



Workers remove weeds from a piece of land being used to cultivate jute plants in Naowapara village in Satkhira. The sowing period usually runs from early March to early May whereas harvests around three months later from July to September, states the crop calendar of the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

Ford recalls 422,000 SUVs

REUTERS, Washington

Ford Motor Co is recalling 422,000 sport utility vehicles in the United States because the video output may fail even after getting a prior recall repair, preventing the rear-view camera image from displaying.

The new recall covers 2020 through 2023 Ford Explorer, Lincoln Aviator, and 2020-2022 Lincoln Corsair SUVs with a 360-degree camera.

The recall expands and replaces prior Ford callbacks for the same issue in 2021 and 2023. Ford last year updated the image processing module (IPMB) software in an effort to address the issue.

Ford said on Thursday it is "working together with suppliers to identify root cause and provide the correct remedy as quickly as possible".

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) said the loss of the rear-view camera image can reduce the driver's rear visibility, increasing the risk of a crash.

Owner notification letters are expected to be mailed on June 26.

Last year, Ford said it had reports of 17 minor crashes relating to the recall issue and more than 2,100 warranty reports. Ford said Thursday it had 29 claims of vehicles exhibiting symptoms of malfunctioning screens after getting the 2023 recall repair.

CHAR AREAS IN DHAKA DIVISION

Govt plans Tk 303cr livestock, poultry project

MD ASADUZ ZAMAN

The government is planning to undertake a Tk 303 crore project to increase milk, meat and egg production in char areas under Dhaka division by at least 15 per cent to 20 per cent and subsequently improve living standards.

The project aims to donate livestock and poultry alongside early-stage feed, vaccine and medicine among 65,290 families in 31 upazilas of Manikganj, Dhaka, Munshiganj, Rajbari, Faridpur, Madaripur and Shariatpur.

Proposed by the Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock and to be implemented by the Department of Livestock Services (DLS) from July this year to June 2027, the project will run under 10 packages, according to planning commission documents.

One poultry package involves providing 25 one-week-old chicks of either Egyptian Fayoumi or Sonali breeds, including two males, Tk 8,800 for a coop, and three months' feed and necessary vaccines and medicines.

In this way, around 1,650 families will each get calves, 8,220 goats, 4,110 sheep, 16,450 ducks and 32,900 chickens.

The calves will be hybrids and around

one year old, worth some Tk 90,000, said Md Shamim Hossain, focal point officer of the project, on being contacted by The Daily Star.

"To make it sustainable, we will provide feed grain, necessary vaccines and medicines only for the first 12 months," he

The project aims to donate livestock and poultry alongside early-stage feed, vaccine and medicine among 65,290 families in 31 upazilas of Manikganj, Dhaka, Munshiganj, Rajbari, Faridpur, Madaripur and Shariatpur.

said, adding that information would also be shared on feeding different types of grass and silage.

Each goat or sheep will be worth around Tk 11,200, he said.

On ensuring proper selection of beneficiaries, Shamim said a five-member committee would be formed in every upazila headed by the upazila nirbahi

officer and comprising the upazila agriculture officer, fisheries officer, union chairman and DLS officer.

"We have set up some criteria for the beneficiaries. The selection body would verify the list properly. Nobody outside of the char areas has any scope to be included in the beneficiary list," he said.

A feasibility study has been conducted by Bangladesh Livestock Research Institute, he said.

The project has been scrutinised through two project evaluation committee (PEC) meetings, said Md Sayduzzaman, additional secretary to the agriculture, water resources and rural institutions division of the planning commission.

"We have proposed a raise of Tk 30 crore from an initial proposal of Tk 273 crore taking into consideration the high prices of feed grain and other materials," he said.

This project may soon be placed before the Executive Committee of the National Economic Council for approval, he said.

The char people always remain neglected and this project may make their lives a little better. But the authorities should ensure proper implementation, he said.

Gadget & Gear opens Apple experience store in Dhaka

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Apple's authorised reseller Gadget & Gear (G&G) in partnership with Standard Chartered Bangladesh yesterday announced the opening of its first-ever Apple experience store, Gadget Studio by G&G.

The company said it marks a significant milestone in Bangladesh as the store offer a comprehensive range of Apple products with a redefined shopping experience for Apple enthusiasts.

The experience store will provide the customers with an access to the latest products, personalised service and a state-of-the-art shopping environment, according to a statement of G&G.

"Apple enthusiasts can explore and purchase the latest iPhone models, iPad, MacBook, Apple Watch, AirPods, iMac, and authorised accessories. The store boasts a premium interior with minimal and sophisticated elegance," the statement read.

The store is located at bti Landmark on 16 Gulshan Avenue in Dhaka.

As a special launching offer, the customers can enjoy an exclusive discount of 10 per cent or get 18 months' equated monthly instalment facility at zero interest on some conditions.

Md Jashim Uddin, president of the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry; Mostofa Azad Chowdhury Babu, senior vice president; Nure Alam Shimu, partner and CEO at Gadget & Gear; Jahangir Alam Sacchu, a partner, and Mohammad Ahsan Kabir Chowdhury, another partner of Gadget & Gear, were present at the opening of the store.

Dhaka Travel Mart sees Tk 10cr transaction

STAR BUSINESS DESK

The 18th edition of the international tourism fair, styled "Air Astra Dhaka Travel Mart", saw overall transactions that exceeded Tk 10 crore, according to organisers of the fair.

The three-day fair ended yesterday at the Pan Pacific Sonargaon Dhaka.

The organisers claimed that the tourism fair attracted over 12,000 visitors in three days, said a press release.

"This year, the travel mart created more enthusiasm among visitors, which was beyond our expectations. The fair attracted over 12,000 visitors in three days," said Kazi Wahidul Alam, an organiser of the event.

"Total volume of the transaction, including cash and forward booking, exceeded Tk. 10 crore, which is really a big achievement considering the existing economic situation," he added.

Over 50 organisations representing India, Nepal, Malaysia, Thailand, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Oman, the UAE, and hosts Bangladesh showcased their products and services at the fair.

Participants offered attractive discounts on domestic and international air tickets, hotel and resort bookings, and various other tourism products and services.

Fumigation of US cotton

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Bangladesh lifted the rule of mandatory fumigation of US cotton last week and the country asked for reciprocity through the special access, he said.

However, the fumigation is still mandatory for raw cotton brought in from other North American countries, as those are not scientifically tested like the ones imported from the US, he said.

In the meeting, the USTR officials complained about the export of counterfeit goods from Bangladesh to the US, he said.

There is no scope of sending any counterfeit goods from Bangladesh to the US and European Union as the consignments are audited by different organisations at different levels before shipments are finally made, said Ghosh.

The USTR also stressed the need for improving the business climate to attract more American investment

to Bangladesh, he said.

Ghosh said the government has already changed the renewal time for trade and export and import licences. Previously, those licences needed to be renewed every year but now they need to be renewed every five years, he said.

The USTR also expressed concerns about the government's new data protection act, which might discourage the US businesses to invest more in Bangladesh, he said. Ghosh said the visiting USTR team would sit with the ICT ministry today.

Regarding the labour situation, he said the government has been updating the labour laws and rules under a National Action Plan addressing requirements of the EU for a GSP Plus facility and publishing those on public websites so people could know about them.

During the discussion,

Bangladesh did not directly request for revival of the GSP to the US markets but demanded preferential market access, Ghosh said.

However, Bangladesh sought US support in the forum of World Trade Organization in obtaining an extension of least developed country facilities beyond 2026.

He also said the issue of US sanctions on officers of the Rapid Action Battalion of Bangladesh was not discussed during the meeting as it was not the issue of the commerce ministry.

From the US side, Brian Luti, director for South Asia regional affairs at the National Security Council, Brendan Lynch, deputy assistant at the USTR, and Mahnaz Khan, director for South Asia at the USTR, attended the meeting.

After the meeting, none from the USTR talked to journalists.

Unfounded

FROM PAGE B1

Brig Gen Md Ehsanul Kabir, director general for engineering and operations division at the BTRC, said recently at an event.

"We face it at every step," he said.

The BTRC is yet to get approvals for network infrastructure installation on the Padma bridge, metro rail and Karnaphuli tunnel, he added.

The BTRC receives over 20 requests every month from different areas for the installation of towers while about 5 to 7 requests for their removal as people fear the radio waves, he said.

"We keep trying and the ice is starting to break. We believe we will be able to expand the network in the hard-to-reach areas," he said.

"Every year we relocate a good number of towers due to the unfounded apprehensions," Mohammed Shahedul Alam, Robi's chief corporate and regulatory officer.

Operators combinedly had to dismantle about 200 towers till date centring the apprehensions, according to the operators.

Telecom regulators have long been conducting surveys throughout the country and found that the radiation level is far lower than the permissible limit of EMF exposure.

As per the standard of the International Commission on Non-Ionising Radiation Protection (ICNIRP), International Telecommunication

Union and World Health Organisation, the permissible limit of EMF exposure is 2.106 milliwatts per meter square (mW/m2).

The BTRC conducted a field survey in 30 spots in 12 areas of Dhaka from November 2022 and January this year. The survey found the EMF radiation emitted by cell towers of mobile operators to be far below the limit.

The highest amount of radiation was found in Malibagh Chowdhurypara and nearby. However, the EMF emission levels from towers in that area were one-twentieth of the permissible limit set by the ICNIRP.

Not only the masses, authorities running government projects never incorporate the issue of telecommunication network alongside utility services in their planning, said AKM Al-Amin, head of network services at Grameenphone.

Only in Dhaka city alone, Grameenphone needs to install 300 more towers, Robi 100 and Banglalink 62 for delivering better services. But they said they were not getting the nod neither from government entities nor private ones.

"Everyone wants a good network but most people don't want towers in their places," said Al-Amin.

"This problem is increasing day by day. We want government infrastructure and strategic project designs to include a plan to deploy mobile networks," he added.

Buy local yarn

FROM PAGE B1

of Bangladesh Knitwear Manufacturers and Exporters Association.

In the letter sent last week, the BTMA also said a lot of imported yarn and fabrics are sold at major shops across the country, including Dhaka, Narayanganj, Narsingdi and Sirajganj.

However, local spinners have a lot of unsold yarn that is ready to be sold to knitters and weavers at the market rate, it added.

Earlier, when the demand for yarn soared in line with the demand for garment items amid the global supply chain's recovery from Covid-19, local spinners sat with garment

manufacturers to set yarn prices in consultation with millers and garment exporters.

This time too, knitwear exporters also need to sit with the spinners to fix the price and ultimately be encouraged to buy locally spun yarn at competitive prices from domestic markets, the letter said.

GOVERNMENT OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF BANGLADESH Nilphamari Govt. College Nilphamari Nilphamari

Memo No. CEDP/PMU/P/(IDG-1165)/179/2019-6053

Date: 21/05/2023

e-Tender Notice 02/2022-2023

e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for the procurement of following package:

Sl. No.	Tender ID No.	Name of Package	Last Date and Time of Tender Security Submission	Tender Closing Date & Time
1.	836010	Supply and Installation of Campus Network for Nilphamari Govt. College, Nilphamari	8 June 2023 11.30 AM	8 June 2023 12.30 PM

This is an online tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copy will be accepted.

To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required.

The fees for downloading the e-Tender Documents from the National e-GP System portal have to be deposited online through any registered Banks' Branches up to 7 June 2023 3:30 PM.

Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP Help Desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).

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Public expenditure

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CPD Senior Research Fellow Towfiqul Islam Khan said as the public expenditure is low in Bangladesh, the recurrent expenditure of running the government might be met, but public investment in the much-needed areas remains low.

"Hence, investments in the social sectors in Bangladesh such as health, education and social protection have remained the lowest in the world."

He said the inability to mobilise domestic revenue is often blamed.

"But it is also true that the government, on a continuous basis, could

spend much less than the budgeted amount and the budget deficit as a percentage of GDP has remained lower than the programmed limits over the years. Indeed, the institutional deficit of the government in implementing the budget is exposed."

"The quality of public expenditure and value for money are often undermined due to the deficit in good governance."

Data from the Implementation Monitoring and Evaluation Division under the planning ministry showed that the government's

ADP expenditure was Tk 203,648 crore in 2021-22, constituting 5.13 per cent of GDP.

Zahid Hussain, a former lead economist at the World Bank's Dhaka office, however, thinks increasing the budget size for the sake of raising is not rationale unless service deliveries are ensured.

"Traditionally, revenue collection and project implementation capacity have been low. But unless you fix the problem of public investment management, corruption and implementation capacity, raising public expenditure will not be helpful."