

Star BUSINESS

Bangladesh Bank Governor Ahsan H Mansur said it would be possible to lower the policy rate in six months if inflationary pressure comes down to a tolerable level



Story on B4

Ex-BSEC chief attempted to eavesdrop on investors

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

The immediate past chairman of the stock market regulator had attempted to get government approval earlier this year to bring voice calls and internet data of stock market investors under surveillance.

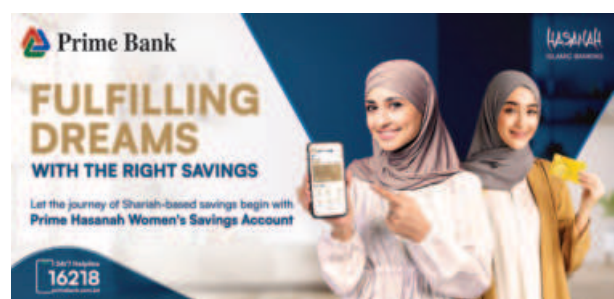
Prof Shibli Rubayat Ul Islam, the former chairman of the Bangladesh Securities and Exchange Commission (BSEC), had sent a letter to Financial Institutions Division under the finance ministry seeking to sign a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with National Telecommunication Monitoring Center (NTMC).

The NTMC is the state's communication interception and intelligence agency running under Public Security Division of the Ministry of Home Affairs.

Prof Shibli had resigned from the top post on August 10, five days past the fall of the Awami League government following a student-led uprising.

In the letter, he had reasoned that the surveillance was to catch stock market manipulators and traders with insider information.

Prof Shibli was adamant on running the surveillance,



a top BSEC official confirmed to The Daily Star yesterday seeking anonymity.

"So, he had taken the decision regarding signing an MoU with the NTMC at a commission meeting," said the official.

The MoU was supposed to state that the NTMC would start collecting various data of investors, excluding that related to securities, within seven working days of it being signed, said the official.

There will be no MoU without the Financial Institutions Division's approval, said the official, adding that the BSEC was now seriously looking into the matter to soon decide whether to continue to seek the approval.

"We are urgently looking into this matter," Khondoker Rashed Maqsood, the newly appointed BSEC chairman, told this newspaper.

Investors were surprised to hear about the surveillance attempt, with many criticising it as a breach of privacy.

Instead of surveillance, Bangladesh should take a cue from developed countries and first encourage stock market forecasting services of professional analysts, said Al Amin, a stock market analyst.

In the absence of such services, investors usually discuss among themselves to decide on their market activities, he said.

"If the BSEC goes for bringing investors under surveillance, there will be panic," added Amin, also an associate professor of the Department of Accounting & Information Systems at the University of Dhaka.

Secondly, the BSEC should use its software for detecting circular trading to identify market manipulators and then take decisive steps, said Amin.

The stock exchanges earlier informed of specific cases of manipulation but the stock market regulator hardly took any action, he said.

There is no guarantee that the market manipulators always plan their malpractices over voice calls or the internet, he added.

If the surveillance attempt follows through, it will be a breach of privacy because the regulator will be able to avail every conversation of stock investors, said Saiful

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Gazi Tyres, a concern of Gazi Group, saw its production unit in Narayanganj looted, vandalised, and set ablaze in two phases this month, reducing it to a pile of ashes and rubble. Miscreants first attacked from August 5-8 before renewing their barrage at the start of this week.

PHOTO: SAURAV HOSSAIN SIAM

Workers bear the brunt of politically motivated attacks on businesses

SUKANTA HALDER and MD ASADUZZAMAN

Vandalism and arson attacks on factories since earlier this month have created deep concerns among entrepreneurs and plunged thousands of employees who work in these firms into uncertainty.

From August 4 to 27, incidents of arson, looting and vandalism have been reported at nearly three dozen industrial units across the country, according to reports by our correspondents.

Most establishments that were targeted are owned by businesspersons with political affiliations. Of them, a majority have links to the Bangladesh Awami League, which saw its 15-year reign end after former prime minister Sheikh Hasina fled the country on August 5 in the face of a mass uprising.

The rampant acts of arson and vandalism, facilitated by a complete breakdown of law and order in the aftermath of the government's fall, were termed as unprecedented by business leaders.

Mir Nasir Hossain, former president of the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI), said he had witnessed such incidents after a change in government in the past, but added that what happened this time around caught him off guard.

"I have never seen such attacks, arson and looting in industrial

factories in the past," he added.

Take for example the case of Gazi Group, owned by former textile and jute minister Golam Dastagir Gazi. The company saw two of its concerns in Narayanganj, Gazi Auto Tyres and Gazi Pipe, fall prey to a barrage of attacks this month.

Miscreants took aim at both units, which are located close to each other in the district's Rupganj upazila, attacking relentlessly from August 5 to 8. Incidents of arson and vandalism occurred again at Gazi Auto Tyres on August 25-26.

From August 4 to 27, incidents of arson, looting and vandalism have been reported at nearly three dozen industrial units

In an estimate shared with the FBCCI on August 25, Gazi Auto Tyres said it incurred losses amounting to around Tk 1,000 crore due to the attacks.

"Due to this arson attack, our factory has now been reduced to debris. As a result, about 2,650 officers and employees are basically unemployed. It has become very difficult for them to cope with this difficult situation," the company said in a letter to the FBCCI.

The letter also mentioned that the company is in the process of taking legal action against the perpetrators.

"If we do not restart the production process, there will be a huge shortage of domestically produced tire tubes and other products in the market," it added.

Speaking to The Daily Star, Md Ashraf Alam, a manager of Gazi Auto Tyres, said the factory had been left in ruins.

"In this situation, we are battling uncertainty. We got our salaries this month, but we can't say what will happen next month," he added.

Alam, who hails from Kazipur upazila of Sirajganj, is the lone breadwinner of his seven-member family.

"We, the workers, are not involved in politics. So why should we be victimised? We came here to just do our jobs," he rued.

Seeking anonymity, an employee of Gazi Pipe, said: "This incident has pushed me into peril. Now, I have to search for a new job. Given the volatile situation in the country, it will be very difficult for me."

Saiful Islam, an assistant general manager at Gazi Tyres, claimed law enforcement agencies were called during the attack, but they did not cooperate.

"When the police and army were called, an army team came in front of the factory gate. But they left after 10 minutes," he said.

However, those complaints were denied by the police.

Habibur Rahman, assistant superintendent of police for

READ MORE ON B3



Law and order buyers' main concern

Exporters tell finance adviser

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Businesspeople yesterday expressed deep concern over the security of their factories and trade, apprehending that a lack of law and order would prompt foreign buyers to shift work orders to other countries.

"The main concern of the buyers is law and order, which has been discussed with the (finance) adviser (of the interim government)," said AK Azad, a former president of the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry.

He was talking to journalists after a delegation of garment manufacturers made a courtesy call on Finance Adviser Salehuddin Ahmed at the Economic Relations Division (ERD) office in Dhaka yesterday.

According to Azad, it takes seven to 10 days to collect samples from the airport once they arrive from abroad while the Chattogram port is plagued with container congestion.

If these types of bottlenecks are not resolved and law and order not restored, buyers will think of alternatives, he said.

He said word was going around that the interim government would withdraw the export development fund alongside cash incentives for exports and impose duties on fabric imports.

This will negatively impact exports of garment manufacturers who need to import fabrics for use as raw materials, and some factories will have to shut down, Azad said.

Meanwhile, extortion at factories and business establishments has increased alarmingly, he added.

The finance adviser assured he would sit with the Bangladesh Bank governor and finance secretary to resolve the problems and hold a follow-up meeting to discuss reviews of the delegation's recommendations, he added.

Salehuddin Ahmed also recommended that the leaders of the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters

READ MORE ON B2

Islami Bank to appoint 3 auditors to find out causes of irregularities

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Islami Bank Bangladesh will appoint three external auditors to root out the causes of irregularities in its loan approvals, forex dealings and employee recruitment process over the past seven years.

The bank's new board of directors took this decision at their first official meeting yesterday.

Earlier on August 22, the Bangladesh Bank formed a new board for the Shariah-based bank with the appointment of five independent directors. Md Obayed Ullah Al Masud, former managing director of Rupali Bank, was announced as chairman of the board.

As a result, the largest private commercial bank in the country was freed from S Alam Group after seven years.

One of the directors told The Daily Star that the new board has decided to find out which borrowers are not repaying their loans from the bank and who were involved in approving those disbursements.

Between 2017 and June this year, S Alam Group and its associated companies borrowed Tk 74,900 crore, which was 47 percent of the lender's total outstanding loans as of March.

The loans were taken in the name of Mohammad Saiful Alam, his wife, daughter, other relatives and officials of the Chattogram-based conglomerate, according to central bank officials with knowledge on the matter.

Documents pieced together by The Daily Star show that most of the

READ MORE ON B3

MCCI projects higher imports, remittances and slowing inflation

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Three major indicators of the economy – imports, remittances and foreign exchange reserves – are likely to increase in the first quarter of the current fiscal year, a positive development for the external accounts, according to the Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Dhaka (MCCI).

The country's monthly imports may hit \$5.68 billion in September, up from August's projection of \$5.51 billion and July's estimated import bill of \$5.39 billion, the chamber said yesterday in its quarterly economic review.

Similarly, remittances may grow to \$2.29 billion next month from \$2.18 billion in August.

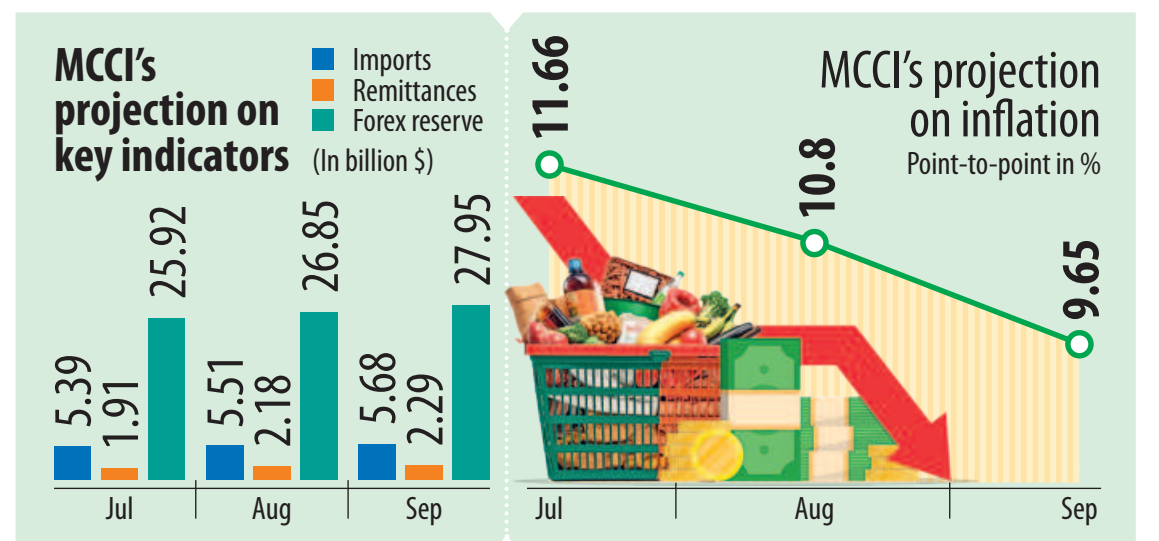
The leading trade body also said that inflation, which hit 11.66 percent in July, the highest in 13 years, is expected to ease this month and next month.

"The economy is trying to overcome the difficulty due to the present conflicting world scenario. Therefore, the performances of the selected economic indicators are mixed," the chamber said.

Bangladesh's overall forex reserves may rise to \$27.95 billion at the end of September, it added.

The MCCI did not project exports as the Export Promotion Bureau refrained from publishing export statistics for three months since June after correcting a massive data mismatch.

Imports and remittances may decrease in July due to the present slowed down economy and then may increase in the next two months, the chamber



said, adding that the foreign exchange reserve may decrease in July due to the payment of \$1.42 billion for the May-June period through the Asian Clearing Union (ACU).

"Inflation increased in July, but it is expected to fall in August and September of 2024," it added.

The MCCI said the economy showed some signs of improvement with the increase of foreign exchange reserves and remittances in June of the current year.

But the country witnessed massive mayhem as students protested the quotas system for government jobs since the start of July, which dealt a big blow to business activities.

"After the fall of the Awami League government [on August 5], the interim government has just taken power and it will take time to normalise business activities," it added.

READ MORE ON B3

BRAC Bank, Syngenta sign deal to finance farmers

STAR BUSINESS DESK

BRAC Bank recently signed a strategic partnership agreement with agrochemical company Syngenta to offer agricultural financing solutions to marginal farmers across the country.

Syed Abdul Momen, deputy managing director and head of SME banking of the bank, and Mohammad Hedayet Ullah, managing director of the agrochemical company, penned the deal at the latter's head office in Dhaka, according to a press release.

Under this partnership, the bank will provide digital micro-loans to farmers, leveraging its advanced technological capabilities and extensive SME banking network.

The collaboration will also involve

onboarding Syngenta's input retailers, ensuring they can access essential financial services and products that the bank offers.

The initiative aims to foster an ecosystem that supports micro, small, and medium enterprises by integrating financial services with advanced agricultural technology.

The agreement underscores the bank and the agrochemical company's commitment to contributing to the development of Bangladesh's agricultural sector.

It aligns with BRAC Bank's mission to support sustainable development goals and enhance financial inclusivity across Bangladesh, particularly within the agricultural sector. At the ceremony, they discussed the potential impact of this collaboration on the agricultural sector, particularly in uplifting the socio-economic status of marginal farmers.



PHOTO: BRAC BANK

Mohammad Hedayet Ullah, managing director of Syngenta Bangladesh, and Syed Abdul Momen, deputy managing director and head of SME banking of BRAC Bank, pose for photographs after signing an agreement at the former's head office in Dhaka recently.

Aparup Chowdhury becomes UCB chairman

STAR BUSINESS DESK

Aparup Chowdhury and Bashir Ahmed were elected as the chairman and the executive committee chairman respectively of United Commercial Bank (UCB) yesterday.



Aparup Chowdhury

Chowdhury is also an independent director of the bank, according to a press release. A former secretary, he has 37 years of experience in field administration and policy pool of different ministries and organisations as well as corporate bodies.

Bashir Ahmed is the managing director of Airmate Goodie Electrical Industries, Goodie Accessories, International Distribution Company Bangladesh, B&B Electronics, B&B Food & Beverage and B&B Electrical & Electronics.

He is also the managing director of Dhaka Electrical & Electronics, Bard International Mettle Emporium and Petal Enterprise.



Nuruiddin Md Sadeque Hossain, managing director of Southeast Bank, and Md Jalalul Azim, managing director and CEO of Pragati Life Insurance, pose for photographs after signing a memorandum of understanding at the bank's head office in Dhaka recently.

PHOTO: SOUTHEAST BANK

Southeast Bank, Pragati Life strike MoU on payroll banking

STAR BUSINESS DESK

Southeast Bank recently signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Pragati Life Insurance Limited to provide banking services, including payroll banking, collection, and payment services.

Nuruiddin Md Sadeque Hossain, managing director of the bank, and Md Jalalul Azim, managing director and CEO of the life insurer, penned the

MoU at the bank's head office in Dhaka, according to a press release.

Under this agreement, the insurer's employees and executives will get their salaries and other benefits through the bank's payroll banking services.

The insurer will be able to collect premiums through the bank's wide range of delivery channels and make insurance claim payments and fund transfers through the corporate payment module (CPM) system.

PRICES OF KEY ESSENTIALS IN DHAKA CITY			
	PRICE (AUG 27, 2024)	% CHANGES FROM A MONTH AGO	% CHANGE FROM A YEAR AGO
Fine rice (kg)	Tk 64-Tk 80	4.35 ↑	9.09 ↑
Coarse rice (kg)	Tk 52-Tk 55	2.88 ↑	9.18 ↑
Loose flour (kg)	Tk 40-Tk 45	0	-13.27 ↓
Lentil (kg)	Tk 105-Tk 110	0	16.22 ↑
Soybean (litre)	Tk 145-Tk 152	-1.00 ↓	-5.71 ↓
Potato (kg)	Tk 50-Tk 60	-5.17 ↓	29.41 ↑
Onion (kg)	Tk 110-Tk 120	0	43.75 ↑
Egg (4 pcs)	Tk 50-Tk 53	0	3.00 ↑

SOURCE: TCB

DONATIONS FOR FLOOD VICTIMS

IFIC Bank employees give one day's salary

STAR BUSINESS DESK

Employees of IFIC Bank recently donated the equivalent of one day's salary for flood-affected people in different districts of the country.

The bank issued a cheque worth Tk 1 crore for the Chief Adviser's Relief and Welfare Fund on August 25, according to a press release.

The bank also handed over

separate funds as well as food, emergency medicines and relief goods to different social and cultural organisations at the TSC of the University of Dhaka to distribute among victims.

IFIC Bank believes the collective effort of everyone can reduce the losses of the people affected by the flood and help rebuild affected communities, the press release added.

Trust Bank offers Tk 1cr

STAR BUSINESS DESK

Employees of Trust Bank recently donated a financial aid package worth Tk 1 crore to people in flood-hit districts of the country.

It was deposited to the Chief Adviser's Relief and Welfare Fund to meet essential

humanitarian needs of the flood victim, according to a press release.

Driven by a sense of duty for the people affected by the devastating flood, all employees of the bank have combinedly contributed Tk 1 crore, which is the equivalent of one day's salary for all employees, the press release added.

ONE Bank's employees donate one day's salary

STAR BUSINESS DESK

Employees of ONE Bank donated the equivalent of one day's salary to flood-affected people in different districts of the country.

The money will be given to the Chief

Adviser's Relief and Welfare Fund for flood victims, the bank said in a press release.

The bank's employees feel proud to be a part of the government's noble initiatives towards mitigating the suffering of flood-affected people, the press release added.

Law and order

FROM PAGE B1

Association (BGMEA) stay alert over labour-related issues, such as trade unions and wages while ensuring due diligence in labour rights and environmental protection.

The adviser acknowledged the garment industry's significant contributions to poverty alleviation, investment and employment generation and women's empowerment, Azad said.

The BGMEA also sought a soft loan of about Tk 1,800 crore to Tk 1,900 for garment manufacturers.

"Our factories could not run for around 17 days due to the changing situation of the country. A crisis might arise next month," said Khandoker Rafiqul Islam, president of the BGMEA.

"So, we requested our adviser to provide a soft loan, which will be paid back with interest within a year," he added. "We are yet to decide on an exact figure. But we roughly estimate that the amount required could be Tk 1,800 crore to Tk 1,900 crore."

"We are optimistic of the sector's development if we can work with this government," he said.

"We also gave him (Adviser) assurance that when normally returns, Bangladesh's exports will

quickly be back on track. We all have to cooperate so that foreigners can put their trust in Bangladesh's readiness," Islam added.

Mohammad Hatem, president of the Bangladesh Knitwear Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BKMEA), said they highlighted the high margins for letters of credit charged by six Islamic banks alongside harassment by the National Board of Revenue.

He acknowledged that there is a lack of confidence among foreign buyers.

The discussion was very fruitful, said British High Commissioner to Bangladesh Sarah Cooke, who also took part in the meeting.

"We're very keen to expand our trade and investment ties. We also discussed how the UK can support, and how we may work together, to bring our experts together to discuss issues of economic reform," she said.

"Of course, we'd like to see more foreign direct investments from the UK in Bangladesh," Cooke added.

Germany confirms economy shrank in Q2

FROM PAGE B4

A recovery was initially expected to get under way at the start of 2024, but a string of disappointing data in recent months has suggested the rebound will take longer than initially thought.

"The German economy is currently back where it was a year ago: stuck in stagnation as the growth laggard of the entire eurozone," ING bank

economist Carsten Brzeski said.

The gloomy outlook was highlighted in the closely watched Ifo survey on Monday, which showed a further deterioration in business confidence in August – particularly among companies in the manufacturing sector.

While there was no immediate improvement in sight, Brzeski said there

was "some optimism for the second half of the year" as robust wage growth could yet encourage German consumers to spend more in the months ahead.

The German government expects the economy to expand by a modest 0.3 percent this year, lagging behind the wider eurozone which the European Union predicts will grow by 0.8 percent.

Canada slaps 100% tariffs on Chinese EVs

FROM PAGE B4

The EV surtax, on top of existing import duties of 6.1 percent, will be imposed from October 1 and target Chinese electric and certain hybrid passenger automobiles, trucks, buses and delivery vans.

Ottawa will also limit eligibility for EV incentives to those made in countries with which Canada has free

trade deals, which would exclude China.

Its surtax on imports of steel and aluminum products from China will be effective from October 15.

Beijing's embassy, in response, raised its "strong dissatisfaction" over the new tariffs.

"This move is typical trade protectionism and

politically motivated decision," a spokesperson said in a statement on the embassy's website.

"It will damage trade and economic cooperation between China and Canada, hurt the interests of Canadian consumers and enterprises (and) slow down the green transition process of Canada," they said.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Local Government Engineering Department
Office of the Executive Engineer
District: Dinajpur
www.lged.gov.bd

Memo No. 46.02.2700.000.07.59.01.23-3269 Date: 27/08/2024

2nd Corrigendum on e-Tender Notice-01/2024-2025

Due to unavoidable circumstances the e-Tender notice Invitation Memo No: 46.02.2700.000.07.59.01.23-2890 Date: 09/07/2024 and Memo No: 46.02.2700.000.07.59.01.23-3147; Date: 13/08/2024 will be changed as follows:

Sl. No.	Tender ID	Package No.	Existing		Changed	
			Last selling date & time	Closing & opening date & time	Last selling date & time	Closing & opening date & time
1	999698	LGED/SSWRDP-2/BD-P-98/23-24/75137-Structure	28.08.24, 15.00	29.08.24, 11.00	04.09.24, 15.00	05.09.24, 11.00

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 04 September 2024, 16:00.

Md. Masudur Rahman
Executive Engineer
LGED, Dinajpur
Phone: 02589923381
xen.dinajpur@lged.gov.bd

রপ্তানি উন্নয়ন ব্যুরো
মেলা ও প্রদর্শনী বিভাগ
টিসিবি ভবন ১, কাওরান বাজার
ঢাকা।

রপ্তানি উন্নয়ন ব্যুরোর বার্ষিক মেলা ক্যালেন্ডারের অধীনে নিম্নবর্ণিত মেলায় অংশগ্রহণের জন্য প্রকৃত রপ্তানিকারক প্রতিষ্ঠান হতে আবেদন গ্রহণ করা হচ্ছে।

মেলা নাম	"Global Sourcing Expo"
মেলা সময়কাল	November 19-21, 2024.
মেলা আয়োজক ও মেলা কেন্দ্র	Melbourne Convention & Exhibition Centre
বুথের সাইজ	09 Sqm (Per Booth)
বুথ টাইপ	Shell Scheme
প্রদর্শনী পণ্য	Apparel, Textile, Fashion Accessories, Fabric & Trim, Homewear, Footwear, Service Provider/Technology.
বুথ ভাড়া	AUD \$ 7,684 বাংলাদেশী টা: ৬,২২,৪০৪ (টা: ছয় লক্ষ বাইশ হাজার চারশত চার)মাত্র।

০২। উল্লেখ্য, বিদ্যমান নীতিমালা অনুযায়ী অংশগ্রহণকারী প্রতিষ্ঠানটি ৩০-৫০% হারে ভর্তুকি প্রদান করা হবে। তবে বিমান ভাড়া, আবাসন ও অন্যান্য আনুষঙ্গিক ব্যয় অংশগ্রহণকারী প্রতিষ্ঠানসমূহকে বহন করতে হবে।

০৩। উক্ত মেলায় অংশগ্রহণের আগ্রহী প্রতিষ্ঠানসমূহকে প্রয়োজনীয় কাগজ পত্রাদি সহ ব্যুরোর নির্ধারিত ছকে আবেদনপত্রের সাথে প্রযোজ্য হারে অংশগ্রহণ ফি ইপিবি-এর অনুকূলে পে-অর্ডার আগামী ০৩-০৯-২০২৪ তারিখের মধ্যে ইপিবি'র মেলা বিভাগে দাখিলের জন্য অনুরোধ করা হলো। services.mincom.gov.bd এর মাধ্যমে অনলাইনেও আবেদন করা যাবে। আবেদনপত্র ব্যুরোর ওয়েবসাইট (www.epb.gov.bd) থেকে ডাউনলোড করা যাবে। আবেদনপত্রের সাথে প্রয়োজনীয় ডকুমেন্টস (ইজারিসি, ট্রেড লাইসেন্স, আয়কর ও ভ্যাট সার্টিফিকেট, অংশগ্রহণকারী সর্বোচ্চ ০২ জন (দুই জন) প্রতিনিধির পাসপোর্ট কপি, অন্যান্য বেশ ক্রমের তিসা কপি, সর্বশেষ অর্থ বছরের পিআরসি) অবশ্যই দাখিল করতে হবে।

মহেশ্বর খাতুন
উপ-পরিচালক
মেলা ও প্রদর্শনী বিভাগ

GD-273

Finance adviser asks NBR to reconsider duty structure

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Finance and Commerce Adviser Salehuddin Ahmed yesterday asked the National Board of Revenue (NBR) officials to reconsider the duty structure of imported essential commodities in a bid to tackle persistent inflation.

The adviser said essential commodities, namely edible oil, sugar, potato and fertiliser, are very important for all consumers, according to an official of the NBR.

He asked them to consider the issue during a courtesy meeting with NBR officials at the tax administration's headquarters in Agargaon.

NBR Chairman Abdur Rahman Khan was among those present at the meeting.

Ahmed sought the measure at a time when the public is under severe pressure from persistent inflation, especially food inflation, which crossed 14 percent for the first time in 13 years in July.

At the same time, overall inflation stood at 11.66 percent, according to the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics.

Ahmed also asked NBR officials to take steps to expedite the unloading process at the port.

"There should not be any barriers from the government's side. If any barriers remain, they should be removed soon," Ahmed said during a press briefing after the meeting.

It should no longer be the case that the NBR will harass those who usually pay taxes while ignoring those who do not pay taxes properly, he added.

The NBR chairman added that the



Finance and Commerce Adviser Salehuddin Ahmed yesterday asked the National Board of Revenue officials to take steps to expedite unloading of goods from Chattogram port.

PHOTO: STAR/FILE

tax administration would give their utmost effort to meet the revenue collection target for the current fiscal year.

The NBR has set a revenue collection target of Tk 4.80 lakh crore for FY25, a 17

percent increase compared to the prior year's target.

However, their efforts have already been marred by turmoil at the beginning of the fiscal year due to the students' protest against the quota system for

government jobs since July.

"We will remain wary so that we can avoid tax leakage," Khan added.

Salehuddin added that they would adopt a holistic approach to reform the NBR.

US industry seeks easing of steep Biden-Harris China tariff hikes

REUTERS, Washington

The Biden-Harris administration this week is expected to announce final implementation plans for steep tariff increases on certain Chinese imports, and if US industry gets its way, many of the planned duties would be softened.

Manufacturers from electric vehicles to electric utility equipment have asked for the higher tariff rates to be reduced, delayed or abandoned, and for potential exclusions to be greatly expanded.

President Joe Biden in May announced a quadrupling of tariffs on Chinese electric vehicles to 100 percent, a doubling of duties on semiconductors and solar cells to 50 percent, as well as new 25 percent tariffs on lithium-ion batteries and other strategic goods including steel to shield US firms from Chinese excess production.

The White House had said initially the new tariffs would take effect on Aug. 1 but that was delayed until some time in September as the US Trade Representative's office studied more than 1,100 public comments, opens new tab. A final determination is due by the end of August.

Whether to ease the tariffs is the administration's first major trade decision since Vice President Kamala Harris emerged as the Democratic Party's presidential nominee after Biden stepped aside in late July.

The decision is politically tricky. Dialing back the duties could draw criticism from Republicans that Harris will take a softer stand on China trade in a campaign where Trump has vowed to hit Chinese imports with hefty tariffs. Proceeding with the original hikes would draw complaints about higher costs, even from some Democrats in Congress.

China has vowed retaliation against the "bullying" tariff hikes and Foreign Minister Wang Yi said they showed that some in the US may be "losing their minds."

MCCI projects higher imports

FROM PAGE B1 The MCCI said issues such as smooth logistics, banking services and security in industries needed to be addressed to ensure the revival of economic activities.

It stressed the need to overcome rising inflation, slowdown in external demand, weak remittance inflow, shortfall in revenue collection, slow public expenditure, depreciation of the taka and a decline in foreign exchange reserves.

"The unemployment situation and low investment are other challenges."

The authorities also need to protect small businesses and ensure proper electricity and gas supply, it added.

The oldest business chamber in the country said agricultural production was good because of favourable natural factors and strong government support.

The manufacturing sector also registered the start of a slow rebound.

The gradual easing of import restrictions, low clearance of a backlog of letters of credit, and the introduction of the crawling peg system to manage the exchange rate

have spurred economic activity, the MCCI said.

However, the real estate business remains sluggish, mainly because of higher costs of property and lower purchasing power of people.

"Besides, the higher prices of building materials have slowed overall construction work," it said citing industry people.

"The devaluation of the taka against the US greenback is one of the major reasons for the increase in construction costs. Amid inflationary pressures, labour and transportation costs have also risen."

The MCCI added that Bangladesh was yet to see tangible economic pickup.

The leading chamber cited that the gross inflows of foreign direct investment (FDI) decreased by 6.5 percent year-on-year to \$3.8 billion in the July-May period of FY25.

It noted that FDI inflow to Bangladesh was low compared to many other countries with similar levels of development.

"Bangladesh's low labour costs are generally believed to be attractive to foreign investors, yet they hesitate to make fresh investments because of the

country's underdeveloped infrastructure," it added.

The MCCI said other impediments are shortages of energy and weak transmission infrastructure, a lack of consistency in policy and regulatory frameworks, scarcity of industrial land, corruption, and non-transparent and uneven application of rules and regulations.

Ex-BSEC chief

FROM PAGE B1 Islam, president of DSE Brokers Association (DBA).

"This is a subversive decision," he said, adding that if the regulator wants to monitor phone calls, it must take approval from the courts.

If investors know that their conversations are being monitored, they will be frightened, he said.

Alternatively, the BSEC can use artificial intelligence to detect market manipulation attempts at an early stage by observing trading patterns, he added.

The Daily Star tried to reach Prof Shibli for comment but his phone was found switched off last night.

FROM PAGE B1 Narayanganj's Rugganj Araihaajar Circle, said: "We tried our best to provide security for the factory."

According to our Narayanganj correspondent, incidents of vandalism, looting and arson took place from July 19 to August 25 at Fakir Garments in Fatullah, Eurotex and Vertex in Kutubpur, MB Knit Fashion Limited at the BSCIC Industrial City and a plastic recycling factory in Sonargaon.

Such examples abound. Bengal Polymer Wares, Bengal Poly and Paper Sack Ltd, BENGAL FLEXIPAK LIMITED and all other concerns of the Bengal Group of Industries that are located in Gazipur had fallen prey to arson, vandalism and looting by miscreants on August 4.

In an estimate shared with the FBCCI on August 19, Bengal Group said the losses incurred due to the attacks amounted to around Tk 462 crore.

Several garment factories, including Sinha Textile in Dhaka's Ashulia, were also targeted that same day while fires broke out at four other factories in the region.

One of the victims was Beximco Synthetic, owned by Salman F Rahman, the private industry affairs adviser to former prime minister Sheikh Hasina. It was one of the most profitable companies of Beximco Group.

A senior official of Ha-Meem Group said one of their go-downs in Ashulia had fallen victim to an arson attack, causing losses of Tk 50-60 crore.

In Ashulia's Enayetpur area, 16 jhut (garments waste) warehouses were set ablaze. Of them, 10 belong to Mohammad Saiful

Workers bear the brunt

Islam, a former member of parliament from the Dhaka-19 constituency.

A close relative of Islam, seeking anonymity, told The Daily Star that losses would hit at least Tk 50 crore.

SS Agro Complex, owned by Kamal Ahmed Mojumder, a former state minister for industries and former member of parliament from the Dhaka-15 constituency, also found itself in the crosshairs.

Miscreants looted the complex in the Barakair area of Dhamrai for three consecutive days from the evening of August 5, stealing over 500 cows, goats, sheep, buffaloes, deer, birds, ducks, fish and various agricultural machinery worth around Tk 50 crore.

Kamran T Rahman, president of the Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry, said such attacks are unacceptable.

"Industrial establishments are national resources and damage to a factory is a loss for the country," he said. "There is no way it should happen. This type of incident affects the lives and livelihoods of hundreds of people."

Adding that unemployment would increase due to such incidents, Rahman further said that foreign direct investment, which is vital for Bangladesh at the moment, would also be impacted.

"Foreign investors are currently observing the situation in Bangladesh. They will not come to invest until things normalise," he said.

"The government must ensure protection for factories and establishments. It is our

constitutional right. Law and order must be established fully," Rahman added.

Ashraf Ahmed, president of the Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry, said: "If we cannot protect our industries from vandalism by miscreants, it is not possible for businesses to operate smoothly."

"We request the government to take stern action against miscreants and looters to save our factories, human lives and the overall economy."

FBCCI President Mahbul Alam said there is no point in destroying a good company.

"It is a matter of great concern. This will ultimately harm the country. Unemployment will increase."

Khandoker Rafiqul Islam, president of the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association, said arson and looting is causing losses to both individuals and the state.

Even if the company is private, it is the wealth of the country, he said while adding that no problem can be solved by wasting resources.

Islam also opined that unemployment would increase as a consequence of the attacks.

"We talked to the army chief about increasing security in factories. They assured that they will give our security top priority," he said.

A senior official of the Industrial Police said there are no records of incidents of arson or looting from August 4 to 15 because the police were not functioning at the time.

But according to their information, there have been three incidents of arson and two counts of vandalism since August 15, the official said.

(Saurav Hossain Siam and Aklakur Rahman Akash contributed to this report.)

বাংলাদেশ পানি উন্নয়ন বোর্ড

ফোন: ০২-৪৭৭৭৮২৯৪২
ইমেইল: xcn.kushtia@gmail.com

নির্বাহী প্রকৌশলীর দপ্তর
কুষ্টিয়া পানি উন্নয়ন বিভাগ
রাপাউবো, কুষ্টিয়া

Memo No. T-4/595
Date: 27.08.2024

Re-Tender Notice/2024-25 (OTM)

An Re-Tender has been invited in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for the Procurement of the following works:

Sl. No.	Tender ID	Package No. & description	Location of the works	Tender/ proposal document last selling date & time	Tender/ proposal closing & opening date & time
I	II	III	IV	V	VI
1	1006762	P16/Kushtia/2023-24 Protective work along the Right bank of Padma River from KM. 10.030 to KM. 10.480 0.450 Km. at Bahalbaria, Upazilla: Mirpur, District: Kushtia under Kushtia O&M Division, BWDB, Kushtia during the FY 2023-24	Bahalbaria, Mirpur, Kushtia	11-Sep-2024 16:00 hrs.	12-Sep-2024 11:00 hrs
2	1006804	P17/Kushtia/2023-24 Protective work along the Right bank of Padma River from KM. 10.480 to KM. 10.930 0.450 Km. at Bahalbaria, Upazilla: Mirpur, District: Kushtia under Kushtia O&M Division, BWDB, Kushtia during the FY 2023-24	Bahalbaria, Mirpur, Kushtia	11-Sep-2024 16:00 hrs	12-Sep-2024 11:30 hrs

This is an online tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP System 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 bank's branches up to banking hours on dated mention above on column V.

Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd) (01762625528-31) (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>).

পানি-১৯১/২০২৪-২০২৫
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Md Rashidur Rahman
Executive Engineer
Kushtia WD Division
BWDB, Kushtia

GD-267

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Roads and Highways Department
Office of the Additional Chief Engineer
Gopalganj Zone, Gopalganj
www.rhd.gov.bd

Memo No. 35.01.3532.016.07.016.09-2572 Date: 27-08-2024

Amendments/Corrigendum Notice for Tender ID No. 1007060

Periodic Maintenance Programme (PMP-Major Road) Providing Strengthening & DBS-Wearing Course work from Ch. 00+000 Km (Tungipara) to Ch. 18+260 Km (Majhbari) of Tungipara-Kotalipara (Majhbari) Road (Z-8430) under Gopalganj Road Division during the FY 2024-2025.

Tender No: e-GP/04/GZ/2024-2025 PMP Road (OSTETM), ID No: 1007060

It is to notify all concerned that the following amendments/corrigendum notice have been made for the above tender due to unavoidable circumstances.

Particular information	Old value	Amendments/ Corrigendum 01
Document last selling date & time	04/09/2024 17:00	18/09/2024 17:00
Last date & time for tender/proposal security submission	05/09/2024 11:30	19/09/2024 11:30
Closing date & time	05/09/2024 12:00	19/09/2024 12:00
Opening date & time	05/09/2024 12:00	19/09/2024 12:00

Shishir Kumar Baral
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GD-269



The Karwan Bazar kitchen market in Dhaka has apparently run out of jaggery and puffed and flattened rice owing to high demand from good Samaritans seeking to donate dry food alongside other relief items for people affected by the recent devastating floods on the eastern part of the country. Moreover, traders say they are facing a shortage in supply of these food items from their sources. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Germany confirms economy shrank in Q2

AFP, Frankfurt

The German economy shrank by 0.1 percent in the second quarter, final data confirmed Tuesday, weighed down by sluggish private consumption and a drop in industrial investments.

"After the slight increase in the previous quarter, the German economy slowed down again in spring," said Ruth Brand, head of federal statistics agency Destatis.

The quarter-on-quarter contraction confirmed an initial estimate released by Destatis at the end of July, which surprised analysts who had been expecting a small uptick in growth in Europe's largest economy.

The April-to-June period noticeably saw a 4.1-percent plunge in investments in machinery and equipment, and a two-percent fall in investments in construction.

Household consumption was down 0.2 percent on the previous quarter, as were exports amid weak foreign trade.

Germany, traditionally a driver of European growth, was the only major advanced economy to shrink in 2023 as it battled high inflation, an industrial slowdown and cooling export demand.

READ MORE ON B2

BB could lower policy rate if inflation falls

Governor says at a meeting with DCCI delegation



Ahsan H Mansur

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Bangladesh Bank Governor Ahsan H Mansur yesterday said it would be possible to lower the policy rates within about six months if inflationary pressure in the country is reduced to a tolerable level.

Mansur made this comment at a meeting with a delegation of the Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry (DCCI) at the central bank headquarters in Dhaka.

The Bangladesh Bank increased the policy rates by 50 basis points to 9 percent on August 25 in an effort to combat persistently high inflation by making bank borrowing costlier.

Food inflation in the country crossed 14 percent for the first time in 13 years in July, with overall inflation rising by 1.94 basis points to 11.66 percent from the previous month.

This surge in inflationary pressure was brought on by nationwide supply chain disruptions following weeks of unrest that led to the fall of the Sheikh Hasina-led government on August 5.

Regarding the recent hike in policy rates, Mansur said it would be possible to reduce them within the next six or seven months if inflation is brought down to a tolerable level by then.

The policy rate, or repo rate, refers to the interest commercial banks must pay for borrowing from the central bank.



PHOTO: STAR/FILE

Food inflation in the country crossed 14 percent for the first time in 13 years in July, with overall inflation rising by 1.94 basis points to 11.66 percent from the previous month.

But although this will have the intended benefit of reducing the money supply, higher interest rates may slow down the flow of credit for cottage, micro, small and medium enterprises (CMSMEs), according to DCCI President Ashraf Ahmed.

"So, the central bank should instead facilitate financing for CMSMEs by accelerating several schemes for the sector," he said while leading the delegation at the meeting.

Ahmed also urged the central bank governor to ease the process for securing foreign trade credit and increase the credit flow of banks so that they can adequately fund CMSMEs.

In response, Mansur assured they would facilitate credit guarantee facilities for the sector.

He also emphasised the need to limit government borrowing from banks to increase the credit available for the private sector.

Furthermore, Mansur suggested it would be easier for local entrepreneurs to secure foreign trade credit if they improve their payment history in regards to loans.

He reiterated that they will soon form a banking commission, which will then devise the necessary roadmap for bringing stability to the country's financial sector.

Nurun Nahar and Md Habibur Rahman, deputy governors of the central bank, were present.

Malik Talha Ismail Bari, senior vice-president of the DCCI, Md Junaed Ibna Ali, vice-president, and other members of the chamber among the delegation were also present.

What investors expect from new BSEC chair

M SHAHRIAR AZAD BHUIYAN

Bangladesh's stock market has been bearish for the past 14 years, leading to significant losses for many investors, erosion of their confidence and weakening of numerous associated institutions, such as the Investment Corporation of Bangladesh (ICB).

The number of beneficiary owner (BO) accounts has declined from a peak of 3.3 million to 1.6 million, of which about 1 million actively participate in the secondary market.

The lack of good governance was evident from the questionable steps taken by the last two chairmen of the Bangladesh Securities and Exchange Commission (BSEC).

These include approvals for low-quality initial public offerings (IPOs), which were overvalued in many cases and which flooded the market with substandard stocks.

The floor price was imposed for a long period while the market was dominated by a few manipulators who created artificial demand and conducted insider and serial trading.

The recent appointment of Khondoker Rashed Maqsood, who has extensive experience in the banking sector, as the BSEC chairman has renewed hope for the restoration of investors' confidence.

Investors and analysts expect him to prioritise a number of issues.

Focus on regulatory integrity

The BSEC's primary role should be to formulate and implement effective policies rather than focusing on market returns and the rise of the index.

The regulator must amend regulations related to IPO approvals, market surveillance and investor protection to ensure that the market operates with transparency, fairness and adherence to global best practices.

Abolish floor price

The regulator has to lift the floor price currently in place for six stocks, standardise the circuit breaker threshold from the existing 3 percent and make an announcement assuring that such measures would not be reimposed.

These will make it clear to foreign and domestic investors that the market is prioritising liquidity and adhering to basic secondary market principles.

The floor price has not only failed to stabilise the market but also driven away the very investors needed for market recovery.

Crackdown on market manipulators

The regulator must take decisive action as per securities laws, such as the imposition of fines of substantial amounts, against manipulation, which includes publishing of false reports, artificial demand creation and insider and serial trading.

By holding manipulators accountable, the BSEC can begin to rebuild trust among investors and create a level playing field.

Policy support for stockbrokers

The bearish trend, low turnovers, reduced trading activity and shrinking client base have left stockbrokers struggling to reach even break-even.

The BSEC could facilitate quick and easy loans from Capital Market Stabiliser Fund and the ICB for secondary market investments would offer much-needed relief.

It could also advocate for the withdrawal of a capital gains tax imposed by the National Board of Revenue last fiscal year.

These measures would help brokers sustain their operations and support market liquidity, ultimately contributing to the survival and recovery of the industry.

Views are personal. The author is the head of operations and compliance at UniCap Securities. He can be reached at shahriar@unicap-securities.com



Canada slaps 100% tariffs on Chinese EVs

AFP, Ottawa

Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau announced Monday 100 percent tariffs on Chinese electric vehicle imports, matching US measures seeking to fend off a flood of Chinese state-subsidized cars into North America.

Accusing China — one of the world's largest exporters of electric vehicles (EVs) — of "not playing by the same rules as other countries" in areas such as environmental and labor standards, he also unveiled a 25 percent surtax on imports of steel and aluminum products from China.

The United States and the European Union have in recent months imposed tariffs on Chinese EVs of 100 percent and 38 percent, respectively.

Canada's auto manufacturing industry employs more than 125,000 people, and Ottawa has poured billions of dollars into supporting its transition to electric vehicles, and firming up a domestic electric battery supply chain.

Its strategy — which has enticed Goodyear Tire, Honda, Stellantis, Volkswagen and others with subsidies — follows that of the United States, whose Inflation Reduction Act has provided a host of incentives for the green industry.

Ottawa has also blocked new Chinese investment in its critical minerals mining sector.

At a news conference in Halifax on Canada's Atlantic coast, Trudeau said Chinese EV overproduction and hefty state subsidies for its auto sector "requires us to take action."

"Unless we want to get in a race to the bottom, we have to stand up, and that's what we're doing," he said. In a statement, the government called the tariffs a response to "this extraordinary threat."

READ MORE ON B2

High-tech manufacturing spurs China's industrial profit growth

REUTERS, Beijing

China's industrial profits grew faster in July buoyed by high-tech manufacturing, even as sluggish domestic demand weighed on the recovery in the world's second-largest economy.

Profits in July jumped 4.1 percent from a year earlier following a 3.6 percent rise in June, National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) data showed on Tuesday.

For the January-July period, profits expanded slightly faster at 3.6 percent compared with 3.5 percent in the first half, offering some hope of improving momentum amid dreary factory output, export, prices and banking lending numbers earlier in August.

"The mild expansion in industrial profits showed that domestic macro policies are taking effect" as the factory sector is undergoing a transition and upgrade, said Zhou Maohua, a macroeconomic researcher at China Everbright Bank.

The high-tech manufacturing sector, including the making of lithium-ion batteries and semiconductors and related equipment, led the earnings growth with

a 12.8 percent rise in the January-July period, the data showed.

Still, "domestic consumption demand remains weak while the external

environment is complex and volatile," said NBS statistician Wei Ning, suggesting more efforts were needed to boost domestic demand.



PHOTO: AFP/FILE

Employees work on an electric meter production line at a factory in Yinchuan, in northwestern China's Ningxia region. For the January-July period, industrial profits expanded slightly faster at 3.6 percent compared to 3.5 percent in the first half.

Tamer shipments last month raised a red flag over the country's export-driven recovery and heightened concerns about frail domestic demand.

China's July bank loans recorded the first contraction in 19 years, central bank data showed earlier.

Electric vehicle battery giant CATL recorded faster profit growth in the second quarter, but its revenue fell at a faster clip during the quarter, as EV sales slow in the world's largest auto market.

Amid lacklustre demand, a prolonged housing downturn and employment worries, Beijing is looking to pivot its stimulus toward consumption.

At a cabinet plenary session earlier this month, Premier Li Qiang vowed to boost the economy with a focus on consumption.

State-owned firms booked a 1 percent rise in profits in the first seven months, foreign firms posted a 9.9 percent gain, while private-sector companies saw profits up 7.3 percent, NBS data showed.

Industrial profit numbers cover firms with annual revenue of at least 20 million yuan (\$2.80 million) from their main operations.