



A partial view of the Chattogram port. Businesses now cannot import products as per their needs owing to banks' inability to supply adequate dollar.

PHOTO: STAR/FILE

DCCI for adequate dollar support for banks to pay for imports

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

The Dhaka Chamber of Commerce & Industry (DCCI) has urged the Bangladesh Bank to support commercial banks with adequate foreign exchange supply to help them settle letters of credits (LCs) with a view to keeping the market of essentials stable during Ramadan.

DCCI President Md Sameer Sattar made the call when the board of directors of the chamber called on Bangladesh Bank Governor Abdur Rouf Talukder at the central bank office on Monday, according to a press release of the chamber.

Bangladesh is facing a serious dollar shortage as escalated imports have driven down the foreign currency reserves. So, businesses can't go ahead with required imports to feed the economy owing to banks' inability to supply the American greenback needed.

The central bank has restricted non-essential imports to save US dollars. Amid the tightening of purchases from external

sources, overall LC opening in Bangladesh slumped 14 per cent year-on-year in July-December. Settlement declined 9 per cent.

Sattar also stated that public-private partnership is crucial to tackling any economic challenge.

During the discussion, Sattar thanked the BB for unveiling a timely monetary policy statement (MPS) that would help both private and financial sectors turn around as the MPS includes some instrumental policies and guidance.

He also hailed the initiative of continuing the re-financing scheme of Tk 50,000 crore for agriculture, cottage, micro, small and medium enterprises (CMSMEs) and import-substitute industries.

Sattar emphasised necessary reforms like easing the documentary requirements for CMSMEs to access finance and, especially, in relation to the credit guarantee scheme for the better interest of the CMSME community.

Besides, he recommended easing the documentation process for young and innovative startups so that they can avail loans easily.

The DCCI chief underscored the need for enhancement of the private sector credit growth to accelerate its contribution in the economic resurgence.

He suggested ensuring good governance to contain the soaring non-performing loans by taking stern measures and fast-tracking loan recovery by focusing on habitual defaulters and bringing in necessary reforms to regulations in the banking sector.

In the press release, Abdur Rouf Talukder said: "We are facing three major challenges now."

The challenges are the ongoing Russia-Ukraine war, the interest rate hike by the Federal Reserve and the recent Covid surge in China.

"Despite these challenges, our economy is quite stable," he said.

The governor also indicated that the current situation of LCs may ease within the next couple of months.

The central bank is relentlessly working through relevant policy measures and actions like lowering the LC margin to ensure seamless supply of essential commodities in the market during the upcoming Ramadan, said Talukder.

Considering the importance of remittance inflow, he mentioned that recently there have been some changes in the process of sending remittance, including the waiver of relaxation of required documents and fees by local banks and engaging mobile financial services to bring money sent home by migrant workers.

As a result, the remittance inflow will increase considerably in future, said Talukder in the press release.

DCCI Senior Vice President SM Golam Faruk Alamgir Arman, Vice President Md Junaed Ibna Ali and members of the board were also present during the meeting.

Eurozone returns to growth after 6-month crunch

AFP, Brussels

The eurozone economy grew in January for the first time in six months, a closely watched survey showed Tuesday, raising hopes that Europe will avoid a recession this winter.

The S&P Global Flash Eurozone purchasing managers' index (PMI) rose to 50.2 in January from 49.3 in December. A figure above 50 indicates growth.

The European economy has benefited from lower inflation, improved supply chains and the recent reopening of China's Covid-scarred economy, leading to increased optimism for 2023.

"The survey undoubtedly brings welcome good news to suggest that any downturn is likely to be far less severe than previously feared and that a recession may well be avoided altogether," said Chris Williamson, S&P's chief business economist.

He said the survey suggested "a nadir was reached back in October, since when fears over the energy market in particular have been alleviated by falling prices, helped by the warmer than usual weather and generous government assistance".

But Williamson warned the region was "by no means out of the woods yet" as demand continues to fall, albeit at a slower rate than before.

The single currency area's largest economy, Germany, also benefited from the easing of supply chain pressure which helped manufacturing, S&P said, and reported improvement with the composite PMI rising from 49.0 in December to 49.7 in January.

But output in France, where activity is driven by domestic consumers and services, fell for a third consecutive month after a sharper drop in services activity.

S&P said output for the rest of the eurozone, made up of 20 countries after Croatia joined in January, also returned to growth.

Inflation in the single currency area remains high at 9.2 percent, but has fallen for two months in a row, boosted by the slowdown in the rate of energy price rises.

S&P's Williamson said however the increase in inflation for goods and services would "add encouragement to the hawks to push for further monetary policy tightening".

PRICES OF KEY ESSENTIALS IN DHAKA CITY			
	PRICE (JAN 24, 2023)	% CHANGES FROM A MONTH AGO	% CHANGE FROM A YEAR AGO
Fine rice (kg)	Tk 58-Tk 75	-2.21 ↓	3.91 ↑
Coarse rice (kg)	Tk 46-Tk 52	-2.97 ↓	3.16 ↑
Loose flour (kg)	Tk 58-Tk 60	-5.6 ↓	66.2 ↑
Lentil (kg)	Tk 100-Tk 105	0	3.54 ↑
Soybean (litre)	Tk 168-Tk 170	0.3 ↑	14.58 ↑
Potato (kg)	Tk 25-Tk 30	22.22 ↑	66.67 ↑
Onion (kg)	Tk 30-Tk 35	-13.33 ↓	18.18 ↑
Egg (4 pcs)	Tk 40-Tk 45	14.86 ↑	16.44 ↑

SOURCE: TCB



Prof Eaysmin Ara Lekha, pro-vice-chancellor of the university, and Shahidul Islam, chief financial officer of Transcom Electronics Limited, sign an agreement on the supply, installation, testing and commissioning of Samsung-branded "VRF Cooling" and "HVAC" systems at the permanent campus of the university in Dhaka recently.

PHOTO: TRANSCOM ELECTRONICS



Muhammad Qaisar Ali, additional managing director of Islami Bank Bangladesh, receives an award from Dr Mashiur Rahman, economic affairs adviser to the prime minister, in recognition of the bank's contribution in collecting remittance at an event at Pan Pacific Sonargaon Dhaka on Monday.

PHOTO: ISLAMI BANK BANGLADESH



Mohammad Ali, managing director of Pubali Bank, receives an award titled "Branding Bangladesh Beyond Bangladesh" from Dr Mashiur Rahman, economic affairs adviser to the prime minister, in recognition of the bank's contribution in collecting remittance at a programme at Pan Pacific Sonargaon Dhaka on Monday.

PHOTO: PUBALI BANK

Transcom Electronics, Uttara University ink deal

STAR BUSINESS DESK

Uttara University and Transcom Electronics Limited recently signed an agreement on installing the state-of-the-art Samsung "VRF Cooling" and "HVAC" systems at the permanent campus of the university.

Prof Eaysmin Ara Lekha, pro-vice-chancellor of the university, and Shahidul Islam, chief financial officer of Transcom Electronics, inked the deal in Dhaka, said a

press release.

This is the single largest project for Samsung brand, bearing a capacity of 1,146.80 tonnes and it will be executed by Transcom HVAC (heating, ventilation, and air conditioning) team.

Prof Dr M Azizur Rahman, vice-chancellor of Uttara University, Sameer Paul, head of business of Transcom HVAC, and other senior officials of both organisations were present.

Eastern Housing clocks Tk 30cr profit

FROM PAGE B4

10.50 per cent year-on-year higher profit to Tk 19.51 crore in the October-December quarter. It was Tk 17.64 crore in the same quarter of FY22.

The company reported EPS of Tk 2.09 in October-December of FY23 against Tk 1.89 in the same quarter of FY22.

The net operating cash flow per

share of Eastern Housing was Tk 15.10 in July-December of FY23, down from Tk 17.24 in the first half of FY22.

The net asset value per share rose to Tk 75.84 on December 31 from Tk 74.71 on June 30.

Shares of Eastern Housing surged 9.98 per cent on the DSE yesterday, the highest among the gainers.



Md Afzal Karim, managing director of Sonali Bank, receives an award from Dr Mashiur Rahman, economic affairs adviser to the prime minister, in recognition of the bank's contribution in collecting remittance at an event at Pan Pacific Sonargaon Dhaka on Monday.

PHOTO: SONALI BANK



Md Murshedul Kabir, managing director of Agrani Bank, receives an award titled "Branding Bangladesh Beyond Bangladesh" from Dr Mashiur Rahman, economic affairs adviser to the prime minister, in recognition of the bank's contribution in collecting remittance at a programme at Pan Pacific Sonargaon Dhaka on Monday.

PHOTO: AGRANI BANK



Md Shafiqur Rahman, deputy managing director of Al-Arafah Islami Bank, receives an award titled "Branding Bangladesh Beyond Bangladesh" from Dr Mashiur Rahman, economic affairs adviser to the prime minister, in recognition of the bank's contribution in collecting remittance at an event at Pan Pacific Sonargaon Dhaka on Monday.

PHOTO: AL-ARAFAH ISLAMI BANK