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EXPORT DATA

BB finds 6 types of wrongdoing

Sends clarification to govt agencies after shocking statistical correction

REJAUUL KARIM BYRON and SOHEL PARVEZ

The central bank discovered six types of statistical wrongdoing that inflated export data, a development that led to a multibillion-dollar correction.

Anomalies range from serial duplication errors to miscalculations of the value of fabrics to repeated miscounts of sample items as exports.

Bangladesh Bank sent a note to government agencies, explaining the rationale for the correction. The document seen by The Daily Star offers shocking glimpses into the extent of data inaccuracies with serious implications for the economy.

Discrepancies were covered last year by several media outlets, including this newspaper, but the massive correction by the central bank on July 3 in a balance of payments update came as a surprise to economists and business leaders.

To eliminate the anomalies, the central bank obtained export data from scheduled banks in the July-September period last year and verified them against statistics provided by the National Board of Revenue.

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- Serial duplication errors in customs data
- Miscalculations of value of fabrics
- Sample items classified as products with export value
- Sales by EPZ-based firms were counted twice
- Failure to adjust gap between initial LC value and actual export proceeds
- Losses from stock-lot sales, discounts and commissions were not adjusted



'Padma Bridge a source of huge pride for Bangladeshis' PM says it altered int'l community's mindset towards us

UNB, Mawa, Munshiganj

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said the construction of Padma Bridge with the country's own funds has taken the nation to a dignified position before the world and it changed the international community's mindset towards Bangladesh.

"The people of Bangladesh can move now

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Labour back in power with huge mandate

Starmer sworn in as UK PM ending 14 years of Conservative rule, pledges to fix country



"Now, our country has voted decisively for change, for national renewal and a return of politics to public service. The work of change begins immediately, but have no doubt, we will rebuild Britain."

KEIR STARMER



"... first and foremost, I am sorry. I have given this job my all, but you have sent a clear signal that the government ... must change. And yours is the only judgement that matters."

RISHI SUNAK

Customs official acquired Tk 6.43cr properties in 8yrs

Show ACC papers; he 'grossly underreported' assets value

DIPAN NANDY

In just eight years, Customs Commissioner Mohammad Enamul Haque bought properties that, on paper, cost him over Tk 6.43 crore.

According to an Anti-Corruption Commission report, Enamul bought real estate, flats, large commercial spaces in buildings, and built a nine-storey building while working as a joint commissioner and a commissioner of Customs, Excise, and VAT Commissionerate in Chattogram and Rangpur from 2013 to 2020.

A Dhaka court on Thursday ordered confiscation of his properties worth over Tk 6.51 crore. Investigators believe Enamul grossly underreported the price of the properties when he bought them.



Enamul Haque

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Onion price jumps up to Tk 120 a kg

SHAHEEN MOLLAH and MD ABBAS

Ruma Akhter, an employee of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University, could not believe her ears yesterday when a trader at the capital's Karwan Bazar asked Tk 104 for a kilogram of onions.

"The price shocked me when I heard it," she said. She bought onions for Tk 70 per kg a month ago.

"How come the price of onions went up by Tk 34 per kg in a month?" said Ruma, the only breadwinner of her three-member family.

Visiting Karwan Bazar, Shewrapara, Ibrahimpur, Kochukhet, and Mirpur-II kitchen markets yesterday, The Daily Star found that the retail prices of onions have surged by Tk 10 to Tk 20 per kg within a week.

The essential cooking ingredient was sold for Tk 100-120 a kg yesterday, up from Tk 90-100 last week.

Traders claimed that the prices increased due to supply shortages.

Sajib Sheikh, proprietor of Matri Bhandar at Karwan Bazar, said they are getting small supplies from Faridpur and Pabna, two major onion producers.

"The drop in supplies are leading to the price hike," he said, adding that he is now being forced to sell Indian onions.

Mohammad Majed, general secretary of Shyambazar Onion Traders' Association, said the prices of all varieties of local onions increased over the last one week due to the supply crunch.

"We are currently importing onions from India where the prices are high," Majed, also an onion importer, told The Daily Star.

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Grandmaster Zia breathes his last doing what he loved

SPORTS REPORTER

Chess Grandmaster Ziaur Rahman passed away yesterday after suffering a cardiac arrest during the 12th round match of the National Chess Championship in Dhaka, leaving the country's sports fraternity numb with grief with his sudden demise at the age of 50.

Zia suddenly fell to the ground midway during a game against GM Enamul Hossain Razib at the Bangladesh Chess Federation Hall room at around 5:45 pm.

He was immediately

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AGENCIES

Britain's new Prime Minister Keir Starmer yesterday pledged to use his massive electoral majority to rebuild the country, saying he wanted to take the heat out of politics after years of upheaval and strife.

Standing outside his new office and residence at Number 10 Downing Street, Starmer acknowledged the scale of the challenge after his party's landslide victory in a parliamentary election ended 14 years of often tumultuous Conservative government.

He warned that any improvements would take time, and he would need to first rebuild faith in politics.

"This lack of trust can only be healed by actions, not words. I know that," he said.

"Whether you voted Labour or not, in fact, especially if you did not, I say to you directly - My government will serve you. Politics can be a force for good. We will show that."

Standing behind a lectern, he said he understood that many Britons were disillusioned with politics after years of scandal and chaos under the Conservatives, who were roundly rejected in Thursday's election, suffering a historic loss.

Starmer said the rejection signalled that Britain was ready for a reset: "Because no matter how fierce the storms of history, one of the great strengths of this nation has always been our ability to navigate away to calmer waters."

MASSIVE MAJORITY

The centre-left Labour won a massive majority in the 650-seat parliament, prompting Rishi Sunak's resignation yesterday morning, before Starmer went to meet King Charles and be formally named prime minister.

He said he would fight every day to rebuild trust, saying Britain would have a "government unburdened by doctrine", underlining something he had repeated during the campaign - that he would put country first, party second.

"To defy, quietly, those who have written our country off. You have given us a clear mandate, and we will use it to deliver change."

The election result has upended British politics. Labour won more than 410 seats, an increase of 211, while the Conservatives, the western world's most successful party, lost 250 lawmakers, including

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4 Bangladesh-origin MPs reelected

Tulip, Rushanara among them

AGENCIES

Four Bangladesh-origin candidates - Tulip Rizwana Siddiq, Rushanara Ali, Rupa Huq and Apsana Begum - have been elected as Labour Party lawmakers in the UK parliament.

The result was published on the official website of the British Parliament yesterday morning.

Tulip, granddaughter of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, has won by a huge margin in the Hampstead and Highgate constituency in northwest London. According to a BBC report, Tulip got 23,432 votes while her nearest rival Don Williams of the Conservative and Unionist Party got just 8,462 votes.

This is the fourth consecutive win for Tulip.

Rushanara Ali, the first Bangladeshi-origin

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Flood victims salvage what is left of their houses from Gaibandha's Kharzani Char yesterday. The shoal in the Brahmaputra river went under water on Wednesday due to onrush of water from upstream. Flooding has affected about 29,000 families in four upazilas of Gaibandha.

PHOTO: MOSTAFA SHABUI

Flood in North to continue for another week

STAR REPORT

The flood situation in several northern districts, including Kurigram and Gaibandha, is likely to linger for another week.

"The water level of the Brahmaputra will continue to rise for the next two to three days and after that, it will start declining," said Sarder Udoy Raihan, executive engineer of Flood Forecasting and Warning Centre.

However, the situation in the Sylhet region has improved slightly as the water level of the Surma is decreasing, he said.

According to reports of our district correspondents, several lakh people, especially those living in low-lying areas, in Kurigram, Gaibandha, Jamalpur, Sirajganj, and Sylhet are marooned in floodwater.

Many schools have been closed in the flood-affected areas.

Several flood victims told The Daily Star that they are in dire need of food and pure drinking water as relief assistance distributed by the government is not enough.

Rezia Begum, 30, of Hatia village in Kurigram's Ulipur upazila, said she and her family members have shelter on a WDB dam as water entered their home on Thursday afternoon.

According to Kurigram district administration and relief and rehabilitation offices, 55 unions out of 72 in the district have been hit by flood, causing suffering to over 1 lakh people.

The flood situation in Gaibandha and Bogura is worsening as the low-lying areas have been flooded for the last four days.

Juwel Mia, district relief and rehabilitation officer

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