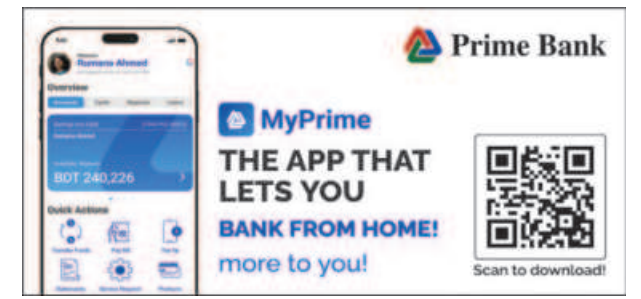


# Star BUSINESS



Value-added garment items such as jackets have propelled growth of Bangladesh's apparel exports even amid times of economic uncertainty in recent years. In addition, local producers are offering competitive prices for their products, prompting global buyers to shift their orders from China and other countries. PHOTO: STAR

## Labaid Cancer Hospital plans to go public

AHSAN HABIB

Labaid Cancer Hospital and Super Specialty Centre, a sister concern of Labaid Diagnostic Centre, is planning to come to the stock market to raise fund. This will be the second hospital to go public after Samorita Hospital, which got listed with the Dhaka Stock Exchange in 1997.

Labaid Cancer Hospital has already signed a corporate advisory and issue management agreement with City Bank Capital, a merchant bank, officials of the companies told The Daily Star.

City Bank Capital will also act as the issue manager for the planned initial public offering of the hospital.

Ershad Hossain, managing director and CEO of City Bank Capital, and Sakif Shamim, managing director of Labaid Cancer Hospital, signed a deal in this regard at City Bank Capital's headquarters in Dhaka yesterday.

The healthcare sector needs huge capital expenditure and the capital market has the scope to

READ MORE ON B3

# Bangladesh now a hub for making winter jackets

REFAYET ULLAH MIRDHA

Bangladesh has gradually turned into a major manufacturing hub for winter jackets as work orders are mainly shifting away from China due to higher production costs and a shortage of skilled workers in the country.

Winter jackets are a relatively new export sector as local apparel makers have been diversifying their products with this type of value-added garment item in recent years.

Bangladesh's apparel shipments have grown even amid times of global economic uncertainty for two reasons, namely the shift of work orders from China and increased export of value-added garments.

For instance, nearly 50 local apparel exporters are currently producing winter jackets that are priced between \$30 and \$50. This was unheard of even five years ago as the country's exports were mainly confined to basic t-shirts, woven shirts and trousers at the time.

Other than China, work orders for high-end winter jackets are also shifting from Vietnam, India, Myanmar, Taiwan, South Korea and Japan, according to industry



people.

In addition, the winter jackets made in Bangladesh are even being sent to some Scandinavian countries in Europe as well as Russia, the US and Canada.

"We have increased our sourcing of value-added winter jackets from some local factories as they have already improved their production capacity and offer competitive prices," said an official of a major European retailer in Dhaka on condition of anonymity.

SM Khaled, managing director of Snowtex, a leading jacket exporter, said his company has been bagging a lot of work orders from international retailers and brands.

Snowtex currently has the capacity to export between \$25 million and \$30 million worth of

jackets each month, he added.

Similarly, Abdullah Hil Rakib, managing director of TEAM Group, a leading outerwear exporter, said his company ships winter jackets worth \$10 every month.

Winter jackets are the latest addition to TEAM Group's export basket with bulk shipments even reaching some Scandinavian countries, Taiwan, the US and Russia. The company's exports were previously limited to woven and other knitted garment items.

Bakhtiar Uddin Ahmed, chief operating officer of Fakir Apparels Limited, said local manufacturers are getting a good response from global retailers and brands as they can supply winter jackets at competitive prices.

Considering this heightened

demand, the company set up a new jacket manufacturing unit in Narayanganj four years ago. With this added capacity, Fakir apparels can ship 1.50 lakh jackets abroad each month.

The price of these jackets is comparatively higher than other garment items as buyers usually pay between \$30 and \$50 per piece, he added.

Faruque Hassan, president of the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA), said local garment exporters get almost half of what their Vietnamese counterparts make from garment exports due to various reasons.

This means international buyers will pay \$5 for a t-shirt made in Vietnam but the same product would get \$2.5 if made in Bangladesh.

One of the main reasons behind the lower pricing for Bangladeshi garment items is the production of basic items.

However, recent hikes in the production of high-end value-added garments is reducing this gap as global buyers are paying better prices for such products, Hassan added.

READ MORE ON B3

## Banglalink nearing stock market listing

Operator may raise over Tk 800cr

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Banglalink Digital Communications Limited, the third-largest mobile phone operator in Bangladesh, plans to go public, a massive development for a stock market where investors have strong appetite for sound companies.

Once the listing completes, the multinational telecommunication company would be the third mobile phone carrier in Bangladesh to go public after Grameenphone and Robi Axiata.

Banglalink may raise more than Tk 800 crore through an initial public offering under the fixed-price method by offloading shares equivalent to 10 per cent of its paid-up capital.

Bangladesh Securities and Exchange Commission (BSEC) Spokesperson Mohammad Rezaul Karim confirmed the development, saying the telecom operator has disclosed its plan to get listed in the stock market.

Yesterday, a number of senior officials of Banglalink met with BSEC Chairman Shibli Rubayat Ul-Islam and discussed the listing issue. Kaan Terzioglu, chairman of Banglalink, and group chief executive officer of VEON, the parent company of the operator, led the delegation.

In March last year, Terzioglu said Banglalink was aiming to enter the stock market in three years.

"VEON sees a long-term opportunity in Bangladesh and would like to make the people of Bangladesh a part of Banglalink's success story. In line with this, VEON had a good discussion with the BSEC and would be working together to explore future opportunities," said Taimur Rahman, chief corporate and regulatory affairs officer of Banglalink, yesterday.

Launched in 2005, Banglalink's revenue rose 12.1 per cent year-on-year to Tk 5,374 crore last year, according to the 2022 earnings report. This was the third double-digit growth in consecutive quarters.

The operator's annual service revenue grew 12.3 per cent last year while data revenue surged 26.6 per cent.

"The company has inter-company loans and a syndication loan. Moreover, it has a plan to go for expansion, so it needs funds," said Karim.

As the taka has depreciated significantly against the American greenback, its foreign currency loan is going to be costlier. The Bangladesh Bank is also suggesting it go to the stock market, he said.

"On top of that, Banglalink wants to see its proper valuation. So, it has decided to get listed."

The company's paid-up capital is about Tk 8,400 crore, so it would raise over Tk 800 crore from the market, according to Karim.

Banglalink crossed the milestone of four crore subscribers by acquiring 3.3 lakh clients in January 2023. With the new customers, its subscriber base

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STOCKS	
DSEX ▲	CASPI ▲
0.30%	0.31%
6,222.90	18,382.42

COMMODITIES	
Gold ▼	Oil ▲
\$1,947.88 (per ounce)	\$69.00 (per barrel)

ASIAN MARKETS			
MUMBAI	TOKYO	SINGAPORE	SHANGHAI
▲ 0.77%	▼ 1.42%	▲ 1.09%	▲ 0.64%
58,074.68	26,945.67	3,173.93	3,255.65

## Consumers bracing for further belt-tightening

Costlier Ramadan groceries to leave them in a tight spot

SUKANTA HALDER and MD ABU TALHA SARKER

Prices of groceries which witness peak demand during Ramadan, the holy month of fasting for Muslims, have swelled significantly year-on-year owing to hikes in import and transportation costs alongside the value of dollar.

Prices of daily necessities and the cost of living have also increased, resulting in a decrease in the sale of all those products, including chickpeas, dates, lentils, edible oil and sugar.

According to the Trading Corporation of Bangladesh (TCB) and the country's retail traders, the market price of chickpeas was Tk 70 to Tk 75 per kilogramme (kg) a week before Ramadan last year.

Now it is selling for Tk 85 to Tk 95 per kg.

Sugar was sold at Tk 78 to Tk 80 per kg and right now is selling at Tk 115 to Tk 120. Consumers previously spent Tk 158 to Tk 165 to buy one litre of edible oil and now it is being sold at Tk 180 to Tk 185.

In case of one kilogramme of red

lentil, it was Tk 95 to Tk 100 but now is Tk 130 to Tk 135. Quality dates, which were Tk 500 to Tk 600 per kg last year, are being sold at Tk 700 to Tk 800 this time around.

According to Bangladesh Bank, the price of one dollar was Tk 86 in May last year, which has now increased to Tk 106.

**Importers say that although prices of some products have decreased in the world market, local customers are not getting the benefits due to the increase in import costs**

Importers say that although prices of some products have decreased in the world market, local customers are not getting the benefits due to the increase in import costs.

Jihad Hossain, a resident of Tejkanipara of the capital, had bought about Tk 9,000 worth of spices, chickpeas, lentils, edible oil, sugar, broiler chicken, fish and some fruits for Ramadan last year.

An employee of a private company, Hossain said he lives in a two-room rented flat with his son, daughter and wife.

"There is a matter of Eid shopping. I can't go for a sublet or a one-room flat to save some money. So, this time I bought a lesser amount of goods spending Tk 5,000 due to the increase in prices," he said.

Laizur Rahman Masud, also a private company employee living in the Eastern Housing area of Mirpur, said household expenses were rising quite fast due to the "abnormal" increase in the prices of daily essentials and the cost of living.

"We have decided not to buy iltar (fast-breaking evening meal) items this Ramadan. Rather we will eat homemade food along with dates," he said.

Abdullah Al Mamun works as a salesman in a mobile phone shop in Bogura for a salary of Tk 8,000.

Mamun said he and his father were the breadwinners of their six-member family and this year they had bought 40 per cent less groceries for the month due to the increase in prices.

READ MORE ON B3



The hike in prices of goods has prompted customers to limit their purchases to only what was essential for their families

Kashem Mollah  
A retailer in Mirpur-II



The annual sales conference 2023 of KAI-Altech Group, was held in Le Meridien, Dubai. The top 150 Business Partner of Bangladesh were presented in the program, along with the chairman of KAI-Altech Group Mr. Ebrahim D. Mamoon, the managing director, Mr. Al Amin Murshed, and other directors and high officials of the group. The leading dealers were highly honored on that program. Later on, the ceremony concluded with a 7-day excursion to some historical places of Dubai.

Advertisement



Faisal Rahman, additional managing director of Prime Bank, exchanged signed documents of an agreement with Abdur Rouf Talukder, governor of Bangladesh Bank, at the BB headquarters in Dhaka recently over disbursing loans for export-oriented and production-based industries from a Tk 5,000 crore "Green Transformation Fund" of the central Bank. PHOTO: PRIME BANK



Syed Waseque Md Ali, managing director of First Security Islami Bank, exchanged signed documents of an agreement with Abdur Rouf Talukder, governor of Bangladesh Bank, at the BB headquarters in Dhaka last week over disbursing loans for export-oriented and production-based industries from a Tk 5,000 crore "Green Transformation Fund" of the central Bank. PHOTO: FIRST SECURITY ISLAMI BANK



Nuruddin Md Sadeque Hussain, managing director (current charge) of Southeast Bank, exchanged signed documents of an agreement with Abdur Rouf Talukder, governor of Bangladesh Bank, at the BB headquarters in Dhaka recently over disbursing loans for export-oriented and production-based industries from a Tk 5,000 crore "Green Transformation Fund" of the central bank. PHOTO: SOUTHEAST BANK



Sheikh Mohammad Salim Ullah, secretary to the financial institutions division of the finance ministry, inaugurates a new financial product of Bangladesh House Building Finance Corporation (BHBFC) named "Swapnoneer" at the BHBFC Bhaban in the capital on Sunday. Md Salim Uddin, chairman of the organisation, and Md Abdul Mannan, managing director, along with other directors of the corporation, were present. PHOTO: BHBFC

## IFIC Bank organises event marking milestone

STAR BUSINESS DESK

The bank organised a celebration programme at IFIC Tower in Purana Paltan, Dhaka yesterday to mark the milestone.

Shah A Sarwar, managing director of the bank, deputy managing directors, and other senior officials of the bank were present on the occasion.

Officers and employees of the bank from every branch and sub-branch across the country virtually joined the event.

IFIC Bank has achieved a milestone of becoming the largest bank in the country in terms of having the highest number of branches and sub-branches across the country.

So far, the bank has 1,243 branches and sub-branches in different districts, upazilas, cities, and villages across the country that offer one-stop and full banking services, said a press release.



Shah A Sarwar, managing director of IFIC Bank, cuts a cake at IFIC Tower in Purana Paltan, Dhaka yesterday, marking a milestone of becoming the largest bank in the country in terms of having the highest number of branches and sub-branches across the country. PHOTO: IFIC BANK

## Pubali Bank signs MoU with US-Bangla Airlines

STAR BUSINESS DESK

Pubali Bank Limited and US Bangla Airlines recently signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) on service facilities.

NM Firoz Kamal, deputy general manager of the bank, and Md Shafiqul Islam, head of sales and marketing of the airline, signed the MoU at the bank's head office in Dhaka, said a press release.

Under this MoU, cardholders of the bank will enjoy 10 per cent discount on all domestic air fare, while credit cardholders will enjoy zero per cent EMI facility for 3 and 6 months under holiday packages in popular destinations like Cox's Bazar, the Maldives, Bangkok, and Singapore at US Bangla Airlines.

Javed Hasan, Ashim Kumar Roy, general managers of the bank, Md Rabiul Alam, deputy general manager, along with other high officials from both organisations were present.

## Asian Paints brings two new products

STAR BUSINESS DESK

Asian Paints Bangladesh recently launched two products - SmartCare Damp Proof Silicon Ceramic and Ultima Protek Shyne - for exterior walls and wooden furniture, offering a 12-year warranty.

The use of SmartCare Damp Proof Silicon Ceramic, a waterproofing solution, as a sealer on new exterior walls and Ultima Protek Shyne, a lamination exterior emulsion paint, as a topcoat ensures protection from any weather damage for a long time, says a press release.

PRICES OF KEY ESSENTIALS IN DHAKA CITY			
	PRICE (MAR 21, 2023)	% CHANGES FROM A MONTH AGO	% CHANGE FROM A YEAR AGO
Fine rice (kg)	Tk 60-Tk 75	0	3.85 ↑
Coarse rice (kg)	Tk 46-Tk 50	-4 ↓	3.23 ↑
Loose flour (kg)	Tk 55-Tk 58	0	50.67 ↑
Lentil (kg)	Tk 95-Tk 100	0	0
Soybean (litre)	Tk 168-Tk 172	0	0
Potato (kg)	Tk 16-Tk 20	-14.29 ↓	-10 ↓
Onion (kg)	Tk 35-Tk 40	15.38 ↑	-11.76 ↓
Egg (4 pcs)	Tk 45-Tk 47	-5.15 ↓	24.32 ↑

SOURCE: TCB

## 5G will come when time is right

FROM PAGE B4

merger is not the likely scenario for Bangladesh. We need to find other ways to partner with and be a good partner for digitalisation in Bangladesh.

DS: GP is now in its 26th year in Bangladesh. What more can we see from Telenor and GP?

Rostrup: 5G will come when the time is right, and we will do more on 4G. We will make sure that GP is as relevant and participates as much as possible in the things that are taking place.

We will invest where we are investing today. But also, we will continue modernising GP.

DS: The quality of service is a big issue in Bangladesh. What is GP doing to address it?

Rostrup: We are working hard on the service quality issue. But there are a lot of external factors for which we need help on the regulatory side. We need to be able to put bigger towers in place of smaller ones. We need help to stop some boosters and jammers that are installed and that are probably not regulated and approved.

DS: How ready is GP to launch 5G? How ready are we for 5G as a country?

Rostrup: I think GP and Telenor are technically ready to apply 5G. We are applying 5G in many markets globally as Telenor.

We are running pilots. We have a timeline to roll out the spectrum. But it must be mentioned that the digital ecosystem is not there yet. So, if you push for 5G too hard, it's not going to do anything good. It's going to absorb a lot of capital. So, this needs to be done carefully.

DS: Has Bangladesh been able to utilise the full benefit of 4G?

Rostrup: No. But it is not the nation's responsibility

## Cattle fatteners to get loans

FROM PAGE B4

Despite the inclusion of cattle fattening in the list of low-cost financing, he said, marginal and small farmers might not be able to avail the low-interest loans for beef production.

"Scheduled banks demand trade licence, two-year experience and bank statements for lending which small farmers usually do not have. So large farmers will benefit from the low-cost loan under the refinance scheme," he said.

Emran said the Bangladesh Bank should ensure that small producers avail the loan at easy terms.

Bankers can extend the loans visiting farms and based on guarantee from farmers instead of asking for banking and other documents, he added.

**Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh**

Office of the Executive Engineer  
Education Engineering Department  
Faridpur  
Web: [eed.faridpur.gov.bd](http://eed.faridpur.gov.bd)

Meme No. EE/EED/FAR/e-GP/2022-23/14 Date: 21/03/2023

### e-Tender Notice No. 14/2022-2023

e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for the procurement of the following works under EED Faridpur District as mentioned below:

SL No.	Tender ID	Package No.	Description of works (Limited Tendering Method)	Tender closing (date & time)	Tender opening (date & time)
01	804820	FAR/GOVT/REP/WD-34	Construction of Second Floor Slab by Removing Tin Shed with Repair and Renovation Works of Assistant Engineers Office, Education Engineering Department under Sadar Upazila Faridpur District.	06-04-2023 at 12:00	06-04-2023 at 13:00
02	804780	FAR/GOVTREP/REV/WD-02	Repair and Renovation Works of Academic Building at Alfadanga Govt. College under Alfadanga Upazila Faridpur District.	06-04-2023 at 12:00	06-04-2023 at 13:00
03	804781	FAR/GOVTREP/REV/WD-03	Remaining Works of Honour's Building Vertical Extension at Govt. Aynuddin College under Madhukhali Upazila Faridpur District.	06-04-2023 at 12:00	06-04-2023 at 13:00
04	804782	FAR/GOVTREP/REV/WD-04	Construction of Internal Road Camp at Govt. Birshetho Abdur Rauf Degree College under Madhukhali Upazila Faridpur District.	06-04-2023 at 12:00	06-04-2023 at 13:00
05	804783	FAR/GOVTREP/REV/WD-05	Repair and Renovation Works of Hostel Super's Quarter at Govt. Teachers Training College under Sadar Upazila Faridpur District.	06-04-2023 at 12:00	06-04-2023 at 13:00

This is an online tender where only e-Tender will be acceptable in the National e-GP System Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender A1 & A2 renewed up to FY 2022-23 enlistment Category Contractor of Education Engineering Department, Faridpur District who are registered in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) will be eligible.

The fees for downloading the e-Tender document from the National e-GP System Portal have to be deposited online through any registered bank's branches up to 16:00 on 05-04-2023.

Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP help desk ([helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd](mailto:helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd)).

The procuring entity reserves the right to accept or reject any or all tender(s) without assigning any reason whatsoever.

**Afzal Hossain**  
Executive Engineer  
Phone: 0631-6459  
E-mail: [ee\\_far@eedmoe.gov.bd](mailto:ee_far@eedmoe.gov.bd)

GD-522

(রাজস্বের শ্রবণিক, টেকসই সমৃদ্ধি)

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার

কাস্টমস, এক্সাইজ ও ভ্যাট বিভাগ, খুলনা  
ই-মেইল: [khulnavatd@yahoo.com](mailto:khulnavatd@yahoo.com)

### মাইক্রোবাস ভাড়ার দরপত্র আহ্বান বিজ্ঞপ্তি

কাস্টমস, এক্সাইজ ও ভ্যাট বিভাগ, খুলনা এর আওতাধীন খুলনা জেলার সকল রাজস্ব এলাকায় ইট টাটা প্রতিষ্ঠানসহ বিভিন্ন উৎপাদনকারী, সরবরাহকারী ও সেবা প্রদানকারী ব্যক্তি/প্রতিষ্ঠানের নিকট থেকে স্থানীয় পর্যায়ে মূল্য সংযোজন কর ও সম্পূর্ণকৃত শুদ্ধ আদায় কার্যক্রম তদারকি, নজরদারি, নিবারণ (প্রিভেন্টিভ) অভিযান পরিচালনা এবং বকেয়া রাজস্ব আদায় করার লক্ষ্যে সার্বক্ষণিক ব্যবহারের নিমিত্তে ০১টি মাইক্রোবাস (দৈনিক/মাসিক) ভাড়াভিত্তিক ভাড়া গ্রহণের জন্য নিম্নলিখিত শর্ত সাপেক্ষে লিখিত দরপত্র আহ্বান করা যাচ্ছে।

**শর্তাবলী:**

- সরবরাহতর্য গাড়ি ০১টি সর্বনিম্ন ১৫০০ সিসি এবং ০৮(আট) আসন বিশিষ্ট হতে হবে।
- সরবরাহতর্য গাড়ির যাবতীয় দলিলাদি হালনাগাদ/নবায়নকৃত হতে হবে এবং দরপত্রের সাথে লাইসেন্সের সত্যায়িত ফটোকপি সরবরাহ করতে হবে।
- গাড়িচালকের বেধ লাইসেন্স হালনাগাদ/নবায়িত হতে হবে এবং দরপত্রের সাথে লাইসেন্সের সত্যায়িত ফটোকপি সংযুক্ত করতে হবে।
- সরবরাহের পর গাড়ির কোন প্রকার ত্রুটি দেখা দিলে তার পরিবর্তে একই ক্ষমতাসম্পন্ন ও একই আসন সংখ্যা বিশিষ্ট অন্য আরেকটি গাড়ি সরবরাহের নিমিত্ত একাধা অঙ্গীকারনামা দরপত্রের সাথে সংযুক্ত করতে হবে।
- দরপত্রে গাড়ির যাবতীয় খরচ (যথাঃ তৈল/গ্যাস-প্রতিঘণ্টা, ভাড়া-প্রতিদিন) ইত্যাদিসহ সর্বমোট দর উল্লেখ করতে হবে।
- মাসিক ভিত্তিতে বিল দাখিলের নিমিত্ত লগবুকসহ নিজস্ব প্যাডে বিল উপস্থাপন করতে হবে।
- মাইক্রোবাস ভাড়া প্রদানকারী ব্যক্তি/প্রতিষ্ঠানের ১৩ ডিগ্রিটির হালনাগাদ মুসক নিবন্ধন নম্বর ও টিআইএন নম্বর থাকতে হবে এবং বিল পরিশোধের সময় আইনানুগ ভ্যাট ও অর্ধম আয়কর কর্তন করা হবে।
- মাইক্রোবাস ভাড়া প্রদানকারী ব্যক্তি/প্রতিষ্ঠানের মালিকের NID কার্ড থাকতে হবে।
- মাইক্রোবাস ভাড়ার মেয়াদ কার্যাদেশে উল্লেখিত তারিখ হতে ৩০/০৬/২০২৩ তারিখ পর্যন্ত বলবৎ থাকবে।
- মাইক্রোবাসটি কাস্টমস, এক্সাইজ ও ভ্যাট বিভাগ, খুলনা জেলার সকল উপজেলায় ব্যবহৃত হবে। উল্লেখ্য প্রতিদিন সকাল হতে দায়িত্ব কাজ শেষ না হওয়া পর্যন্ত মাইক্রোবাস প্রয়োজনে চালাতে হবে। সাপ্তাহিক বন্ধের সময় এবং সরকারি ছুটি দিনে প্রয়োজন হলে মাইক্রোবাস সরবরাহ করতে হবে।
- কোন প্রকার দুর্ঘটনা সংক্রান্ত যে কোন প্রকার আইনগত জটিলতার দায়ভার মাইক্রোবাস ভাড়া প্রদানকারী প্রতিষ্ঠানই বহন করবে।
- কোন অজুহাতে মাইক্রোবাস সরবরাহ বন্ধ করা যাবে না। যে গাড়িটি ভাড়া দেয়া হবে তার রেজিঃ নং আগেই জানাতে হবে। কোন কারণে তা দিতে না পারলে অন্য আরেকটি গাড়ি সরবরাহ করে তার রেজিঃ নং, ড্রাইভারের নাম ও মোবাইল নং এ দস্তরের যানবাহন কর্মকর্তাকে জানাতে হবে।
- গাড়িতে লগ বই ব্যবহার করতে হবে এবং তা যানবাহন কর্মকর্তা কর্তৃক স্বাক্ষরিত থাকবে।
- দরপত্র সম্পর্কিত সকল কার্যাদি The Public Procurement Act-2006 and The Public Procurement Rules-2008 অনুযায়ী পরিচালিত হবে।

আমহী দরপত্রদাতাগণকে আগামী ২৮/০৩/২০২৩ তারিখ দুপুর ১২.০০টা পর্যন্ত প্রতিষ্ঠানের নিজস্ব প্যাডে নিম্নস্বাক্ষরকারীর দস্তরে রক্ষিত বাস্কে দরপত্র দাখিল করার জন্য অনুরোধ করা হলো। একই দিন দুপুর ১২.৩০ ঘটিকায় দরপত্রদাতাদের উপস্থিতিতে (যদি কেহ উপস্থিত থাকেন) দরপত্র কমিটি দরপত্র বাস্তব দরপত্র যাচাই-বাছাই করে আইনানুগভাবে দরপত্র গ্রহণ করবেন।

বিদ্রূপ দরপত্র গ্রহণ ও বাস্তব করার সম্পূর্ণ এখতিয়ার দরপত্র কমিটি সংরক্ষণ করেন।

স্বাক্ষরিত

মোহাম্মদ হালাউদ্দিন রিপন  
সহকারী কমিশনার ও বিভাগীয় কর্মকর্তা  
কাস্টমস, এক্সাইজ ও ভ্যাট বিভাগ, খুলনা

জিডি-৫২৭

Airlines demand tax exemption on aircraft purchase

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

The Aviation Operators Association of Bangladesh (AOAB), a platform of the country's private air operators, yesterday demanded tax exemptions on the purchase of aircraft, helicopters and their parts.

The organisation said these taxes were not sustainable for the country's fragile aviation sector to survive.

The AOAB demanded withdrawal of four types of taxes imposed on this sector. The organisation cited these demands at its pre-budget proposal for the financial year 2023-24 during a meeting with the National Board of Revenue.

A letter containing the proposal was provided by Mofizur Rahman, secretary general of the organisation and managing director (MD) of NovoAir.

In the letter, he said, "Buying helicopters and their parts is very expensive at present. Tax imposed on it is 5 per cent, advance tax is 5 per cent, advance income tax is 5 per cent. Taxes on these sometimes exceed 100 per cent."



Jute bought from nearby districts being unloaded from a truck at a collection point in Phulbari Gate in Khulna city for export. Currently each maund (around 37 kilogrammes) is selling for Tk 2,500 to Tk 3,500 depending on the quality. Bangladesh annually produces roughly 80 lakh bales (one bale equals 180 kilogrammes) of raw jute, nearly 40 per cent of which is turned into products for export. Some 8 lakh bales were exported in fiscal 2021-22, showed data from the Department of Jute. The photo was taken on Monday.

PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

Bangabandhu industrial award policy amended

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

The industries ministry has brought changes to the Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Industrial Award (BSMIA) Policy in order to align it with the government's visions and plans, including the Sustainable Development Goals 2030 and the Vision 2041, and meet the challenges of the fourth industrial revolution.

The ministry issued a gazette notification on March 12 and the new policy will replace the one unveiled in 2019.

The government introduced the BSMIA in 2019 to encourage the public and private sectors to accelerate industrialisation by implementing the government's visions and plans. It was aligned with Vision 2021 and Vision 2041.

Officials of the industries ministry said slight changes have been brought in order to put in place a policy that is in line with the government's target and vision. All basic clauses have remained unchanged.

The new policy has emphasised product diversification, manufacturing of import-substitute products and creativity.

It encourages innovative industrial initiatives than conventional industries to produce technology-based products in line with the demand in the local and international markets.

GPH Ispat launches high-grade steel rebar

STAR BUSINESS REPORT, City

GPH Ispat Limited, one of the leading steel manufacturers in Bangladesh, on Monday launched its new high-grade steel rebar product, which they claim will reduce construction cost as well as ensure safety of the structures.

The group announced to launch GPH Quantum B600D-R steel rebar, first of its kind in the country, within over four months of launching its another new product GPH Quantum B600C-R steel rebar.

GPH Ispat launched the steel at a seminar titled "Countries only high strength and high performing steel GPH Quantum B600 C-R & B600 D-R" at Radisson Blu Chattogram Bay View attended by around three hundred engineers and architects.

In November last year, GPH launched B600C-R

steel rebar in Dhaka.

Both the two new products have now been launched together in Chattogram, GPH Ispat's Additional Managing Director Mohammad Almas Shimul told The Daily Star.

The two higher grade products would bring drastic changes in the country's construction sector, the steel maker said.

At the event, Padma Bridge Project Technical Team Leader and renowned structural engineer Professor Shamim Z Basunia said the products tested in Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BuEt) would reduce the size of the column section in building construction.

Thus, it would increase the floor area, and the capacity of carrying permanent and chronic loads will be higher, he said while presenting a paper on "Quality Reinforcement Steel: Use of 600MPa (87KSI) Steel in Durable Concrete Construction".

Update laws on arbitration: ICCB

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

The existing legal framework for arbitrations in Bangladesh should be updated for the enforcement of arbitral awards to get more foreign or local investment, according to the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC) Bangladesh.

An arbitration or arbitral award is the decision or judgment rendered by the arbitrators resolving the matter submitted for their consideration.

"The ease of enforcing foreign arbitral awards has a direct effect on both foreign and local investments," said Mahbubur Rahman, president of ICC Bangladesh.

He made these remarks while addressing a webinar on "Into the Century Year: ICC Court visits ICC Bangladesh" yesterday.

Foreign direct investment (FDI) is a powerful tool for economic growth, especially for a developing country like Bangladesh, he added.

"The existing laws on arbitration are outdated and do not provide adequate guidance on the recognition and enforcement of foreign arbitral awards. The act came into force over 21 years back in 2001," said Kutubuddin Ahmed, an executive board member of ICC Bangladesh.

Restaurateurs seek uninterrupted gas in Ramadan

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Bangladesh Restaurant Owners Association (BROA) has called for an increase in gas supply and addressing complexities in pipeline transfers and name changes ahead of the holy month of Ramadan.

It also proposed reducing VAT and taxes to meet the basic needs of people employed in the sector alongside restaurants running small and medium scale operations and street food vendors.

Organising a press briefing at Dhaka Reporters' Unity yesterday, the association placed a nine-point demand to resolve non-cooperation and a lack of coordination among various governmental departments.

The BROA said it supports the prime minister's plan to ensure safe food throughout the country but saw the lack of coordination as the biggest obstacle.

Consumers bracing for further belt-tightening

FROM PAGE B1

He said he admitted his son in first grade in January this year and that cost created additional pressure for him.

"In such as a situation, it becomes difficult for me to run the family with the salaries I currently get. And so, I bought less to manage everything," he said.

Arif Bin Saidul Haque of Chattogram said every year he used to purchase the groceries one week ahead of Ramadan but this time he has not done so although only a couple of days remain before Ramadan arrives on March 24 this year.

This time he had decided against purchasing all the groceries for the whole month in one go for the rising cost of living and high medical expenses of his ill mother.

"This time I will market on a weekly basis, and all will be homemade. I'll not buy any item from food shops," added Haque.

Sales down 30%-40%

Traders said sale of Ramadan groceries used to begin in full swing after Shab-e-Barat, which is observed 15 days ahead of

the month of fasting. This time, however, the scenario in the markets was different.

Retail traders of the two big cities of Dhaka and Chattogram claimed that their sales this year have decreased by 30

Mirpur-II, echoed them. He said the hike in prices of goods had prompted customers to limit their purchases to only what was essential for their families.

Mohammad Morshed, owner of Nihad Store in Hamzarbagh area of

Protection. The government entity said anything in excess of Tk 200 was unreasonable because the production cost of one kg of broiler chicken was Tk 135 to Tk 140 for large-scale farms, despite the increase in

Labaid Cancer Hospital plans

FROM PAGE B1

hospital is planning to raise fund from the market, Hossain said.

As Labaid Cancer Hospital has huge growth potential, City Bank Capital has agreed to give the service, he added.

The 14-storey modern building facility of the hospital has over 150 inpatient beds, emergency facilities, intensive care unit, dialysis and palliative care, according to the website of the hospital.

It has the facility of chemotherapy, radiotherapy, brachytherapy, immunotherapy and hormone therapy and dedicated modern laboratory for cancer diagnosis, it added.

Labaid is an around 35-year-old company and it has an intrinsic value, said Shamim of Labaid Cancer Hospital, the initial investment of which was Tk 500 crore.

"We want to go for the IPO for its value creation."

The hospital has the potential to grow further and it has plans to go for expansion, he added.

Official notice from the Government of Bangladesh regarding the amendment of the Bangabandhu Industrial Award Policy. Includes details of the policy changes and a list of 15 items for public procurement.

Banglalink nearing

FROM PAGE B1

2023. With the new customers, its subscriber base stood at around 4.14 crore at the end of the month.

The company's strong performance can be attributed to mainly two factors: strong performance in ensuring service quality, especially data services, and massive network expansion.

As per Ookla's Speedtest Intelligence report, Banglalink delivered the fastest average download

speed among the top local mobile network operators with 19 Mbps in the fourth quarter of 2022.

It recently completed the deployment of 4,000 base transceiver stations, taking the total to more than 14,500.

Taimur Rahman said: "Banglalink has been a catalyst for making telecom services affordable for the mass. It has been consistently performing well and the recent result indicates a strong foundation for future

sustainable performance."

Grameenphone raised Tk 486.1 crore in 2009 and Robi issued shares worth Tk 523.7 crore in 2020. The two largest mobile phone operators have floated 10 per cent of their shares in the market.

The listing of Banglalink would be seen, by both investors and analysts, as a positive development for the stock exchanges in Bangladesh since the number of listed sound and well-reputed companies is not high.

FROM PAGE B1

The BGMEA chief went on to say that local garment makers aim to earn better prices by supplying value-added items.

Bangladesh's export earnings from apparel shipments has changed a lot in recent times as the income is now mainly value driven instead of volume based as many local exporters are producing high-end

Bangladesh now a hub

products.

This is a major reason for the country's positive growth in garment exports even under difficult global economic circumstances.

Garment shipments grew 10.12 per cent year-on-year in the January-February period of the ongoing fiscal to reach \$8.36 billion, as per data from the Export Promotion Bureau.

## Indian businesses keen to invest heavily here

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Indian businesses showed interest to invest heavily in various sectors of Bangladesh.

The leaders of the Bharat Chamber of Commerce (BCC) expressed this interest at a meeting with the Bangladesh Investment Development Authority (Bida) at the conference room of Bida in the city's Agargaon on Monday.

A 10-member delegation of the BCC is now on a four-day visit to Bangladesh to find the business opportunities here.

Indian businessmen have always been interested to be development partners of Bangladesh, said NG Khaitan, president of BCC.

India and Bangladesh have always been friendly countries and Bangladesh has achieved tremendous success in the last 10 years, he said.

"We have come to Bangladesh on a four-day visit to check the investment areas in Bangladesh," said Abhik Roy, secretary general of BCC.

"Our investors are interested to invest in various sectors of Bangladesh."

Bangladesh has become one of the best investment destinations thanks to the infrastructural development the country has achieved, its political stability, stable economic growth and its successful response to the Covid-19 pandemic, said Lokman Hossain Miah, executive chairman of Bida.

Bangladesh is a large and growing market of with 170 million people and the number of people in the mid-income group is increasing by the day, he said.

The Bida has taken various investment expansion activities, including setting up of 100 economic zones and 27 hi-tech parks, he said.

"Bangladesh will become an upper middle-income nation within a decade. So now is the best time to invest in the country."

## Phoenix Insurance posts lower profit in 2022

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Phoenix Insurance Company Ltd registered an 8 per cent year-on-year decline in profit to Tk 8.14 crore last year.

The profit stood at Tk 8.87 crore in 2021, according to a disclosure on the Dhaka Stock Exchange.

Thus, the insurer reported earnings per share of Tk 2.02 for the year that ended on December 31, which was Tk 2.2 in 2021. Phoenix Insurance said its EPS fell as dividend income and other incomes went down.

The consolidated net asset value per share dropped to Tk 37.10 in 2022 from Tk 39.9 in 2021, owing to the fall in the prices of most of the shares where the insurer has investments. The consolidated net operating cash flow per share plummeted to Tk 1.37 from Tk 4.06 because of lower premium deposits and other incomes.

The board of directors of Phoenix Insurance recommended a 15 per cent cash dividend for 2022.

Shares of the insurer were up 1.19 per cent to Tk 34 on the DSE yesterday.

## Russia reports record gas supplies to China via Siberia

AFP, Moscow

Russian energy giant Gazprom said Tuesday it had reached a daily record in gas volumes supplied to China through the Power of Siberia pipeline.

The announcement came as Russian President Vladimir Putin hosts Chinese counterpart Xi Jinping for a second day with the leaders expected to sign agreements including on economic integration.

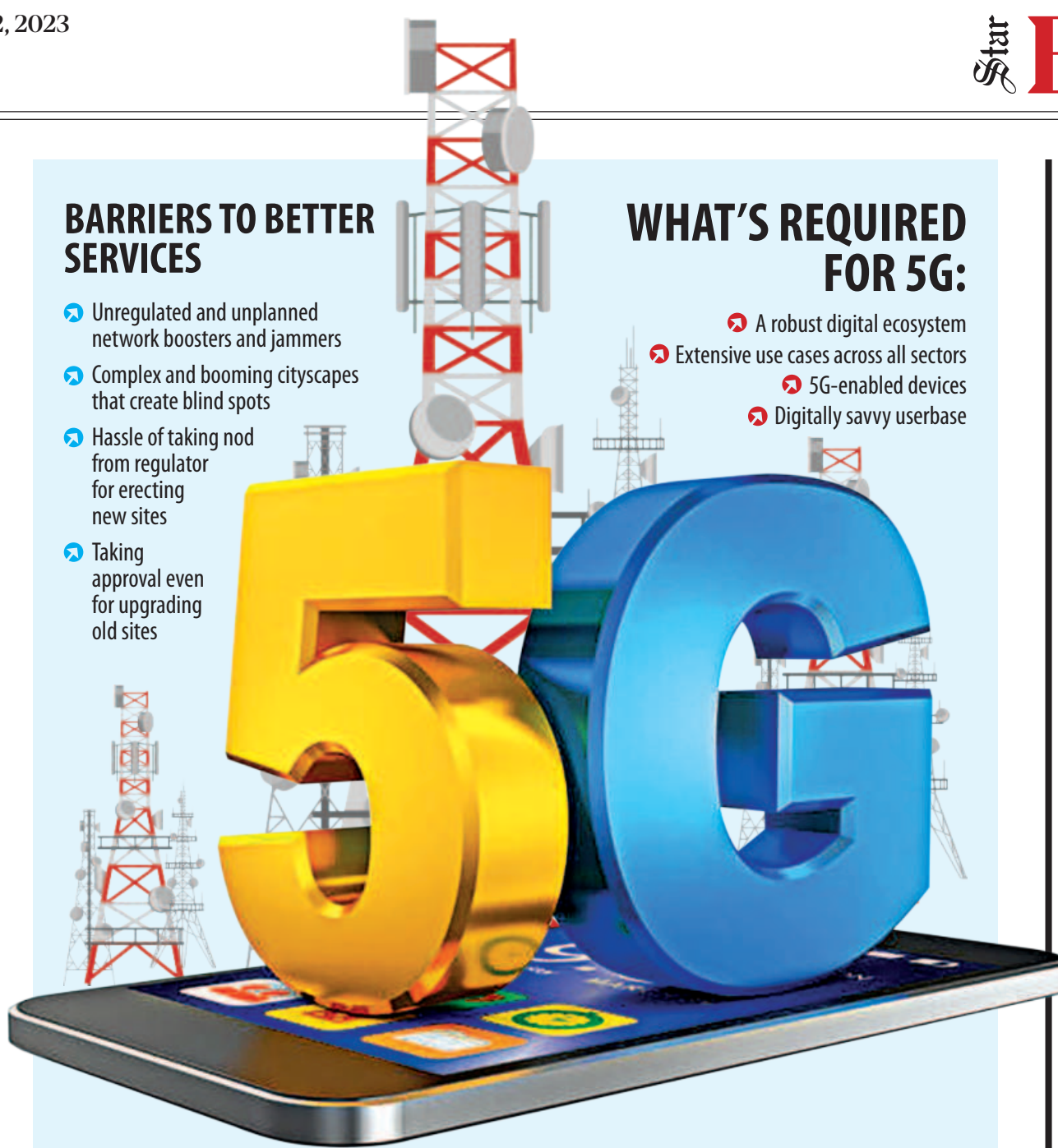
"On March 20, China's request for Russian gas supplies via the Power of Siberia pipeline significantly exceeded the existing daily contractual obligations," the company said in a statement.

### BARRIERS TO BETTER SERVICES

- Unregulated and unplanned network boosters and jammers
- Complex and booming cityscapes that create blind spots
- Hassle of taking nod from regulator for erecting new sites
- Taking approval even for upgrading old sites

### WHAT'S REQUIRED FOR 5G:

- A robust digital ecosystem
- Extensive use cases across all sectors
- 5G-enabled devices
- Digitally savvy userbase



## 5G will come when time is right

Says GP Chairman Jørgen C Arentz Rostrup

SHAHRIAR RAHMAN

Jørgen C Arentz Rostrup, chairman of Grameenphone, and head of Telenor Asia, was recently in Dhaka to take part in the Bangladesh Business Summit. On the sidelines of the mega event, he spoke to The Daily Star about Telenor's vision in Asia and Bangladesh, the future of the digital economy and the roadmap to 5G, among other issues.



**DS: What's your take on the Bangladesh Business Summit?**

**Rostrup:** Since arriving in Bangladesh, I have met with and listened to a lot of knowledgeable people. I was intrigued by their vision and impressed by the digital strategy and vision of the prime minister for Bangladesh for the next 20 years. Our view is that we need to digitalise SMEs and the public sector as well. We need to focus on digital skill training. That's the only way you can actually move from vision to execution.

**DS: Bangladesh's youth population is 45 per cent. How can the next generation of the workforce be globally**

**competent?**

**Rostrup:** Roughly two million people enter the job market every year. However, a small percentage receive formal skills training before they join the labour market. While the numbers are gradually improving, very few people have digital skills.

The government is talking about creating three million technology-related jobs by 2025. It is a great vision, but it is equally important to have a roadmap to get there.

We need to create a digital ecosystem that is beneficial, transparent, solid, efficiency-driven, and collaborative. We need to create room for the private sector to explore, innovate, and test things to increase engagement.

**DS: Telenor has recently sold its unit in Myanmar. The same is happening in Pakistan. It is merging its operation in Malaysia and Thailand. This means that the footprint of Telenor is shrinking in Asia. Is this a pattern we might expect to see in other markets, including Bangladesh?**

**Rostrup:** First of all, we are actually expanding the headquarters in Singapore. We are putting more resources in Asia from Telenor's point of view. Second, Myanmar was extremely unfortunate for us and it was in clear conflict with our values. Hence, we could not operate there anymore.

Then we have the mergers in South-East Asia. What we are doing is simply moving forward in the next journey. For example, in the first 10-15 years of our 25-year journey in Bangladesh, it was all about mass market growth. And Bangladesh saw a mass market growth. That was the first part of the journey. Now comes the second phase.

Currently, we are facing enormous opportunities and expectations of connectivity and services around it. And services extended from it will be decisive for a digital journey. So, we are now talking about needing to partner with others, and that is an acknowledgement in itself.

We are also partnering with other telecommunication companies, like a merger in Southeast Asia. It is all about new dynamics in the markets. Here in Bangladesh, I feel we have a size, which means that the

READ MORE ON B2

## Stocks recover after two-day fall

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Major indices of the Dhaka Stock Exchange (DSE) yesterday rose, snapping a two-day losing streak.

The DSEX, the benchmark index of the country's premier bourse, added 18 points, or 0.30 per cent, to hit 6,222 points.

The DS30, which represents blue-chip stocks, increased 0.21 per cent to 2,220 points while the DSES, an index comprised of shariah-compliant companies, went up 0.43 per cent to 1,355 points.

Turnover, a key indicator of trade volume in the market, inched up 1.4 per cent to Tk 349 crore.

The stocks bounced back as bargain hunters came up to grab some oversold stocks, International Leasing Securities said in its daily market review.

The markets started with an upbeat note in the morning session and observed a bullish trend during the whole session as investors' buoyancy remained afloat till closure, it added.

Almost all sectors achieved price appreciation with paper and printing rising 2.9 per cent, jute advancing 2.6 per cent, and services and real estate edging up 2.1 per cent.

Investor activity was mainly focused on the food and allied sector, capturing 13.7 per cent of the day's total turnover, followed by IT (12.6 per cent) and travel and leisure (11.8 per cent).

Of the securities traded, 87 advanced, 14 declined and 224 did not show any price movement.

**The stocks bounced back as bargain hunters came up to grab some oversold stocks, International Leasing Securities said in its daily market review**

Legacy Footwear made the highest gain with an increase of 10 per cent.

Orion Infusion, Zeal Bangla Sugar Mills, Hakkani Pulp & Paper Mills, and Jute Spinners were among the top gainers.

Renwick Jaineswar & Co was the highest loser, shedding 2 per cent.

Bank Asia, Republic Insurance Company, Rangpur Dairy & Food Products, and Sonar Bangla Insurance were also on the list of significant losers.

Sea Pearl Beach Resort & Spa was the most-traded stock with issues worth Tk 30 crore being transacted. Bangladesh Shipping Corporation, Shinepukur Ceramics, Olympic Industries, and Rupali Life Insurance Company also registered significant turnover.

Caspi, the all share price index of the Chittagong Stock Exchange, gained 57 points, or 0.31 per cent, to close at 18,382 points.

Of the issues traded, 50 rose, 12 retreated and 95 did not see any price swing.

Meanwhile, turnover of the port city bourse surged 48.6 per cent to Tk 12.29 crore.

## Central Insurance's profit declines 15.75% in 2022

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Central Insurance Company Ltd posted a 15.75 per cent year-on-year decrease in profit to Tk 10.79 crore in 2022.

The profit stood at Tk 12.81 crore in 2021.

Thus, the insurer reported earnings per share of Tk 2.03 for the financial year of 2022 compared to Tk 2.41 a year ago, according to a disclosure on the Dhaka Stock Exchange.

The net asset value per share of Central Insurance rose slightly to Tk 49.48 last year from Tk 49.35 in 2021 while the net operating cash flow per share slipped to Tk 2.51 from Tk 2.77 during the period.

The board of directors of the company has recommended a 15 per cent cash dividend for the year that ended on December 31.

Central Insurance shares rose 1.64 per cent to Tk 37.10 on the DSE yesterday.

## Cattle fatteners to get loans from Tk 5,000cr BB fund

MD FAZLUR RAHMAN

The Bangladesh Bank yesterday said cattle fatteners or beef producers would get loan from its Tk 5,000 crore refinance scheme for ensuring food security.

The announcement comes at a time when cattle fattening for beef production has been growing in Bangladesh amid growing interest among farmers owing to higher prices of beef.

Last year, farmers reared 41 lakh cattle targeting to sell during Eid-ul-Azha, which accounts for half of annual demand for animals for meat.

A total of 33.42 lakh cattle were fattened under the special regime, which involves nutritious diets and movement restrictions, in 2017, according to the Department of Livestock Services.

In November last year the central bank formed the refinance scheme to ensure food security as the banking regulator thinks the world might face a food crisis in the days to come.

The loans will have to be disbursed to the sectors such as the cultivation of rice,

vegetables, fruits and flowers, fish and poultry farming, and milk production, it said at that time.

In a notice yesterday, the BB said the cattle fatteners have been brought to the sectors and they would be eligible for loans under the scheme.

Under the central bank scheme, farmers will be able to take loans at 4 per cent interest.

Banks will be allowed to take loans at 0.5 per cent interest from the fund, meaning that they will enjoy an interest margin of 3.5 per cent after disbursing the fund to the farmers.

Farmers will have to repay the fund within 18 months, including a grace period of three months.

Growers who cultivate paddy, vegetables, fruits and flowers will be able to get Tk 2 lakh in loans without any collateral.

Mohammad Shah Emran, general secretary of Bangladesh Dairy Farmers' Association, said around 800,000 farmers are engaged in dairy and bulls rearing in the country.

READ MORE ON B2



Cattle fattening for beef production has been growing in Bangladesh amid growing interest among farmers owing to higher prices of beef.

PHOTO: STAR