

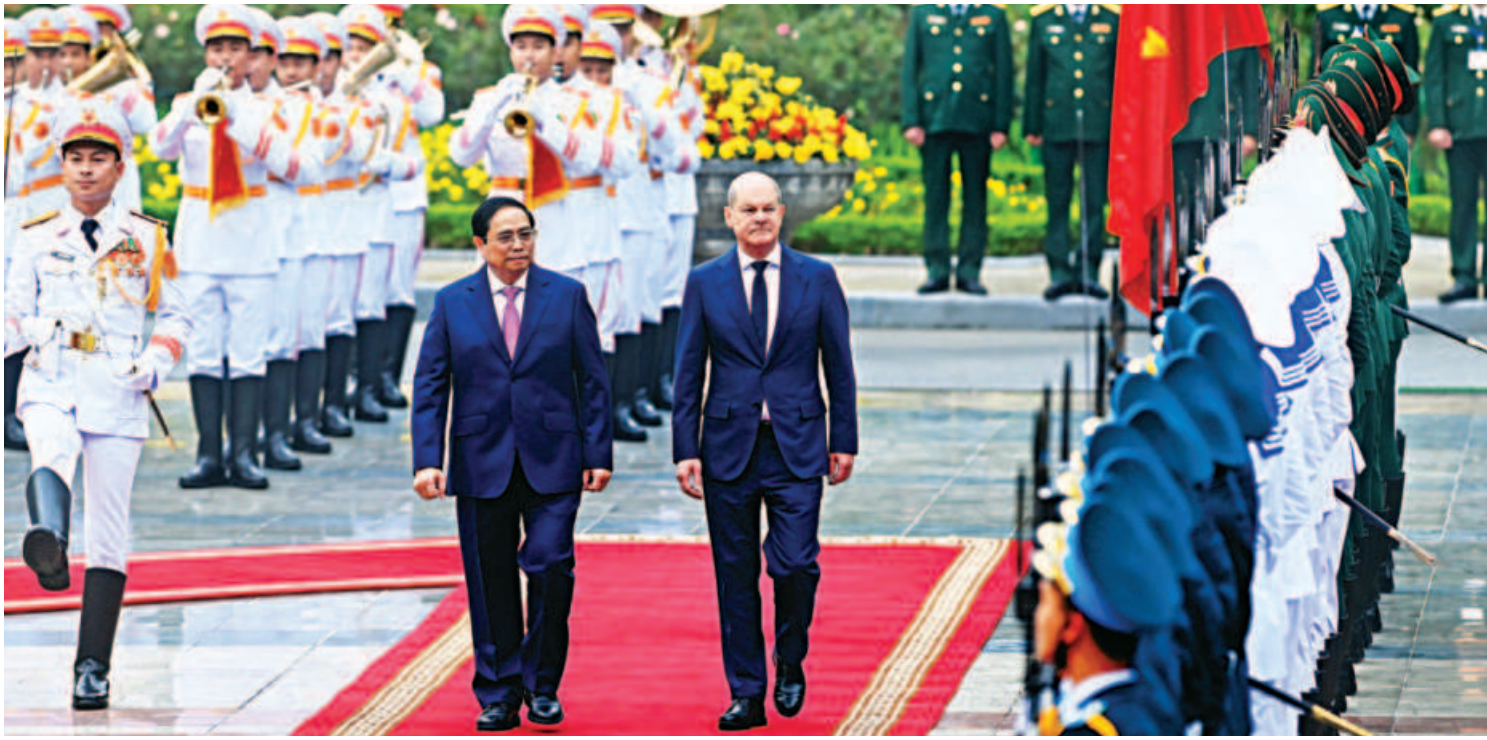
**Hong Kong-based firm to invest \$23m in Ishwardi EPZ**

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Lugang Technology Limited, a Hong Kong-based company, is going to invest \$22.99 million to set up a textile factory in Ishwardi Export Processing Zone.

The company will produce 5,100 tonnes of raw and dyed yarn annually at the factory where 3,182 Bangladeshi nationals will get employment opportunities.

Ali Reza Mazid, investment promotion member of the Bangladesh Export Processing Zones Authority (Bepza), and Ding Feng, vice general manager of Lugang Technology, signed an agreement to this effect at Bepza Complex in Dhaka yesterday.



Vietnamese Prime Minister Pham Minh Chinh (centre left) and German Chancellor Olaf Scholz (centre right) inspect an honour guard during a welcome ceremony at the Presidential Palace in Hanoi on November 13. The German chancellor was making his rounds in the Asia-Pacific region. Having visited China on November 4, Scholz also touched base with Vietnam and Singapore last weekend, before proceeding to the G20 summit hosted by Indonesia.

PHOTO: AFP

# Germany looks to Asia-Pacific to strengthen economy

Diversification, however, will not mean decoupling: German chancellor

THE STAR/ANN

Germany is keen on strengthening its economic ties with the Asia Pacific region, said German Chancellor Olaf Scholz in his opening address during the 17th edition of Asia-Pacific Conference of German Business (APK) held in Singapore on Monday.

Scholz noted the consequences left at the wake of the Russia-Ukraine war; hunger, energy shortages and inflation are global, despite the fact that the conflict might be far away geographically.

"Reducing risky, one-sided dependencies when it comes to certain raw materials or critical technologies will play an important role in the National Security Strategy that we are currently working on. Our view of the matter is clear: the best way to achieve more resilient supply chains is to diversify our trade relations," he said.

The German chancellor is making his rounds in the Asia-Pacific region. Having visited China on Nov 4, Scholz also touched base with Vietnam and Singapore last weekend, before proceeding to the G20 summit hosted by Indonesia.

The APK is jointly organised by the Asia-Pacific Committee of German Business, the German Federal Ministry of

Economics and Climate Action, and the German Chambers of Commerce Abroad in Asia-Pacific.

"The Asia-Pacific region is much more than China. The Asia-Pacific Conference has been looking at the entire region for over 30 years now, and that is precisely why my government has decided to strengthen our support for this conference," said Scholz.

Earlier this year, Scholz also met with Prime Minister Fumio Kishida in Tokyo, Japan. Morever, India's Prime Minister, Narendra Modi paid the chancellor a visit in May.

Condemning Russia's war aggression whilst stressing on the need to intensify partnerships with Asia, Scholz's approach to these visits is to prepare Germany to be more shockproof in dealing with crises.

According to current forecasts, Asia will contribute around half of global gross domestic product (GDP) by 2050.

German Asia-Pacific Business Association regional manager Asean, Daniel Mueller stated it is a well-known and accepted fact in Germany that Asia will be the heart of the new world order both politically and economically.

"Germany does not want to stand back and tries to increase its engagement in the region. The signal is that we have

understood the importance of the region and are willing to defend our interests. It is also a subtle signal to China that there are many opportunities beyond the People's Republic," he told StarBiz.

Mueller also stated that Asia-Pacific countries should also, like Germany, actively diversify their markets in order to strengthen economic capabilities.

"Asia-Pacific countries should also take into account the imperative of risk mitigation in an uncertain geopolitical environment and consider "economic security" and likewise further diversify their external economic relations.

In regards to Malaysia's progress in building resilience across supply chains, Mueller opined that it is well on track.

"Malaysia is already relatively well positioned in this regard, both in terms of the various sources of economic growth and the various export markets," he said.

Russia has been a reliable natural gas supplier to Germany for decades. When the war broke out, Germany found itself in a quandary as it struggled to either be weaned from Russia or seek an alternative source.

Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung, Director of Media Programme Asia, Ansgar Graw concurred this and told StarBiz, "Following the energy crisis, Germany is now trying

to avoid becoming entirely dependent on China for the manufacturing and production of goods. While Germany does not intend to decouple from China, it sees the need to seek for alternative markets in other countries."

Scholz added that diversification does not mean decoupling, which he warned could be protectionism in disguise.

Among the German delegation, it could also be heard that German business leaders would resist heavily if German attempts to decouple from China.

"As long as China is not doing something like attacking Taiwan, the government cannot stop German businesses from investing in China. The government may only be able to resort to decline providing investment guarantees for German businesses.

"This was the case with carmaker Volkswagen AG when credit insurances to invest in Xinjiang, China were denied due to allegations of human rights violation in the Chinese province."

Meanwhile, vice chancellor and federal minister for economic affairs & climate action Robert Habeck noted leaving China out of the equation will only backfire as it will lose out on the opportunities the second largest global economy brings.

## Central Pharma suffers losses in Jul-Sep quarter

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Central Pharmaceuticals Limited posted losses in the first quarter of the current financial year of 2022-23.

The drug-maker incurred a loss of Tk 95.84 lakh in the July-September quarter, equaling the loss it suffered in the same quarter a year earlier.

Its earnings per share were Tk 0.08 in negative in July-September this year against Tk 0.08 in negative during the same quarter a year earlier, showed the unaudited financial statements.

The net operating cash flow per share was nil in the first quarter this fiscal year as well as in the same three-month quarter of the last financial year.

The net asset value per share was Tk 5.88 on September 30 and Tk 5.96 on June 30.

Shares of Central Pharmaceuticals were unchanged at Tk 12.40 on the Dhaka Stock Exchange yesterday.

## Delta Life Ins celebrates anniversary

STAR BUSINESS DESK

Delta Life Insurance Company organised a programme to celebrate its "three decades of excellence" in the field of life insurance of the country.

Saifuzzaman Chowdhury, minister for land, inaugurated the programme as chief guest at Delta Life Tower in Gulshan, Dhaka on Tuesday, said a press release.

Hafiz Ahmed Mazumder, chairman of the board of directors of the insurer, presided over the event, where Monzurur Rahman, chairman of Pubali Bank, Md Jonaid Shafiq, vice-chairman of the insurer, and Anwarul Haque, chief executive officer (current charge), were present.

PRICES OF KEY ESSENTIALS IN DHAKA CITY			
	PRICE (NOV 16, 2022)	% CHANGES FROM A MONTH AGO	% CHANGE FROM A YEAR AGO
Fine rice (kg)	Tk 62-Tk 72	-3.6 ↓	6.35 ↑
Coarse rice (kg)	Tk 46-Tk 52	-2 ↓	5.38 ↑
Loose flour (kg)	Tk 60-Tk 62	7.96 ↑	79.41 ↑
Lentil (kg)	Tk 100-Tk 105	5.13 ↑	17.14 ↑
Soybean (litre)	Tk 175-Tk 180	10.94 ↑	24.56 ↑
Potato (kg)	Tk 22-Tk 28	-3.85 ↓	0
Onion (kg)	Tk 50-Tk 55	16.67 ↑	-12.5 ↓
Egg (4 pcs)	Tk 43-Tk 48	-6.19 ↓	22.97 ↑

SOURCE: TCB



Mohammed Mahtabur Rahman, chairman of NRB Bank, inaugurated the operations of NRB Bank Securities PLC at its head office in Dhaka yesterday. Golam Kabir and Mohammed Jamil Iqbal, vice-chairmen of the bank, Md Motiur Rahman, chairman of the board audit committee, Bayzun N Chowdhury, director, Md Abdul Jalil Chowdhury, independent director, Mamoon Mahmood Shah, managing director, Md Mukhter Hossain, adviser, Shabbir Ahmed Chowdhury, director of the NRB Bank Securities PLC, and Fahim Ahasan Chowdhury, managing director, were present.

PHOTO: NRB BANK



Md Nurul Amin Faruk, director of Exim Bank, inaugurated a relocated branch at Noor Tower on Jubilee Road in Chattogram yesterday. Mohammad Feroz Hossain, managing director, Md Zoshim Uddin Bhuiyan, deputy managing director, SM Abu Zaker, additional deputy managing director, and Md Abul Hashem, the branch manager, were present.

PHOTO: EXIM BANK

## Trade with Turkey

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He also shed light on a few avenues where Bangladesh could expand its trade through investment and planning, including ICT, light engineering, automobile, leather, pharmaceuticals and shipbuilding.

All of these sectors have the potential to diversify the economy, the ambassador added.

Termining diversification the key tool to attracting businesses, he said once this happens, businesses will be interested in making investments giving priority to Bangladesh.

ICT has emerged as an area where Bangladesh has potential. New investors are exploring potential areas for investment. Because, Bangladesh is the second largest online labour provider in the global IT market, said Turan.

Turkey currently sells machinery, chemicals, cotton and light engineering products and buys jute and some garments, he continued.

Turan hoped for ongoing discussions of a joint economic commission to find ways to remove obstacles faced by businesses.

On the formation of Bangladesh-Türkiye Business Forum a couple of months ago, he said it was not a chamber yet.

It is a small group of dedicated, powerful businesses including Mohammadi Group, United Group, Kazi Farms Group, AK Khan and Company, Bangladesh Steel Re-Rolling Mills (BSRM), Ispahani Group, Square Group and Bengal Foundation, he said.

It also includes six Turkish companies operational in Bangladesh, he said, adding that the forum would hold meetings to explore avenues of trade partnerships.

"Our businesses see Bangladesh as a trustworthy manufacturing hub. One of our largest business groups is coming to Bangladesh. They decided to come here after a thorough research on Bangladesh market," said Turan.

"BIDA (Bangladesh Investment Development Authority) is very helpful. They are solving whatever issues that emerge. I believe that the years to come will show a much more active presence of Turkish businesses in Bangladesh," he added.

## Summit Alliance Port's profit doubles

FROM PAGE B4

and Tk 34.34 on June 30.

Established in 2003 in Patenga of Chattogram, SAPL is the largest off-dock in the country's private sector, handling 22.50 per cent of Bangladesh's containerised export volumes and 10.50 per cent of the import volumes, according to the company's website.

Besides, it has established the first-ever inland water terminal facility in the private sector named "Mukhtarpur Terminal" on the bank of the Dhaleswari in Mukhtarpur under Munshiganj, providing off-dock services and economical cargo transportation and easing the pressure on the Dhaka-Chattogram highway.

A subsidiary of SAPL has taken over the management of three river terminals in Kolkata and Patna.

Shares of the company rose 4.20 per cent on the Dhaka Stock Exchange yesterday.

## Flour mills cut

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country has sufficient foods stock for the next few months.

"But the government is importing wheat from international markets on its own to ensure uninterrupted supply for carrying out different food programmes," he added.

The food department is currently selling flour through its open market sales (OMS) initiative for just Tk 18 per kg.

"Imports have been hampered in case of the private sector and so, the government making an effort to overcome the situation," Alam said.

Other than those in Rangpur, flour mills in various other parts of the country, including Narayanganj, a major hub for wheat flour, are not getting an adequate amount of grain to process.

## Iraqis keen to invest

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"Iraqi investors are also interested in forming joint ventures in the pharmaceutical sector in Bangladesh. They also showed keen interest in the leather sector," he said.

There are many projects that are currently not in operation in Iraq, and if any Bangladeshi company wants to re-start them, the Sulaimany Chamber will facilitate the process, he added.

The bilateral meeting also discussed doing business environment, the investment policy eco-system, trade and investment opportunities of Bangladesh and Iraq.

Bilateral trade between Bangladesh and Iraq stood at \$57.23 million in 2020-21, with the balance tilting towards the Middle Eastern country.

In the financial year, Bangladesh's export was \$3.8 million against the import of \$53.43 million.

"Iraq can import vegetables, potatoes and mangoes from Bangladesh. And in the service sector, they can import our ICT," said DCCI President Rizwan Rahman, speaking at the meeting. He said the signing of a double taxation avoidance agreement between Bangladesh and Iraq would encourage investment in the diversified manufacturing and service sectors.

He invited Iraqi companies to invest in the economic zones of Bangladesh and hire skilled workforce from the country.

DCCI Vice-president Monowar Hossain was also present at the meeting.