

BUSINESS OUTLOOK

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16 August 2022

Fuel Oils Price Hike

Suicidal



Bike Sales Defy Odds

Hospitality Industry Poised For Massive Growth



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From the Editor

Fix the Economy First

The people are in distress. The latest record hike in fuel prices that sent commodity prices through the roof, only exacerbated their suffering and is bleeding their pockets. No one is unscathed. Finance minister AHM Mustafa Kamal himself admitted the fuel oil price hike would further push up inflation and impact the overall economy. He also said that the costly fuel oil would increase the prices of goods and services. The minister was talking to reporters at his secretariat office, five days after the price hikes of petrol, diesel, octane and kerosene. The monthly inflation rate was hovering over 7 per cent in June and July before the latest rise in fuel oil prices. High inflation puts low and fixed-income groups in trouble maintaining their daily expenses, often eroding savings, mercilessly dragging many below the poverty line, said CAB president Ghulam Rahman. The majority of people have been facing precarious situations since the wage rate did not increase significantly. They have been forced to rely on savings or borrowing to meet daily expenses.

What led to this unprecedented situation? Media reports that amid so many negative factors, a group of finance division officials said the government was forced to make upward adjustment since the country's economic outlook was deteriorating. Weak monetary policy, rising non-performing loans, unnecessary costly projects, corruption and rampant capital flight, have long been stressing the macroeconomy. Consequences of mismanagement of the macroeconomy have gradually started to pop up. Even general people now understand how the country's power generation capacity, almost double the production, leads to payment of vast amounts of capacity charges, pocketed mostly by businessmen loyal to the present government. The current dollar crisis is not an isolated case. The country is facing a risk of debt distress soon with plummeting foreign currency reserves now hovering below \$40 billion from \$48 billion a year ago. The government is persuading the International Monetary Fund to provide \$4.5 billion in loans. We still don't know if the IMF will agree to lend the foreign currency to temporarily manage the situation. But we can hope the Washington-based multilateral agency will provide the loan as Bangladesh never failed to service the foreign debt. But it is easily understandable that the conditions which will be tagged with the loan will not be easy to implement. In this situation, the first and foremost necessity is streamlining the macroeconomic management. But how could it be possible when the banking sector became unmanageable with the increasing default loans and power sector crippled with capacity charges? Illegal foreign currency flight remains unstoppable. We hope the government will first pay attention to these issues. ■



(Sikder Md Sadrul Hasan)

s69hasan@yahoo.com

Editor & Publisher

Sikder Md Sadrul Hasan

Managing Editor

Afroja Bilkis Hasan

News Team

Siddique Islam, Salauddin Bablu, Masum Billah
Saadman Sajjad, Kayes M Sohel, Ashrafal Islam
Jasim Uddin Khan and Fahad Ferdows.

Contributors

Zafar Malik, Syed Ishtiaque Reza
Kashem Mahamud

Staff Correspondent

Shahed Farid

USA Correspondent

Waliul Alam

UK Correspondent

Nurul Akbar Bhuiyan

Photo Department

Bulbul Ahmed, Sheikh Mamun

Cartoonist

Syed Rashad Imam (Tanmoy)

IT and Graphic Design

Tonmoy Rajbangshi

Head of Marketing

Basiruzzaman Akond

Marketing Operation

Chandan Rajbangshi

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Editorial, News & Commercial Office

Razzak Plaza, 9th Floor (L-10)
2, Shahid Tajuddin Ahmed Sarani,
Moghbar Crossing, Dhaka-1217.

Telephone : 01819 200 641, 01627 140 427

Email : bdbusinessoutlook@gmail.com

Website

www.businessoutlookbd.com

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Five Major Chinese Firms To Delist From NYSE

Five major Chinese companies including two of the country's largest oil producers will delist from the New York Stock Exchange, the firms said in filings on August 12. Sinopec and PetroChina—two of the world's biggest energy firms—will apply for "voluntary delisting" of their American depository shares, the companies said in separate statements. The Aluminum Corporation of China, also known as Chalco, as well as China Life Insurance and a Shanghai-based Sinopec subsidiary, announced similar moves. The delisting plans come as tensions between Beijing and Washington climb over US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's visit last week to Taiwan, which China claims as part of its territory. Beijing has raged against the visit, staging unprecedented military drills around the self-ruled island and suspending cooperation with the United States on issues ranging from climate change to fighting drug smugglers. The five companies are on a list of firms published



by the US Securities and Exchange Commission that faced delisting from Wall Street if they did not comply with new audit requirements. All five companies said in separate statements that they expected to stop trading on the NYSE by early September. ■

MCCI Seeks Five-Year Term For Trade Licences



The Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MCCI) has urged the government to extend the validity of all trade licences by up to five years in a bid to reduce the sufferings faced in renewing such certifications each year. The MCCI asked the government to extend the validity of several licences for at least five years. The call came at a discussion on "Issuance or renewal of licences for 5 years", organised by the MCCI in Dhaka on August 11. Md Saiful Islam, president of the MCCI, said several licences, including a trade licence and environmental clearance certificate, are needed to start any business in the country. "This impedes the ease of doing business as they face hassles in each step of the process," Islam added. Chief guest Sheikh Fazole Noor Taposh, mayor of the Dhaka South City Corporation (DSCC), gave his consent to the proposal, which he termed as very logical. ■

Call For Cash Incentive For Chilled Fish Exports

A state body suggests supplying cash incentive to exporters of chilled fish with an eye to helping boost export of the sector. The Business Promotion Council (BPC) under commerce ministry currently offers different initiatives to boost export growth. It has recently requested the ministry for steps to incentivise exporters of such fish. Earlier, the Bangladesh Live and Chilled Food Exporters Association (BLCFEA) sought to provide a 25-per cent cash incentive. The BLCFEA got membership of the council in 2020. The state-run agency has recently requested the ministry to take action in this connection. "We've requested the government to take action regarding cash incentive for the export of chilled fish to increase export earnings," says an official. The frozen fish sector currently enjoys 7.0-10 per cent cash incentive on shrimp exports and 2.0-5.0 per cent on other fish exports. ■



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Rise In Fuel Price: Now ICDs Raise Service Charge

Private inland container depots (ICDs) have raised the charge for one of a couple of services requiring the use of diesel reasoning the August 5 price hike of fuels. The government hiked fuel prices by up to 51.7 per cent, the highest in the country's history. The price of each litre of diesel has reached Tk 114 from Tk 80. In a notice on August 12, Bangladesh Inland Container Depots Association (Bicda) said the tariff for a service involving the handling of import-laden containers had been increased by around 34 per cent with immediate effect. Overall, charges for five types of services requiring use of diesel, such as vehicular and equipment operations, need to be adjusted with the fuel price hike, said Bicda Secretary General Md Ruhul Amin Sikder. The Bicda members are still in discussion over raising four other charges, including those for handling export containers, haulage, lifting and verifying gross mass. According to the Bicda circular, the charge for the import handling service involving a 20-foot container has been raised from Tk 9,754 to Tk 13,080 while for a 40-foot container from Tk 11,255 to Tk 15,107. ■



Lighters' Fare Raised By 15-22pc For Fuel Price Hike

The Water Transport Cell (WTC), a private organisation that coordinates the allocation and schedules of lighter vessels, took the decision after an emergency meeting of its executive committee on August 11 afternoon. In a circular issued after meeting, the WTC said the new rates would be effective since August 6. Leaders of the Bangladesh Cargo Vessel Owners Association, Coastal Ship Owners Association of Bangladesh, Inland Vessel Owners Association of Chattogram, WTC Goods Agents Association, and WTC Local Agents Association attended the meeting at the WTC office in the Agrabad commercial area of Chattogram. According to the circular, 22 per cent of the existing fare has been added to the rates mentioned in the WTC fare chart for transporting goods from Kutubdia, the outer anchorage of Chittagong Port, and different ghats of Karnaphuli river to Dhaka, Barishal and Chandpur. Besides, the fare taken for transporting goods to other destinations has been raised by 15 per cent, it said. ■

Gas crisis puts ceramic industry in more troubles

Ceramic manufacturing businesses of the country are undergoing a hard time to maintain their production performance as their production has declined 40 per cent due to the on-going gas crisis. The industry has become a booming manufacturing sector due to rising demand on both local and international markets that meets 85 per cent of local demand. The total size of investments in the sector is around \$ 1.57 billion and the annual export earnings from the sector are more than \$ 40.35 million. Industry insiders regarding the energy supply crisis said that if the situation continued and the government delayed in taking steps to overcome the crisis, the situation might get worse than the pandemic period. To resolve the immediate gas supply crisis they stressed import of LNG to meet the current demand and also suggested that the government develop renewable energy sources like biogas, solar energy, wind, water and other types of energy to increase the energy sufficiency. Bangladesh Ceramic



Manufacturers and Exporters Association president and managing director of China-Bangla Ceramic Industry Limited Shirajul Islam Mollah said while talking to media about the impact of gas supply crisis. He said, 'We are forced to close off the production at our factory 12 hours a day due to the gas supply crisis, as a result production quantity has decreased and the production cost has increased.' ■



What's Stopping BNP From Raising A Political Storm?

SMS Hasan

With rising inflation, soaring commodity prices, declining currency value, falling forex reserves and a record hike in fuel oil prices, Bangladesh's economy is passing through a tough time. The opposition BNP, out of office for more than a decade, couldn't have asked for a better setting to launch and intensify its anti-incumbency protests ahead of the next national elections just around the corner. But now it has decided to intensify street protests which it believes to morally boost its supporters.

Taka recently witnessed its highest slide against the greenback, sliding to Tk 119 against the US currency as the government approaches the International

Monetary Fund to get a loan of \$4.5 billion. The foreign exchange reserves went below \$39 billion from \$48 billion within a few months. The government imposed a ban on the import of luxury items while many business houses, including the state-owned Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation, are facing difficulties opening letters of credit with private and public banks to import petroleum fuels due to the dollar crisis.

Recently, the power division announced an area-wise power rationing and finally the labour and employment ministry announced a zone-wise holiday staggering plan to save electricity. Meanwhile, the energy division raised the prices of all kinds of

petroleum fuels by up to 52 per cent in one go. All these are indications of massive volatility in the economy. Some critics say the country is finally moving towards the fate of Sri Lanka where the government announced it a bankrupt state with its president leaving the country facing public wrath. Against these backdrops, ministers are making different interesting comments defending the government's measures but they ended up being the butt of jokes on social media. People are suffering, they are discontent.

Many believe it is high time for the opposition to launch an anti-government movement but some argue that it's too early with the next election still far away. They argue that it would be

tough to keep the momentum of the mass movement until the end. So, it will not be wise to launch a final movement right at this moment though there is a ready platform as people are vigorously critical of the government's recent moves. They say the BNP should wait some more days to start a final mass movement. Possibly, BNP opted for the second option to take more time. However, BNP has taken a policy to show its strength on the street by organising rallies, public meetings

on August 11, he said their party has initiated a movement to save the 18 crores people of Bangladesh and protect the country from misrule. BNP's Dhaka south and north city units arranged the rally protesting against the latest hike in fuel prices and the power crisis. Thousands of leaders and activists of the party and its associate bodies started gathered in the area blocking both sides of the road stretching from Bijoy Nagar crossing to Fakirerpool, causing immense suffering to commuters.

administration shouldering its failure to resolve people's problems. "The parliament must be dissolved and the Election Commission has to be reconstituted for forming a new government and parliament of people through a credible election."

Fakhrul said their party will spread their anti-government movement across the country's villages and upazilas with programmes like rallies and demonstrations from August 22. "We'll force this government to quit and arrange a fresh election under a non-party government through our movement by uniting people."

Fakhrul said people are going through a tough time as prices of all essentials, including rice, pulses and oil are going up. "On the other hand, the power crisis is deepening. The common people are the worst affected by the fuel price hike as the prices of all essentials are increasing further." The BNP leader said the government had not taken any step to explore gas in the country only to plunder public money in the name of importing LNG and LPG. "The power tariffs have been increased repeatedly because of the import of gas with their own people."

Besides, Fakhrul said the government has been spending Tk28,000 crore on the quick rental power plants. "Already Tk78,000 crore have been siphoned off abroad from the country." Referring to the statistics of the Export Promotion Bureau, he said: "\$270 billion have been exported from Bangladesh in the last seven years. But Bangladesh Bank is showing a figure of \$249 billion. Where did the remaining money go? The nation wants to know." The BNP secretary general alleged that their leaders and workers of the party



Obaidul Quader, General Secretary, AL

and demonstrating processions.

'Victory Inevitable'

BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir has urged the country's people, especially the youth, to get ready to intensify the movement against the current 'fascist regime' by taking control of the streets as their victory is inevitable.

"I would like to tell students and the youth that when we're young we waged a war and liberated the country, you have to rise to liberate the country afresh for ensuring our future safety, prosperity, justice, parity, social esteem and building a new Bangladesh," he said. Speaking at a public rally in the city's Nayapaltan central office

The rally was also meant for registering the party's protest against the soaring prices of all essential commodities, ongoing load shedding and the killing of two leaders of its associate bodies by police in Bhola. It was the biggest rally by the main opposition party in recent time to show its political strength.

Miriam Fakhrul said: "We all must get into this movement. We'll have to take to the streets with fresh vigour and establish a government of people in the true sense by ousting the present fascist and monstrous regime. Our victory is inevitable." He also urged the government to step down immediately handing over power to a non-party neutral

were arrested and obstructed at different places on their way to Nayapaltan rally. "They (govt) fear even our peaceful rally as they have usurped power by force. As they have no legitimacy, they are always afraid of facing a fall."

BNP standing committee member Khandaker Mosharraf Hossain alleged that the government has increased the fuel prices only to plunder public money. "The prime minister earlier said we don't import octane and petrol. So, why did the government increase the prices of fuel?"

He also alleged that the government has been giving people the wrong information about the country's foreign currency reserves in a bid to mislead them. "The businessmen are facing difficulties to open LC to import food and other goods for a shortage of dollars in the country. If the country has adequate reserves, then why the government resorts to load shedding and increases fuel prices?"

Referring to the remarks of Ambassador of Switzerland to Bangladesh Nathalie Chuard that the government did not seek information on the deposits of Bangladeshi money in the Swiss banks, Mosharraf said this government knows very well that their party leaders are involved in money laundering. "That's why they did not seek information about it."

He said there is now no alternative to waging a united movement to protect the country's people from the hands of the current 'despotic', 'looter' and 'fascist' regime.

BNP standing committee members Mirza Abbas, Gayeshwar Chandra Roy, Dr Abdul Moyeen Khan, Nazrul Islam Khan, Selima Rahman, Iqbal Hasan Mahmud Tuku, vice-chairmen Abdullah Al

Noman and Abdul Awal Mintoo, among others, addressed the rally.

Quader Warns Of Tackling BNP's Movement On Streets

Awami League General Secretary Obaidul Quader has warned that if the BNP resorts to any violence and arson in the name of movement, it will be strongly handled on the streets. "If the BNP, as an opposition party, calls a peaceful movement, why will the government halt it?" he questioned while speaking at an emergency meet-

movement will disappear," he said.

Holiday Staggering For Factories

The government has announced a fresh holiday staggering plan for area-based industries to minimise consumption of both natural gas and electricity. The new plan was announced through a notification by the Ministry of Labour and Employment on August 11. The notification was for the sake of the people, said the Ministry of



Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir, Secretary General, BNP

ing at the AL Bangabandhu Avenue central office on August 11 arranged in observance of the AL programs announced marking the mourning month of August.

Quader said if the BNP adds the elements of violence to its programmes and carries out arson terrorism, the government will not sit idle. He said their anarchy will be strongly dealt with on the streets. Capitalising on the persisting global crisis, plots continue to oust the government, the AL general secretary said, adding that many people think the AL has forgotten the way how to handle a movement on the streets and it is not at all. "You will see us on the streets soon. When the Awami League comes to the field, the

Labour and Employment. The new notification came in line with the recent announcement of State Minister for Power, Energy and Mineral Resources Nasrul Hamid following his meeting with different business bodies on August 7. After the meeting, he said that industries across the country will remain closed one day a week under a new area-based load shedding plan. Under a staggering programme an area-based factory holidays will be maintained to minimise consumption of both natural gas and electricity.

As per the gazette notification, industries of a certain area will remain closed for a day as holiday while other areas will remain

open. In that case, from Friday to Thursday, each of the days will be applicable for keeping the industries closed in a certain area as holiday across the country instead of the currently applicable Friday and Saturday.

Officials of the Power Division said that the new rationing system will help save around 500-550 MW of electricity, he said.

The government on April 12 imposed a four-hour gas rationing for industries across the country from 5pm to 9pm daily to save natural gas. Although the initial decision was to continue gas

plants are now shut and load-shedding is being implemented officially from July 19 to reduce diesel imports and save foreign currency.

Although area-based load-shedding was scheduled for one hour, it allegedly continued for three hours at a time in some city areas across the country.

Load shedding in rural and remote areas, however, stretched for more hours, consumers claim.

Markets and shopping malls can now stay open until 8pm.

The government also prohibited

Switzerland would be requested for information about money launderers again, the minister replied that countries, where money is laundered, do not wish to exchange such information.

Earlier the finance ministry and Bangladesh Bank had sought information about 67 people and their money in Swiss banks. At that time, they gave information about only one person.

Although the information was sought several times, Switzerland, a friend of Bangladesh, was urged not to provide misinformation, the minister said.

Extended Weekends For Educational Institutions Likely

The government is considering extending weekends for educational institutions to save on electricity, Education Minister Dipu Moni has said.

The minister was speaking at a seminar on August 12.

She said a decision on the matter would be announced soon.

According to the new curriculum that will come into effect in 2023, educational institutions will have a two-day weekend.

Dipu Moni said there had been no academic loss due to the Covid-19 pandemic and research on this issue was underway.

Speaking about the importance of technical education, the minister said: "No one has remained unemployed after receiving technical education."

She added that technical education should be made prestigious. ■



rationing for 15 days, the government withdrew it after 10 days of its execution amid protests from business enterprises.

During the meeting, Nasrul said that the nationwide load-shedding will ease in September. "Load-shedding can come down to half from the current level in September and the country may get rid of load-shedding from October," he added.

The business leaders requested to provide uninterrupted electricity and keep the captive power plants outside the purview of tariff hike. Under an ongoing austerity measure all the diesel-fired power

illumination in different social gatherings in community centres, shopping malls, shops, offices and houses since July 7.

"People Living In Heaven..."

"The people of Bangladesh are in heaven compared to other countries amid the global recession," said Foreign Minister Dr AK Abdul Momen on August 12. A specific faction is spreading fear that Bangladesh will have a similar disaster as Sri Lanka, however, this is baseless, he told reporters after a views-exchange meeting on land acquisition for an expansion project of Sylhet Osmani International Airport. When asked if

Moong Dal Exports To Japan On The Rise

Business Outlook Report

Grameen Euglena, a joint venture between Japan's Euglena Co Ltd and Bangladesh's Grameen Krishi Foundation, has been processing moong dal collected from Patuakhali and exporting it to Japan since 2018. And although the compa-

Satake decided to form the joint venture after seeing that moong dal, which has huge demand in his country, is widely produced in Bangladesh. Although moong dal exports are generally prohibited, he was initially able to secure permission for shipping it abroad on a trial basis for

are working together to increase cultivation. Mohammad Emdadul Haque, project director of the SACP, said moong dal exports have not only improved Bangladesh's export earnings, but also the farmers' standard of living. He went on to say that farmers sell their moong dal for



ny's exports had declined due to various difficulties amid the Covid-19 pandemic, the situation has now normalised to an extent. Grameen Euglena exported some 300 tonnes of moong dal to Japan in 2021 but this year, the company aims to ship 1,000 tonnes of the lentil.

Sources at Grameen Euglena said they had signed an agreement with the Ministry of Agriculture in 2012 to allow moong dal exports on a limited scale. The company initially procured the lentil from Dashmina upazila of Patuakhali but later started sourcing it from Patuakhali sadar upazila and Baufal upazila as well. The purchased moong dal is processed at the company's facility in Ishwardi upazila of Pabna before being exported to Japan. Najmus Sadat, coordinator of Grameen Euglena's local operations, said Japanese businessman Yuko

one year. In 2018, the company officially began exporting moong dal to the island nation after receiving approval in this regard for a five-year period.

Since then, cultivation of the Bari-6 (large grain) variety of moong dal has started in Patuakhali under the supervision of the agriculture ministry to meet the demand for exportable lentils. Grameen Euglena currently has about 10,000 contract farmers, who sell their produce to the company for around Tk 5 to Tk 10 per kilogramme higher than the market price. Considering that Japan has an annual demand of 50,000 tonnes for large-grain lentils, the Smallholder Agriculture Competitiveness Project (SACP) of the Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE), International Fund for Agricultural Development and Grameen Euglena

between Tk 78,000 and Tk 80,000 per ton. Nurunnabi Sikder, a farmer of Hosnabad village in Dashmina Upazila who has been contracted by Grameen Euglena, said he cultivates export quality large-grain moong dal. "The lentil is selling for Tk 70 to Tk 80 per kilogramme in the market and so, local farmers are happy to be getting better prices from the company," he added.

AKM Mohiuddin, deputy director of the Patuakhali DAE, said moong dal has been cultivated on 86, 431 hectares of land in Patuakhali to produce 1.14 lakh tonnes of the pulse this season.

"Farmers are benefiting more from exports, which also makes it possible to earn more foreign currency," he added. ■



PM Offers Nepal To Use Mongla, Chattogram Seaports

Business Outlook Report

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina again proposed Nepal to use Mongla and Chattogram seaports alongside Syedpur airport for mutual benefits. "Nepal can take advantage of using our Mongla and Chittagong ports," she said while a visiting parliamentary delegation from Nepal paid a courtesy call on the Prime Minister at her official Ganabhaban residence here on August 5.

Chairperson, International Relations Committee, House of Representatives, Federal Parliament, Nepal, Pabitra Niruola Kharel led the Nepalese delegation, according to a press release of the Press Wing of the Prime Minister's Office. Mentioning

that Bangladesh is developing Syedpur Airport as a regional airport, the premier said, "Neighboring countries including Nepal can use the airport."

During the meeting, both the sides expressed their eagerness to consolidate further the relations between the two countries alongside strengthening bilateral cooperation on business and trade for mutual benefits. Expressing her gratitude to the leadership and the people of Nepal for supporting Bangladesh during the Liberation War in 1971, Sheikh Hasina said her government attaches great importance to maintaining good relations with neighboring countries, including Nepal. The Prime Minister expressed

satisfaction that the delegation visited Bangabandhu Memorial Museum at Dhanmondi and Bangladesh Parliament and went to Tungipara through the much-cherished iconic Padma Bridge.

At the outset, the Nepalese delegation thanked the government of Bangladesh for arranging an excellent program for them. The delegation members expressed great satisfaction that Nepal and Bangladesh have been enjoying cordial relations over the years. They mentioned that this year was very significant for both countries for celebrating the 50th year of establishing diplomatic relations. They suggested that the two countries could further consolidate

their cooperation in sectors like power, hydro-electricity, tourism, education, ICT, connectivity, and people to people contact. They emphasized high-level visits on a regular basis to strengthen the friendly ties.

The delegation appreciated Prime Minister for her visionary leadership and the recent socio-economic development, which they termed as very impressive.

The Nepalese delegation included Chandtara Kumari, MP, Dr. Deepak Prakash Bhatt, MP, Dev Prasad Timalsena, MP, Lila Devi Sitaula, MP, Narad Muni Rana, MP, and Sarala Kumari Yadav, MP.



3 More Grain Ships Set To Leave Ukraine As NATO Chief Warns Putin

Business Outlook Report

Three ships carrying a total of 58,041 tonnes of corn have been authorised to leave Ukrainian ports on Friday as part of a deal to unblock grain exports, as a Russian offensive forced Ukraine to cede territory in the east. The first vessel carrying Ukrainian grain allowed to leave port since the start of the war set sail from Odesa on August 6 bound for Lebanon, under a safe passage deal brokered by Turkey and the United Nations. The Joint Coordination Centre in Istanbul, which groups Russian, Ukrainian, Turkish and UN personnel, said two ships would leave from Chornomorsk and one from Odesa on August 5.

"The three outbound vessels are estimated to depart in the morning from their respective ports," it said. From Chornomorsk, the Polarnet would leave for Karasu in Turkey with 12,000 tonnes of corn and the Rojen would take 13,041 tonnes of corn to Teesport in Britain. From Odesa, the Navistar would take 33,000 tonnes of corn to Ringaskiddy in Ireland. The Turkish bulk carrier Osprey S, flying the flag of Liberia, was expected to arrive in Ukraine's Chornomorsk port on Friday, the regional administration of Odesa said. It would be the

first ship to arrive at a Ukrainian port during the war. As of August 4 afternoon, Osprey S was anchored in the Sea of Marmara, about 1 km (0.62 mile) off Istanbul's Asian coast, along with other ships waiting to cross the Bosphorus in to the Black Sea, according to a Reuters journalist. Russian President Vladimir Putin sent troops into Ukraine on February 24, sparking the biggest conflict in Europe since World War Two and causing a global energy and food crisis. Ukraine and Russia produce about one third of global wheat and Russia is Europe's main energy supplier.

Ukraine has called for the grain deal to be extended to include other products, such as metals, the Financial Times reported. "This agreement is about logistics, about the movement of vessels through the Black Sea," Ukraine's Deputy Economy Minister Taras Kachka told the newspaper. "What's the difference between grain and iron ore?"

Eastern 'Hell'

After five-months of fighting, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy this week described the pressure his armed forces were

under in the eastern Donbas region as "hell". Moscow is seeking to control the largely Russian-speaking Donbas, comprised of Luhansk and Donetsk provinces, where pro-Moscow separatists gained control of territory after the Kremlin annexed Crimea to the south in 2014. Zelenskiy spoke of fierce fighting around the town of Avdiivka and the fortified village of Pisky, where Ukraine has acknowledged its Russian foe's "partial success" in recent days.

The Ukrainian military said on August 4 Russian forces had mounted at least two assaults on Pisky but had been repelled. Ukraine has spent the last

Human rights group Amnesty International on August 3 said Ukraine was endangering civilians by basing troops in residential areas. Zelenskiy hit back at the group, saying it was trying to "shift responsibility from the aggressor to the victim". The White House said it expected Russian officials to try and frame Ukrainian forces for an attack on the front-line town of Olenivka last week that killed prisoners held by Moscow-backed separatists. Russia's deputy UN ambassador responded in a Twitter post, saying U.S.-made High Mobility Artillery Rocket Systems were used in the attack.

UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres said on



Secretary General of NATO Jens Stoltenberg

eight years fortifying defensive positions in Pisky, viewing it as a buffer zone against Russian-backed forces who control the city of Donetsk about 10 km to the southeast.

Ukrainian General Oleksiy Hromov told a news conference his forces had recaptured two villages around the eastern city of Sloviansk, but had been pushed back to the town of Avdiivka after being forced to abandon a coal mine regarded as an important defensive position. The Russian defence ministry confirmed its offensive. Reuters could not immediately verify either side's assertions.

The Ukraine war has displaced millions, killed thousands of civilians, and left cities, towns and villages in rubble. Ukraine and its Western allies have accused Russian forces of targeting civilians and war crimes, charges Russia rejects. On Friday, Ukraine's General Staff said Russian shelling of scores of towns across the country again targeted civilian settlements as well as military infrastructure.

Nato Warning



President of Russia Vladimir Putin

August 3 he would launch a fact-finding mission after Russia and Ukraine both requested an investigation. Putin says he launched his "special military operation" in Ukraine to ensure Russian security and protect Russian-speakers in Ukraine. Ukraine and the West describe Russia's actions as an unprovoked imperial-style war of aggression. NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg said on August 3 the war was the most dangerous moment for Europe since World War Two and Russia must not be allowed to win. Amid fears among some politicians in the West that Russia's ambitions may extend beyond Ukraine, Stoltenberg warned Putin that the response to such a move from the Western military alliance would be overwhelming.

"If President Putin even thinks of doing something similar to a NATO country as he has done to Georgia, Moldova or Ukraine, then all of NATO will be involved immediately," Stoltenberg said.

The war has led previously non-aligned Finland and Sweden to seek NATO membership, with the request so far ratified by 23 of the 30 member states, including the United States. ■

Businesses Express Concern Over Energy Crisis



Business Outlook Report

Businesses expressed concern over running production in industrial units because of ongoing power cuts, low pressure of gas in supply lines and high energy prices. Many industrial units, especially export-oriented small and medium garment units, are said to be having to subsequently delay shipments. The concerns were expressed at a seminar on "Energy Security for Sustainable Development of Industrial Sector" organised by the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI) at its Dhaka premises on August 4.

Exporters, importers, textile millers, business chamber leaders and businesspersons from almost all kinds of industrial sectors, government high-ups and experts attended the seminar. Mansoor Ahmed, senior vice-president of the Bangladesh Knitwear Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BKMEA),

said the export target may not be achieved if the export-oriented garment sector suffers power cuts. Azizul Hakim, a director of the Bangladesh Ceramic Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BCMEA), said the ceramic industries need gas for 24 hours and currently they are getting it for 12 hours. As a result, the ceramic industries are facing financial losses every day, he said. "Please keep the ceramic industries out of load shedding," Hakim added. Ghulam Mohammed Alomgir, chairman of Max Group, said gas discovered in Bhola should be used for industries in its adjoining locality as soon as possible.

He also suggested introducing super quick power plants to meet the demand for power as soon as possible. "We need energy security," said Abul Kasem Khan, director in charge of an FBCCI committee on power and energy, adding that the world is currently going through a

bad patch for the Russia-Ukraine war. "Coal based power plants are needed. The current reserve of coal can ensure 72 years of energy sustainability in the country," Khan said. Helal Uddin, president of the Bangladesh Dokan Malik Samity, said power cuts should be stopped as soon as possible to save small traders and shop owners across the country. Mohammad Ali, managing director of the Bangladesh Petroleum Exploration and Production Company (Bapex), said there is a possibility of finding 618 million cubic feet of gas by 2025. Some 150 billion cubic metre of gas will be added to the national pipeline within one week, he said. Md Jashim Uddin, president of the FBCCI, also said Bangladesh can go for setting up coal-fired power plants as had been done by many other countries.

Ahmad Kaikaus, principal secretary to the prime minister, said coal, gas and oil are interlinked. "If the price

of one item increases, it affects the others as well," he said. "There is little scope to give any assurance to you at this meeting," Kaikaus said regarding the current demand for power and energy and prices. Badrul Imam, a former professor of the geology department of the University of Dhaka, said the situation worsened as new gas fields had not been explored by Bangladesh for many years. Bangladesh is one of the least explored countries with regard to gas, he said. In Bangladesh, gas is discovered in one out of every three wells that are dug whereas the global average is one in every five. For many countries it is one out of every 10, he said. So, Bangladesh is fortunate in this sense, Imam said, adding that so far Bangladesh explored only 100 gas wells but even India's Tripura, which is 10 times smaller than Bangladesh, explored 170 wells.

It clearly indicates that the explora-

tion rate of gas wells in Bangladesh is too low, he added. Imam also said Myanmar has been exporting gas from the sea but Bangladesh could not yet explore resources within its maritime boundary, which was established through a legal battle with Myanmar in 2012. Mohammad Ali Khokon, president of the Bangladesh Textile Mills Association (BTMA), said gas was the only raw material over which there were issues for the textile and garment sector, all the while the country has become the second largest exporter of apparel items. More than \$5 billion worth of textile and garment could have been exported from the country had gas been supplied properly. Consultations among the apex trade bodies are needed prior to any increases brought about in the prices of gas and power, he said.

Saiful Islam, president of the Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and

Industry (MCCI), urged for exploring for coal as soon as possible, reasoning that the high price and shortfall of gas were posing a threat to industrial production. Tawfiq-e-Elahi Chowdhury, energy adviser to the prime minister, said the Russian and Ukrainian agriculture and industries were out of the purview of power cuts in an effort to safeguard their economies. He called upon people to accept some sacrifices considering this is a bad patch for the Russia-Ukraine war. He also said he cannot make any big promise regarding gas but was trying to ensure its availability.

Industries must look for alternative fuels subject to the availability of coal, liquefied petroleum gas, oil and biomass fuels of all types, said Ijaz Hossain, a former professor of the Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology in a keynote.

Teletalk's Dues To Govt Pile Up

The Cell Phone Operator Again Failed To Pay Fees

Business Outlook Report

State-run mobile network operator Teletalk has yet again failed to pay fees to the Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (BTRC) for the spectrum it acquired in the latest auction. The commission has recently written to the operator, seeking Tk 100.75 crore in spectrum assignment fees and value-added tax. But it didn't make the payment, breaching the guidelines of the telecom regulator.

According to the instructions for Radio Frequency Auction 2022, some 10 per cent of the total amount of the payable spectrum assignment fee was supposed to be paid within 60 days from the notification date of the auction result. Teletalk acquired

the spectrum through the auction that took place on March 31 this year and was supposed to clear the 10 per cent of fee by June 30. The commission requested Teletalk to pay the fees for the spectrum as soon as possible, including a 15 per cent late fee. "It's our job to notify whoever fails to pay the dues. In this case, we have told them to pay the fee, including the late fee," said Subrata Roy Maitra, vice-chairman of the BTRC.

This was not the first time the state-run mobile phone operator has failed to clear bills. In fact, Teletalk's repeated failures to make payments against spectrum and other fines. In June, the BTRC fined four mobile phone operators — Teletalk, Robi

Axiata, Grameenphone and Banglalink — Tk 7.65 crore in total for operating illegal VoIP (Voice Over Internet Protocol). Robi, Grameenphone and Banglalink paid Tk 2.8 crore. The BTRC slapped the highest Tk 5 crore fine on Teletalk, but it hasn't paid the fine yet. Teletalk owes Tk 1,631 crore to the government, Mustafa Jabbar, telecom minister, told parliament in June.

Of the sum, Tk 1,585 crore was for the 3G spectrum assignment fee that Teletalk acquired in 2012. Md Shahab Uddin, managing director of Teletalk Bangladesh, said: "After getting the letter from the BTRC, we have sought money from the ministry. Once we get the money,

we will pay it." Teletalk Fails To Ensure Standard Services Teletalk often ranks the lowest among the operators in Bangladesh when it comes to delivering quality services, according to various reports of the BTRC and global independent agencies.

It has failed to ensure the standard call success rate and the call drop rate in the Dhaka division, excluding the two city corporations in the capital.

According to the result of a nationwide drive-test of the BTRC last year, the average call success rate of Teletalk was 96.8 per cent and the call drop was 2.59 per cent. Howev-

er, the call success rate should be 97 per cent or more, while the call drop should be less than 2 per cent and the call setup time should be less than seven seconds, according to the policy of the BTRC. The Mobile Network Experience Report published recently by Opensignal, an independent global standard for analysing consumer mobile experience, showed Banglalink, Grameenphone and Robi are joint winners of its 4G availability award given their statistically tied scores, which are in

the 78.9-80.7 per cent range. Teletalk came last with a score of 60.6 per cent. This means that 4G users on the network spent 60.6 per cent of their time with an active 4G connection on average.

Teletalk has weaknesses in its internal control system, said the Comptroller and Auditor General of Bangladesh in a report after carrying out an audit into the operator for the fiscal years of 2004-05 to 2010-11.

The operator's internal control system is not effective due to the administrative weakness of top-level management, it said. "A lack of an effective system of revenue assur-

ance has created ample scope for fraud. No professional or academically qualified persons have ever been appointed in the finance department."

"Teletalk is under serious financial risk, which is detrimental to the company's profitability and sustainability," it added.

In its report for FY2015-16, the CAG's office said due to a lack of proper decision-making by Teletalk's board, necessary guidance

and an ability to prepare its own plan, the operator has not been able to formulate any long-term strategic plan or short-term action plan even though 10 years have passed since the beginning of the business. Abu Saeed Khan, a senior policy fellow at LIRNEasia, a Colombo-based think-tank, called for taking strict actions against Teletalk for its non-compliance.

"The BTRC should immediately use its authority to regulate the market. Otherwise, it would lose its moral authority."

Shahab Uddin of Teletalk said the company is lagging in competition



with the private operators due to scanty investment. The government has taken two projects, involving Tk 2,700 crore, to expand the 4G network of the operator at the union level, haor and char areas.

"Upon completion of the projects, our network capability will expand strongly." ■



Commodity Prices See Fresh Rise On Higher Transport Cost

Business Outlook Report

The prices of essential commodities witnessed a fresh rise on the kitchen markets in the capital Dhaka on August 8 after the government raised fuel oil prices by almost 50 per cent with effect on August 6. Traders said that the price hike of fuel oils affected the prices of commodities as transport costs increased by almost 50 per cent.

Both wholesalers and retailers said that the prices of perishable items mainly vegetables increased by 20-30 per cent in the capital on August 8. The prices of rice, soya bean oil, broiler

chicken, fish, eggs, red chillies and ginger also went up on the kitchen markets on the day. Retailers said that the prices of rice also started increasing on both the wholesale and retail markets due to the hike in transport costs. The prices of rice increased by Tk 1-2 a kilogram in the city on August 8.

‘The price hike of fuel oils has already affected the prices of essential commodities due to an increase in transport costs,’ said Md Emran Master, president of the Bangladesh Kanchamal Arot Malik Samity. He said that the prices of vegetables increased by up

to 30 per cent on the wholesale market as truck fares increased by almost 50 per cent after the hike in the price of diesel. According to Emran, the wholesale price of a crate of bitter gourd weighting around 20 kilograms increased by Tk 300 and sold for Tk 900 on August 8.

He said that the prices of other items, including okra, papaya, cucumber and pointed gourd, went up on the market. The coarse variety of rice sold for Tk 48-52 a kilogram in the capital while the medium-quality variety of rice sold for Tk 55-60 a kilogram. BR-28 variety, also known as a

lower-grade Miniket, retailed at Tk 62-64 a kilogram. The fine-variety of Miniket sold for Tk 70-75 a kilogram and Najirshail for Tk 75-80 a kilogram on August 8. Aubergine sold for Tk 50-80 a kilogram, papaya for Tk 30-40 a kilogram, bitter gourd for Tk 60-80 a kilogram, bottle gourd for Tk 50-60 apiece, cucumber for Tk 50-70 a kilogram, pointed gourd for Tk 40-60 a kilogram, potatoes for Tk 30-35 a kilogram, carrot for Tk 150-160 a kilogram and tomatoes for Tk 110-120 a kilogram on the day.

The prices of broiler chicken increased by Tk 10 a kilogram and the

item sold for Tk 170–175 a kilogram on August 8. The Sonalika variety of chicken sold for Tk 270–280 a kilogram and the local variety for Tk 530–550 a kilogram on the day.

The price of eggs increased by Tk 2 a hali (four pieces) and the item sold for Tk 44–46 a hali on the markets in the city.

Md Shamsul Haque, former president of the Dhaka Mahanagari Hass-Murgi Arotdar Samity, said that the prices of chicken increased slightly on the wholesale market on Monday as transport costs increased due to the diesel price hike.

He said that the price of broiler chicken increased

by Tk 5–10 a kilogram and the item was sold for Tk 135–140 a kilogram on the wholesale market on August 8.

The price of packaged soya bean oil increased by Tk 2 a litre and a five-litre container of the item was retailed at Tk 900–910 on August 8. The prices of fish increased by Tk 20–20 a kilogram and Rohita

sold for Tk 320–400 a kilogram and Katla for Tk 300–400 a kilogram, depending on size and quality.

The prices of red chillies increased by Tk 30–50 a kilogram and the imported variety of red chillies sold for Tk 400–420 a kilogram and the local variety for Tk 380–400 a kilogram on the day. ■

Banks Instructed To Campaign For Bringing Back Laundered Money



Business Outlook Report

Bangladesh Bank (BB) has instructed the country's scheduled banks to launch a campaign to encourage Bangladeshi nationals to send home the undisclosed money they earned abroad by paying only 7 per cent taxes.

The campaign will be in accordance with the recently made 'Income Tax Ordinance' aimed at bringing back undisclosed income and the money laundered by Bangladeshi nationals. Bangladeshi nationals can show their income, earned abroad by any

means, in the income tax return by paying 7 per cent tax. Such income will be legalized by the banking channel and no one (banks or any other agencies) can ask about the sources of this income. The central bank issued a circular in this regard on August 8 and sent it to all scheduled banks for necessary action.

The circular stated the implementation and promotion of offshore tax amnesty under the Income Tax Ordinance. "Through the Finance Act, 2022, as per Section-19 of the Income Tax Ordinance, 1984,

paying 7 per cent tax during the period from July 1, 2022, to June 30, 2023, the undisclosed money accumulated outside Bangladesh in any form, can be legally brought into Bangladesh, by banking channels and displayed it in the income tax return," the circular added.

Economists and former NBR officials criticized the amnesty saying that money laundering and capital flight from Bangladesh would increase due to this. ■

BIKE SALES DEFY ODDS

Achieving Pre-Pandemic
Level Growth Likely



Apu Ahmed

Recovery of motorcycle sales to pre-pandemic level is on the cards in the current calendar year that has already been hit hard by power and dollars crises.

Sales Up

While the crises of dollars and power are largely blamed for the banking sector mismanagement exposed amid the war between Russia and Ukraine, odds like restriction on the movement of two wheelers on highways and the upcom-

ing ban on sale of motorcycles to a person having no driving licenses are supposed to discourage the sales of motorcycles. However, the data generated out of the motorcycle registration by Bangladesh Road Transport Authority is encouraging for the local motorcycle assembling units.

Registration Trends

In the first seven months of the current calendar year, registration of two wheelers was 2,89,237 units throughout the country. Almost one fourth or 77,774 units of

them were registered in the Dhaka metropolitan city. The number of motorcycles registered throughout the country was 3,75,252 in 2020 and 3,11,016 in 2021, both years were affected badly by the Covid pandemic. The registration of motorcycles hit an all-time high at 4,01,452 in 2019.

Ban on Movement

The government has banned bike riding on the Padma Bridge following the death of two motorcyclists within 48 hours of the inauguration of the

super structure across the mighty river Padma on June 25. No doubt, the bridge became a much-sought site for bikers after a seamless ride on the Dhaka-Mawa expressway. Three in every five vehicles crossing the bridge were motorcycles before the ban. The government had also imposed a ban on the movement of motorcycles on highways from July 7 to July 13 on the occasion of Eid-ul-Azha.

Preventing Accidents

The authorities said the decision was taken to

prevent traffic accidents met by bikers while analysing accidents in

ahead of the Eid in April after thousands of people left the capital for their

for motorcycle registration. BRTA has identified that the number of regis-

overall situation compounded by price hike of petrol to Tk 130 a litre from Tk 86 and the price of octane to Tk 135 per litre from Tk 89 since the early this month. The industry insiders assume that the motorcycle sales would reach pre-pandemic level despite all odds.

Price Still Affordable

Abdul Matlub Ahmad, who runs Nitol-Niloy Group to assemble Hero motorcycles in Bangladesh, noted that the market size was yet to cross Tk 5,000 crore a year, almost equivalent to the market size of four-wheelers. He told a national daily that assembling motorcycles locally under policy support from the government helped



Eid-ul-Fitr, held in April. According to non-profit Road Safety Foundation, 249 people were killed in 178 road accidents between April 25 and May 30, of which 79 or 32 per cent of the deceased were bike related victims. However, many believe that such government decisions have once again proved emptiness of the policy and exposed weakness in mismanagement of the transport sector. Demand for transports increases manifold on the occasion of Eid because of movement of people towards the countryside. The motorcycle ride services, familiar in the capital over the past several years, have become an option for many to make hassle-free rides to the countryside.

Operators' Pressure

It was reported that over 3,000 motorbikes had been spotted at a ferry terminal at Shimulia in Munshiganj on a day

village homes. More than a thousand motorcycles crossed the Padma River and a dock was designated for motorcycle crossings due to overcrowding. The growing use of motorcycles has prompted the authorities to suspend movement of motorcycles on the following Eid. Many believe that other than accidents, pressure from transport operators forced the government to impose the ban. The road safety rights campaigners calculated that such bans deprive 1.2 million passengers from riding home on bikes. Holiday-makers faced a serious transport crisis and were forced to pay extra fares to transport operators.

Tough Rules for Registration

Meanwhile, the government has decided to plug loopholes by introducing a provision for the registration of bikes from next month. The new rule will require driving licenses

tered motorcycles has been 36.50 lakh against the number of issued licences of 23.50 lakh. It means that at least 13 lakh motorcyclists are without



licences. The local motorcycle assemblers, however, are less wary of the

reduce the price of bikes. He noted that buyers were still purchasing bikes at

affordable prices. He also noted that chances for drop in sales of the useful vehicle were slim as long as its prices remained affordable.

Manufacture Parts Locally

Indian company Bajaj is the market leader with 42 per cent share of the motorcycles segment in Bangladesh. It sells around 2.5 lakh units on average per year. It manufactures 12,000 units per day at its Zirani factory in Savar. Dileep Banerjee, chief executive officer of Uttara

Motors, the sole distributor of Bajaj motorbikes, said that prices of motorcycles would be cheap if the government encouraged vendors to make parts. It is possible to manufacture majority components if the government takes initiatives providing incentives to the entrepreneurs, he said. He said that sales had already regained and crossed the pre-pandemic levels with almost all brands doing fine in marketing of motorcycles in the country. The industry, according to him, will

achieve 20 per cent growth in 2022 and 2023.

Policy Support Needed

Nine firms including Japanese brands Honda, Suzuki and Yamaha; three Indian brands -- Bajaj, TVS and Hero -- the rest of three -- Runner Automobiles of Bangladesh, Atlas Bangladesh Limited, and Grameen Motor -- have almost fulfilled the local demand by mainly assembling those after importing components mainly from India and China. A motorcycle manufacturer requires

more than 700 components to produce a bike. The local light engineering industry can make four components, namely drive chain, seat, stand, and battery. Many believe it is high time for the government to encourage assemblers to promote locally-made components to save foreign currency in the coming years, with forecasts that volatility in the global financial market would persist until the end of the next calendar year. ■

Bangladesh Bank Asks Six Banks To Remove Treasury Heads Amid Dollar Crisis



Business Outlook Report

The Bangladesh Bank has asked six banks to remove the heads of their treasury departments amid allegation of dollar price manipulation. The central bank sent letters to the six banks in this regard on August 8.

The banks are Standard Chartered Bank, BRAC Bank, Dutch-Bangla Bank, City Bank, Southeast Bank,

and Prime Bank, said central bank officials. They said that the treasury chiefs preserved large amount of dollars in order to raise the price of the bank note.

The exchange rate of a dollar shot up to Tk 115 in the open market on Monday amid a shortage of the currency in the financial market. The interbank rate of dollar was set at Tk

95, raising from Tk 94.7. Banks buy dollars from exporters at a lower rate and sell those at a much higher rate to importers to make huge profits. The central bank has so far inspected more than 100 exchange houses and issued show-cause notices on 42 houses and suspended licences of five houses.

On August 8, the central bank injected \$139 million into the financial market that dipped the foreign reserve to \$39.56 billion on Monday from \$39.66 billion on August 8. The reserve was \$48.06 billion in August 2021. Bangladesh struggled with dollar shortage due to the higher imports compared with the exports. The current Russia-Ukraine war has escalated the current economic crisis in the country due to the global supply chain disruption. Bangladesh's trade deficit hit a historic high of \$33.25 billion in the financial year 2021-22 amid surge in imports and commodity prices on the global market. ■



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Fuel Oils Price Hike Suicidal

Apu Ahmed

Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation (BPC) has been facing criticism after fuel oil price hike by almost 50 per cent citing the high international market.

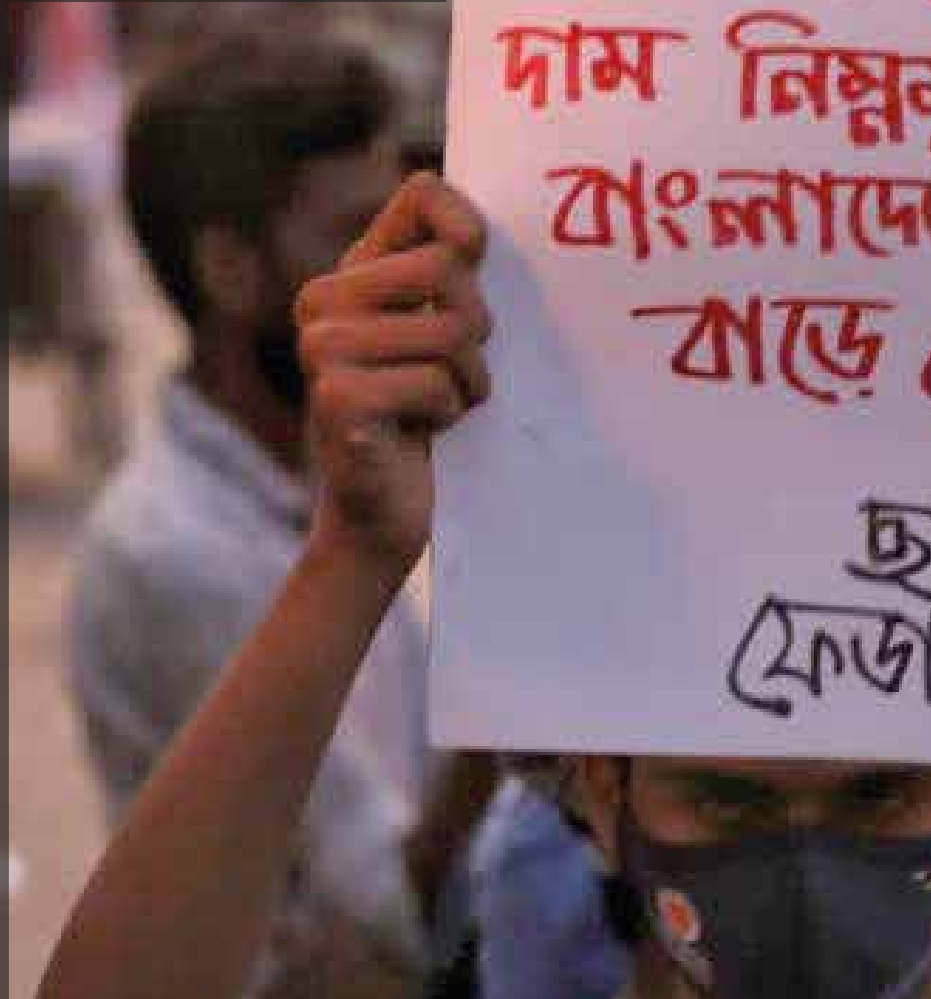
Global Fuel Market Downward

But available information shows that the government's decision of increasing the price of diesel and kerosene since August 5 by 42.5 per cent to Tk 114 per litre from Tk 80, petrol by 51.16 per cent to Tk 130 from Tk 86 and octane by 51.68 per cent to Tk 135 per litre from Tk 89 does not match with its logic of the international market price. Fuel oil prices in the international market had dropped from \$120 on March 8 by around \$32 in August. It is clear that the decision of upward adjustment was taken during its downward trend in the international market. It looks unjustified because of the domino effects of the price shocks on lives and livelihoods as the majority of people were still recovering from the Covid fallouts.

'Suicidal Move'

The war between Russia and Ukraine since February 24 caused an escalation of fuel oil prices in the international market. By March, the price soared to the highest since 2008. Although there has been volatility in fuel oil prices the trend is downward. Dhaka University economics department chair Professor Mah-

bubul Mokaddem Akash termed the decision of increasing fuel oil prices suicidal. The country's annual import of fuel oils is about 65 lakh tonnes, of which diesel accounts for over 80 per cent. The transport sector consumes over 62 per cent of the diesel import and the use of the fuel in agriculture is some 20 per cent. Both transport and agriculture sectors will bear major brunt, said former caretaker government adviser Mirza Azizul Islam.



BPC or Money Machine?

State Minister for Power, Energy and Mineral Resources Nasrul Hamid claimed that BPC incurred a loss of over Tk 8,000 crore since February. However, such statement contradicts with Bangladesh Economic Review of the Finance Division. BPC has profited Tk 48,122 crore over the past eight years — until May 29, 2022 — by selling fuels at prices higher than their buying rates. The lone fuel oils importer and distributor is awash with profits as it did not reduce fuel prices even when they struck a historic low after the pandemic began in 2020. The price of kerosene and

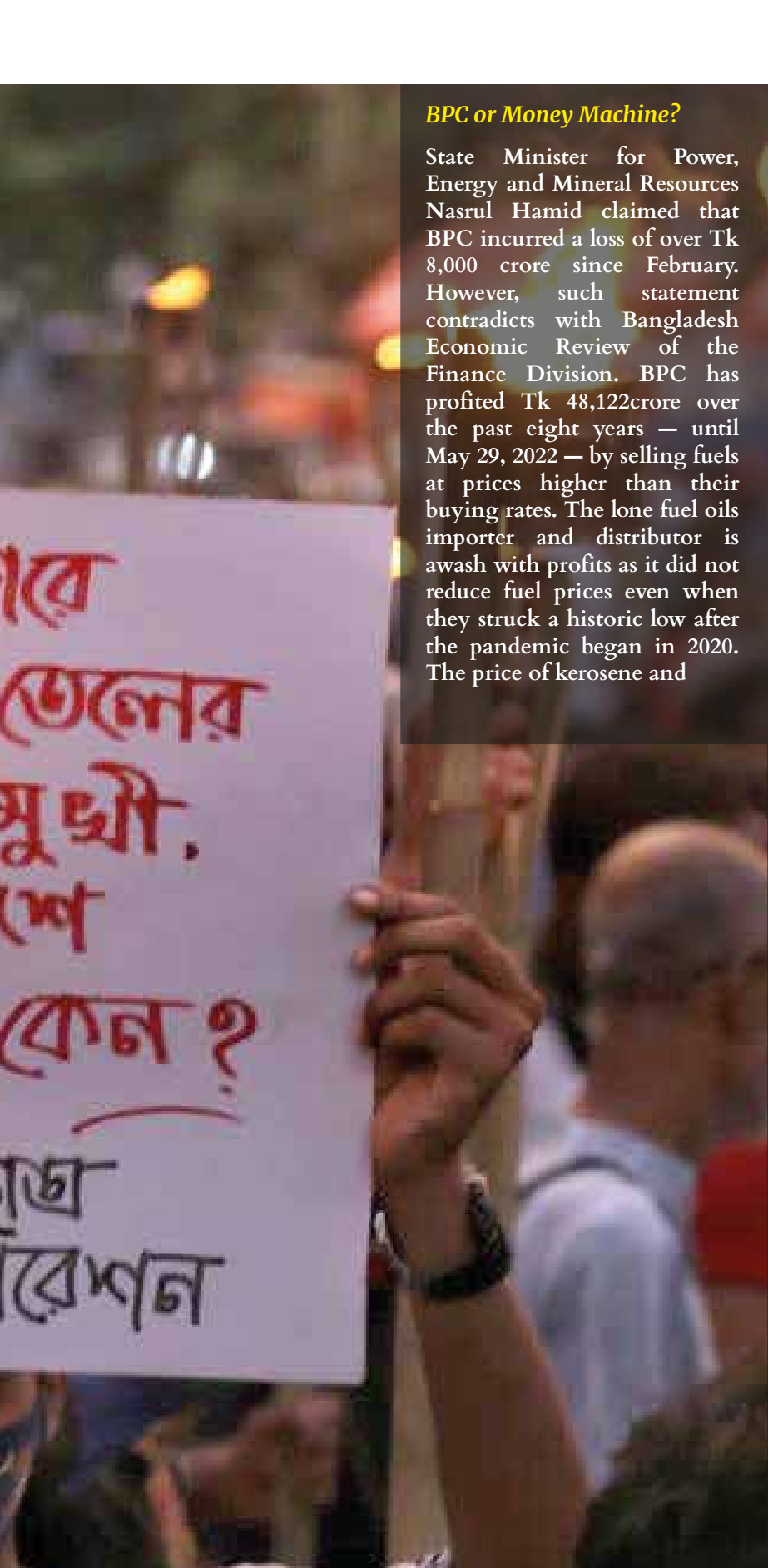
diesel was increased by Tk 15 a litre to Tk 80 from Tk 65 on November 3, 2021.

Alternative Options

Economists said the government should try alternative options. The BPC profit stashed with the commercial banks should be utilised to maintain the fuel import bills. It should also wait for further fall in price of fuel oils to recoup the losses. Such strategy is just the opposite BPC followed after 2014-15. The government can also cut import duty, said South Asian Network on Economic Modeling Executive Director Selim Raihan. Center for Policy Dialogue executive director Fahmida Khatun said passing the burden on the people became unjustified since the government took around Tk 9,000 crore from BPC's profit in 2019-20 and 2020-21 as per the law on surplus funds of the state-owned enterprises.

BERC Sidelined

Consumer rights campaigners said the power and energy ministry's price hike of fuel oils was illegal. Energy prices are legally fixable by the Bangladesh Energy Regulatory Commission, said Jyotirmoy Barua, a lawyer of the Consumers Association of Bangladesh. He said as per law, energy prices would be fixed by the BERC. Ever since its establishment in 2004, the BERC has never fixed fuel prices. BERC chair Abdul Jalil said that two writ petitions filed by the CAB were pending with the HC seeking an order so that fuel prices are fixed by the commission. The government has de-facto control over setting of prices, he said,



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adding that they could not fix fuel prices because of the legal requirement for having rules in this regard. The BERC had rules formulated over 10 years ago for fixing fuel prices but the government did not approve them.

Inflation Everywhere

Finance minister AHM Mustafa Kamal said that the fuel oil price hike would further push up inflation and impact the

ious situations since the wage rate did not increase significantly. They have been forced to rely on savings or borrowing to meet daily expenses.

Macroeconomy Under Stress

Amid so many negative factors, a group of finance division officials said the government was forced to make upward adjustment since the country's economic outlook was deteriorating. Weak monetary policy,

currency reserves now hovering below \$40 billion from \$48 billion a year ago.

Govt Looks For Safeguard in IMF Loan

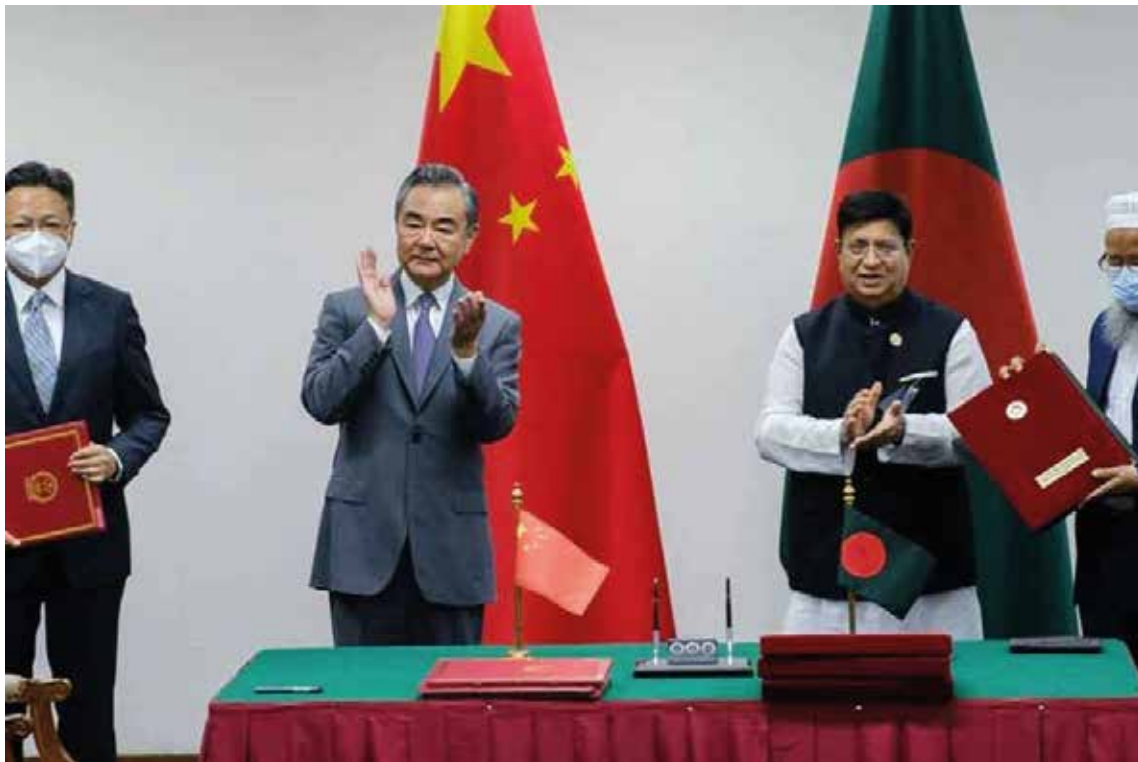
The price hike of fuel oils will not only ensure maintaining profitability of BPC at the cost of miseries of majority people but also strengthen the government plea for a \$4.5 billion dollar loan from the International Monetary Fund. A recent



overall economy. He also said that the costly fuel oil would increase the prices of goods and services. The minister was talking to reporters at his secretariat office, five days after the price hikes of petrol, diesel, octane and kerosene. The monthly inflation rate was hovering over 7 per cent in June and July before the latest rise in fuel oil prices. High inflation puts low and fixed-income groups in trouble maintaining their daily expenses, often eroding savings, taking many below the poverty line, said CAB president Ghulam Rahman. The majority of people have been facing precar-

rising non-performing loans, unnecessary costly projects, corruption and rampant capital flight, have long been stressing the macroeconomy. Consequences of mismanagement of the macroeconomy have gradually started to pop up. Even general people now understand how the country's power generation capacity, almost double the production, leads to payment of vast amounts of capacity charges, pocketed mostly by businessmen loyal to the present government. The current dollar crisis is not an isolated case. The country is facing a risk of debt distress soon with plummeting foreign

IMF mission in Dhaka suggested the government reduce subsidies on power, gas and fertiliser. Price hike of fuel oils has done following the upward adjustment in prices of gas and fertiliser. Thus, hints are clear that the government prefers IMF loans. The Washington-based multilateral lender is also showing interest in extending the loan, although there is no guarantee that the loan will be utilised properly. Who will give assurances that some portion of the proposed loans will not be flown outside through over-invoicing? ■



Bangladesh's Export To Grow With 98pc Duty-Free Market Access: China

Business Outlook Report

The duty-free treatment of 98 per cent tariff lines goods will help Bangladesh to further increase its export to China, says the Chinese Embassy in Dhaka on August 9.

State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi during his recent visit to Bangladesh, announced that the duty-free treatment of 98 per cent tariff lines goods originating from Bangladesh exported to China will take into effect on September 1.

This will further help to boost Bangladesh's export to China, said the Embassy.

Several kinds of basic leather products added into the 98 per cent zero-tariff lines are "good news" to Bangladeshi exporters in the leather

industry, which is an industry with huge potential in Bangladesh, said the Chinese side. Businessmen in the leather industry have already been focusing on the opportunity provided by the 98 per cent duty-free treatment, according to the Chinese Embassy.

Programs are undergoing and helping Chinese manufacturing enterprises related to leather products forming business relations with Bangladesh's leather exporters, it said.

Bangladesh has many high-quality agricultural, livestock and fishery products.

For example, China said, the national fish of Bangladesh, the hilsa, is among both the 97 per cent and the 98 per cent zero tariff lines,

and has already acquired inspection and quarantine access to the Chinese market.

Bangladesh's mango, jackfruit, guava, honey, and beef are all listed as duty-free products in both the 97 per cent and the 98 per cent tariff lines.

Varied by different categories of tariff lines, compared with the duty-free treatment of 97 per cent tariff lines, there are more than several hundreds of tariff lines added to the 98 per cent duty-free treatment tariff lines, such as some agricultural products, crude oil of ground nut, crude cotton-seed oil, liquid crystal display panel, paper product, saloon cars and chemicals, said the embassy. ■



National Bank Limited organised a day-long training workshop titled "Prevention of Money Laundering and Combating the Financing of Terrorism" for the BAMLCOs of the Bank at National Bank Training Institute recently. Mr. Md. Rafiqul Islam, Director, BFIU was present as the Chief Guest and Mr. Md. Mehmood Husain, Managing Director & CEO of NBL, was present as the Chairperson in the workshop. ■



Commercial Bank of Ceylon recently signed an MoU with InterContinental Dhaka to avail Lounge services for the bank's dedicated cardholders and their guests at Balaka Executive Lounge at Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport in Dhaka. The MoU was signed by Chief Operating Officer of Commercial Bank of Ceylon PLC Kapila Liyanage and General Manager of InterContinental Dhaka Ashwani Nayar. ■



City ALO recently signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) for strategic partnership with Bangladesh Women Chamber of Commerce and Industry (BWCCI) at the BWCCI premises. Md Safiul Amin, Head of Branches, City Bank, and Selima Ahmad, MP, President of BWCCI, signed the agreement on behalf of their respective organisations. ■



Arif Quadri, Managing Director & CEO, UCB, and Md Sabuj Uddin Khan, Additional Chief Engineer, RHD, exchanging documents after signing an agreement in the city recently for cash collection and deposit services on the Jatir Pita Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Mohasarok (N-8 Expressway). ■



Islami Bank Bangladesh Limited has been recognized by Bangladesh Bank as a leading partner for operating its digital smart payment booth at Gabtoli cattle market under the 'Smart Bangladesh Smart Haat' project jointly organised by Bangladesh Bank and Dhaka North City Corporation. Atiqul Islam, Mayor of Dhaka North City Corporation, handed over a crest in this connection to Engr. A. F. M Kamaluddin, Deputy Managing Director of the bank, at a programme in the city. ■



Rupali Bank Chairman Kazi Sanaul Hoq and Managing Director and CEO Md Obayed Ullah Al Masud inaugurating the central monitoring room of the bank. ■



Dhaka Bank Limited signed an agreement recently for providing cash management services to Omera Petroleum Limited. Mustafa Husain, SEVP & Manager, Gulshan Branch, Dhaka Bank, and Md Atiar Rahman, Head of Finance & Accounts, Omera Petroleum, signed and exchanged the agreements on behalf of their respective organisations in presence of Emranul Huq, Managing Director & CEO, Dhaka Bank, at the bank's Gulshan Head Office. ■



Premier Bank Limited arranged a week-long foundation training programme on credit module for the trainee junior officers. Managing Director & CEO of the bank M Reazul Karim, FCMA, was present as the chief guest and inaugurated the programme. ■



A month-long training course on 'Entrepreneurship Development' organised by Shahjalal Islami Bank Limited began at the bank's Training Academy on Wednesday. Managing Director & CEO of Shahjalal Islami Bank M Shahidul Islam presided over the ceremony while Additional Secretary and Executive Project Director Md Ekhlashur Rahman inaugurated the training course as the chief guest. ■



First Security Islami Bank signed an agreement with Robi Mobile Operator. Under this agreement, First Security Islami Bank will get corporate SIM connection and bulk SMS services while the users of bank's mobile app 'FSIBL Cloud' will enjoy free internet data from Robi mobile operator. Syed Waseque Md Ali, Managing Director of First Security Islami Bank, and Md Adil Hossain Nobel, Chief Enterprise Business Officer of Robi Axiata Ltd., exchanged the documents of the agreement on behalf of their respective organisations. ■



To speed up recovery of non-performing loan, IFIC Bank Limited organised the Annual Recovery Meet-2022 at the IFIC Tower on Monday, with the bank's MD & CEO Shah A Sarwar in the chair. ■



Managing Director & CEO of BRAC Bank Selim RF Hussain hands over housing bond certificate to IFC Country Manager Martin Holtmann at a ceremony at the bank's head office in Dhaka recently. ■



BCI, SME Foundation Tie Up For Capacity Building Of Small, Medium Industries

Business Outlook Report

Bangladesh Chamber of Industries (BCI) has tied up with SME Foundation to jointly work towards development and capacity building of the small and medium enterprises across the country. A memorandum of understanding (MoU) was signed between the two organizations at a function at the SME Foundation office at Agargaon on August 11.

BCI president Anwar-ul Alam Chowdhury (Parvez) and SME Foundation managing director Dr Md Mofizur Rahman signed the deal on behalf of their respective sides. SME Foundation Chairperson Dr Md Masudur Rahman was present on the occasion. Addressing at the function, Anwar-ul Alam Chowdhury said that BCI has been the sole chamber in the country representing the entire industrial sector. "It has

been working towards removing all sorts of bottlenecks against industrialization. BCI has already launched an initiative to create new entrepreneurship, develop micro, small and medium industries and improve the light engineering and agro-based industries. He said the lack of skilled manpower and efficient managers have become the major obstacles in the development of the industrial sectors.

"Most of the new entrepreneurs have to leave their venture within the first 2-3 years because of the lack of efficiency in marketing and due to inadequate financial credit support," he said adding that the BCI will now provide training to the entrepreneurs to improve their efficiency and capability. He said the BCI believes that through the partnership with the SME Foundation, it will be possible to raise the

contribution of the industrial sector to 60-70 percent to the economy. The Chairperson of SME Foundation said, "We appreciate the initiative of the BCI. "The partnership between the BCI and SME Foundation can work together to eliminate existing problems in the SME sector with development and capacity building," he added.

This MoU will further accelerate the work of the BCI and SME Foundation in development and capacity building of the small and medium industrial sector, he hoped. BCI director Nazmul Anwar, secretary general Dr Ordhendu Shekhar Roy and Deputy Management of SME Foundation Salahuddin Mahmud, Md Nazim Hasan Sattar, general Manager Farzana Khan and other officials of both sides were present on the occasion. ■



Wage Growth Falls To 7-Year Low In FY22

Business Outlook Report

The wage growth in Bangladesh declined to a seven-year low of 6.06 per cent in the last fiscal year, highlighting the struggle low-paid workers are facing owing to the higher cost of living, official figures showed. The growth rate in 2021-22 is six basis points lower than the previous fiscal year, according to the Wage Rate Index (WRI) of the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics.

In an encouraging sign, however, the wage growth rose in the first month of the current fiscal year. The increase stood at 6.56 per cent, up from 6.47 per cent in June and the highest in seven months, data from the BBS showed recently. The WRI is intended to measure the movement of wages of low-paid skilled and unskilled workers over time in the main sectors of the economy and is also used to calculate the changes in real wages.

Ironically, the decline in wage growth came at a time when average inflation surged to a seven-year high of 6.15 per cent in 2021-22. What is more, average inflation outpaced the wage growth rate in FY22, the first time since FY15, when inflation stood at 6.15 per cent against a wage growth of 4.94 per cent.

The national statistical agency calculates the average wage rate of low-paid skilled and un-skilled labourers belonging to 11 occupations in the agriculture sector, 22 occupations from the industrial sector and 11 occupations from the service sector. Agricultural workers suffered the most in FY22 as their wages grew at 6.10 per cent, the slowest pace since FY15. Wages for industrial workers were up 34 basis points to 5.85 per cent and that of service sector workers advanced by 25 basis points to 6.32 per cent. "The real income of workers in

these sectors has fallen in general," said Selim Raihan, a professor at the Department of Economics at the University of Dhaka. "As a result, they are not being able to buy the same quantity of goods and services they could afford in the past." At the peak of the coronavirus pandemic, many people lost jobs and incurred earnings losses. Economic recovery was witnessed towards the end of 2021 and at the beginning of 2022, helping people find jobs again and compensate for income losses.

But the new inflationary pressure since the outbreak of the Russia-Ukraine war has created additional pressure for the low-income people and the new poor created by the fallout of the pandemic since the conflict has sent food prices and commodity costs higher. Higher commodity prices are largely responsible for the spike in inflation since Bangladesh is an

import-dependent nation. "But the prices of the imported items are not falling in Bangladesh in line with their decrease in the global markets," said Prof Raihan, calling on the government to eliminate the scopes for price manipulation and market distortions.

The executive director of the South Asian Network on Economic Modeling, a think tank, urged the government to address the inflationary pressure to lessen the burden of the higher cost of living. "Social protections have to be beefed up." On August 2, the government began selling edible oil, lentil, sugar and onions at

subsidised rates among one-crore families across the country through the Trading Corporation of Bangladesh. The sale would continue until August 14. Prof Raihan said this assistance would aid one-fourth population of the country, but the support is limited since the frequency and quantity might not be enough to offset the rise in the prices of basic items.

Another challenge is reaching out to the informal workers, who account for 85 per cent of the country's labour force, making it difficult for a nation like Bangladesh to come up with a national minimum wage. "The formalisation

of informal workers is a major challenge for the government," said Prof Raihan.

His suggestion is to create a national database of the sectors with high informalisation, eradicating the hassles businesses run into if they want to become formal, and showing the benefits of getting formalised.

"A flawless database of workers is needed to implement the government's planned universal pension scheme and the existing social safety net programmes in a true sense." ■

Boosting Remittance Inflow

'Govt Giving Priority To Sending Skilled Workers Abroad'



Business Outlook Report

The government is giving priority to sending skilled workers abroad to help boost remittance inflow, said Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment Minister Imran Ahmad on August 4. He said there is a good demand for

Bangladeshi workers in different countries, which are emphasising hiring skilled workers having language expertise. "We believe if we can build a good position in this area (overseas employment), the remittance earnings would rise gradually," he hoped. The minister

was speaking at a stipend distribution ceremony at the Probashi Kallyan Bhaban in Dhaka. A total of 162 migrants' children were provided with financial stipend by the Wage Earners' Welfare Board at the programme.

The government is always by the side of the migrant workers, said Imran Ahmad, adding that his government had introduced a stipend programme for migrants' children so that they could continue their study properly.

Cabinet Secretary Khandker Anwarul Islam spoke at the event as a special guest, with Dr Ahmed Munir Saleheen, secretary of the expatriates' welfare ministry, in the chair.

Director General of the Wage Earners' Welfare Board Md Hamidur Rahman also spoke at the programme. ■



Cost Price To Decide Banks' Limit: BB

Business Outlook Report

Banks in Bangladesh have been allowed to calculate their stock market exposure limit on the basis of the purchasing price of the securities they own instead of their market value.

Stock market intermediaries have long demanded the Bangladesh Bank permit banks to compute their exposure on the basis of costs. On August 4, the finance ministry also recommended the central bank bring about changes to the rules.

The central bank, in a notice, said the purchasing price of shares of other companies, mutual funds, debentures and corporate bonds would be considered in calculating the highest exposure limit of banks.

As per the Banking Companies Act 1991, a bank's investment in the capital market is limited to 25 per cent of its capital, which includes paid-up capital, share premium, statutory reserve, and retained earnings.

Thanks to the latest decision, banks will not face any pressure in selling shares even if the price of their holdings goes up because it will no longer affect their exposure cap, said a top official of a merchant bank.

Many banks got the chance to increase their investment in recent times as the value of many shares has dropped owing to the uncertainty facing the global and local economy amid the Russia-Ukraine

War, runaway inflation, and the volatility in the financial sector, driving down their exposure limit.

But under the new rule, banks will not be permitted to raise their exposure.

General investors hope that banks will increase their investment in the capital market due to the new exposure limit, but in reality, that might not happen, said the merchant banker.

"Banks are not investing funds at the level as many had thought because of lower confidence, excessive manipulation in the market, and a limited number of good stocks." ■



Pacific Jeans To Set Up Solar Plants In All Units By 2025

Business Outlook Report

The Chattogram based Pacific Jeans Group is planning to set up rooftop solar power plants in all 10 of its manufacturing units by 2025 in a bid to get at least 20 per cent of the group's energy requirement from renewable sources. The group is going to invest \$10 million to complete the project.

As a part of its plan, the leading denim exporter has set up a 708-kilowatt (KW) capacity solar power plant on the roof of Universal Jeans Ltd, which is one of its concerns located inside

the Chattogram Export Processing Zone (CEPZ), in April this year. Abul Kalam Mohammad Ziaur Rahman, executive chairman of the Bangladesh Export Processing Zones Authority (BEPZA), inaugurated the plant as chief guest though a ceremony on August 8.

The solar plant having a total of 1,299 pieces of photovoltaic modules of solar panels was set up at a cost of \$5 lakh on more than 49,000 square feet. Syed M Tanvir, managing director of Pacific Jeans, said the new plant would be able to generate around 3.5 megawatts (MW) of green energy every day,

which is around 10 per cent of the unit's total energy consumption. In 2017, the group on an experimental basis installed a 70KW solar plant on the roof of another concern, NHT Fashions Ltd, at a cost of \$7,6923. Till April this year, total power generation in the plant stood at 446MW, which was 4 per cent of the total power required by the unit.

The total amount of carbon offset since installation of the first solar plant stands at 638 tonnes. "Being a responsible manufacturer, we took a number of projects keeping in mind environ-

mental sustainability and the global carbon emission reduction target," Tanvir said. "All our international clients, including Marks & Spencer, UNIQLO, H&M and American Eagle have their own environmental sustainability goal and CO2 emissions target. And being their manufacturer, we are also aligned with those targets. If we do not reduce carbon emissions, they would not be able to reach those targets," he added.

Tanvir went on to say that keeping this and the Sustainable Development Goals in mind, Pacific Jeans has set a target to

reduce its carbon emissions by 65 per cent within 2030.

As a part of its roadmap, the group started implementing different projects like setting up a water recycling plant, rainwater harvesting facility and modern washing plant to reduce water consumption as well as a waste recycling plant.

The group's solar power project would also contribute immensely to the government's energy saving plan in the context of the current global energy crisis, he opined.

Tanvir then said they are working to install another 1060KW capacity rooftop solar power plant in another factory in the CEPZ named Pacific Jeans Ltd by September this year.

Tanvir said once the overall project is completed in 2025, they have a target to generate renewable energy of 32.70MW per day, which would be 15 to 20 per cent of their total daily consumption.

"And with these plants the group would be able to save CO2 emissions of 6,458 tonnes per year," he said.

"We will gradually develop these plants as we have a target to generate 50 per cent of our required energy from natural sources," Tanvir added. ■

Forty Countries Confirm Participation In Russia's Eastern Economic Forum



Forty countries have confirmed participation in the upcoming Eastern Economic Forum, the press service for the Roscongress foundation said.

"A month before the opening of the 7th Eastern Economic Forum, representatives of 40 countries have confirmed their participation in it. Such significant interest in the forum shows that the Eastern Economic Forum has become the most relevant global business platform for broadening international cooperation in the Asia-Pacific region.

We expect foreign leaders and high-ranking guests to attend it," the press service quoted Russian Presidential Advisor and Executive Secretary of the Eastern Economic Forum's organizing committee Anton Kobyakov as saying.

The forum's business program is dedicated to the most important issues concerning the development of the Far East, the global and regional economy, and international cooperation, as well as discussions on ways out of the crisis and the world's

new architecture, Kobyakov said. "We are already in the new reality today, and our key objective, which is formulated in the forum's main theme 'En route to a multipolar world', is to transform business processes and to find new footholds for economic cooperation and growth.

I am confident that the forum will once again confirm its status as a leading communication platform in Asia-Pacific region," he said.

The program of the 7th Eastern Economic Forum, which will take place in Vladivostok from September 5 to September 8, consists of more than 70 business events.

It includes countries' business dialogues, Russia-India, Russia-Vietnam, and Russia-ASEAN, as well as a meeting of the Russia-China Business Council and a conference on investments and trade in the Arctic.

Some 4,000 delegates and journalists are expected to attend the Eastern Economic Forum in 2022. ■

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Diversified Energy Sector Need Of The Hour

Business Outlook Report

Primе Minister's energy advisor Dr Tawfiq-e-Elahi Chowdhury has urged officials to work towards building a diversified energy sector. "Creative solutions have to be taken up for resolving the problems in the power and energy sector," he said, while addressing a webinar, titled 'Diversified Energy, Enriched Future', organised by the Energy and Mineral Resources Department on the occasion of the National Energy Security Day on August 9.

The PM's energy advisor advocated the use of solar power instead of diesel in irrigation pumps. "If we could introduce solar irrigation pumps, it could save half a million metric tonnes of diesel," he said. Defending the government's gas import policy, Dr Chowdhury said it was introduced as part of the diversified fuel-mix policy. "It is not true that there was no drilling in past 5-10 years in the country. Rather, 35 wells were drilled in the past five years, which means an average of seven wells have been drilled in a year." With senior secretary Md Mahbub

Hossain in the chair, the event was also addressed by State Minister for Power, Energy and Mineral Resources Nasrul Hamid, chairman of the parliamentary standing on power and energy Begum Waseka Ayesha Khanom, power secretary Habibur Rahman, Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation (BPC) chairman ABM Azad, and Petrobangla chairman Nazmul Ahsan.

'Energy and Power' magazine editor Mollah Amzad Hossain and Dhaka University professor Dr Anwar Hossain Bhuiyan made two separate presentations at the event. On his part, Nasrul Hamid said that Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman had shown great courage by purchasing five gas fields from a foreign company on August 9 in 1975. "We've been getting the benefits of the great deal to date," he said. "We have to follow his path by showing courage in taking decisions in the energy sector." He also urged all to face the current challenges in the energy sector through unity and patience. "Post-pandemic, the Russia-Ukraine war might not be the last one. Many

more dismays may come in the days to come." Begum Waseka Ayesha Khanom said that appropriate technologies and fundamental research works should get priority in resolving the problems of the power and energy sector. Habibur Rahman, on the other hand, said the government has framed electric vehicle policy to encourage use of electricity in the transport sector. "Initiatives have been taken up for setting up offshore wind power plants as renewable options." Modular nuclear power plants are also being considered for the future electricity generation, he added. Nazmul Ahsan said that Petrobangla has initiated a move to drill 46 wells in the next few years, "which will result in increasing production of natural gas by 600 million cubic feet gas to the national grid".

ABM Azad, on his part, said that BPC is implementing a single point mooring project which will annually save Tk 800 crore in petroleum transportation from deep sea to the fuel refinery in Chattogram. ■

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WEEKLY SELECTED ECONOMIC INDICATORS

Chief Economist's Unit
(Policy Support Wing)
11 August 2022

	10 August 2021	30 June, 2022 ^R	31 July, 2022 ^R	10 August 2022	Percentage change
1. Foreign Exchange Reserve (In million US\$)	45965.79	41826.73	39599.91	39542.73	From June, 2022
	10 August 2021	30 June, 2022	31 July 2022	10 August 2022	
2. Interbank Taka-USD Exchange Rate (Average)	84.8398	93.4500	94.7000	94.8000	
3. Call Money Rate	2.40	4.42	5.56	5.49	
	10 August 2021	30 June, 2022	31 July 2022	10 August 2022	
4. Broad/Overall Share Price Index	6617.83	6376.94	6180.90	-3.07	From June, 2022
a) Dhaka Stock Exchange (DSE) [®]	19281.85	18727.52	18232.77	-2.64	7.60
b) Chittagong Stock Exchange (CSE)	July, 2021	July-June, FY21	July, 2022 ^P	July-June, FY22 ^P	8.36
5. a) Wage Earners' Remittances (In million US\$)	1871.49	24777.71	2096.91	21031.68	FY2019-20
b) Annual Percentage Change	-27.97	36.10	12.04	-15.12	18205.01
	June, 2021	July-June, FY21	June, 2022 ^P	July-June, FY22 ^P	10.87
6. a) Import (C&F) (In million US\$)	6969.00	65594.70	7665.80	89162.30	FY2019-20
b) Annual Percentage Change	44.95	19.73	10.00	35.93	54784.70
	June, 2021	July-June, FY21	June, 2022 ^P	July-June, FY22 ^P	-8.56
7. a) Import (I.o.b) (In million US\$)	6447.00	60681.00	7095.00	82495.00	FY2019-20
b) Annual Percentage Change	44.97	19.71	10.05	35.95	50690.00
	July, 2021	July-June, FY21	July, 2022 ^P	July-June, FY22 ^P	-8.57
8. a) Export (EPB) (In million US\$)*	3473.43	38758.31	3984.82	52082.66	FY2019-20
b) Annual Percentage Change	-11.19	15.10	14.72	34.38	33674.09
	July-June, 2021	July-June, 2022 ^P	FY 2019-20 ^R		-16.93
9. a) Tax Revenue (NBR) (Tk. in crore)	22489.01	220072.53	25164.17	252920.76	FY2020-21
b) Annual Percentage Change	67.16	16.74	11.90	14.93	259881.80
	May, 2021	July-May, FY21	May, 2022 ^P	July-May, FY22 ^P	18.99
10. Investment in National Savings Certificates (Tk. in crore)	June, 2021	July-June, FY21	June, 2022 ^R	July-June, FY22 ^R	FY2019-20
a) Net sale	4573.56	41959.54	1749.63	19915.75	14428.35
b) Total Outstanding	344093.90	344093.90	364010.13	364010.13	302134.35
	June, 2020	June, 2021	June, 2022 ^P	Percentage change	
11. a) Reserve Money (RM) (Tk. in crore)	284483.40	348071.80	347162.10	FY2020-21	FY2019-20
b) Broad Money (M2) (Tk. in crore)	1373735.00	1560895.20	1708122.40	FY2021-22	FY2018-19
	June, 2020	June, 2021	June, 2022 ^P	FY2020-21	FY2018-19
				-0.26	5.32
				9.43	12.64
				13.62	9.88

	July-June, FY21			July-June, FY22 ^P			Percentage change		
	Opening	Settlement	Opening	Settlement	Opening	Settlement	Opening	Settlement	Settlement
12. Total Domestic Credit (Tk. in crore)	1307633.70	1439899.00	1671748.90	16.10	10.11	14.02	12.17		
a) Net Credit to the Govt. Sector	181150.70	221025.90	283314.60	28.18	22.01	59.92	18.10		
b) Credit to the Other Public Sector	29215.10	30017.80	37198.70	23.92	2.75	25.09	24.32		
c) Credit to the Private Sector	1097267.90	1188855.30	1351235.60	13.66	8.35	8.61	11.29		
13. L/C Opening and Settlement (million US\$)									
a) Consumer Goods	7812.68	6806.99	9837.10	8678.67	27.50	18.73			
b) Capital Machinery	5702.59	3741.76	6463.68	5267.54	40.78	-12.39			
c) Intermediate Goods	6143.81	5314.96	7882.05	7187.29	35.23	3.91			
d) Petroleum	4407.92	4289.64	9364.49	9273.23	112.45	-5.14			
e) Industrial Raw Materials	24419.38	20225.99	33401.99	29738.75	36.78	11.01			
f) Others	18551.04	16877.06	25285.38	23536.25	36.30	9.64			
Total	67037.42	57256.40	92234.69	83681.73	37.59	7.52			
14. Rate of Inflation on the basis of Consumer Price Index for National (Base:2005-06=100)	December, 2018	June, 2019	December, 2020	June, 2021	September, 2021	December, 2021	March, 2022	June, 2022	July, 2022
a) Twelve Month Average Basis	5.55	5.48	5.69	5.56	5.50	5.55	5.75	6.15	6.33
b) Point to Point Basis	5.35	5.52	5.29	5.64	5.59	6.05	6.22	7.56	7.48
Corresponding Period	December, 2017	June, 2018	December, 2019	June, 2020	September, 2020	December, 2020	March, 2021	June, 2021	July, 2021
a) Twelve Month Average Basis	5.70	5.78	5.59	5.65	5.59	5.69	5.63	5.56	5.54
b) Point to Point Basis	5.83	5.54	5.75	6.02	5.97	5.29	5.47	5.64	5.36
Classified Loan	December, 2018	June, 2019	December, 2019	June, 2020	December, 2020	March, 2021	June, 2021	December, 2021	March, 2022
a) Percentage Share of Classified Loan to Total Outstanding	10.30	11.69	9.32	9.16	7.66	8.07	8.18	7.93	8.53
b) Percentage Share of Net Classified Loan to Agricultural and Non-farm Rural Credit (Tk. in crore)	2.18	2.53	1.02	0.15	-1.18	-0.48	-0.47	-0.43	-0.07
15. SME Loan (Tk. in crore)	Apr-Jun '19-20	Oct-Dec '20-21	Jan-Mar '20-21	Apr-Jun '20-21	Jul-Sep '21-22	Oct-Dec '21-22 ^P	Jan-Mar '21-22 ^P	2021	2020
a) Disbursement **	28063.70	48980.98	44445.67	41788.73	42075.49	57118.60	51716.69	185428.48	153496.15
b) Recovery	221695.35	237653.44	240169.54	243074.82	245325.67	252082.09	259704.21	252082.09	237653.44
c) Outstanding	12132.03	16499.23	17379.01	19430.74	14834.23	18772.59	17340.49	68765.25	74257.02
16. Industrial Term Loan (Tk. in crore)	Apr-Jun '19-20	Oct-Dec '20-21	Jan-Mar '20-21	Apr-Jun '20-21	Jul-Sep '21-22	Oct-Dec '21-22 ^P	Jan-Mar '21-22 ^P	FY 2020-21	FY 2019-20
a) Disbursement	10187.76	15538.37	16893.10	14734.86	12979.47	18477.42	16572.97	58488.71	69723.89
b) Recovery	277351.09	275311.09	299048.73	315294.16	303329.12	308918.45	310572.40	1163938.15	277351.09
c) Outstanding	2013.14	2014.15	2015.16	2016.17 ^N	2017.18 ^N	2018.19 ^N	2019.20 ^N	2020.21 ^{NR}	2021.22 ^P
17. GDP Growth Rate (in percent, Base: 2005-06=100)	6.06	6.55	7.11	6.59	7.32	7.88	3.45	6.94	7.25

Weekly basis commodity Statement of LCs Opened and Settled for the month of July/2022

In million US \$(Provisional)

Sl. No.	Name Of The Commodity	First week		Second week		Third week		Fourth week		Fifth week		Total	
		Opened	Settled	Opened	Settled	Opened	Settled	Opened	Settled	Opened	Settled	Opened	Settled
1.	Rice	10.85	0.02	9.62	0.00	15.33	1.84	15.01	3.35	1.84	4.81	52.65	10.02
	i) Private Sector	10.85	0.02	9.62	0.00	15.13	1.84	15.01	3.35	1.84	1.12	52.45	6.33
	ii) Public Sector	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.20	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	3.69	0.20	3.69
2.	Wheat	0.22	6.16	0.26	4.72	0.75	29.52	1.86	50.22	7.03	1.70	10.12	92.32
	i) Private Sector	0.22	6.10	0.26	4.72	0.75	29.42	1.86	50.22	7.03	1.70	10.12	92.17
	ii) Public Sector	0.00	0.05	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.09	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.15
3.	Sugar	14.68	0.00	0.00	5.40	4.70	34.77	24.43	9.19	0.00	0.56	43.81	49.91
	a. Raw	14.68	0.00	0.00	5.40	4.70	34.77	13.10	9.12	0.00	0.56	32.48	49.84
	i) Private Sector	14.68	0.00	0.00	5.40	4.70	34.77	13.10	9.12	0.00	0.00	32.48	49.28
	ii) Public Sector	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.56	0.00	0.56
	b. Refined	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	11.34	0.07	0.00	0.00	11.34	0.07
	i) Private Sector	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	11.34	0.07	0.00	0.00	11.34	0.07
	ii) Public Sector	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
4.	Milk Food	12.70	9.35	1.79	4.69	1.45	10.48	4.32	10.55	0.24	0.89	20.50	35.97
5.	Edible Oil (Refined)	45.65	30.14	0.17	23.00	61.23	72.91	133.70	134.75	36.31	0.03	277.07	260.83
	a) Soyabean	8.93	6.17	0.00	9.26	8.69	5.36	0.00	29.53	1.31	0.00	18.93	50.32
	b) Palm Oil	32.38	23.96	0.00	13.58	52.52	63.37	61.75	54.66	0.00	0.00	146.66	155.57
	c) Others	4.34	0.01	0.17	0.16	0.02	4.19	71.95	50.56	35.00	0.03	111.49	54.94
6.	Edible Oil (Crude)	24.99	44.52	10.81	36.00	30.36	58.80	75.98	138.88	8.78	13.75	150.92	291.95
	a) Soyabean	4.65	44.52	4.65	35.98	16.88	34.05	11.86	28.52	0.00	2.67	38.03	145.75
	b) Palm Oil	4.70	0.00	6.16	0.00	12.77	0.02	46.85	29.20	0.00	3.70	70.47	32.92
	c) Others	15.65	0.00	0.00	0.02	0.72	24.73	17.28	81.16	8.78	7.37	42.42	113.28
7.	Dry Fruits	0.22	0.40	0.02	0.14	0.45	0.72	0.05	0.35	0.08	0.07	0.81	1.68
	a) Dates	0.00	0.29	0.02	0.02	0.06	0.30	0.03	0.18	0.03	0.00	0.14	0.79
	b) Others	0.22	0.10	0.00	0.12	0.38	0.43	0.03	0.18	0.04	0.07	0.67	0.89
8.	Pulses	2.31	14.45	0.53	0.33	3.15	2.86	0.27	8.45	0.37	0.24	6.62	26.33
	a) Masur Dal	2.12	8.32	0.47	0.30	1.09	2.21	0.24	1.85	0.04	0.22	3.96	12.90
	b) Chola Dal	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
	c) Others	0.19	6.13	0.06	0.03	2.06	0.65	0.03	6.60	0.33	0.02	2.67	13.43
9.	Onion	4.75	0.16	1.67	0.27	5.09	1.26	4.86	3.19	1.05	0.91	17.42	5.80
10.	Ginger	0.58	0.83	0.05	0.27	0.42	0.63	0.31	0.54	0.00	0.15	1.36	2.43
11.	Drugs & Medicines	0.84	1.12	2.00	0.45	0.76	0.36	0.97	2.06	0.00	0.02	4.57	4.00
12.	Poultry Feeds	6.27	25.06	2.98	4.76	10.82	14.17	10.94	11.33	0.40	1.73	31.40	57.05
13.	Coal	0.10	18.12	0.02	0.51	11.88	1.11	0.58	0.94	0.23	0.25	12.81	20.93
14.	Cement	3.17	1.24	0.92	2.79	0.09	1.20	2.00	1.30	0.00	3.97	6.38	10.50
15.	Clinker	5.54	13.23	5.41	2.32	19.71	17.21	25.27	26.09	0.02	1.53	55.95	60.39
16.	B.P Sheet	0.63	0.85	0.00	9.33	0.07	1.17	0.65	1.21	0.52	5.89	1.87	18.45
17.	Scrap Vessels	1.93	3.06	0.00	3.10	6.33	0.70	10.99	13.44	1.97	0.00	21.21	20.29
18.	Paper	4.40	1.71	0.43	0.91	0.86	2.18	0.98	4.07	0.62	3.51	7.29	12.37
	i) Newsprint	0.30	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.05	0.16	0.31	0.00	0.00	0.45	0.35
	ii) Others	4.10	1.71	0.43	0.91	0.86	2.13	0.83	3.76	0.62	3.51	6.84	12.02
19.	Zinc Ingot	0.64	2.22	4.03	0.00	1.17	4.28	2.53	0.26	0.00	0.00	8.36	6.75
20.	Raw Cotton	75.04	65.48	13.14	23.99	51.04	98.10	46.32	107.88	4.21	17.90	189.74	313.36
21.	Synthetic/Mixed Yarn	31.95	21.05	1.44	9.93	9.01	29.96	11.02	32.19	1.59	5.83	55.01	98.97
22.	Cotton Yarn	44.45	69.88	3.51	22.96	17.48	70.24	25.27	75.66	3.96	16.61	94.67	255.36
23.	Textile Fabrics	29.52	25.56	2.63	8.70	14.53	24.38	22.74	29.96	1.84	5.40	71.26	93.99
24.	Textile Accessories	20.76	19.15	4.88	8.89	14.30	20.69	22.25	27.28	5.63	6.06	67.82	82.07
25.	Back-to-Back LCs	241.73	172.70	8.41	75.83	98.23	188.02	137.39	226.18	27.70	49.61	513.47	712.34
	a. Fabrics	191.18	117.21	6.14	53.47	66.26	132.29	97.84	156.01	21.62	32.26	383.04	491.23
	b. Accessories	46.75	51.66	1.61	20.89	27.53	50.90	34.58	63.70	5.84	14.29	116.32	201.43
	c. Others	3.80	3.83	0.66	1.47	4.44	4.83	4.97	6.48	0.24	3.07	14.11	19.68
26.	Pharmaceutical Raw Materials	23.45	19.15	3.45	10.17	16.24	28.72	25.10	21.90	4.28	2.76	72.51	82.69
27.	Chemicals & Chemical Products	200.14	31.24	20.39	26.88	19.48	33.46	36.76	92.50	4.43	92.00	281.20	276.09
	a. Chemical Fertilizer	133.97	7.54	17.96	8.01	2.25	9.68	23.56	64.18	1.27	85.23	179.01	174.65
	i) Urea	2.21	0.31	17.65	0.00	0.01	0.84	17.95	0.64	0.00	43.10	37.83	44.90
	ii) TSP	44.47	0.42	0.00	0.00	0.06	0.08	0.01	17.59	0.07	0.24	44.61	18.33
	iii) MOP	0.03	0.05	0.00	0.01	0.00	0.07	0.00	0.03	0.00	0.06	0.04	0.22
	iv) DAP	26.88	0.05	0.12	0.01	0.14	0.00	0.09	36.99	0.00	40.94	27.23	78.00
	v) Others	60.37	6.71	0.18	7.99	2.03	8.68	5.51	8.94	1.20	0.88	69.29	33.20
	b. Other Chemicals & Chemical Product	66.17	23.70	2.43	18.87	17.23	23.78	13.20	28.32	3.16	6.77	102.20	101.44
28.	P.O.L.	302.03	217.16	121.96	263.84	136.76	214.57	47.89	315.12	0.35	0.52	608.99	1011.20
	i) Crude	0.47	3.04	0.02	0.00	0.05	13.03	0.27	15.29	0.00	0.00	0.81	31.35
	ii) Refined	301.56	214.13	121.94	263.84	136.71	201.54	47.61	299.83	0.35	0.52	608.17	979.85
29.	Capital Machinery	84.26	252.55	10.59	74.63	32.86	155.16	83.68	90.58	7.20	44.13	218.58	617.05
30.	Machinery For Misc Industries	47.64	43.59	8.22	17.28	33.46	59.21	43.89	78.01	6.34	10.18	139.54	208.28
31.	Motor Vehicle	22.55	11.32	7.44	6.70	10.96	15.43	8.58	10.94	1.89	4.56	51.42	48.94
32.	Computer, Its Accessories & Spares	6.51	5.43	0.69	3.53	1.69	12.83	3.74	5.96	3.17	2.38	15.79	30.13
33.	Medical, Surgical & Dental Equipments	3.75	3.42	0.82	0.85	1.28	3.63	2.27	3.72	0.71	1.61	8.83	13.24
34.	Others	818.56	431.88	77.87	266.05	307.05	580.34	410.64	561.79	49.55	120.46	1663.66	1960.51
	Grand Total	2093.00	1562.19	326.14	919.21	938.96	1790.93	1243.22	2099.85	182.31	420.03	4783.63	6792.21

Data downloaded on 07.08.22



Hospitality Industry Poised For Massive Growth

Imtiaz Ahmed

Buoyed by local travellers' generous spending, Bangladesh's hotel and hospitality sector which suffered heavily during the pandemic has picked up in recent times with the business in some cases surpassing that of the pre-pandemic period, said Ashwani Nayar, General Manager, Intercontinental Dhaka, while talking to this correspondent recently.

Nayar, an Indian citizen with 25 years of experience, said the hotel and hospitality industry would grow in Bangladesh in the coming days as the economy has been clocking steady growth over the years.

Bangladesh has contained the pandemic period successfully, putting the economy on track

during 2020 and 2021, he said.

Though the international travellers are not visiting Bangladesh as per expectation to the pre-pandemic level, local travellers are contributing to the booming business in the industry, Nayar noted.

"Local consumers are spending, something that was not a trend five years back. Bangladesh's domestic consumption is much higher, especially in terms of food and beverage. Even if the number of inbound international travellers drops, the domestic consumption itself ensures, to a certain degree, that businesses of hospitality, food and beverages and dining remain viable and profitable. I think that is a very unique situation," he said. In the last 10 years, the country has

witnessed opening of posh hotels including, five-star hotels like Radisson Blu in Chattogram, Holiday Inn at Tejgaon, DuSai Resort & Spa in Maulvi Bazar, The Peninsula Chittagong, Amari Dhaka, Long Beach Suites Dhaka, Le Meridien Dhaka, Six Seasons Hotel in Dhaka, Four Points by Sheraton in Dhaka, Rose View Hotel, Hotel Valley Garden and Nazimgarh Garden Resort in Sylhet, Long Beach Hotel in Cox Bazar, Grand Sultan Tea Resort & Golf in Maulvi Bazar showing that Bangladesh is becoming a success story in the hospitality industry. During this time, The Westin, Radisson Blu Water Garden, Amari, Six Season, Four Points Sheraton, Le Meridien and Sarina and Regency have been opened. At least 8-10 new five-star

hotels are entering the market within the next 5–6 years, as the economy has been growing by over 7.50 per cent over the last 10–15 years. The hospitality industry is likely to witness new investment

business perspective,” Nayar said. For IHG and the InterContinental Hotel in Dhaka, the vision or the ethos is to bring the highest level of international hospitality service standards into what we offer, he

the cumulative impact of the crisis, said Nayar.

Improved the infrastructure is a key to making the hospitality industry successful in Bangladesh, he opined.

He also believes that the opening of the Padma Bridge will help flourish the hospitality sector in the south and south-western parts of the country. However, improved road and rail communications, quality cuisines, hotels and motels and maintaining environment are also important in this context, he added.

To a question, he said some limitations like lack of western entertainment, high tariff on liquor and a presumably perceiving conservative culture in parts of the country won't stand in the way of promoting the hospitality sector.

The success of the hostility depends on the uniqueness of each country. Countries like Saudi Arabia, UAE, Bhutan, France, Germany and USA have their uniqueness in their respective countries. Bhutan has imposed restrictions on international travellers except South Asians to protect its environment. International tourists, except South Asians, have to count high tariffs while visiting Bhutan.

Before the pandemic, during the hajj season, nearly three million pilgrims performed hajj and several million performed Umrah for the rest of the season.

The culture, lifestyle, cuisine, ecology and environment are unique in Bangladesh that have the strength to attract international tourists and make the tourism sector successful, he opined.

After life has returned to normalcy in recent times, the hotel and hospitality sector has got a boost with business picking up to the level of pre-pandemic period, stakeholders concerned said.

Shahidus Sadeque, director for marketing and business promotion



IHG Hotels have recently launched Holiday Inn in Dhaka and we are in the process of introducing new deluxe brands...

Ashwani Nayar
General Manager
InterContinental Dhaka

worth some Tk 10–15 billion in the next couple of years.

The industry in Bangladesh holds tremendous potential as the economy is growing by over 7–8 per cent. The country is set to become a developing country by 2026. The number of international hotels in Bangladesh has increased over the years. A lot of new brands have entered the market and new brands are under development and coming to the market, showing a healthy sign.

“IHG Hotels have recently launched Holiday Inn in Dhaka and we are in the process of introducing new deluxe brands which is the Crown Plaza Hotel. InterContinental, I believe, is the only luxury brand in the city at the moment, but that is changing. Given that, I think the next 5–10 years are going to be a very vertically inclined growth trajectory in the context of a

noted, adding that they want to create their own intellectual capital, “our own service capital, and our own service style which is based on the inherent strengths of this country. And we want to bring those to an international level and expose them both to the international and domestic travellers.”

To a question of public–private partnership in boosting the hospitality sector, Ashwani Nayar cited the example of Singapore in overcoming the Asian crisis in the late 1990s.

The 1997–98 Asian financial crisis began in Thailand and then quickly spread to neighbouring economies. However, the recovery in 1998–1999 was rapid and worries of a meltdown subsided.

The state–owned organisations -- Singapore Tourism Board and Singapore Airlines -- worked with the private sector to help overcome

of InterContinental Dhaka, while talking to this correspondent, said the restaurant business of the hotel has run well and reached the pre-pandemic period.

However, the occupancy of guest rooms is slightly low compared to the pre-pandemic period. With the gradual rise in international travel, guest room occupancy is expected to rise in the coming days, said Shahidus Sadeque, who has spent nearly 20 years in the hospitality industry.

Meanwhile, Bangladesh's hotel and tourism sector incurred losses worth Tk6,000 crore in 2020 following the spread of Covid-19, a study by the Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS) showed.

The study was carried out by reviewing the existing literature and collecting primary and secondary information to find out the contribution of the sector to the economy as well as to comprehend the possible impacts of Covid-19 on the sector.

The BIDS study also finds that most of the entrepreneurs in the sub-sectors realised that the current state of the business is untenable in the medium term as consumers' tastes and preferences changed over time and hence need major overhauling in terms of infrastructures and services with skilled human resources.

As complementary measures, the study pointed out several issues the government needs to address, including developing tourist sites and strengthening diplomatic efforts by Bangladesh missions abroad and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to help attract local and international tourists.

The BIDS study analysed the current status of the hospitality and tourism sector and identified the probable impacts in terms of loss of sales and revenues, consequent retrenchment of workers and employees and reduced work-hour

of workers based on a comparison between the pre-COVID-19 and the COVID-19 pandemic periods.

The study noted that even though the government initially allocated Tk 121,400 crore as fiscal stimulus

30th position by 2023, by when the GDP should increase by 50 per cent to \$1,159 billion.

The country expects that the GDP growth rate will exceed the target of 7.8 per cent and will increase to 9



With the gradual rise in international travel, guest room occupancy is expected to rise in the coming days...

Shahidus Sadeque
Director
Marketing & Business Promotion
InterContinental Dhaka

and liquidity support, the hospitality sector was deprived of such support.

Bangladesh can mull replicating success stories of the hospitality and tourism industry of Malaysia, Indonesia, the Maldives, India, Vietnam and Sri Lanka to boost the national economy, said a high official of the Hotel Intercontinental Dhaka.

Bangladesh is one of the top growing economies in the world, and the GDP growth may surpass over 8 per cent after completion of some major projects like Metro Rail.

Meanwhile, the Padma Bridge was opened on June 25, which will give impetus to the local tourism. Bangladesh now has the 31st highest GDP worldwide in terms of purchasing power parity (PPP), at \$751 billion.

The country is poised to move up to

per cent in the next five years.

The World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC), the global authority on the economic and social contribution of Travel & Tourism, said the direct contribution of travel and tourism in Bangladesh in 2015 was Tk 407.6bn (2.4 per cent of GDP).

Meanwhile, IHG® (InterContinental Hotels Group), one of the world's leading hotel companies, opened InterContinental® Dhaka in partnership with Bangladesh Services Limited recently. ■



Fuel Price Hike To Help BPC Make A Profit Of Tk 205 Crore Per Month

Business Outlook Report

After the latest fuel price hike Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation (BPC) will make a profit of Tk 205 crore per month if dollar price continues with the rate of the month of July. But if the dollar rate goes higher, BPC will incur a loss of Tk 47 crore per month.

The estimate was disclosed by BPC chairman ABM Azad at a press briefing at the organisation's Dhaka office on August 10. "We have calculated that after the rise in prices, BPC will have an estimated profit of

Tk 205 crore per month if dollar price is not raised compared with the price of July", he told reporters. He noted that currently BPC's overall loss is Tk 6 per litre. But it is making a profit of Tk 25 per litre in octane, and about Tk 20 in petrol. On the other hand, he said, the BPC is paying a tax of Tk 20.70 per litre in diesel import and Tk 23.5 per litre octane import.

He also informed that the BPC has a 30 days' consumption equivalent stock of diesel (294,319 metric tons), 19 days stock of octane (22,827 metric tons), 18 days stock of

petrol (19,174 mt) and jet fuel of 32 days (35,780 mt). The government hiked the price of fuel oil by a big margin with effect from August 6. According to the release, diesel price has been increased by Tk 34 to Tk 114 per litre while octane price hiked by Tk 46 to Tk 135 and petrol by Tk 44 to Tk 130.

Earlier, in November last year, the government increased the price of diesel and kerosene by Tk 15 to Tk 80 per litre. As a result, the bus fare was disproportionately increased by around 27 per cent and the launch

fare by 35 per cent. The BPC made the recent upward adjustment in the fuel prices when the downward trend continues at the international market.

A document provided by the Centre for Policy Dialogue shows that the price of Brent crude has declined to \$93.9 per barrel on August 8 from \$100 per barrel on August 1.

The BPC chairman said that it has cash plus deposits of Tk 19,000 crore which is equivalent to pay import bills for 2 months consumption of fuel. ■

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বিশ্ব সেরা প্রযুক্তির

নিরাপদ সিলিন্ডার

