is likely to come under control soon.

Bangladesh requires around 80 lakh tonnes of animal feed annually.

The poultry industry is the biggest consumer but the demand for cattle feed for dairy farming is growing fast as well, said Md Ihtesham B Shahjahan,

READ MORE ON B2

16 firms face show-cause for not submitting financial reports

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

The Bangladesh Securities and Exchange Commission (BSEC) has asked the management of 16 listed companies to show valid reasons for not submitting their financial reports within a certain period.

The 16 companies are: Aman Feed, Shurwid Industries, Appollo Ispat, Emerald Oil, Bangas, Active Fine Chemicals, Aman Cotton Fibrous, Sunlife Insurance, Libra Infusion, Ambee Pharmaceuticals, Progressive Life Insurance, Imam Button, Delta Spinners, Delta Life Insurance, Fareast Islami Life Insurance, and Intech.

As per regulations, listed companies are bound to submit the audited financial report of each financial year and unaudited financial reports of every quarter within a certain period.

However, the aforementioned companies did not submit their financial reports regularly in a timely manner.

A top official of the BSEC, preferring anonymity, said some listed companies do not upload the financial reports on their website and so, stock investors are deprived of the scope to analyse the real scenario of the companies.

Besides, some of them did not submit the financial reports to the regulators either, which is a breach of listing regulations and securities rules. As a result, the BSEC recently sent letters to the managing directors of these companies asking for proper justification in regard, he added.

Meanwhile, general investors sought the regulator's action against the listed companies if they do not upload financial reports on their website.

Most listed companies in Bangladesh do not post their quarterly financial reports within 48 hours of securing approval from their boards as they take advantage of the lack of specific regulations in this regard, experts say.

As per listing regulations, the issuer of listed securities must make its detailed financial statements available on its website as well as that of the country's bourses through a link arrangement. However, no deadline has been set to make such disclosures.

Debt deadline and central bank hikes loom in Russia

REUTERS, *London*

The cost of Russia's invasion of Ukraine will become a lot clearer next week, with a previously unthinkable sovereign default looming, more emergency central bank measures likely and a stock market crash guaranteed if it reopens.

Moscow's "special operation" in its former Soviet neighbour has cut Russia off from key parts of the global financial markets by the West, triggering its worst economic crisis since the 1991 fall of the Soviet Union.

Wednesday could mark another low. The government is due to pay $117 million on two of its dollar-denominated bonds. But it has been signalling it will not, or if it does it will be in roubles, tantamount to a default.

Technically it has a 30-day grace period, but that is a minor point. If it happens it would represent its first international default since the Bolshevik revolution over a century ago. "Default is quite imminent," said Roberto Sifon a top analyst at S&P Global which has just hit Russia with the world's biggest ever sovereign credit rating downgrade.

Fed set to hike rates to tame inflation

AFP, *Washington*

Surging prices for fuel, food and housing have sent US inflation to the highest in four decades, and the Russian invasion of Ukraine has made the situation worse, so the Federal Reserve is preparing to take action this week.

But the central bank's efforts to put out the inflation fires will be complicated by the prospect the war and wide-ranging sanctions imposed on Russia will disrupt trade flows and undermine the US economic recovery.

The policy-setting Federal Open Market Committee holds its two-day policy meeting this week, with an announcement set for Wednesday when it is poised to begin raising the benchmark lending rate that was cut to zero at the start of the Covid-19 pandemic in March 2020.

That would be the first in a series of rate hikes, but amid the rising uncertainty, some economists think policymakers may move less aggressively than previously expected as they weigh the competing forces on the economy.

"The Fed is being tugged in two different directions by the massive increase in energy prices that's taken place over the last few weeks," David Wilcox, a former senior advisor to three successive Fed chairs, told AFP.

While higher inflation justifies the tightening moves, "the reduction in purchasing power that households are experiencing ... would call for a more accommodative stance of policy, a more cautious approach," said Wilcox, now with the Peterson Institute for International Economics and Bloomberg Economics.

Markets are pricing in about six rate hikes this year, but Grant Thornton Chief Economist Diane Swonk expects seven, while Wells Fargo raised their forecast from five to six -- which would still leave the policy rate below two per cent.

READ MORE ON B2

A clerk bags dried peppers for a customer inside Grand Central Market in downtown Los Angeles, California on March 11. US consumer prices hit a new 40-year high in February as the world's largest economy continued to be battered by a surge of inflation, which the fallout from Russia's invasion of Ukraine is expected to worsen.

PHOTO: AFP

Fitch downgrades Russian oil, gas firms

AFP, *Paris*

Credit rater Fitch Saturday downgraded 28 Russian natural resources companies including state gas giant Gazprom, warning they risk defaulting on payments under sanctions imposed for Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

Fitch Ratings said in a statement it had lowered the rating on the companies, which also include oil producer Lukoil and miner Rusal, from B to CC. The latter rating implies some form of default on their payments was "probable".

It cited a Russian decree on March 5 that authorised Russian companies to settle debts to certain blacklisted foreign companies in rubles rather than foreign currency. The move was a response to sanctions imposed on Russia due to its February 24 invasion.