Gold prices hiked to Tk 1.53 lakh per bhori

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Jewellers have raised gold prices again, setting the new rate at Tk 153,474 per bhori (11.664 grammes) effective from today.

The previous price of 22-carat gold ornaments stood at Tk 150,862 per bhori.

The Bangladesh Jewellers' Association's standing committee on pricing and price monitoring took the decision to raise prices yesterday, citing a rise in pure gold prices in the local market, according to a press release.

On February 20, gold prices hit Tk 154,525 per bhori, the highest ever in the country.

Gold prices in Bangladesh have been rising steadily for over a year, driven by international market trends and volatility in domestic supply.

In July 2023, gold prices crossed the Tk 100,000 mark for the first time in Bangladesh.

The country requires 20 to 40 tonnes of gold annually, of which about 80 percent is met through smuggling.

Singer opens new plant in Narayanganj

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Singer Bangladesh is expanding its operations with a new home appliance manufacturing plant in Bangladesh Special Economic Zone (BSEZ) in Araihazar, Narayanganj, some 27 kilometres west of capital Dhaka.

The company's board of directors had approved the project on March 30, 2022, as a part of the company's strategy to boost its local manufacturing capacity.

So far, Singer has invested Tk 603.89 crore through multiple transactions, with Tk 580.33 crore specifically allocated for machinery and plant construction, according to a disclosure to the Dhaka Stock Exchange (DSE) yesterday.

The expansion is expected to enhance production efficiency and meet growing demand for home appliances in Bangladesh.

So far, Singer has invested Tk 603.89 crore through multiple transactions, with Tk 580.33 crore specifically allocated for machinery and plant construction

Kazi Ashiqur Rahman, company secretary of Singer Bangladesh, said the company has informed the DSE that it would propose a resolution at its upcoming annual general meeting (AGM) on April 22 to formalise the investment.

"The investment has already been made, and production has started at the new plant," he said.

The resolution seeks the approval of shareholder for the addition of tangible assets worth Tk 603.89 crore, as recorded in the company's latest financial statements.

The approval is required under Bangladesh Securities and Exchange Commission (BSEC) regulations issued on March 22, 2021, Rahman said, adding that the process ensures transparency, regulatory compliance, and investor confidence.

Once fully operational, the new plant is expected to increase production capacity, reduce reliance on imports, and support the government's industrial growth initiatives within designated economic zones.

Chinese solar giant Longi to invest in Bangladesh

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Longi, one of the world's largest solar panel manufacturers, has decided to set up an office and invest in solar panel manufacturing in Bangladesh, Chinese Ambassador to Bangladesh Yao Wen said yesterday.

The decision follows last December's visit by several top Chinese solar panel manufacturers seeking to explore investment opportunities.

This was against the backdrop of Chief Adviser Professor Muhammad Yunus inviting Chinese firms to relocate their manufacturing plants to Bangladesh as a part of the interim government's plan to turn Bangladesh into an economic hub.

"At least two Chinese firms, including Longi, have decided to establish offices and plants in Bangladesh. They will invest very soon," Yao Wen told Professor Yunus at the State Guest House Jamuna.

The ambassador said Chinese firms have been the largest investors in Bangladesh since August 5, when the previous government was removed from power.

Reforms on the move

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This does not prevent cash dividends. On the contrary, there is a significant and positive association between business risk and dividend payout ratio in the banking sector. Banks with higher business risks tend to pay higher dividends.

This reflects a "milking the property" strategy. Several banks appear to be prioritising dividend payments over maintaining financial stability.

Towards better prudence

These practices exacerbate the long-term damage to banks already weakened by fraud and defaults. For commercial banks, a sound dividend policy is essential for maintaining a robust capital base to absorb potential losses and comply with regulatory capital requirements. During times of economic and political instability, such as those we currently face on a daily basis, a conservative dividend policy that emphasises retaining earnings is imperative.

BB's new dividend policy could reportedly restrain 23 out of 61 banks from making dividend payouts at the risk of depositors' and minority shareholders' interests. Banks that have taken a deferral facility to maintain provisioning requirements cannot pay dividends, nor can those with NPLs exceeding 10 percent of their total loans or incurring penalty or fine due to shortfall in the cash reserve ratio and statutory liquidity ratio.

Cash dividends are restricted to the profits generated within the current calendar year; they cannot be distributed from past accumulated profits. Banks that maintain a risk-adjusted capital adequacy ratio (CAR) of at least 15 percent can issue cash and stock dividends up to 50 percent of their net profit after tax. This limit drops to 40 percent if the CAR is between 12.5 percent and 15 percent. No cash dividends can be paid if the CAR falls between 10 percent and 12.5 percent.

Such tightening is particularly warranted when the BB is pressed to provide liquidity support to distressed banks. After the political changeover last year, the BB provided money to troubled banks to prevent a bank run. It has provided around Tk 25,000 crore in liquidity support to ensure they could meet withdrawal demands.

The BB needed to make sure such withdrawals do not include cash dividends paid by liquidity and capital-constrained banks. The crisis-hit banks are yet to repay the funds to the BB. Further asset quality deterioration is on the cards with declining growth, high inflation, and continuing social unrest.

The dividend payout reform encourages banks to retain earnings. By prioritising protecting depositors from potential risks, it should help banks navigate challenging economic conditions by promoting financial prudence.

Readiness for deeper reforms

Although the new regulation might initially face backlash in the stock market, particularly from short-term-focused investors, their long-term advantages for both the economy and the market are remarkable. Enhancing banks' capital foundations will strengthen the overall health of the banking sector.

These measures align with the upcoming tighter NPL recognition criteria and the simplified provisioning framework set to be implemented this April. They also complement the Prompt Corrective Action (PCA) framework announced in December 2023 with a commitment to implement by end March 2025. The PCA outlines specific strategies for addressing banks based on the severity of their balance sheet issues.

Currently, it is hoped that banks can no longer leverage political protection to operate as freely with impunity as they did under the previous regime. Now is opportune moment for reforming the prudential framework encompassing dividend payments, NPL recognition, provisioning requirements, and disciplined exits.

Those disadvantaged by these reforms are currently at a significant political disadvantage. The call for financial stability has never been stronger, both from local stakeholders and international partners.

These reforms are especially handy as comprehensive efforts to overhaul the banking system, including the BB, are in progress, albeit still in their infancy. The impact of these changes will become more apparent once a substantial number of reforms have been sustainably implemented over time.

The writer is former lead economist of the World Bank's Dhaka office.

Satellite company

FROM PAGE B1

As a single point of contact and system integrator, BSCL can provide end-to-end integration, management, marketing and distribution for Starlink in Bangladesh, leveraging its industry presence and regulatory expertise, Hussain said.

This partnership, he believes, could drive digital connectivity, bridge service gaps and accelerate Bangladesh's digital transformation.

REGULATORY UPDATES

In October last year, BTRC drafted guidelines for satellite internet service operators, permitting wholly owned foreign companies to obtain licences -- paving the way for Starlink and similar companies to enter Bangladesh.

Meanwhile, the telecom ministry has recommended that BTRC include a clause granting satellite internet service providers a 25 percent rebate on fees and charges if they operate in partnership with a local satellite operator. However, the guideline has not yet been finalised.

In a formal letter sent to Elon Musk on February 19, Chief Adviser Prof Yunus outlined the potential of Starlink's connectivity, particularly for young entrepreneurs, rural communities and underserved populations in Bangladesh.

Several local telecom infrastructure companies and operators are competing to become Starlink's local partner, according to sources.

CPD wants budget

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"It is crucial to allocate funds for these individuals and their families."

The think tank also urged the interim government to introduce a scholarship programme to finance the education of those injured or disabled during the uprising until they complete their undergraduate degrees.

OVERHAUL NBR, REVISE VAT CUTS

The CPD also called for reforms to the National Board of Revenue (NBR), including developing a modern tax structure, digitalisation, creating a consistent tax policy, and establishing a hassle-free tax payment system.

Besides, the CPD recommended withdrawing a 5 percent value-added tax (VAT) on tuition fees for English-medium schools. Furthermore, CPD suggested exempting all taxes on imported books.

It also proposed reducing the corporate tax rate for private universities, medical colleges, dental colleges, engineering colleges, and institutions offering information technology education from the existing 15 percent to 10 percent.

TRUMP'S TARIFF WAR WON'T HELP BANGLADESH

At the event, Prof Mustafizur Rahman, a distinguished fellow of the CPD, rejected the notion that Donald Trump's return to power and his tariff policies would open new export opportunities for Bangladesh.

Instead, he cautioned that Bangladesh's export prospects could become "constrained and stagnant".

"There is an assumption that the tariffs on China could benefit Bangladesh, as we are competitors in the US market," Rahman said.

"However, after the US imposed a 25 percent tariff on China in 2016, our exports to the US initially declined, despite a rebound this year. So, I don't believe there is a direct benefit for us," he added.

Investors flag

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The letter also noted that the 700MHz band consists of a full 2x45MHz, and releasing only 2x25MHz is insufficient for technical and commercial viability.

The investors urged the government to delay the auction until the full spectrum is available, ensuring a more effective and sustainable allocation.

As long-term stakeholders in Bangladesh's telecom sector, the companies expressed their commitment to supporting the country's connectivity and economic development.

They offered to engage in further discussions with the relevant ministry and the Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (BTRC) to address these concerns and explore alternatives that align with global best practices.

Premier Cement goes for merger

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Another key advantage he highlighted is cost reduction in maintaining regulatory compliance.

"We must currently maintain separate tax filings, environmental clearances and licensing for each entity. But if the merger is successful, administrative burdens like these will be significantly reduced," he said.

Rahman further said that one of the most notable financial benefits of the merger will be the ability to avail VAT rebates on gas bills, which would not have been possible otherwise.

"If a company does not have its own power generation setup, it cannot claim VAT rebates on gas bills. So, once Premier Power falls under Premier Cement's umbrella, we will be able to take advantage of this rebate," Rahman added.

As a part of the merger, the existing shareholdings of National Cement and Premier Power will be restructured. At present, Premier Cement holds an 18 percent stake in National Cement while it has a 96 percent stake in Premier Power. Following the merger, these entities will cease to exist separately, and Premier Cement will assume full control.

The company also assured that public shareholders will be accommodated through the share exchange process.

However, further details will be provided after obtaining regulatory approvals.

"After March, the remaining shareholders will receive their shares accordingly," Rahman said.

With the cement and power sectors becoming increasingly competitive, he believes this merger will strengthen Premier Cement's position in the industry.

Additionally, Rahman said that Premier Cement expects to streamline its supply chain and enhance the company's profitability through the move.

Premier Power currently operates a 4.34 MW power plant, which plays a crucial role in supporting domestic cement production despite being relatively small in size.

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 Sl No.14)
5.	Invitation for Tender No.	**11 of 2024-2025/E-6 Dated: 12 March 2025**
6.	Procurement Method	Open Tendering Method (OTM)
7.	Source of Funds	Govt. of Bangladesh (GOB)
8.	Tender publication date	**16 March 2025**
9.	Tender last Selling date	**13 April 2025 (During Office hours)**
10	Last date of Tender submission	**15 April 2025 upto 1200 hours**
11.	Tender opening date and time	**15 April 2025 at 1230 hours**
12.	Name & Address of the Tenders selling, receiving and opening Tender documents	DW & CE (Air), Dhaka Cantt, Dhaka-1206.
13.	Eligibility of Tenderer	a. MES Enlisted Contractors 'Class' as bellow. b. Contractors enlisted in other Govt departments may also participate in tenders of the work on receipt of security clearance from DGFI.

14.	Description of works	Location	Class	Price of Tender Document (Non refundable)	Amount of Tender Security (Taka) in the shape of Pay Order/Bank Guarantee/Bank Draft in favour of DW&CE (Air)	Completion time in months
a)	Incomplete works against CA No. CE Air/249, 250, 251 of 2022-2023 for Construction of BOQ (12 Storied foundation/150 Feet height) 1 x Basement including Internal/External Services after Demolition Old BOQ in Officers Mess area BAF Base Bashar, Tejgaon (1st phase of 4 phases)	BAF Base Bashar, Tejgaon	'A'	Tk. 19,000/-	Tk. 42,79,000/-	15 (Fifteen) Months
b)	Incomplete works against CA No. CE Air/151 of 2022-2023 for Construction of 1 x 72 Airmen type quarter (10 storey with 14 storied foundation, 08 Flat in each floor) keeping Ground floor vacant including internal / external services at Saudi Colony BAF Base Bashar, Tejgaon	BAF Base Bashar, Tejgaon	'A'	Tk. 28,000/-	Tk. 65,19,000/-	15 (Fifteen) Months
c)	Incomplete works against CA No. CE Air/172 of 2022-2023 for Construction of Aircrft/ Helicapter Hangar including ancillary/External work at BAF C&M Unit Lalmonirhat	BAF C&M Unit Lalmonirhat	'A' & 'B'	Tk. 9,000/-	Tk. 19,92,000/-	12 (Twelve) Months
d)	Incomplete works against CA No. CE Air/214 of 2021-2022 for Construction of 1 x Hangar for 6 x AW -139 Helicopter at BAF Base Zahurul Haque Chattogram (Last Phase of 3 Phase).	BAF Base Zahurul Haque Chattagram	'A'	Tk. 19,000/-	Tk. 43,59,000/-	12 (Twelve) Months

15.	Contact Details	Tel : 9836520, e-mail : dwceair@gmail.com
16.	Special Instructions	a. Tenderers shall submit copy of valid Enlistment letter & security clearance with application on company letter-head when purchasing Tender. b. Detailed requirements are mentioned in Tender Data sheet of Tender documents. c. The procuring entity reserves the right to accept or reject any or all the Tenders.

আই এস পি আর/বিমান/১৬

Mohammad Shah Alam
Superintending Engineer
For DW & CE (Air)

GD-679

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স্মারক নং-৭৪৭/ই তারিখঃ ১৬/০৩/২০২৫খ্রিঃ

২০২৪-২৫ অর্থ সালে সৈয়দপুর রেলওয়ে জেলার পুলিশ রেশন ষ্টোরের ৪র্থ কোয়ার্টারের মশুর ডাল ও সয়াবিন তৈল সরবরাহকারী নিয়োগের জন্য পাবলিক প্রকিউরমেন্ট রেগুলেশন/০৮ (সর্বশেষ সংশোধনী) মোতাবেক যোগ্যতাসম্পন্ন প্রকৃত ঠিকাদার/ব্যবসায়ী/সরবরাহকারী প্রতিষ্ঠানের নিকট হতে সীলমোহরকৃত খামে দরপত্র আহবান করা যাচ্ছে।

১।	মন্ত্রণালয়/বিভাগ	স্বরাষ্ট্র মন্ত্রণালয়, জননিরাপত্তা বিভাগ
২।	সংস্থা	বাংলাদেশ পুলিশ
৩।	দরপত্র সম্পাদনকারী প্রধান	পুলিশ সুপার, সৈয়দপুর রেলওয়ে জেলা
৪।	সংগ্রহ সত্ত্বার জেলা	সৈয়দপুর রেলওয়ে জেলা
৫।	দরপত্রের বিষয়	২০২৪-২৫ অর্থ সালের ৪র্থ কোয়ার্টারের রেশন ক্রয়
৬।	দরপত্রের সূত্র নম্বর	স্মারক নং-৭৪৭/ই তারিখ-১৬/০৩/২০২৫খ্রিঃ
৭।	দরপত্রের পদ্ধতি	উন্মুক্ত দরপত্র পদ্ধতি
৮।	বাজেট ও অর্থনৈতিক খাত	কোড নং- ১২২০২০১-১২০০০০৬০৯-৩২৫৪১০২-খাদ্যদ্রব্য সংগ্রহ
৯।	দরপত্র সিডিউল প্রাপ্তির সর্বশেষ তারিখ	১৩/০৪/২০২৫খ্রিঃ অফিস চলাকালীন সময় পর্যন্ত
১০।	দরপত্র জমা প্রদানের সর্বশেষ তারিখ ও সময়	১৫/০৪/২০২৫খ্রিঃ সকাল ০৯.০০ ঘটিকা হইতে ১২.০০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত
১১।	দরপত্র খোলার তারিখ ও সময়	১৫/০৪/২০২৫খ্রিঃ তারিখ ১২.৩০ ঘটিকা। দরপত্রদাতা বা মনোনীত প্রতিনিধিদের উপস্থিতিতে (যদি থাকে)
১২।	দরপত্র সম্পাদনকারী অফিস ও ঠিকানা	পুলিশ সুপার, রেলওয়ে জেলা, সৈয়দপুর
১৩।	দরপত্র প্রাপ্তির স্থান	১। পুলিশ সুপারের কার্যালয়, সৈয়দপুর রেলওয়ে জেলা ২। পুলিশ সুপারের কার্যালয়, দিনাজপুর।
১৪।	দরপত্র দাখিলের স্থান	পুলিশ সুপারের কার্যালয়, সৈয়দপুর রেলওয়ে জেলা।
১৫।	দরপত্র খোলার স্থান	পুলিশ সুপারের কার্যালয়, সৈয়দপুর রেলওয়ে জেলা।
১৬।	দরদাতার যোগ্যতা	রেশন সামগ্রী সরবরাহ কাজের অভিজ্ঞতাসম্পন্ন দরদাতা।
১৭।	দরপত্রের সহিত যে সকল কাগজপত্র জমা প্রদান করিতে হইবে	সংশিষ্ট কাজ বাস্তবায়ন সংক্রান্ত ঠিকাদারী লাইসেন্স, ট্রেড লাইসেন্স, হালনাগাদ আয়কর সার্টিফিকেট, ভ্যাট রেজিষ্ট্রেশন সার্টিফিকেট, ব্যাংক সলভেন্সি সার্টিফিকেট ও কাজের অভিজ্ঞতার সাটিফিকেট

১৭। লট নং	কাজের বিবরণ	পরিমাণ (কম/বেশি)	সিডিউলের মুল্য	দরপত্র জামানত	কাজ সমাপ্তির সময়
১	মশুর ডাল সরবরাহ (দেশি, উন্নতমানের)	চাহিদা মোতাবেক	১,০০০/-	১,০০,০০০/-	এপ্রিল/২৫ হতে জুন/২৫
২	সয়াবিন তৈল সরবরাহ (উন্নতমানের)	ঐ	১,০০০/-	১,০০,০০০/-	

বিশেষ জ্ঞাতব্যঃ
ক। সিডিউল ক্রয়ের সময় আবেদনের সাথে ট্রেড লাইসেন্স ও ঠিকাদারী লাইসেন্সের সত্যায়িত কপি সংযুক্ত করে আবেদন করতে হবে।
খ। দরপত্র আহবানকারী কর্তৃপক্ষ কোন কারণ দর্শানো ব্যাতিরেকে যে কোন দরপত্র গ্রহণ, বাতিল ও সমূদয় দরপত্র বাতিলের ক্ষমতা সংরক্ষণ করেন।
গ। দরপত্রটি সীলমোহরকৃত খামে ঠিকাদার এবং সংগ্রহ স্বত্ত্বার নাম সম্বলিত হতে হবে।
ঘ। অন্যান্য সকল তথ্যাদি দরপত্রের সাথে সংযুক্ত থাকতে হবে।

ফারহাত আহমেদ
বিপি-৭২৯৯০২০৮০৬
(অতিঃ পুআইজি,বাংলাদেশ পুলিশ)
পুলিশ সুপার
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ই-মেইলঃ srsyedpur@police.gov.bd
ফোনঃ ০২৫৮৯৯৫৬৯২৬, ফ্যাক্সঃ ০২৫৮৯৯৫৭১৬১

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