

Concord, Bepza sign MoU

STAR BUSINESS DESK

Concord Entertainment Company and Bangladesh Export Processing Zones Authority (Bepza) recently signed a memorandum of understanding.

Under the MoU, Bepza employees will enjoy special discounts at Fantasy Kingdom Complex and Resort Atlantis in Dhaka and Foy's Lake Concord and Foy's Lake Resort, the facilities of Concord Entertainment Company, in Chattogram.

Anup Kumar Sarker, executive director for marketing of Concord Entertainment Company, and Md Zakir Hossain Chowdhury, executive director for admin (joint secretary) of Bepza, inked the deal at Bepza Complex in Dhaka, a press release said.

Arif Nowshad, assistant general manager for sales of Concord Entertainment Company, Md Nuruzzaman, manager for sales, Kalam Md Abul Bashar, additional executive director, and Md Jhantu Ali, assistant director of the Bepza, were present.



A vendor going around on his bicycle selling items made out of coloured paper, styrofoam, strings and cotton, costing anywhere from Tk 200 to Tk 400 and used in decorating homes marking Durga Puja. There are approximately 2,000 artisans making a living from this craft in Lalmonirhat, Kurigram, Rangpur, Gaibandha and Nilphamari. The photo was taken at Roypara village of Lalmonirhat a couple of days ago.

PHOTO: S DELIP ROY

Japan's dependency on ME crude reaches 94.5pc

REUTERS, Tokyo

Japanese crude oil imports from the Middle East in August rose 12.1 per cent from a year earlier to 2.82 million barrels per day (bpd), equivalent to 13.88 million kilolitres, with Japan's dependence on the region reaching 94.5 per cent, the industry ministry said on Friday.

Japan has stopped buying crude from Russia since June in the light of Moscow's invasion of Ukraine, and Japanese refiners have sought alternatives from the Middle East, such as Saudi Arabia.

The dependency rate on the Middle East hit 97.7 per cent in July, the highest since statistics began in 1952, according to an official at the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI).

But the figure in August slightly fell from the previous month as imports from the United States grew.

The dependency marked the sixth consecutive month of year-on-year increase.

Japan's total crude oil imports rose 9.3 per cent in August from a year earlier to 2.98 million bpd (14.69 million kl).

Homogeneous policies to ensure cheaper egg, meat

FBCCI panel says

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Homogenous policy supports throughout the agriculture sector, instead of providing advantages to just growing crops, can substantially bring down egg and meat prices for end consumers, said entrepreneurs.

Animal farming and fishing should be provided similar advantages, demanded members of a Standing Committee on Livestock, Poultry and Fisheries of the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI) on its first meeting yesterday.

For instance, poultry, cattle, fish and shrimp farms have to pay electricity bills at a rate higher than that paid by crop growers, they said.

If the rate was the same for all, the former could reduce production and operating costs, making it possible to meet the need for protein at affordable prices, they added.

The government should provide utilities at a special rate to livestock farms, said FBCCI President Jashim Uddin.

To become a developed country by 2041, Bangladesh needs to reach exports to \$300 billion, which may appear tough solely relying on garments, he said.

Here the government should provide appropriate support for increasing fish, shrimp and meat exports, he said.

Poultry, cattle, fish and shrimp farms have to pay electricity bills at a rate higher than that paid by crop growers. The rate should be same for all, the FBCCI committee says

On the recent price instability of eggs in the market, he blamed a few unscrupulous traders, urging that they be identified to protect the sector's image.

Uddin also advised the committee to work on logistics and supply chains to ensure fair prices for marginal farmers.

Earlier, Salahuddin Alamgir, director-in-charge of the FBCCI standing

committee and vice-president of the FBCCI, said banks should allot 5 per cent of their loan disbursements targeting the livestock sector, just as they do for crop growers.

He also demanded to fix the per dollar exchange rate at Tk 100 specifically for the import of livestock and recommended introducing insurance policies of low premiums to protect farmers.

Moshiur Rahman, chairman of the committee and executive member of the Feed Industries Association Bangladesh, called for strengthening the inter-ministerial coordination of government agencies.

"Both the livestock department and BSTI (Bangladesh Standards and Testing Institution) monitor different categories of farms," he said.

"Farmers have to suffer due to a lack of coordination and different sets of standards of the two organisations," he mentioned.

Rahman also stressed on proper waste management to ensure compliance with the country's laws.

FY23 budgetary measures to dent revenue base further: Fitch

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

The current low revenue base in Bangladesh could be further undermined by the measures taken in the budget for FY2023, including corporate tax cuts, American credit rating agency Fitch said in its latest report.

Fitch also stated on Thursday that the general government revenue GDP ratio, which was 9.8 per cent in FY22, is a key credit weakness and much below the average.

The budget targets a deficit of 5.5 per cent of GDP, Fitch said, adding that: "The deficit could undershoot the government's target, as has occurred in the past, but our FY23 economic growth forecast trails the government's 7.5 per cent, meaning that the budget deficit is likely to slightly exceed the government's target."

Regarding the governance in the banking sector, it said, "We regard the health of Bangladesh's banking sector and governance standards as weak, especially among public-sector banks."

Referring official data, the report stated that the system's gross non-performing loan (NPL) ratio reached 8.5 per cent by end March 2022, from 7.9 per cent at the end of 2021.

India cuts base import price of palm oil, gold

REUTERS, Mumbai

India has slashed the base import prices of crude and refined palm oil, crude soya oil and gold, the government said in a statement late on Friday, as prices corrected in the world market.

The government revises base import prices of edible oils, gold and silver every fortnight, and the prices are used to calculate the amount of tax an importer needs to pay.

PRICES OF KEY ESSENTIALS IN DHAKA CITY			
	PRICE (SEP 29, 2022)	% CHANGES FROM A MONTH AGO	% CHANGE FROM A YEAR AGO
Fine rice (kg)	Tk 65-Tk 80	0	16.94 ↑
Coarse rice (kg)	Tk 47-Tk 52	-12.39 ↓	6.45 ↑
Loose flour (kg)	Tk 52-Tk 55	1.9 ↑	59.7 ↑
Lentil (kg)	Tk 95-Tk 105	-6.98 ↓	12.36 ↑
Soybean (litre)	Tk 161-Tk 175	-4.27 ↓	26.79 ↑
Potato (kg)	Tk 24-Tk 30	0	42.11 ↑
Onion (kg)	Tk 35-Tk 45	-15.79 ↓	-13.4 ↓
Egg (4 pcs)	Tk 47-Tk 50	18.29 ↑	32.88 ↑

SOURCE: TCB



From left, Sanjiban Roy Nandi, country head/general manager of Sika Bangladesh Ltd; Yumi Kan, area manager South Asia-head of TM Concrete of Sika Asia Pacific Management Pte; Nathalie Chuard, Swiss ambassador to Bangladesh; Shaikh Yusuf Harun, executive chairman (senior secretary) of Bangladesh Economic Zones Authority (Beza); Tanjima Binthe Mostafa, director of Meghna Group of Industries, and Abdul Azim Chowdhury, executive member (additional secretary) for administration and finance of Beza, attend the groundbreaking ceremony of a factory to be set up by Sika Bangladesh, a subsidiary of Sika Group, in Meghna Industrial Economic Zone in Sonargaon of Narayanganj on Thursday. The factory will produce admixture and grout.

PHOTO: MEGHNA GROUP OF INDUSTRIES



Habibur Rahman, managing director of South Bangla Agriculture and Commerce (SBAC) Bank, poses for photographs with the participants of a training workshop of refinancing project by Bangladesh Bank, Asian Development Bank and Japan International Corporation Agency at SBAC Training Institute in Dhaka recently. AKM Fazlur Rahman, principal of the training institute, Md Obaidul Hoque, executive director of the BB, Md Jaker Hossain, director of SME and special programmes department, and Chowdhury Liakat Ali, additional director, were present.

PHOTO: SBAC BANK

India raises

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With inflation likely to be largely in line with RBI's estimates, the hike will make the ex post forward real repo rate positive, albeit still lower than the RBI's estimated real neutral rate of 0.8-1 per cent.

"At this point, we still think that the RBI would not go too restrictive and terminal rate could hover near the estimated real rates, implying not more than 100 bps hikes ahead, including today's decision. However, the extent of global disruption will remain key to the RBI's reaction function ahead."

"Compelled by the global monetary tightening cycle and in a bit to rein in inflationary pressures, MPC announced repo rate hike by 50 bps. Going forward, the domestic policy may continue to be driven by the global monetary tightening cycle and aggressive stance of (US) Federal Reserve reducing our degrees of freedom."

"Assuming Fed funds rate of 4.4 per cent by December 2022, we may

see at least another 50 bps hike in remaining part of the current financial year, despite recent correction in commodity prices offering tailwinds."

"The RBI raised the policy rate by 50 bps to 5.9 per cent as expected, aligning itself to aggressive monetary tightening globally. Moreover, the rate move was in response to continued inflationary risks and growth that broadly continues to hold up. We expect repo rate to be raised to 6.5 per cent in this cycle."

"The central bank kept its stance unchanged at 'withdrawal of accommodation,' justifying this stance as adequate, as the policy rate adjusted for inflation still trails behind 2019 levels."

"On the rupee, as argued by us before, the RBI said that their strategy would be focussed on maintaining investor confidence and anchoring expectations, signalling that FX interventions are likely to continue to defend any extreme volatility in the rupee."

China's economy struggling

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the official survey showed a sharp slowdown in services sector activity growth.

Signs that the world's second-largest economy is struggling to regain traction after narrowly avoiding contraction in the second quarter, could add to concerns about a global recession, as major central banks embark on the most aggressive round of rate rises in decades.

"The surveys suggest that

China's economy continued to lose momentum in September, with the global downturn weighing on exports and virus disruptions dealing a fresh blow to services activity," Zichun Huang, an economist at Capital Economics, said in a note.

Elsewhere in Asia, data showed South Korea's factory production shrinking for a second month in August, but a separate release showed Japan's factories ramping

up output again last month.

China's official manufacturing survey showed factory activity grew marginally in September, beating expectations for a reading of 49.6 in a Reuters poll of economists, and coming in above the 50-point mark that separates contraction from growth. China's government has rolled out more than 50 policy measures since late May.

"With the basket of economic policies coming into effect and the

impacts of heatwaves fading, the manufacturing sector has picked up, leading to the PMI return to expansionary territory," said Zhao Qinghe, a senior statistician at the NBS, in a statement.

Covid outbreaks dragged down businesses in retail, aviation, accommodation and catering sharply, Zhao said, adding that a government-led infrastructure push accelerated construction activity.



Sheikh Nasir Uddin, chairman of Akij Group, inaugurates Dhaka Bank's 110th Akij City branch at Noapara in Jashore yesterday. Abdul Hai Sarkar, chairman of Dhaka Bank, ATM Hayatuzzaman Khan, founder vice-chairman, Altaf Hossain Sarkar, director, Emranul Huq, managing director, and Arham Masudul Huq, chief executive officer of Dhaka Bank Foundation, were present.

PHOTO: DHAKA BANK



Habibur Al-Amin Sadi and Manjur Kader Moni, panel mayors of Cumilla City Corporation, inaugurate Daily Shopping's new outlet at Cumilla Police Lines on Wednesday. Galib Farrokh Bakht, chief operating officer of Daily Shopping, Feroz Alom, deputy general manager, and Omar Faruk, head of marketing, were present. Daily Shopping, a subsidiary of Pran-RFL Group, has 62 outlets across the country.

PHOTO: PRAN-RFL GROUP