

Agro-processors warn of price hike if VAT not revised

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

The Bangladesh Agro-Processors Association (BAPA) yesterday warned that the prices of processed food products soon will rise if the government does not revert the current value added tax (VAT) and duty rates to their previous levels.

"If this issue is not resolved within the next few days, we will be forced to increase our product prices," said BAPA President MA Hashem. Citing how higher VAT and duty rates have reduced their earnings, he questioned whether the country's processed food industry would survive much longer if it keeps incurring such losses.

Hashem made these remarks while speaking to reporters at the National Board of Revenue (NBR) headquarters in Agargaon, Dhaka, following his second meeting with NBR Chairman Md Abdur Rahman Khan.

Agro-businesses had raised concerns after the NBR decided to increase VAT and supplementary duties (SD) on nearly 100 goods and services on January 9. Later, the tax administrator retracted its decision on nine items.

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BATBC's profit drops yet it offers higher dividends

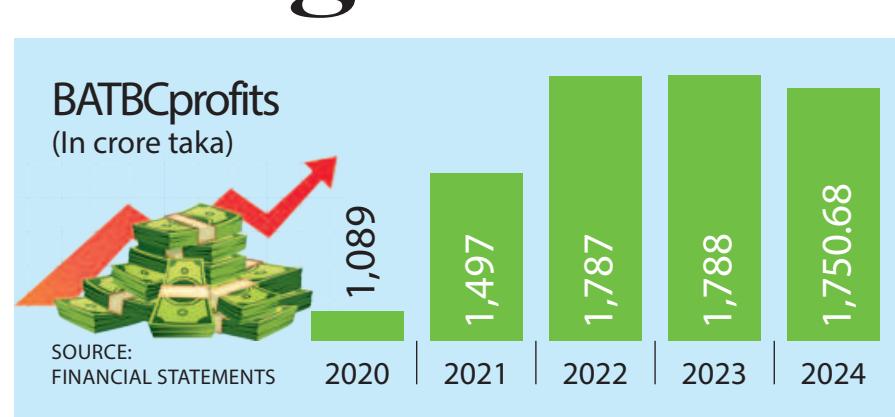
STAR BUSINESS REPORT

British American Tobacco Bangladesh Company (BATBC), the country's top tobacco producer, registered a lower year-on-year profit in 2024, yet announced higher dividends for shareholders.

Its profit dropped 2 percent to Tk 1,750 crore. The company did not publish the reason for the drop while posting a disclosure on the Dhaka Stock Exchange (DSE) website yesterday.

At the same time, BATBC's earnings per share (EPS) stood at Tk 32.42, compared to Tk 33.11 in the previous year.

Although its profit dropped, the board of directors of the company announced a 150 percent cash dividend, taking the total dividend for the year to 300 percent, including an interim dividend of 150 percent.



In 2023, BATBC provided a 100 percent cash dividend for its shareholders.

Yesterday, the company's stock price dropped by around one percent to Tk 350 at the DSE.

At the end of the year, the net asset value per share of the company rose to Tk 106.88, up from Tk 99.33 in the previous year. The company's net operating cash flow per share surged to Tk 32.07,

compared to Tk 18.90 in the previous year, the data showed.

Its record date, meaning the day a company finalises the list of shareholders eligible for the forthcoming dividend distribution, is February 26, 2025.

To provide the dividend, the company will virtually hold an annual general meeting on March 25.

Sponsors and directors of the company hold around 72.91 percent of its total shares, while the government holds 0.64 percent and institutional investors 13.81 percent.

Its foreign investors and general investors hold 4.52 percent and 8.13 percent of the shares, respectively.

The cigarette company—which got listed in 1944—holds a paid-up capital of Tk 540 crore. Its reserves and surplus stood at Tk 4,862 crore.

Govt revises down

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These prospects have made the finance ministry optimistic about increasing the reserve.

However, Zahid Hussain, former lead economist at the World Bank Dhaka Office, expressed scepticism about reaching the target.

"It's true that exports and remittances are growing and that there is a high possibility of receiving budget support from development partners, but Bangladesh must pay various outstanding bills, including those for power, energy, and fertiliser imports," he said.

The government will have to import fuel and LNG (liquefied natural gas) to ensure uninterrupted electricity in the upcoming summer. Additionally, payments must be made for imports from India, including Adani Power," he said.

He noted that a significant quantity of fertiliser must be imported for the Boro season, meaning much of the

budget support would be used to meet these expenses.

"So, it will be difficult to raise the reserve by more than \$3 billion from current levels," said Hussain.

The government has also revised its export growth target to 10 percent, up from 8 percent in the original budget. Meanwhile, remittance growth has been revised to 15 percent, doubling from the initial target of 7 percent.

Hussain described this as a modest and achievable target.

The export sector has also witnessed satisfactory growth in the first six months despite labour protests, factory closures in the RMG sector, and violence," he said.

According to the central bank's balance of payments statistics, exports grew by 11 percent in the first six months of the current fiscal year.

Meanwhile, remittances increased by 27.56 percent during the same period.

READ FULL STORY ONLINE

Cooking oil goes missing from grocery shelves

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"We are receiving only about 15 to 20 percent of the daily demand for soybean oil in our stores," said Sabbir Hasan Nasir, managing director of ACI Logistics Ltd, which runs the country's largest supermarket chain, Shwappno.

"We have heard that refineries are unable to make a profit. The price they paid for the oil is higher, and selling at the government-fixed price leaves them with no profit," he added.

Globally, prices of both palm oil and soybean oil increased in the October-December quarter of 2024 compared to the previous quarter.

Palm oil prices rose 22 percent to \$1,145 per tonne in the October-December period, up from \$937 per tonne in the previous quarter.

Similarly, soybean oil prices increased by 10 percent to \$1,101 per tonne, according to World Bank Commodities Price Data.

To contain cooking oil prices, the

interim government reduced value-added tax (VAT) twice, cutting it to 5 percent from 15 percent after taking office in August. On December 9, the authorities allowed refiners to increase prices.

Abul Hashem, an edible oil wholesaler in Moulvibazar, one of the major wholesale commodity markets in the capital, said supplies improved slightly after the December price hike.

Currently, only 25 percent of the required oil is available, with one refiner supplying over half of the demand, he added.

The government should investigate whether the rejection of refiners' demands this year led to the latest supply reduction, he said.

Abu Bakar Siddique, a wholesaler at Karwan Bazar, said some refiners are compelling them to buy other products to get soybean oil supplies.

"Otherwise, they do not deliver the cooking oil," he said.

Traders in Chattogram and Barishal raised similar concerns.

Md Ismail Hossain, a retail trader at Kazir Deuri market in Chattogram, claimed that all brands have reduced the supply of bottled soybean oil.

He said that previously, company agents supplied products four times a month, but now they are delivering only once a month.

"Moreover, even with cash payments, products are not readily available," he said. Pana Saha, a shop owner in Barishal city, reported a similar supply crunch.

WHAT REFINERS SAY

Biswajit Saha, director of corporate and regulatory affairs at City Group, which markets the Teer brand of oil, said that their daily supply of soybean oil to the market remains unchanged at 1,507 tonnes, even under current conditions.

"We regularly provide all supply-related data to the government's monitoring cells and intelligence

agencies. They also visit the factory to ensure that the supply to the market is being carried out properly," he added.

For comment, The Daily Star approached Mustafa Haider, group director of TK Group, a leading importer and commodity processor marketing the Pushpi brand. However, he did not respond to calls or messages.

Taslim Shahriar, senior assistant general manager at Meghna Group of Industries, another commodity importer and processor which markets the Fresh brand of oil, said the current shortage is temporary.

"We have purchased a large quantity of soybean oil. The supply will normalise before Ramadan," he said.

Mohd Dabirul Islam Diddar, head of finance and accounts at Bangladesh Edible Oil Limited (BEOL), said their supply of Rupchanda brand soybean oil to the local market remains normal.

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WEST ZONE POWER DISTRIBUTION CO. LTD.

(An Enterprise of Bangladesh Power Dev. Board)
Office of the Executive Director
Bidyut Bhawan, 35 Boyra Main Road, Khulna
Ph: 0244111575, Fax: 02477-730484

Memo No: 27.22.4785.010.74.004.25/335

e-Tender Notice (NCT)

e-Tender for the office of the Chief Engineer (O&M, S&D) invites in the National e-GP system Portal (www.eprocure.gov.bd) for the procurement of following goods:

SI	Tender ID	Name of Tender	Last Selling and Closing Date & Time
1	1072140	Supply and Delivery of 3500 Nos. 11 KV Lightning Arrester (LA) and 3500 Nos. 11KV Drop Out Fuse Cutout (DOFC) With Fuse Link at Central Store of WZPDCL, in Khalishpur, Khulna.	05-Mar-2025 11:00 BST 05-Mar-2025 13:00 BST

This is an Online Tender, Where only e-tender will be accepted in the National e-GP System Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted.

To submit e-Tender, registration required in the National e-GP System Portal (www.eprocure.gov.bd).

The fees for downloading the e-Tender documents from the National e-GP System Portal have to be deposited online through any registered Bank.

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

Engr. Md. Abdul Mojid
(Engr. Md. Abdul Mojid)
Chief Engineer (O&M), WZPDCL, Khulna.

GD-371



Engineering Office University of Chittagong Chittagong

Ref No. Cons-03/CECU-2489/25

Date: 06/02/2025

Request for Expressions of Interest (REOI)

1	Ministry/Division	Ministry of Education
2	Agency	University of Chittagong
3	Procuring entity name	Chief Engineer, Engineering Office, University of Chittagong
4	Procuring entity code	N/A
5	Procuring entity district	Chittagong
6	EOI for Selection of	Engineering & Architectural Consulting Firm
7	Procuring method	Quality and Cost Based Selection (QCBS)
8	Budget and source of funds	GoB
9	Project name	Consultant for Architectural and Engineering Design of a 03 (Three)-storied Press Building at University of Chittagong.
10	Brief description of assignment	Providing consultancy services for the preparation of architectural and engineering Design of a 03 (Three)-storied Press Building at University of Chittagong.
11	Submission of proposal	Up to 12:00pm on 23/02/2025. Technical offer shall be submitted at the Engineering Office. C.U. (Please sealed envelope duly marking the envelope as technical offer bearing the Name & Address of the Consultant).
12	Proposal opening date & time	Technical offer will be opened at the Office of the Chief Engineer at University of Chittagong on the same day at 2:00pm in presence of the consultant or his representative if thereby any.
13	Eligibility of the consultant	a) Trade license (updated) b) VAT, TIN and TAX Assessment Certificate (updated) c) Last 03 (Three) years Audit report (Only summary part) d) Average Annual turnover: The consulting firm must have at least an average annual turnover of BDT 75,000,000 (Seventy-Five lakh) for at least 02 (Two) years within the last 05 (Five) years.
14	Experience of the consultant	The consulting firm shall meet the following minimum qualification criteria. 1. The consulting firm shall have a minimum of 10 (Ten) years' experience in the field of providing architectural and engineering design. 2. The consulting firm must have experience in completing both architectural and engineering design of at least 05 (Five) different projects in last 05 (Five) years. 3. The consulting firm should have specific experience in both architectural and engineering design of at least 02 (two) similar types of building projects, each having minimum 05-storied construction (above ground) with a minimum total floor area of 8,000 square meter in each project in the last 05 years.
15	Scope of works	a) The plan shall be prepared considering environmental, ecological impact & topographical condition. b) The plan shall reflect/ represent proposed structures showing three-dimensional visualization. c) Demarcation of the boundary line against acquired land of the University of Chittagong d) Preparation of detail Architectural Design Structural design, MEP, Firefighting system, Bill of quantities (BOQ). e) Provide animation of the proposed plan. f) The plan should fulfil requirements considering present & future demand of the University for minimum 50 (fifty) years.
16	Name, designation of official inviting EOI	Engr. Syed Zahangir Fazal, Chief Engineer.
17	Address, contact details of official inviting EOI	Engineering Office, University of Chittagong. PABX-02334460789, Ext: 4213, Mobile No: 01863-521561

18. The Authority reserves the right to accept or reject any part of all proposals without assigning any reason whatsoever.
19. If it is not possible to receive/open the Proposal on the schedule date for any unavoidable circumstances, the same will be received/opened on the next working day at the same time and same venue.

20. For any kind of query please contact with the related person or email us at ce.engroff@cu.ac.bd

Chief Engineer
Engineering Office
University of Chittagong
Chittagong

MILITARY ENGINEER SERVICES DIRECTOR OF WORKS AND CHIEF ENGINEER (AIR)

INVITATION FOR TENDER

1. Ministry/Division	Ministry of Defence			
2. Agency	Military Engineer Services			
3. Procuring Entity Name	DW & CE (Air), Dhaka Cantt			
4. Tender Name	Project Works of Bangladesh Air Force for the financial year 2024-2025 (As per SI No. 14)			