

Precision biotech key to resilient agriculture: speakers

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Precision biotechnology is crucial for building climate resilience in the agricultural sector of Bangladesh, experts said at a dialogue yesterday.

They made the comments at the dialogue titled "The Nexus of Climate Smart Agriculture and Innovative Biotechnology" at the Radisson Blu Hotel in Dhaka, according to a press release of the US embassy in Dhaka.

The agriculture ministry and the US Department of Agriculture jointly organised the event.

Speakers discussed the importance of agricultural biotechnology in supporting farmers in adapting to and mitigating the effects of climate change to provide food for Bangladeshis.

Addressing the inaugural session of the event, Nathan Flook, the chargé d'affaires at the US embassy, and Wahida Akter, agriculture secretary, highlighted the importance of precision biotechnology to build climate resilience in the farm sector.

Salinity intrusion, drought, and new pests have made it harder for farmers to produce food profitably, they said.

Flook underscored the importance of agricultural biotechnology as a safe tool to build resilience in agriculture and enhance global food security.

Throughout the three technical sessions, scientists, academics, regulators, and policymakers shared the newest policies and research related to biotechnology, according to the press release.



Work on the first terminal of the Payra Sea Port on the southern coast of Patuakhali is in full swing, with authorities hoping to begin operations by October. The completion of the terminal is expected to facilitate the transport of goods and speed up overall operations.

PHOTO: SOHRAB HOSSAIN

Payra port's first terminal likely to open by October

SOHRAB HOSSAIN, Patuakhali

The Payra sea port's first terminal is expected to be up and running by October, facilitating transport of goods from mother vessels and speeding up operations in the country's third major seaport.

The terminal, built on the banks of the Rabnabad channel, will have the capacity to simultaneously load three 200-metre-long mother vessels.

The 650-metre main terminal will have a 3.25 lakh square metre backup yard and a 10,000 square metre container freight station facility. Two more terminals are also under construction.

With Belgian company Jan De Nul completing capital dredging on the country's deepest channel in March this year, mother vessels began using the jetty at the Payra thermal power plant adjacent to the Payra port.

Initially, goods will be transported from the first terminal by road via a bridge over the Andharmanik river, said Payra Port Authority

Deputy Director (Traffic) Azizur Rahman. But ferry services will soon be introduced to ease the movement of heavy vehicles, he said.

Another 1.12km bridge is also being constructed over the Andharmanik river, Rahman said, adding that work on a six-lane 6.35-km road was also proceeding rapidly.

The cost of the project, including the construction of the first terminal, six-lane road and four-lane bridge, is estimated at Tk 4,516 crore.

Marking buoys fitted with lights have been installed at an anchorage which can accommodate 15 ships alongside loading and unloading of goods.

On August 24, the port authority arranged a discussion with stakeholders to speed up the port's construction.

The stakeholders include Bangladesh Shipping Agents Association, Bangladesh Customs and Forwarding Agents Association, Bangladesh Freight Forwarders Association and representatives of wharves located within the port's boundaries.

The port authority should increase communication with importers of Barisal, Bhola and Dhaka, said Syed Mohammad Mithu, general secretary of the port's workers union.

"If we can encourage the big importers in these areas, they will use the Payra port to bring in products. As a result, use of the port will increase and the port will also benefit financially," he said.

Till August, Payra Port Authority earned Tk 913.19 crore in revenues from 339 foreign commercial ships and 1,459 domestic lighterage vessels using the port's under-construction facilities.

The Payra port is somewhat operational, with various traders bringing in products, including cement, and raw materials, through the port, said Payra Port Authority Chairman Rear Admiral Golam Sadek.

"Activities at the Payra port are increasing day by day, paving the way for foreign investment. Once the Payra port becomes fully functional, it can provide economic support to Bangladesh," he said.

DSE inspecting 14 listed firms

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Dhaka Stock Exchange (DSE) is conducting inspections at factories of 14 listed companies to identify whether they have any potential as they have been performing poorly over the years.

The companies are Northern Jute Mills Ltd, National Feed Mills Ltd, Fortune Shoes Ltd, Central Pharmaceuticals Limited, CVO Petrochemical Refinery Ltd, Dulamia Cotton Spinning Mills Limited, Familytex (BD) Limited, Keya Cosmetics Ltd, Khan Brothers PP Woven Bag Industries Limited, Regent Textile Mills Limited, Dacca Dyeing Ltd, Usmania Glass Sheet Factory Limited, Zaheen Spinning Limited and Zahintex Industries Ltd.

A top DSE official confirmed that the DSE had selected 42 companies to conduct inspections as they were incurring losses, failing to hold annual general meetings or had been kept shut for many years.

Some companies are struggling in terms of performance but prices of their junk stocks are rising



At present, some of the companies are struggling in terms of performance but prices of their junk stocks are rising continuously. So, the premier bourse decided to ascertain their business potential, he said.

The Bangladesh Securities and Exchange Commission (BSEC) allowed the DSE to inspect 14 companies in the first phase, he said, adding that the bourse had already inspected almost half of them.

Now, it is preparing an inspection report to provide to the stock market regulator, he said.

A top BSEC official said they were analysing whether it was necessary to conduct inspections into the 42 companies.

"We will hopefully allow them to inspect the companies to get an understanding of their existing situation," he said.

If the BSEC allow the bourse to conduct wide-ranging inspections, it might create a negative impression among companies that are performing well. "So, we are looking into the aspects of conducting inspections," he added.



Muhammad Abdul Mannan, minister for planning, attends the launching programme of a wearable payment device styled "WEAREBL" yesterday unveiled by Eastern Bank in association with Mastercard for local customers.

PHOTO: EASTERN BANK

EBL, Mastercard launch 'WEAREBL' payment solution

STAR BUSINESS DESK

Eastern Bank PLC, in collaboration with Mastercard, yesterday unveiled "WEAREBL," the country's first wearable payment device featuring cutting edge NFC technology.

Users can tap and pay, all with one stylish device by upgrading their phone into a payment powerhouse with a pop-socket. The device, named "Phone Grip", offers seamless integration into the user's daily routine, providing hassle-free, secure, and efficient contactless transactions that simplify life.

By using this device equipped with contactless payment options, Mastercard

cardholders will be able to make safe, secure and fast transactions.

The product will meet the rising demand of contactless payment solutions for local users, the bank said in a press release.

Muhammad Abdul Mannan, minister for planning, attended the launch programme as chief guest.

Md Sharafat Ullah Khan, director of Payment System Department at the Bangladesh Bank, Ali Reza Ittekkar, managing director of Eastern Bank, Syed Mohammad Kamal, country manager of Mastercard Bangladesh, and other senior officials from the respective organisations were present.

Online pharmacy MedEasy

FROM PAGE B1
Accelerating Asia, and nVentures.

"MedEasy's nuanced understanding of Bangladesh's unique challenges caught our attention," said Patricia Sosrodjo, general partner at Seedstars International Ventures.

"They aren't just digitising processes; they're reshaping healthcare experiences for a demographic often overlooked."

MedEasy provides a much-needed solution in the Bangladesh market and, with proper focus and strategy, it should make a significant impact on the lives of Bangladeshis, said Sami Ahmed, managing director of Startup Bangladesh.

No respite for workers as wage growth

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wages have been falling behind price increases, the real wages have been falling.

"This has been happening for over a year now. No action to address this important issue has come to my attention."

He said given the nature of the current inflation, conventional instruments like monetary policy alone can't fight it.

Other measures, especially to ease and regulate the supply of essentials, are urgently needed.

"Market imperfections and foul play in a monopolistic/oligopolistic market have long been pointed out as a major factor behind the recent inflation. It's a pity that very little is being done to moderate this monstrous shock."

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার					
বাংলাদেশ পুলিশ					
অধিনায়কের কার্যালয়					
র‍্যাপিড অ্যাকশন ব্যাটালিয়ন-৭					
পতেঙ্গা, চট্টগ্রাম					
উন্মুক্ত দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি					
"The Public Procurement Act-2006" and "Regulation-2008" এর বিধি মোতাবেক ২০২৩-২০২৪ অর্থ বৎসরে ২য় কোয়ার্টারের (অক্টোবর, নভেম্বর এবং ডিসেম্বর ২০২৩) জন্য র‍্যা-৭, উত্তর পতেঙ্গা, চট্টগ্রাম কোর্সের গ্রুপ ভিত্তিক সরবরাহের পৃথক পৃথক টিকাদার নিয়োগের লক্ষ্যে প্রকৃত বাংলাদেশী বাসকারী/সরবরাহকারী প্রতিষ্ঠানের নিকট হতে সীলমোহরকৃত বামে প্রতিযোগিতামূলক দরপত্র আহ্বান করা যাবে। এতদসম্বন্ধে বিস্তারিত বিবরণ নিম্নে প্রদত্ত হলো:					
১।	মহালাস/বিভাগ	২।	সহকারী	৩।	দরপত্র সম্পাদনকারী প্রধান
৪।	কি কারণে দরপত্র আহ্বান	৫।	দরপত্র সূত্র নং	৬।	তারিখ
৭।	কালের বিবরণ	৮।	অর্ধের উৎস	৯।	তথ্যাদি
১০।	দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি প্রকাশের তারিখ	১১।	দরপত্র জমা প্রদানের সর্বশেষ তারিখ ও সময়	১২।	দরপত্র খোলার তারিখ ও সময়
১৩।	দরপত্র মুদ্রাণের তারিখ ও সময়	১৪।	অফিসের নাম ও ঠিকানা	১৫।	টিকাদারের প্রাক যোগাযোগ
১৬।	মাসামাসের বিবরণ	ক্রমিক নং	আইটেম	পরিমাণ	দরপত্রের মূল্য (টাকা)
১৭।	দরপত্র আহ্বানকারী কর্মকর্তার নাম	১৮।	দরপত্র আহ্বানকারী কর্মকর্তার পদবী	১৯।	দরপত্র আহ্বানকারী কর্মকর্তার ঠিকানা
২০।	দরপত্র আহ্বানকারী কর্মকর্তার যোগাযোগের মাধ্যম	২১।	বিশেষ শর্তাবলী	ক।	নির্দিষ্ট সময়ের পর আর কোন দরপত্র গ্রহণ করা হবে না।
খ।	কোন কারণ দর্শানো ব্যতিরেকে কর্তৃপক্ষ যে কোন দরপত্র গ্রহণ বা বাতিল করার ক্ষমতা সংরক্ষণ করেন।	গ।	দরপত্র উন্মুক্ত হলে কোন আইটমের পরিমাণ বৃদ্ধি অথবা কমানোর বিষয়ে কর্তৃপক্ষের ক্ষমতা রয়েছে।	ঘ।	দরপত্র পিপিআর/২০০৬ ও পিপিআর/২০০৮ ও তদীয় সংশোধনী মোতাবেক সকল শর্তাবলী কার্যকর হবে।
ঙ।	আইটেমের দর বাজার মূল্যের সাথে সামঞ্জস্যপূর্ণ হতে হবে।	চ।	সর্বনিম্ন দরদাতার দর গ্রহণে কর্তৃপক্ষ সকল ক্ষেত্রে বাধ্য নয়।	ছ।	নমুনা হিসেবে প্রদেয় ভোজ্য তৈল সরকার কর্তৃক অনুমোদিত প্রতিষ্ঠান হতে পরীক্ষার ব্যয়ভার দরদাতা প্রতিষ্ঠানমুহকে বহন করতে হবে।

Nagad hikes

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"The free-of-charge service for cash-outs will not negatively impact earnings. Rather, it will help expand our business to a large extent," he said in March.

bKash, the nation's top MF's operator in terms of transaction volume and amount, allows customers to send money to five favourite (Priyo) numbers without any charges. It also does not charge if the amount sent from its app is

less than Tk 100.

It charges Tk 14.90 per Tk 1,000 cash-out for up to Tk 25,000 per month from a 'Priyo Agent'. If someone withdraws more than Tk 25,000 in a month from a Priyo Agent, the charge is Tk 18.50 per thousand, the same rate as cashing out from a normal agent.

According to bKash, 95 percent of customers do not cash out more than Tk 25,000 per month.

The nation's third-

largest operator, Rocket, offers Tk 9 cash-out charge per thousand withdrawn from Dutch-Bangla Bank's ATM booths, making it the lowest cash-out charge among MF's providers. However, its customers have to pay Tk 18 when cashing out from agents.

About 90 percent of MF's transactions in Bangladesh take place through the three operators, according to industry insiders.

BB sits with Padma Bank

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"I informed them that my resignation was for personal reasons. I also told them that my wife is suffering from cancer."

A senior official of SBAC Bank said Rahman's resignation was not official and he is coming to office. "He was in office on Sunday."

Rahman could not be reached for comments. BB Executive Director and Spokesperson Md Mezbaut Haque declined to comment on the issue.