

Since 1980

January 2022

DCCI REVIEW



BRANDING



**Monthly Bulletin of the
Dhaka Chamber of Commerce & Industry
(In-house Circulation Only)**

Vol. XXXXII No. 42 (January 01 to January 31, 2022)
Published on 15 February, 2022

**MEMBERS OF THE BOARD
OF DIRECTORS**

PRESIDENT

Rizwan Rahman

SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT

Arman Haque

VICE PRESIDENT

Monowar Hossain

DIRECTORS

Golam Zilani

Hossain A Sikder

Khairul Majid Mahmud

M. A. Rashid Shah Shamrat

Malik Talha Ismail Bari

Md. Abdul Mannan

Md. Habib Ullah Tuhin

Md. Junaed Ibna Ali

Md. Shahid Hossain

Md. Zia Uddin

Nasiruddin A. Ferdous

N K A Mobin, FCS, FCA

Sameer Sattar

Shamsuzzoha Chowdhury

S. M. Golam Faruk Alamgir (Arman)

Contents

Editorial	01
Chamber News	02
Article	03
National Economy	05
SAARC News	14
Asia-Pacific News	19
Middle East News	24
International News	28
সংবাদ বিচিত্রা	32
Trade Information	36
Share Market	37
Pictorial	38

REVIEW ADVISORY BOARD

Founder Chairman

Late Nuruddin Ahmed

Chariman

Sayed Kamaluddin

Members

A. S. M. Quasem

M A Momen

Hossain Khaled

Shamsul Huq Zahid

Editor

Abu Jar Md. Akkas

DCCI REVIEW

Published by :

Dhaka Chamber of Commerce & Industry (DCCI)

Dhaka Chamber Building (4th floor)

65-66 Motijheel Commercial Area

Dhaka-1000, Phone : 88-02-47122986 (Hunting)

Fax : 88-02-47122475

E-mail : info@dhakachamber.com

Website : www.dhakachamber.com

For online version: dhakachamber.com/publication/review

DCCI Gulshan Centre

bti Landmark (Level-11), Plot-16, Block-CWS (A)

Gulshan Avenue, Gulshan-1

Dhaka-1212, Tel: 88-02- 22264246

Branding Bangladesh

Bangladesh is said to have traditionally been associated with poverty, natural calamities, weak infrastructure, high density, negative image and some other ills to the outside world. The association continues to remain with the country although issues have improved on many fronts where Bangladesh has been able to make its mark. Feats are often defeated and merits are often overshadowed because of the customary associations that, many believe, should have changed by now.

Many believe that the such ideas of the outside world about Bangladesh have not changed in the absence of efforts that are needed to project Bangladesh and its feats and merits to the world community. A change in such notions, which could come about with sustained efforts by both the public and the private sector, would brighten the image of the country, create value for the products and services that Bangladesh deals in and holds on offer for the world and earn points for businesses.

This is where the branding of the country, or branding Bangladesh, comes at play. This is all about creating associations with the country as is done with products in the advertisement world. A catch line or a slogan or several of them for different areas could bring up the idea of Bangladesh and its strength that might help the country to earn something more. This is about promises that Bangladesh should deliver in a set of features, quality, benefits and services to countries beyond Bangladesh that are probable and prospective buyers and consumers of Bangladeshi products and services.

Bangladesh needs to overcome the challenge of its branding by creating a set of positive associations for the country. India did it by promoting itself as a place of varied nature by saying 'Incredible India.' Malaysia did it to promote its tourism industry by saying 'Malaysia, truly Asia.'

Such a branding of Bangladesh, for different sectors, perhaps, may add to the image of the country and help Bangladesh a lot to earn, especially after 2026 when Bangladesh would shake off its status of the least development country and would officially begin its journey as a developing country. After its graduation from the status of one of the least developed countries, Bangladesh will certainly face some challenges, need to ramp up domestic resource mobilization efforts and make a huge investment in human resources so that it can

meet the challenges. Bangladesh will need to diversify its export and shift its focus on small- and medium-scale industries. It will also need to explore markets in Latin America, Africa, Asia and the Middle East other than the European Union and the United States. It will need to promise values for its products and services. All this may not be easy for Bangladesh.

Bangladesh will, therefore, need to brand itself to earn buyer's confidence by promising such values that would be easy if it can, by then, create some positive associations. Germany is, for an example, associated with precision engineering, Italy with fashion, Denmark with design and France with culture. No one thinks twice in buying machines made in Germany and countries of the world readily go for fashion designed in Italy.

After the LDC graduation, Bangladesh will need to forge bilateral alliances with many countries as certain privileges that it enjoys as a least develop country now will not longer be in place then. And, Bangladesh will need to project itself strategically so that it can easily earn the confidence of other countries that it would wish to enter into an alliance with. Although only the branding of Bangladesh may not do the magic, it will also need to have better negotiation skills; a successful branding will makes issues a lot easy by a substantial degree.

But only a positive projection or association of the country would not be enough. The country at the same time should have the capacity to deliver what it would promise. Only positive associations with no real skills could in the long run backfire, dealing a blow to Bangladesh and its economy. The government should, in such a situation, work out strategically sound plans in consultation with the private sector to decide ways on branding Bangladesh in a sustainable and meaningful manner.

This is a changed Bangladesh. There are so many good things that we can utilize in branding Bangladesh in a positive manner. In recent past Bangladesh achieved a tremendous advancement specially in the infrastructure sector as well as in many indices. Right at this moment, we have more than 150 LEED certified RMG factories here in Bangladesh. In agriculture mechanization, Bangladesh did a noteworthy progress. There are lot of avenues, undoubtedly, this is the best time, we have to project Bangladesh as the best destination for trade and investment **r**

DCCI begins post-graduate diploma courses

The inaugural ceremony of the six-month post-graduate diploma courses on Customs, VAT and Income Tax Management and International Trade (export and import) Management was held at the DCCI Business Institute on January 21.

The Acting President of DCCI Arman Haque graced the program as chief guest and inaugurated the courses. Arman Haque advised the participants to have a proper knowledge of VAT and income tax to achieve long-term business success in the current competitive world market.


“One should have a clear idea of VAT and income and other taxes to run business successfully. An adequate knowledge of rules and procedures of

VAT and income tax helps businesses to run professionally,” he said, noting that the world is becoming more connected and competitive.

The relationship with the outside world is growing stronger by an increased development in export and import and technology. As the world becomes more global and connected, international trade becomes a useful asset to bring people and countries together.

The objective of the Customs, VAT and Income Tax course is to familiarize the main features of the subject and recent changes in National Budget and VAT & SD Act, legal exemptions of taxes and use of fiscal incentives in business and other important Customs, VAT and Income Tax related

issues. Besides, International trade is one of the popular ways of self-employment/ entrepreneurship. It is the most dynamic business activities in modern business ecosystem. The objective of the course on International Trade (Export & Import) is to improve and up-grade the skills of the entrepreneurs/professionals dealing with importing and exporting functions in their respective organizations.

DCCI Secretary General Afsarul Arifeen, DCCI Executive Secretary Md Joyal Abdin, Farheen Hassan, Head of the Department of Management and Human Resources Management, FBA, AIUB, Course Coordinator DBI Joint Executive Secretary Tamanna Sultana and all participants were present 



The inaugural ceremony of Postgraduate Diploma courses on ‘Customs, VAT & Income Tax Management’ and ‘International Trade (Export & Import) Management’ organized by DCCI Business Institute (DBI) was held at DCCI Auditorium on January 21. Acting President of DCCI Arman Haque virtually joined the programme and inaugurated the courses as the chief guest.

RCEP: Bangladesh ignoring the Centre of gravity

M S Siddiqui

Legal Economist

e-mail: mssiddiqui2035@gmail.com

The Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) will be the world's largest trading bloc in economic size, and is set to become a new centre of gravity for global trade. It will enter into force on 1 January 2022. RCEP includes 15 Asian and Pacific nations: Australia, Brunei, Darussalam, Cambodia, China, Indonesia, Japan, the Republic of Korea, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, New Zealand, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam.

Its impact on international trade is expected to be significant. Under the RCEP framework, trade liberalization will be achieved through gradual tariff reductions. Many tariffs will be abolished immediately, while others will be reduced gradually during a 20-year period. The concessions are key in understanding the initial impacts of RCEP on trade, both inside and outside of the bloc. The export losses of countries such as Bangladesh, Pakistan, Sri Lanka are more significant when measured in percentage terms. In the case of Bangladesh, it is expected that about 12 per cent of its export to RCEP would be diverted to favour RCEP members. The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) made the estimate in its latest report titled "A new centre of gravity: The regional comprehensive economic partnership and its trade effects" released on December 15, 2021.

This FTA includes 15 East Asian and Pacific Nations of different economic sizes and stages of development, representing around 30 per cent of world GDP. Intra RCEP-trade was already worth about US\$ 2.3 trillion (2019) and this analysis shows that RCEP's tariff concessions would further boost the intraregional exports of the newly formed alliance by nearly 2 per cent, approximately US\$42 billion. Most of these gains come from trade diverted away from non-members.

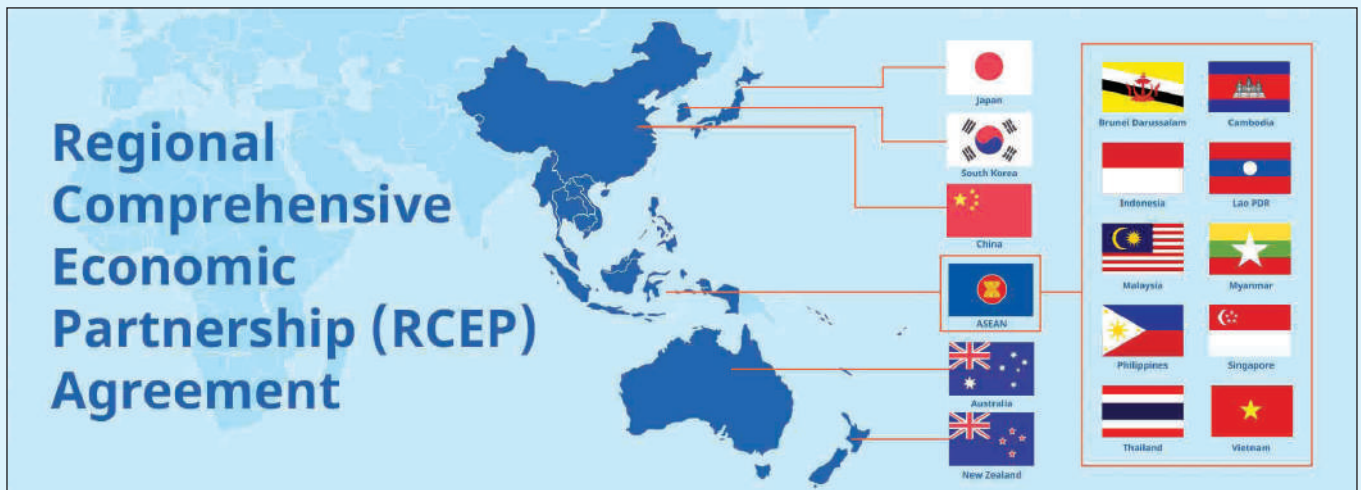
The pact will progressively remove both tariff and non-tariff barriers on trade in both goods and services. Tariff concessions in the manufacturing sectors are expected

to add about US\$ 30 billion to intra-RCEP trade, or an increase of about 2 per cent. More than 60 per cent of this gain, US\$ 18 billion, comes from trade diversion effects. Overall, the tariff concession of RCEP results in gains where trade diversion effects represent 60 per cent, while trade creation represents 40 per cent. As the process of integration goes further these effects could be magnified, a factor that should not be underestimated by non-RCEP members. Agricultural trade is expected to see gains of about US\$ 10 billion, equivalent to an increase of 7 per cent. Most of this gain is expected to come from trade diversion effects from non-member countries.

As the process of integration of RCEP members goes further, these diversion effects could be magnified, a factor that should not be underestimated by non-RCEP members. This is the result of two forces: trade creation, as lower tariffs would stimulate trade between members, by nearly US\$17 billion; and trade diversion, as lower tariffs within RCEP would redirect trade away from non-members to members, equivalent to nearly US\$25 billion.

The agreement goes beyond tariff concessions and encompasses other areas of cooperation to foster regional integration among its members. For example, a single document covering several processing stages and border crossings will suffice to prove the origin of goods. Documentation of data accompanying the trade will be able to occur centrally, in RCEP member countries. The combination of reduced tariffs, facilitated cross-border trade and standardised rules of origin will trigger a re-organisation of supply chains. It will strengthen economic integration and the benefits that may come with it, such as foreign direct investment, technology sharing, structural transformations, among others.

With the signing of the RCEP, the announcement of the EU-China Comprehensive Agreement on Investment (CAI) on 30 December, and the prospects of enlarging the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP), trade policy with and within Asia is gathering speed. In the greater East Asia region, consisting of Japan, South Korea, China and the Association of Southeast Asian nations (ASEAN),



economic integration via trade, investment, supply chains and digital connectivity will accelerate. In contrast, regions that remain on the outside – i.e. North America, Europe and India – surely fear that trade flows will be diverted. UNCTAD study report fear the possible bad impact on trade of Bangladesh as well.

India opted to stay out of RECP due to their fear of Chinese dominate role in RCEP. RECP will become a new centre of gravity for global trade with China in the centre point of the block. One the China is major supply source of raw materials to Bangladesh. The economic and trade perspective is different for Bangladesh and India. An USA based weekly newspaper THE DIPLOMAT article opined (author was a Bangladeshi) on November 05, 2021 that “Bangladesh expressed interest in joining the mega partnership. But with India pulling out, critics are now questioning whether Dhaka acted prudently by showing interest in the grouping”.

Whatever be the regional politics, Bangladesh is in a global value chain (GVC) with upstream supply from China and the emerging export market is China, Japan Korea and ASEAN countries. By joining RECP, Bangladesh may gain most from regional market. For GVCs, low trade barriers between participating countries are particularly important because products cross country borders multiple times – with high barriers, high costs accumulate, and this type of production becomes unprofitable. Therefore, with the emergence of GVCs in Asia, RCEP members have had great incentives to liberalise trade policy.

Bangladesh authority is still undecided about FTA with major trade partners. Mr Md Abdus Samad Al Azad, Joint Secretary (FTA-2) of Commerce Ministry told a daily newspaper that the ministry was studying the merits and demerits of the RCEP agreement and prospects of Bangladesh’s joining with trade pact. Due to FTAs throughout the world, Bangladesh is alone and in a similar situation like falling in the ocean from a ship but preparing to study feasibility of swimming!

Bangladesh has one best option to join the RCEP that will facilitate to re-gain the lost opportunities of FTA with many countries like ASEAN, China, Japan, Australia etc. Alternately, it may pursue these countries for bilateral FTA with is time consuming. These countries now may not agree to negotiate bilateral agreement. As for example, Japan was willing for FTA with Bangladesh but now not very keen as in a recent interview; the Japanese Ambassador in Bangladesh observed that Japan might negotiate FTA with Bangladesh if Japanese businesspersons ask for any FTA. Other countries also may not now waste their time to negotiate FTA with Bangladesh as they are in process finalizing trade partnership with multipole bilateral and regional FTAs **r**

Companies can invest 25pc of asset offshore

Govt issues guidelines on equity investment abroad

The government issued guidelines permitting Bangladeshi entrepreneurs to make offshore equity investment to the tune of 25 percent of net asset of a company to instant welcome from businesses. Seven core conditions are tied to the investment in foreign countries an option big businesses of Bangladesh have long sought.

The financial institutions division of the ministry of finance has published a gazette notification on the “Capital Account Transactions (Overseas Equity Investment) Guidelines 2022” detailing how to spread their wings beyond borders.

“Interested overseas investors will have to take prior permission from the government through central bank channel,” says one provision of the guidelines. They will be allowed to make equity investment abroad up to 20 percent of their average annual income from exports during the last five years or 25 percent of net asset mentioned in the last audited financial report.

The government since 2013 has given permission to eight companies to invest abroad. The firms are DBL Group, Mobil Jamuna, ACI Healthcare, Square Pharma, Incepta Pharmaceuticals, BSRM Steel, Spectrum Engineering, and Akij Group. Also, Ha-Meem Group, Nitol-Niloy Group, Summit Group, Meghna Group and Pran-RFL Group have expressed interest in making equity investment abroad.

Another condition laid down in the guidelines says an entrepreneur who wants to make overseas investment has to be an exporter with adequate balance in its exporters’ retention quota account. The entrepreneur needs to be financially sound



according to audited accounts of his or her company in the past five years, in line with the directives in the Financial Reporting Act 2015. “No loan defaulters should be allowed to make investment abroad.”

The credit-rating grade of the entrepreneur has to be at least 2.0 according to the mapping set in the Guidelines on Risk-Based Capital Adequacy, prepared by the central bank. The overseas investment proposal for business activity shall ordinarily be of similar nature of the entrepreneur’s business engagement in the home country.

The equity-investment proposal has to be proved economically viable by feasibility study.

Also, the proposal should have the potential for future earnings of foreign exchange coupled with other advantages to the country, including raising exports from Bangladesh and employment opportunities for Bangladeshi nationals. The applicant company must have adequate experienced human resources in running international business, financing, and making investment.

A 15-member high-powered committee, comprising representatives from various

ministries, divisions, and departments, led by the central bank governor, will scrutinize overseas equity-investment proposals and have decision by consulting the government, says the investment guidebook.

Overseas equity investment will get priority in countries where there are no restrictions on Bangladeshi nationals to work and repatriate their income to Bangladesh. The countries with which Bangladesh has dual taxation-avoidance agreement, and where investment from Bangladesh and the repatriation of capital including capital gains, dividends, and other admissible earnings including technical know-how fees, royalty, consultancy fees, commission or other entitlements are allowed will get priority for investment.

Also, overseas equity investment will get priority in countries with which Bangladesh has agreements on bilateral equity investment, development, expansion, and conservation. However, equity investment by Bangladeshi entrepreneurs would not be allowed in countries where sanctions have been imposed by the United Nations, the European Union, Office of Foreign Asset Control, and the

strategies with 28 percent of them having taken cost-cutting measures, which included layoffs. Some 22 percent are working with new buyers, 19 percent are investing to expand, 16 percent are exploring new markets, and 15 percent are manufacturing new products. The entrepreneurs have identified major areas for growth for businesses in the next decade.

Some 67 percent of executives who were surveyed indicated that Bangladesh's major market in the next 10 years would be digital financial services. Ultimately, Bangladesh's digital system will significantly improve.

Some 53 percent indicated that skills capital would be another important area of focus, while half of the respondents indicated data management could be a major market for businesses. Other potential growth areas would be plastics recycling, re-skilling, care, and unemployment insurance.

The businessmen's perception towards institutions has not improved during the post-Covid period (2021) compared to the pre-Covid year of 2019. A majority of institution-related indicators are yet to reach the pre-crisis level, the survey found. For example, the government is less responsive to changes and is unable to ensure a stable policy environment.

"Tax structure needs major revision focusing on the equity of different categories of people," said the CPD. As part of the recovery initiative, businessmen requested a reduction in tax rates that the government may consider in the upcoming national budget.

The CPD said the National Board of Revenue and Bangladesh Trade and Tariff Commission should jointly review the fiscal expenditure incurred

for providing fiscal incentives and subsidies to different categories of enterprises and activities.

Businessmen are concerned about the quality of services of law enforcement agencies with 57.5 percent perceiving that the police service is yet to be relied upon to enforce law and order efficiently. About 63.9 percent of businessmen opined that there is a dearth of transparency in the services provided by law enforcing agencies.

The government should handle the sanction with utmost importance as businesses are concerned, said Moazzem referring to the US sanctions on Rapid Action Battalion and some of its current and former officials. If the sanction affects the transactions in businesses, it will be a major factor for the future business environment, he said.

The think-tank said Bangladesh needs to be cautious about digital inequality by ensuring easy access and low-cost facilities for all categories of people, including marginalized, women, youth, and small-and-medium entrepreneurs.

"Necessary fiscal and budgetary support should be made available to expand digital services across the board." The government needs to follow market-based approaches in the case of administered utility and energy markets, the economist said.

"Institutions such as the Bangladesh Competition Commission need to be proactive and have the capacity to identify the problems of dominant market players to ensure competitive behavior."

Business reporting of human and labor rights, environmental compliance and corporate practices needs to be promoted, he added. Fahmida Khatun, executive director of the CPD, also spoke **r**

Economy shows signs of turnaround

Although uncertainty prevails over the country's economy with regard to both global and domestic contexts, Finance Minister AHM Mustafa Kamal portrayed a rosy picture of it in parliament. Presenting a report on the implementation progress of the national budget for 2021–22 in the fiscal year's first quarter from July to September, Kamal said despite the pandemic's effects, the country's macroeconomy has started to turn around. He hoped that the 7.2 percent growth target for gross domestic product would be achieved this fiscal year.



The GDP growth rate, that marked a fall to 3.45 percent in fiscal year 2019–20 due to the pandemic, rose to 5.43 percent last fiscal year (2020–21) thanks to different initiatives taken by the government, he said. Hoping to keep the inflation rate within 5.3 percent, the minister said the monetary policy has been formulated keeping these targets in mind.

"Though there is a possibility of inflation due to rise of fuel price in the global market and eventual price hike in the domestic market, I hope that the inflation rate would be at tolerable limit by the end of this year," he said. The finance minister hoped that the country's per capita income would increase to \$2,785 in the current fiscal year of 2021–22. In 2020–21, per capita income stood at \$2,227. Due to the sincerity and

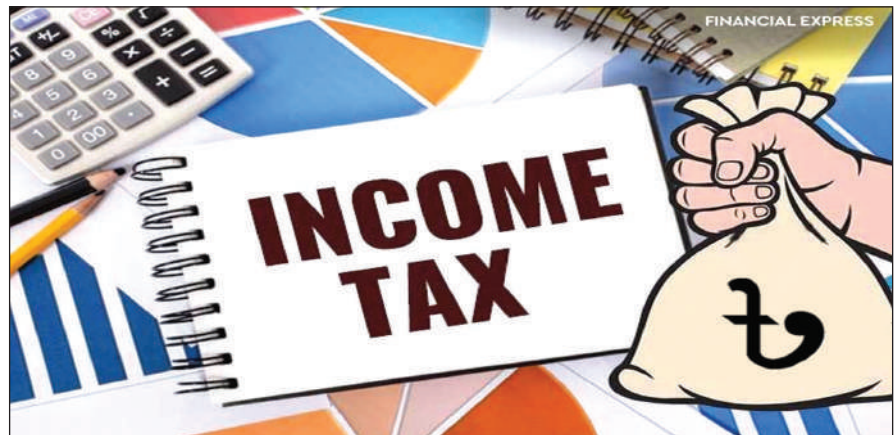
efforts of the pro-poor government, both the poverty and extreme poverty rates have come down to 20.5 percent and 10.5 percent respectively in 2020, said Kamal.

He informed that remittance inflow in the country was at \$5.41 billion in the first quarter of the fiscal year, which was 19.44 percent less than that in the same period of the previous fiscal year. Mentioning that labor export had resumed, including to the main market of Saudi Arabia, he hoped that remittance inflow at the end of the current fiscal year would reach levels similar to that of the previous year. Kamal said activities were underway through Dhaka Mass Transit Company to start passenger transport in the Uttara-Agargaon section of Mass Rapid Transit Line-6 by December 2022. He reiterated his hope for the Padma bridge to be opened for vehicular movement by June this year.

As a whole, all the indicators of the macroeconomy including growth in GDP, per capita income as well as export are in the positive mode in the first quarter of the current fiscal year, said the minister. According to the report submitted by the minister, total budgetary spending in the first quarter of the current fiscal year had reached Tk 65,739 crore, rising by 1.48 percent year-on-year. In the same period in the last fiscal year of 2020–21, total budgetary spending had decreased by 4.83 percent. Around 10.89 percent of the total budget of Tk 6,03,680 crore allocated for this fiscal year was implemented in the first three months till September, it stated **r**

NBR seeks formal complaints over tax harassment

The National Board of Revenue has urged businesspeople to come up with specific allegations if they face any harassment at the hands



of tax officials instead of making random complaints. “If they have any complaint, they have to make it in writing. Then it will be possible to solve them,” NBR Chairman Abu Hena Md Rahmatul Muneem said. He made the remarks while speaking at a press conference organized on the occasion of International Customs Day 2022 at the revenue building in Dhaka’s Segunbagicha. At a recent meeting of the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry, district level businesspeople brought allegations of harassment against VAT and income tax officials.

Muneem said businesspeople raised complaints in case of releasing imported goods, machinery and other products from the customs house as well but the complaints were not always correct. “The revenue authorities will take action if we receive any specific allegation of harassment against any customs officials. Just talking about allegations will not solve them.” He advised businessmen to come to the NBR instead of complaining to the FBCCI.

Bangladesh observed International Customs Day on January 26 as a member country of the World Customs Organisation with the theme of “Scaling up Customs Digital Transformation by Embracing a Data Culture and Building a Data Ecosystem.” Muneem said the NBR

was trying to improve the ASYCUDA system that will eliminate some of the problems at the import stage.

ASYCUDA is a computerized customs management system that covers most foreign trade procedures. It handles manifests and customs declarations, accounting procedures, and transit and suspense procedures. It also generates trade data that can be used for statistical economic analysis. Customs collected Tk 77,150 crore for the government in duties in the last fiscal year. The receipts stood at Tk 41,194 crore as of December in the current fiscal year, 22.44 percent, year-on-year.

Muneem said after the graduation of the country from the group of the least-developed countries, the NBR would compensate the decrease in revenue from customs duty with value-added tax and income tax. “We are working on it and have kept in mind the problems we might face” **r**

Corporate tax cuts turn ‘eyewash’

With an upturn in source taxes without effective refund or adjustment mechanism, corporate taxpayers find annual budgetary cut in corporate taxes apparently juggling the figures sans helping them. Corporate taxpayers have to pay around 97 percent of their taxes in the form of advance, minimum and source

taxes while the rest 3.0 percent they pay with their annual tax returns. Accountants and corporate taxpayers say effective tax rate actually payable at the yearend for corporates increased up to 10 percent, depending on nature of companies, due to upward adjustment of source tax or withholding tax.

National Board of Revenue data also show substantial rise in corporate-tax collection that went up by 25 percent in 2020–21 despite reduction in its rate by 2.5 percent that year. Advance Income Tax at import stage also grew 20 percent in 2021, according to the data. In an analysis of last eight years' data available with the NBR, the FE correspondent found corporate taxpayers having paid, on average, 2.55 percent to 3.20 percent taxes with their tax returns from fiscal year 2013 to 2021 while the lion's share in the total paid as source, AIT or advance tax.

Income tax (administration and human resources) member Shaheen Akhter says as per the Income Tax Ordinance 1984, the corporate taxpayers are bound to pay advance tax in four installments if their income crosses a certain ceiling. "Simple interest would be slapped under the law if any taxpayers fail to pay the advance tax in due time," she adds.

Abul Kasem Khan, chairperson of Business Initiative Leadership Development and former president

of Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry, says corporate-tax rate for his company came to 66 percent in 2021 while it paid 44 percent this year on revenue against applicable rate of 32 percent.

"Corporate tax should be collected on profit, not on revenue. Advance income tax without refund or effective adjustment made the cut in corporate tax futile for us," he observes, underscoring the need for a recast of the taxing modus operandi. Institute of Chartered Accountants of Bangladesh president Shahadat Hossain terms minimum tax on corporate entities an undue burden, especially for those businesses that haven't have any taxable profit.

Executive director of the Foreign Investors' Chamber of Commerce and Industry TIM Nurul Kabir finds Effective Tax Rate, actual payable tax, for corporate taxpayers very high (additional 7 percent to 10 percent) compared to the marginal tax rate. The mismatch is mainly due to inadmissibility of various legitimate business expenses in calculating tax.

Aminur Rahman, former income-tax member of the revenue board, points out "faulty corporate-tax structure" in Bangladesh with six different rates, including for banks, mobile-phone companies and tobacco companies. Such multiple rates are not seen in other countries.

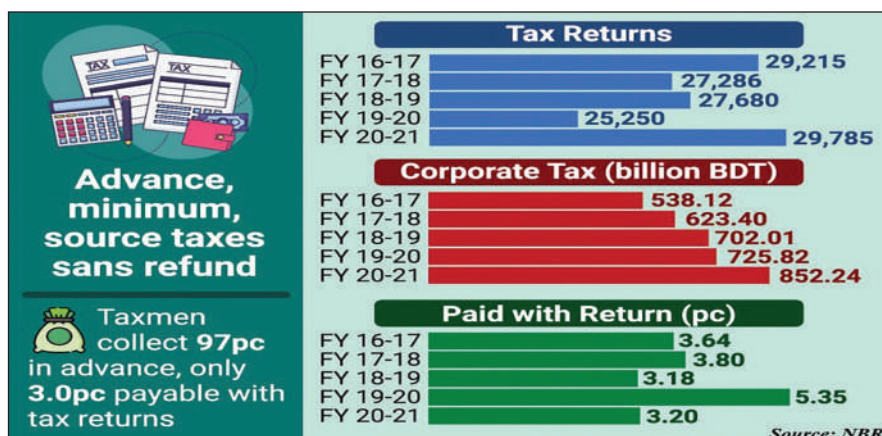
The concept of minimum tax was coined following poor tax compliance in the country so that tax authority can extract as much tax it can in the form of source or minimum tax, he mentioned. "Cut in corporate-tax rate is eyewash as effective tax rate is increasing," says the ex-official who was involved with the taxing of incomes.

Managing Director of Berger Paints Bangladesh Rupali Chowdhury notices tax incidence going up as authority made some of the expenses inadmissible, stopped rebate option for some inputs or raw materials, deducting at-source tax and collecting minimum tax. "Those paying taxes are facing pressure while the non-compliant remained comfortable for years," she says. FICCI sources pointed out a number of inadmissible expenses that are escalating effective tax rates.

Almost 50 to 70 percent of royalty, technical-service fees, and technical know-how fees become inadmissible in the tax returns of foreign investors due to inconsistencies in Bangladesh Investment Development Authority- and NBR-allowable turnover limits, FICCI data showed. T

he chamber of foreign investors also found double taxation on employers in the form of tax on excess perquisite as it is already taxed in the hand of employees. Tax on promotional expenses has been also affecting growth of fast moving consumer goods by raising their tax burden from 5.0 to 50 percent, depending on the profitability of the company.

Snehasish Barua, member of ICAB, says the direct tax turned indirect tax now as tax is being collected in every transaction. Another tax official says taxmen are collecting taxes as per the global popular concept "pay as you earn". Most of the taxes are collected round the year while the rest nominal part comes with the tax returns. He



said escalation of commodity prices, mainly fuels, contributed to higher AIT receipts. “We have no other option but to depend on source-tax collection as corporate-tax evasion is still high in Bangladesh,” he says to justify the advance tax deduction. He mentions that the tax authority is working to automate the tax administration to ensure “tax justice” through refund or proper adjustment of source tax **r**

BB extends support for export trade

Bangladesh’s export trade will enjoy various policy supports for six more months under a renewal aimed at helping boost country’s overall business activities, officials say. The central bank has extended the tenure of its supports as the country takes more time for economic turnaround. The exporters will now enjoy the facilities until June 30 this year instead of December 31 in 2021, according to a notification issued by the Bangladesh Bank.

Under the policy supports, import of industrial raw materials, back-to-back imports, and imports of agricultural implements and chemical fertilizers under supplier’s/buyer’s credit can be extended up to 270 days from 180 days. It was 360 days up to December 31, 2021. Export Development Fund loan to individual member mill of Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers

and Exporters’ Association and Bangladesh Textile Mills Association will remain unchanged at \$30 million instead of \$25 million, according to the notification.

The latest BB policy extension came just two days after a meeting of a BGMEA delegation, led by its president Faruque Hassan, with BB governor Fazle Kabir in Dhaka. Earlier on 30 December 2021, the issues were discussed at a meeting with the country’s top business leaders, according to the officials.

Talking to the FE, a senior BB official said the central bank extended its policy support further to give some extra comfort to the exporters-at this trying time stemming from disruptions caused by the Covid pandemic. “We’ve extended our policy supports further considering higher prices of raw materials, including raw cotton, in the global market in recent months,” the central banker says explaining. Such back will help the exporters offset the adverse impact of the higher prices of the raw materials on their businesses, according to the BB official.

Mohammad Hatem, executive president of BKMEA, welcomed BB’s latest move, saying that it would help boost the country’s overall export earnings further in the near future. “The central bank has also assured the business leaders at the meetings of providing extra policy support on

a case-to-case basis, if necessary,” Hatem said while replying to a query. He adds: “We’ve also urged the BB to enhance the limit of EDF scheme to meet the higher prices of raw materials in the global market.”

Earlier on May 17, 2020, the BB enhanced the loan limit under the EDF scheme from \$25 million to \$30 million for the BGMEA and BTMA members for input procurement. The EDF financing allows manufacturers to procure inputs or raw materials against back-to-back import letters of credit or inland back-to-back LCs in foreign exchange to produce final output for direct export and local delivery to manufacturers of final export **r**

2022 a milestone in infrastructure dev: PM

The year 2022 will be a milestone in the development of Bangladesh’s infrastructure, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina said, as she delivered her address to the nation on the completion of the third year of her administration’s current term, reports bdnews24.com. In June, the much-discussed Padma bridge will be opened to traffic. In October, the Karnaphuli tunnel, which aims to increase connectivity throughout the country, is to be inaugurated. And, in December, Dhaka residents will get their first chance to use the metro rail when a section from Uttara to Agargaon opens. “Despite conspiracies and many other obstacles, we will complete the Padma bridge with our own money. The bridge will provide a direct link between the capital and the southern parts of the country and other regions.”

“Work is also proceeding on other major infrastructure projects across the country,” Hasina said. The first unit of the 1,200 MW Rooppur Nuclear Power Plant, the most expensive





infrastructure project in Bangladesh's history at Tk 1.13 trillion, is expected to begin operating in April next year, Hasina added. The prime minister said she hopes to have the support of the people to keep the Awami League in power and maintain the continuity of development.

"The country has advanced a lot in the past 13 years and today Bangladesh is ahead on many economic indicators, such as poverty alleviation, the development of the health system, the reduction of maternal and child mortality rate, an increase in life expectancy, the empowerment of women and an increase in the literacy rate."

"We want to continue to build a developed, prosperous Bangladesh and take the nation to the level of other developed countries by 2041," she said. "The dreams of the Father of the Nation Sheikh Mujibur Rahman will be achieved through the work of youth and it is my sincere belief that the generation after ours will be able to move into the future with their heads held high," the prime minister said. "However, an anti-independence faction is working to undermine Bangladesh's pace of development," Hasina said. Some cannot stand that Bangladesh is on the "highway to development," she said.

"They are working with the opposition and anti-independence elements

in this country and abroad to try to hamper our progress. They spread lies, falsehoods and fabrications on social media to stir unrest and attempt to misguide our foreign development partners." She called on everyone to be aware of the situation and not to fall for their ruses. "We cannot allow anyone to impede progress. The people are the source of power. We believe in the power of the people and we stand with the people."

The Awami League president also spoke of the government's firm stance on corruption, saying that even powerful members of the party will not be spared if they are found to be involved in corruption. A firm hand must also be used against the threat of militancy, Hasina said. Bangladesh is a country of communal harmony and people of all castes and creeds have lived together in this nation with mutual respect for generations and will continue to do so, she said. She also called for efforts to improve the living standards of people across the country and said her government would fulfil its responsibilities on that front as well.

"It is up to you to analyse the job we have done for the past 13 years, but I would say the government has fulfilled the promises it made." The government will provide Covid vaccine doses for 10 million people a month through a mass immunisation programme in January, said Prime

Minister Sheikh Hasina, as she warned of the lingering effects of the pandemic.

Hasina urged citizens to take the vaccines as soon as possible to shield themselves from the Covid infection, reminding them that the pandemic has yet to ebb globally. The prime minister made the call in her address to the nation, marking the completion of the third year of her government's current tenure.

Bangladesh went through a difficult crisis in 2020 and 2021 due to the prevalence of the pandemic, she said. The crisis has yet to pass, as omicron, a new variant of Covid-19, has spread across the globe. "We need to be careful now, and follow the health protocols. I urge all those who haven't taken the vaccine, to get the shot quickly," Hasina said.

The delta variant of Covid-19 caused a second wave of Covid infections in 2021. As the pathogen finally began trending down across the globe following vaccination and other measures coming to fruition, but a new variant, omicron, was identified in South Africa towards the end of 2021. omicron is spreading across the world, rapidly pushing up the number of Covid cases in Europe and the US. As French Health Minister Olivier Veran says, omicron is not causing a "wave" of infections but a "tide" of it.

The number of patients with the omicron variant has crossed 3,000 in the neighbouring country of India. Bangladesh already reported 20 cases of omicron. Experts believe that two doses of the Covid vaccine cannot provide total protection from the omicron, but lower the need for hospitalisation. The booster dose, however, provides better protection against the variant to a certain extent. The government's vaccination drive is in full swing, Hasina said. As of

now, 129.5 million vaccine doses have been administered. More than 44 percent of the population have received at least the first dose of the vaccine, while 31 percent got two doses. Bangladesh rolled out booster doses in December and has more than 95 million shots in stock.

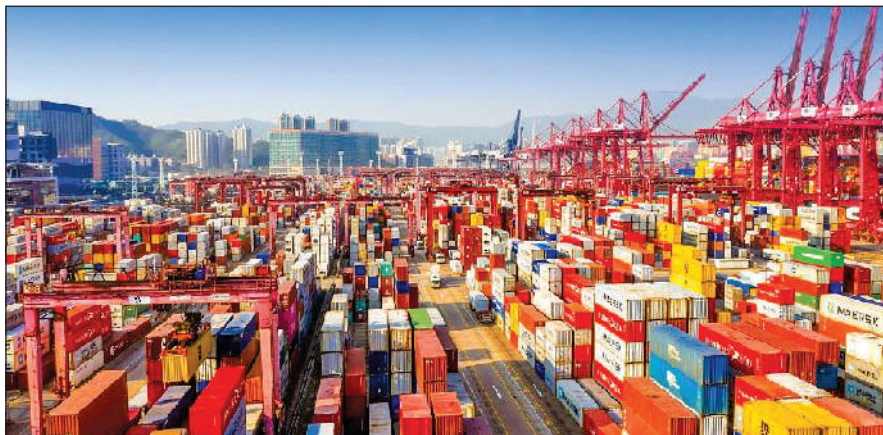
The government launched its mass immunisation programme in phases in 2021 to provide vaccines to the people at the grassroots level. More than 8.3 million people received the vaccine in two days at a programme marking Hasina's birthday. The Covid pandemic has crushed the global economy and has affected the economy of Bangladesh negatively, Hasina said.

"With your help, we have succeeded in overcoming the crisis to some extent. We're trying to keep the economy running with policy support and financial incentive packages."

As of now, the government has offered 28 incentive packages worth Tk 1.8 trillion, with Tk 1.06 trillion already spent by October. Around 67.4 million people and 118,000 organisations have benefited from the packages, said Hasina. Bangladesh's economy grew 5.43 percent in the last fiscal year, despite the pandemic effects, winning praises for its better performance than its regional peers. Per capita income stood at \$2,554 in 2021 **r**

Container growth marks rapid trade rebound

Overall container handling by 17 private depots grew nearly 16 percent in the past year to cross 1.0 million TEUs for the first time, amid a "faster-than-foreseen rebound" in Bangladesh's foreign trade. The growth momentum still persists, signifying the "quickest rebound of the country's external trade amid an all-time-high freight rise," said



sources in the container-handling-trade circles.

According to them, the 16-percent growth in the immediate-past year was compared to previous year's and the volume crossed 1.0 million TEUs for the first time since inception of the inland container depot business in the late 1980s. The growth in the depots' operations is seen sensitive to the country's economic growth as it is at least 3.0 percentage points higher than the Chittagong Port container handling in the year under review.

Their export-cargo handling grew more than 25 percent in 2021 in a robust rebound after the opening up of the economies in Europe and North America. Import handling shows a negative growth by nearly 2.3 percent. But, the sources say, import handling by the depots is not national representative as it handles around 25 percent of all imports. The depots, also called dry ports, handled a total of 709,196 TEUs of exports while imports just 303,016 TEUs in 2021.

"This is a charisma as we grew more than 25 percent amid over 500-percent freight hike," says Nurul Qayyum Khan, managing director at QNS, a depot in Chattogram, and president at BICDA.

Credit goes to all stakeholders, including the apparel makers who

constitute the single-largest export sector in the country. "We thought it may be at best break-even level. But we saw in few months it was 30-percent up," Khan said.

The 17 depots handle almost cent-percent exports of Bangladesh. They have been contributing much to the improvement in port efficiency. Earlier, export procedures used to complete inside the Chittagong Port premises, and such activity had overall negative impact on the port efficiency. Now export stuffing is made at the depots, which means the port activity has widened following operations of the inland container depots.

In the meantime, some forwarders predict that the growth momentum still persists in January and will go on at least few months more despite the onslaught by omicron variant of the pandemic. "Export buoyancy will continue few months more as our marketing team getting huge bookings," says the CEO at a leading forwarding firm.

However, of the 17 depots, KDS depot handled more than 100,000 TEUs of exports in the year followed by SAPL. HSATCY depot handled the lowest number of exports in 2021 at 544 TEUs. On the import front, Portlink handled the biggest number of containers of over 72000 TEUs **r**

Bangladesh proposes FTA with Eurasian Union

A vast market appears in sight as Bangladesh has formally proposed to the Eurasian Economic Union to strike free-trade agreement, officials say, as the country prepares for a socioeconomic status change. The proposal was made last week on the back of a tip from the Eurasian Economic Commission so that it could seek concurrence of its member-states-Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Armenia and Kyrgyzstan.

These five Eastern European countries have over \$1.5 billion annual bilateral trade with Bangladesh, which the commerce ministry officials think can increase manifold if a free-trade pact is inked. The officials concerned say Bangladesh and the EEC signed a memorandum of cooperation in Moscow in May 2019 aiming to take forward bilateral trade. Later, a working group was formed to enhance trade and economic cooperation in 19 sectors.

The first meeting of the working group was held in November last in Moscow, with the Bangladesh side led by commerce ministry additional secretary Noor Md Mahbulul Haq while the EEC side headed by its board member Sergey Glaziev. In the meeting the Bangladesh side had expressed interest in concluding an FTA with the EAEU and the EEC suggested sending a formal proposal

in this regard. A senior commerce ministry official said that Eurasia is a growing market for Bangladesh and also the bilateral trade is increasing substantially day by day.

He said the 19 sectors identified in the memorandum of cooperation would not be focused at a time, and thus Bangladesh initially prioritized trade in goods, services and investment. Alongside these, he adds, the EEC added energy and a couple of sectors for starting work immediately. "Our main target is Russian market," he says, adding that since Russia would not be able to sign any deal unilaterally, "we have to go through EAEU to get any facility there." Bangladesh has already conducted a feasibility study and found that signing FTA with EAEU may yield positive results.

"After getting EEC's consent we will form a negotiation team and start formal talks," he says, preferring not to be named. In fiscal year 2019–20 Bangladesh exported goods worth \$398 million to EAEU member states while imports from there cost \$1.106 billion. Ahead of formal graduation from the least-developed country group in 2026. Bangladesh has intensified its efforts to enter into FTA and Preferential Trade Agreement deals with potential trade partners to make up for eventual GSP loses in the western countries after it graduates into developing-country group. Bangladesh signed first bilateral PTA

with Bhutan in December 2020 and was advancing talks on trade pact with a number of countries which include India, Indonesia, Malaysia, and Sri Lanka **r**

Caution sounded over gaping finance deficits

Some macroeconomic and fiscal challenges surface on the Bangladesh economic front, including the fast-growing balance-of-payments deficit, economists at a review meet cautioned. A government minister echoed some of their concerns and all stressed addressing the problems immediately, failing which the situation could go "out of control." Dr Ahsan H Mansur, executive director at the Policy Research Institute of Bangladesh, said let alone the BoP, the fiscal side is also facing some troubles, including squeezing tax-to-GDP ratio.

He finds subsidy bill growing significantly in recent months while the annual development programme schemes now being prepared on borrowed money. "The pressing issues need to be addressed immediately, within months, even within the weeks, and should be done forcefully. Otherwise, situation will go out of control," Dr Mansur said while speaking on the state of Bangladesh economy in 2021 at a discussion titled "After the pandemic onslaught-economy on strong recovery path".

He finds BoP pressure building up, as the "kerb" market remained up while the central bank has been depreciating its currency gradually. "The current-account deficit now has recorded \$6.0-billion plus in five months of the fiscal year while it was \$3.0-billion plus during the same period a year before," he says about one of the macroeconomic imbalances **r**



Sri Lanka inflation hits record 14pc

Sri Lanka consumer prices shot up a record 14 percent in December, surpassing a previous high of 11.1 from a month earlier, official figures showed as food and fuel shortages worsen. Senior ministers warned parliament last week of a growing food crisis with rice harvests due in March expected to be drastically lower after an agrochemical import ban in 2021 saw farmers abandoning more than 30 percent of agricultural land.

The country's tourism-dependent economy has been hammered by the pandemic with the government imposing broad import restrictions to avert a foreign exchange crisis, triggering a shortage of essential goods.

The Census and Statistics Department said year-on-year inflation in December was the highest since the National Consumer Price Index was established in 2015. It said food inflation also hit a record 21.5 percent, up from 16.9 percent in November and 7.5 percent a year ago. The use of substandard



organic fertilizer and pesticides has sharply reduced vegetable and fruit crop yields. After intense farmer protests, the government lifted its agrochemical import ban in October, but banks are still short of dollars to finance imports.

Supermarkets have been rationing milk powder, sugar, lentils and other essentials for months with a top official warning in December of more restrictions to feed those most in need. But agriculture ministry secretary Udith Jayasinghe was sacked hours after calling for a formal rationing

scheme to ensure that mothers, the elderly and the sick could be fed in the months ahead.

Sri Lanka's foreign reserves have tanked since President Gotabaya Rajapaksa took office in 2019, going from \$7.5 billion to \$3.1 billion at the end of December. The current figure is enough to finance less than two months of imports. International rating agencies have downgraded Sri Lanka over fears of default on its \$35 billion foreign debt. The government has insisted it can meet the obligations **r**

Pakistan on track to get \$32b remittances in 2022

Pakistan is on track to achieve a record \$32 billion in remittance inflows in the current fiscal year 2021–22 as over nine million overseas workers remitted \$15.8 billion during the first half ended on December 31, 2021. The latest data released by the central bank, State Bank of Pakistan, showed that non-resident Pakistanis sent 11.3 percent more money back home during the July-December period compared to the same period in 2021.

“With \$2.5 billion of inflows during December 2021, workers’ remittances continued their strong impetus of remaining above \$2

billion since June 2020. In terms of growth, remittances increased by 2.5 percent month-on-month basis and 3.4 percent year-on-year basis in December 2021,” according to the central bank.

Pakistan economy has received much-needed support and relief



through a consistent upward remittances trend since June 2020. The government expects \$31 billion in remittances for the current fiscal year of 2021–22. Pakistan received record \$29.4 billion remittances during 2020–21 compared to the \$23 billion received during 2019–20. Overseas Pakistanis residing in the UAE and Saudi Arabia contributed a significant share in total remittances as they sent \$3 billion and \$4.03 billion, respectively, during the first half of 2021–22.

Non-resident Pakistanis in the UAE remitted \$453.2 million in December,

while workers in Saudi Arabia sent \$626.6 million, according to the central bank data. United Kingdom (\$340.8 million) and the United States of America (\$248.5 million) were other significant contributors to the remittances in December. "Proactive policy measures by the government and SBP to incentivize the use of formal channels and altruistic transfers to Pakistan amid the pandemic have positively contributed towards the sustained inflows of remittances since 2021," SBP said in a statement **r**

Online businesses become more popular in Bhutan

According to Asian Development Bank, Bhutan is one of the fastest developing countries in the world with an average economic growth of 7.5 percent in 2017. Bhutan's development plans are guided by the Gross National Happiness approach, where all development policies must align to the tenets of GNH. Since 1961, Bhutan has adopted the tradition of implementing five-year plans.

As Internet access and adoption rapidly increase worldwide, many have turned online for employment opportunities. One of the biggest trends of late is the e-commerce market. Electronic commerce is

simply the activity of electronically buying or selling of products on online services or over the Internet.

In many parts of the world, e-commerce is huge with giants like Amazon and Alibaba practically changing the lifestyle of people. Unlike in the olden days, you can currently purchase anything you want over the Internet without having to leave the comfort of your home. While e-commerce in Bhutan is not yet as advanced as in other countries, it's slowly picking up momentum in the kingdom.

The e-commerce business is gaining popularity, especially amongst the youths. With the kingdom's focus on embracing technology and the government's initiatives to encourage entrepreneurship, many are turning to the e-commerce business.

In fact, in August 2021, Bhutan launched a National e-Commerce Portal taking 'Made in Bhutan' products to the international market. Bhutan Made provides a platform for Bhutan's cottage and small industries to market their local products. The portal was launched in recognition of the need to nurture entrepreneurial culture through innovative technologies. Given the small population and market in Bhutan, the portal aims to promote Bhutanese products beyond the kingdom **r**

IMF cuts India GDP forecast to 9pc for FY22

The International Monetary Fund slashed India's economic growth forecast for financial year 2021-22 to 9 percent on concerns over impact of new Covid variant.

In the previous issue of its World Economic Outlook that was published in October 2021, IMF had estimated India's gross domestic product to grow by 9.5 percent for the current fiscal year. For the next fiscal year 2022-23, IMF projects Indian economy to grow at 7.1 percent. IMF chief economist Gita Gopinath said that the slight downgrade is mainly due to the impact of the spread of the omicron variant.

"If you look at the 2021-22 fiscal year, we have a slight downgrade of -0.5 percentage points and for the next fiscal year 2022-23 we have a slight upgrade of 0.5 percentage points. So, growth for the previous fiscal year is now nine percent and for this year now is at nine percent.

We moved it up slightly," Gopinath said during a news conference. According to the IMF, India's prospects for 2023 are marked up on expected improvements to credit growth and, subsequently, investment and consumption, building on better-than-anticipated performance of the financial sector.

According to the first advanced estimates of GDP released few weeks back, the government projected India's GDP to grow by 9.2 percent for the 2022 fiscal year. Besides, the Reserve Bank of India had projected 9.5 percent GDP growth for the same period. Global growth is also expected to moderate from 5.9 percent in 2021 to 4.4 percent in 2022, half a percentage point lower for 2022 than in the October WEO,



largely reflecting forecast markdowns in the two largest economies the US and China.

The IMF slashed the growth forecast for the United States the world's largest economy to 4 percent from the 5.2 percent it predicted in October. The Chinese economy is forecast to grow 4.8 percent this year down from 8.1 percent in 2021 and 0.8 percentage points slower than the IMF expected in October **r**

India may surpass Japan as Asia's 2nd largest economy

India is likely to overtake Japan as Asia's second-largest economy by 2030 when its GDP is also projected to surpass that of Germany and the UK to rank as the world's No.3, IHS Markit said in a report. Currently, India is the sixth-largest economy, behind the US, China, Japan, Germany and the UK. "India's nominal GDP... is forecast to rise from \$2.7 trillion in 2021 to \$8.4 trillion by 2030," IHS Markit said.



"This rapid pace of economic expansion would result in the size of Indian GDP exceeding Japanese GDP by 2030, making India the second-largest economy in the Asia-Pacific region." By 2030, the Indian economy would also be larger in size than the largest Western European economies of Germany, France and the UK.

The long-term outlook for the Indian economy is supported by a number of key growth drivers. "An important positive factor for India is its large and

fast-growing middle class, which is helping to drive consumer spending," IHS Markit said, forecasting that the country's consumption expenditure will double from \$1.5 trillion in 2020 to \$3 trillion by 2030.

For the full fiscal year 2021–22, India's real GDP growth rate is projected to be 8.2 percent, rebounding from the severe contraction of 7.3 percent year-on-year in 2020–21, IHS Markit said.

The Indian economy is forecast to continue growing strongly in the 2022–23 fiscal year, at a pace of 6.7 percent. The rapidly growing consumer market as well as its large industrial sector have made India an increasingly important investment destination for multinationals in many sectors, including manufacturing, infrastructure and services **r**

Pakistan-Lanka trade still insufficient

Dr Bandula Gunawardane, Minister of Trade of Sri Lanka has said that a bilateral trade volume of approximately US 450 million dollars still insufficient as compared to the true potential. Speaking at a meeting of Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry, he highlighted different sectors to increase the exports to Pakistan such

as various kinds of tea, natural rubber, coconut and coconut products, raw and processed fish, papermaking raw materials, gemstones, etc. Dr Bandula Gunawardane mentioned that Pakistan-Sri Lanka Free Trade Agreement inked in 2005 has not achieved its real potential and needs to be revisited to make it more effective and result-oriented. He expressed his resolve to take trade volume to US one billion dollars till 2024.

Hanif Lakhany, VP FPCCI, has expressed his profound grief over the most unfortunate and gruesome Sialkot incident with a Sri Lankan national and respectfully acknowledged the Sri Lankan resolve and resilience to continue to cement the brotherly bilateral relations between the two historically significant strategic partner nations.

Hanif Lakhany added that Sri Lanka is the only country with whom we have trade surplus on a sustainable basis and therefore it will always continue to be an important market for Pakistani business, trade, and industrial community. He also pointed out that Sri Lanka should aggressively promote its wonderful destinations and tourism infrastructure to Pakistanis to broaden people-to-people and business-to-business linkages and relations **r**



IMF defers Pakistan's sixth review until Feb 2

The executive board of IMF has extended the date for the sixth review of Pakistan under the \$6 billion extended fund facility which is scheduled to be carried out on February 2, as per the latest schedule on the IMF website. The Board has reportedly extended the date on the request of the government as the State Bank of Pakistan Amendment Bill, 2021, is yet to be approved by the Senate.



The Senate Standing Committee on Finance and Revenue will take up the SBP bill on January 27, which is likely to be passed in the same sitting. The bill was introduced in the upper house of the Parliament by Senator Mohsin Aziz and was referred to the Senate committee.

The bill was earlier passed by the National Assembly on January 14. As per the earlier schedule, the IMF planned to carry out the sixth review on January 27, a day after the SBP bill is discussed in the upper house.

The IMF earlier postponed the review on January 12 at the request of Finance Minister Shaukat Tarin as the government could not meet two prior conditions for the review, which include Parliament's approval of SBP Amendment Bill, 2021, and Finance Supplementary Bill, 2021. The government had managed to pass the finance bill from both houses

of the Parliament in the third week of January.

Officials in the Ministry of Finance were hopeful that the Senate committee would pass the bill in the same sitting. The finance ministry was hopeful of approving the bill as soon as it was approved by the Senate committee.

Sources had said that even if there was a delay in the Senate with regards to the bill, the IMF would still be able to complete the review because the board meeting of the international lender was scheduled to continue until January 31 **r**

Nepal backs EVs to boost hydro-electricity uptake

Nepalis with battery-operated vehicles can now install a separate household meter to charge their vehicles as part of a drive by the state-owned utility to boost consumption of surplus hydro-electricity from the country's new plants.

Electric vehicle owners can also opt for a larger capacity meter if the approved load for domestic use is insufficient, and the regulator is also increasing the load limit for industries, and offering additional meters for tenants on multi-storey apartments.



A Nepal Electricity Authority board of directors meeting last week decided on a slew of measures to increase consumption of electricity. Nepal is now generating 500MW more than domestic demand, and this surplus is expected to grow during the monsoon. However, due to an imbalance in distribution the country has to import power from India for certain areas of the country, while it sells electricity to India from other parts.

"We must increase the consumption of domestically produced electricity at home to reduce spillover and wastage. That is why we are taking steps to make sure Nepalis have better access to reliable and quality power," says Nepal Electricity Authority chief Kulman Ghising.

With the increase in popularity of electric vehicles NEA is encouraging private companies to set up charging stations in parking lots and open spaces with the new electric meter offer. Local governments will work with the NEA to facilitate the necessary paperwork.

Despite a pledge to be fully electric in its transportation sector by 2031, Nepal had yet to take a significant step or invest accordingly, even though in 2021 it re-introduced a tax rebate for battery-powered vehicles **r**

ADB pledges \$405m to support Afghanistan

The Asian Development Bank has approved \$405 million in grants to support food security and help sustain the delivery of essential health and education services for the Afghan people. Under its Sustaining Essential Services Delivery Project (Support for Afghan People), ADB said, it will provide direct financing to four United Nations agencies which have presence and logistics in Afghanistan, for immediate humanitarian support in response to the unprecedented crisis and to help sustain the country's human development. This direct support will be implemented through the UN agencies and their partner nongovernmental organizations.

Some 22.8 million people are at risk of acute food insecurity, according to UN estimates. The World Food Programme and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations will receive \$135 million and \$65 million respectively.

These funds will enable the provision of emergency food to over 800,000 people and farm inputs, fertilizers, or small farm equipment to around 390,000 households. Around 168,000 people will be covered under food-for-work and cash-for-work programs.

The United Nations Children's Fund will receive \$200 million to maintain basic health care and essential hospital services, covering a target population of about 5.3 million people, and the procurement and deployment of 2.3 million single-dose Covid disease (Covid-19) vaccines for priority groups.

The grant will also enable UNICEF to strengthen 10,000 community-based education classes which use the same curriculum as public schools but are funded by development partners and supervised by village leaders reaching around 264,000 children, 60 percent of which are girls.

UNICEF will provide professional development programs to 10,000 community-based education teachers. It will seek to promote the development of secondary education female teachers and the placement of up to 20,000 adolescent girls from vulnerable families in private schools. Stationary, textbooks, and other learning materials will be provided to 785,000 public school 1st graders through community-based councils.

The United Nations Development Programme will receive \$5 million to monitor project implementation, undertake macroeconomic and social assessments in the country, and assess the impact of ADB's assistance. FAO, UNICEF, and WFP

will engage third-party monitoring firms to verify the delivery of support to targeted beneficiaries and monitor project activities in the field **r**

Maldives import revenue ups, export drops in Dec

Maldives Custom Services revealed that the revenue earned from goods imported in December 2021 increased, while export revenue dropped. According to the statistics publicized by Customs, in December 2021 goods worth MVR 327 million was exported while in 2020 in the same period goods worth MVR 457 million was exported.



This was a 28 percent drop in exports. Various types of fish are exported from Maldives, with the most number of exports made to Thailand. The list also includes Germany, Moraceous, United Kingdom and Japan.

Looking at imports, a 78 percent increase was noted compared to December of 2020 and 2021. In December 2021, goods worth MVR 4.5 billion were imported while in December 2020 it was only MVR 2.5 billion, an increase of 78 percent.

Moreover, Customs revealed that a 23 percent increase was recorded for revenue earned from income earned from various duty's and fees taken from goods imported. In December 2021 a total of MVR 296 million was earned, while in December 2020, MVR 364 was earned **r**



Singapore to put in \$9.2b in Indonesia projects

Singapore will be investing \$9.2 billion to support green investment and build a logistics port hub in Indonesia, President Joko “Jokowi” Widodo said on January 25. The money, he said, will fund renewable energy projects in Batam, Riau Islands province, and in Sumba island and West Manggarai in East Nusa Tenggara province, as well as the development of a logistics hub in Jakarta’s Tanjung Priok port, the country’s largest and busiest seaport.

“Investments in the renewable energy sector continue to be the priority of the Indonesian government to advance green and sustainable development,” he said at a joint press conference with Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong at their Leaders’ Retreat in Bintan.

The two countries also hope to enhance their cooperation in the provision of low-carbon energy, through the facilitation of cross-border electricity trading and financing of low-carbon energy infrastructure. The cooperation was formalized on January 25 through the inking of a memorandum of understanding on Bilateral Partnership on Green and Circular Economy Development, and an MoU on Energy Cooperation.

Jokowi noted that Singapore has been Indonesia’s top foreign direct investor, spending \$7.3 billion from January to September 2021. Lee said: “Singapore has consistently been Indonesia’s top foreign investor since 2014, and despite the pandemic, our investments have grown.” He pointed out that the Kendal Industrial Park has attracted \$1.6 billion in investment and will create “many thousands of jobs”.

But the two countries have been exploring new areas of collaboration such as sustainability, the green economy, the digital economy and



human capital development. “And I’m happy that our officials are already meeting to discuss cooperation on sustainability,” Lee added. Indonesia has been scaling up its green energy plans as it sees renewables as a future driver of economic growth.

Meanwhile Singapore, which relies heavily on gas for power, has made plans to import around 30 percent of its electricity from low carbon sources, such as renewable energy plants, by 2035, with Indonesia being among its potential suppliers.

In October, Singapore’s companies inked two joint development agreements to purchase solar energy from Indonesia. The first was signed by Sembcorp Industries with utility company PT PLN Batam and renewable energy developer PT Trisurya Mitra Bersama (Suryagen).

Sembcorp will work on a large-scale integrated solar and energy storage project in Batam, Bintan and Karimun islands. It comprises around one gigawatt-peak of solar power generation capability and an energy storage system to manage the intermittency for clean energy deployment and export.

The second JDA was inked by Singapore-based power generation and electricity retail company

PacificLight Power and a consortium consisting independent power producer Medco Power Indonesia and electricity company Gallant Venture, part of Salim group, for a 100MW pilot solar power import project from Indonesia to Singapore **r**

Laos inflation highest in 15 months

The prices of goods and services in Laos continue to rise at a rate unseen since August 2020, increasing by 5.27 percent in December when compared to the figures for the same month in 2020. The year-on-year inflation rate has soared above four percent since September 2021, driven by several factors, including the price of food and costs in the communications and transport category and medical care.

For instance, the price of fuel increased by 38.7 percent year-on-year in December, while the cost of pork surged significantly. In addition, the depreciation of the Lao kip against the Thai baht and the US dollar drove up prices in local markets, especially for imported goods. The Lao Statistics Bureau said the consumer price index rose 0.23 percent in December when compared with the figures for November, and year-on-year inflation surged from 5.04 percent to 5.27

percent in December, the highest point recorded in 15 months.

The uncertainty in the global economy could further impact on the Lao economy, notably in the tourism and investment sectors. The Covid-19 pandemic continues to interrupt global supply chains, leading to shortages and driving up prices of goods due to a mismatch between demand and supply. In December, costs in the communications and transport category went up by 1.6 percent month-on-month, and 12.7 percent year-on-year.

The prices of cars and transport equipment surged by 12.4 percent and 20.6 percent year-on-year, respectively. The cost of medical care climbed by 0.5 percent month-on-month and 8.2 percent year-on-year due to the rising cost of medicines and hospital services. The price of medicines rose by 7.8 percent year-on-year, while the cost of hospital and clinic services surged by 13.5 percent year-on-year.

Prices in the restaurant and hotel category went up by 0.7 percent month-on-month and 8.3 percent year-on-year. For instance, the cost of food charged by restaurants and hotels increased by 10.4 percent year-on-year, while the prices of guesthouse and hotel services declined by 0.8 percent year-on-year. In addition, prices in the housing, water, electricity and gas category rose by 0.7 percent month-on-month and 5.8 percent year-on-year.

The cost of construction services went up by 9.5 percent year-on-year, while the price of gas and other energy sources increased by 6.4 percent year-on-year. The cost of clothing and footwear rose by 1.8 percent month-on-month and 5.4 percent year-on-year. For example, the price of men's clothes surged by 6.4 percent, while that of women's clothes went up by 4.2 percent year-on-year. At the

same time, the cost of food and non-alcoholic beverages increased by 2.7 percent year-on-year, with the cost of cooking oil and seasoning surging by 29.6 percent and 19.7 percent year-on-year, respectively **1**

Vietnam buys 80pc of Cambodia's agri-exports

ALMOST 80 percent of Cambodia's agriculture exports worth \$5 billion in 2021 were bought by Vietnam. Cambodia's Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries said Vietnam also bought almost all of the country's cashew nut, pepper and mung bean exports. Citing a report from the ministry, the Vn Express said Cambodian exports of cashew nuts to Vietnam grew 4.6 times from 2020, while pepper and mung bean exports surged four times.

Other produce that Vietnam bought in large amount from Cambodia were rice, grapefruit, bananas and mangoes. Cambodian Agriculture Minister Veng Sakhom told Vietnam's President Nguyen Xuan Phuc during the latter's recent visit that Vietnam was Cambodia's biggest importer among 70 countries and territories in 2021.

He said Vietnamese companies in the country have also harvested about \$200 million worth of latex in the first 11 months of 2021. "Rubber farming

has created jobs for around 33,000 locals. Vietnamese companies also contributed to over 50 percent of Cambodia's banana exports, creating jobs for around 14,000 workers."

Industry officials said the surge in Cambodia's exports of agriculture produce to Vietnam came as many Vietnamese companies have invested into Cambodian farming. Among the reasons attributed for this is Cambodia's affordable land cost as well as lower labor costs. Vietnam Customs said that for the first 11 months of 2021, trade value between Vietnam and Cambodia rose 84 percent year-on-year to \$8.6 billion. Cambodia's exports to Vietnam rose 337 percent in the period.

Meanwhile in another development, Chinese companies have asked several Vietnamese exporters to temporarily not send agriculture shipments by sea. Sweet potato producer Nhat Thanh said that its Chinese partner told them that the import was suspended due to many unavoidable reasons.

The company has a contract to export 50 containers of Thai jackfruit and sweet potatoes every month to China. The reason being cited was that the Chinese government had tightened import procedures starting from this year.

Chinese ports were also congested because of the slow pace of clearance



under the country's Covid-19 prevention policies. According to the Vietnam Fruit and Vegetable Association, export activities by sea to China has been very slow the past week. Many orders are still on the sea and have not yet arrived at the port and there a risk of loss if the port is congested, the association said.

"The Chinese side has reported that they can only check about five vegetables and fruits containers from Vietnam every day due to strict Covid-19 inspection regulations. "Many partners have informed Vietnamese businesses to limit exports by sea," said Dang Phuc Nguyen, general secretary of the Vietnam Fruit and Vegetable Association.

It was also reported that starting next week, China's seaport staff will start taking early Lunar New Year breaks and it will make customs clearance even more difficult. Nguyen said strict quarantine regulations for ship crews caused transshipment operators at ports in southern China to suspend services for at least six weeks during the Lunar New Year holiday. He recommended that Vietnam's agricultural products should limit export shipments during this time.

China has also tightened checks on imported goods and their transport, leading to congestion of Vietnamese container trucks at land border gates over the past month. China is one of Vietnam's top trading partners with the agro-forestry-fishery trade between them growing strongly from \$8 billion in 2015 to \$11 billion in 2021.

China was also Vietnam's second-largest export market for agricultural, forestry and fishery products behind the United States, posting an export turnover of \$8.4 billion in the first 11 months of 2021. It accounts for 19.2 percent of Vietnam's total agricultural exports **r**

China boosts development of outstanding SMEs

Hubei Kofon intelligent transmission equipment Co., Ltd., an innovative small and medium-sized enterprise specializing in the research and development as well as production of reduction gear, provides more than 85 percent of the reduction gears in pipe jacking machines used in the construction of underground pipe galleries and over 80 percent of the speed reducers in the railings for electronic toll collection at expressway toll stations in China.

"We developed and produced the first home-made small planetary gear reducer and the first home-made shield machine speed reducer. Each of these "firsts" represented our success in breaking the long-term monopolies of some developed countries," said Wu Junfeng, chairman of the company.

The company invests 15 percent of its annual sales revenue in R&D, and 80 percent of its annual profit on technological upgrading, Wu disclosed. The company has managed to bring the precision of its reduction gears to the international advanced level and achieve mass production of relevant products, according to Wu, who noted that all of the raw materials and components used by the company are produced

in China. Hubei Kofon intelligent transmission equipment Co., Ltd. is a typical example of China's SMEs that feature specialization, refinement, uniqueness and innovation. They have huge potential and make great efforts to make breakthroughs in key fields and help shore up the country's weak links.

China's recent annual Central Economic Work Conference held in December 2021 stressed the necessity to enhance the core competitiveness of the manufacturing industry and launch a batch of projects for upgrading foundational industrial infrastructure to stimulate the emergence of a large number of SMEs with specialized, sophisticated techniques and unique, novel products. So far, China has incubated over 40,000 such SMEs, including 4,762 "little giant" enterprises, according to Xu Xiaolan, vice minister of industry and information technology.

Each "little giant" company, which refers to a small firm in its early stage of development and focusing on high-end technologies, owns more than 50 valid patents on average; over 60 percent of such companies are engaged in basic industrial fields, over 70 percent have been deeply involved in niche markets for more than 10 years, and over 80 percent are ranked first in the niche markets in



the provinces they are headquartered in; and over 97 percent of these “little giant” companies’ revenue comes from their primary businesses, Xu noted. She believes that SMEs featuring specialization, refinement, uniqueness and innovation serve as a perfect role model of SMEs’ innovation-oriented transformation and become an important force in China’s efforts to develop into a manufacturing powerhouse **r**

China publishes 5-year plan for construction industry

China unveiled a development plan for its construction industry over the 14th Five-Year Plan period (2021–2025) to push the pillar sector of the country’s economy onto a greener, smarter and safer path. The industry will maintain a 6-percent share of the country’s GDP into 2025, according to the document from the Ministry of Housing and Urban-Rural Development. The plan states that the industry will more greatly modernize its industrial chain, form the preliminary stages of a green and low-carbon production mode, see more widespread application of information technologies, and steadily improve the safety and quality of buildings.

Specifically, prefabricated buildings, which are partially or wholly manufactured in factories and then transported to construction sites for assembly, will account for more than 30 percent of the country’s new construction. Building waste at new construction sites will be lower than 300 tonnes per 10,000 square meters.

The government will promote the use of information technologies, such as the Internet of Things and big data, in the building sector by encouraging cooperation between construction companies, internet enterprises and

research institutes. The plan highlights the mass application of construction robots in some fields by 2025.

Efforts will be made to promote parts-producing robots, accelerate research and development on construction-site robots, and explore the application scenarios for robots used for operations and maintenance. Looking to 2035, the plan anticipates that the construction sector will realize comprehensive industrialization, with great improvements to the quality of buildings and its business-innovation capability, while exhibiting world-leading competitiveness, especially in intelligent construction.

China’s construction sector has played an increasingly important role in bolstering the economy and stabilizing employment. In the 13th Five-Year Plan period (2016–2020), the sector expanded 5.1 percent annually in added value, accounting for over 6.9 percent of GDP. In 2020, the sector provided jobs for 53.66 million people **r**

Japan’s imports hit record highs on energy prices

Japan’s exports and imports both reached record highs in December, largely because of surging oil prices and a weaker yen, the government said recently. Japan’s imports in December surged 41 percent from

the same month a year earlier. Exports rose 17.5 percent from the previous year, on stronger shipments of autos and computer chips. Imports have now risen for 11 months straight, while exports have risen for 10 consecutive months, the Finance Ministry said.

The pandemic’s impact on manufacturing, travel and other economic activity has been a huge drag on the world’s third largest economy. Government-ordered restrictions to curb the spread of Covid infections will kick in again for Tokyo and about a dozen other regions, further hampering an economic recovery. Japan logged a trade deficit in 2021 of 1.47 trillion yen (\$12.9 billion), as exports for the year grew 21.5 percent while imports climbed 24.3 percent.

The price of oil and natural gas have soared to multi-year highs recently, adding to global concerns about inflation. Japan imports almost all its oil and gas and pays dearly when prices surge. The weak yen is a boon for Japan’s exports, makes imports more expensive. The US dollar has traded recently at about 114 Japanese yen, up from about 104 yen a year ago.

Koya Miyamae, senior economist for SMBC Nikko Securities, said a speedy recovery in Japan’s exports was unlikely, partly because automakers



face parts-supply problems. Auto parts production has been dented by Covid measures in other parts of Asia. “The recovery is expected to be gradual,” he said. Prime Minister Fumio Kishida is promising to put Japan back on a growth track by encouraging ventures, digital technology and investments in sustainable energy in what he calls “new capitalism.” Some critics say his proposals are vague. Kishida has stressed the nation first needs to deal with Covid, as daily new cases continue to surge from the omicron variant **r**

Japan urges more chip tie-ups with Taiwan

Japan called for greater collaboration with Taiwan on semiconductors at a bilateral economic and trade meeting held recently. Japan-Taiwan Exchange Association Chairman Mitsuo Ohashi praised Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Co’s plans to expand in Japan, saying, “I hope these collaborations can continue to expand, and positively impact the resilience of both Taiwan and Japan’s supply chains.”

“Currently, even though the pandemic has blocked exchanges between Japan and Taiwan, the economic and trade relationships between Japan and Taiwan have continued to deepen,” Ohashi added via video. Although Chinese-claimed Taiwan and Japan do not have formal diplomatic ties, they have close unofficial relations. Both share concerns about China, especially its increased military activities near the two.

The Taiwan-Japan Economic and Trade Conference has typically been held in Taiwan or Japan each year, but because of the pandemic, the two sides met virtually this week. TSMC, the world’s largest contract

chipmaker, announced in 2021 that it would set up a research and development center in Japan, as well as a \$7 billion chip plant with Sony Group. Tech powerhouse Taiwan is at the forefront of efforts to resolve a shortage of chips that has hampered auto production lines and affected consumer electronics makers around the world.

Chiou I-jen, chairman of the Taiwan-Japan Relations Association, thanked Japan for supporting Taiwan’s bid in September to join the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership. He said Taiwan hoped both sides could start a “constructive dialogue” on Taiwan joining the trade pact as soon as possible.

“Taiwan is of crucial importance to the world’s supply chain, economy and trade,” Chiou said, speaking at a Japanese hotel in Taipei. “If (Taiwan) can join the CPTPP, it will greatly increase the importance and visibility of this pact in the global economy.” Taiwan’s bid angered China, which views the island as one of its provinces with no right to the trappings of a state. Taiwan says it is an independent country and has vowed to defend its freedom and democracy **r**

Expats head for exit as Singapore’s Covid controls bite

Atar Sandler arrived in Singapore in 2019, seizing the opportunity to live in a buzzing global city that is also a convenient base to jet off to more exotic locales nearby. But after 2 years of mask-wearing, socialising in small groups and travel restrictions to combat the Covid-19 pandemic, the Israeli human resources professional packed her bags for New York with her husband and children this month. “It’s been like this for so long. And it doesn’t feel like anything’s going to

change here,” said Sandler. “Life is very, very easy here. [But] is it worth it to live such a convenient life without being able to see family, friends, without being able to travel?”

Risk-averse Singapore is trying to balance its approach to living with Covid aiming to protect people in the densely populated island from the disease while reopening its economy and borders to maintain its reputation as a hub for capital and talent.



Companies and expatriate professionals have long been drawn to the business-friendly country, one of the safest places in the world with a high quality of living, political stability, a skilled workforce, ease of travel and low taxes.

But Covid has prompted soul-searching among many relatively affluent expats in Singapore, where foreigners workers make up a fifth of the 5.5 million population. Taiwan economy grows fastest since 2010 as TSMC gives boost. Taiwan’s economy grew at the fastest pace in 11 years in 2021, with growth set to get another bump this year from an unprecedented spending spree by its largest company.

Gross domestic product grew 6.3 percent in 2021, the government’s statistics office said in a statement recently, beating the 6 percent estimate in a Bloomberg survey of economists. That was the fastest rate of expansion since the 10.3 percent rebound in 2010 after the global financial crisis **r**

Export Bahrain facilitates \$130m national exports

Export Bahrain said it had facilitated local exports of over US\$ 130 Million to more than 57 markets worldwide up to December 2021. The initiative, Export Bahrain said, reinforced and increased export opportunities for current and potential exporters. Over 23 percent of exporters entered new markets, and over 10 percent were first-time exporters. Around 7 percent represented service exports, and more than 30 percent of Export Bahrain customers are women business owners.

From January 2021 to December 2021, Bahrain recorded exports of over US\$ 70 Million, a 70 percent jump from 2020 targeting various international markets. Export Bahrain, to date, supported businesses across multiple economic sectors to export more than 56 products and services to 57 markets across the GCC, Asia, Africa, Europe, Australia, United Kingdom, and the United States of America.

Facilities offered are: Export Credit Insurance, Export Shipping & Logistics, International Retail Buyer Initiative, Internationalization & Export Advisory Support, International Tendering & Procurement, Export Facilitation & Deal Support, Export Market Intelligence, E-commerce Facilitation, Startup Exporter Solution, in addition to other support schemes that aim to enable exporters



to take on more challenging and high-growth export markets.

Export Bahrain was able to attract global recognition by winning three prestigious global business awards in 2021, being named as: Best Export Service Facilitators for SMEs — Bahrain 2021 in the International Finance Awards 2021, Best International Deal Facilitators for Start-up Exporters in the Global Business Outlook Awards 2021

Best Company in Accelerating the Growth of Products and Services Made in Bahrain in the Globee Golden Bridge Awards. Zayed R. Alzayani, the Minister of Industry, Commerce and Tourism, and Chairman of Export Bahrain, said “Since its inception in 2018, Export Bahrain has emerged as one of the leading national initiatives aimed

at supporting businesses in Bahrain to internationalize and capture a fair share of export markets in the GCC and beyond through its high-impact support to the private sector.” “Working together, we can ensure that exporting remains a pillar of our economy, benefitting our businesses for years to come.”

Safa Sharif Abdul khaliq, Export Bahrain Acting Chief Executive, said “We are glad to announce that we are eyeing more positive results, inconsistency with the recently announced new economic growth and fiscal balance plan by the Government of the Kingdom of Bahrain for the post-Covid era, as we are certain that it will have a positive impact on the Kingdom’s economic recovery in general and exports in particular” 

IMF upgrades Egypt’s 2022 GDP growth to 5.6pc

The International Monetary Fund upgraded Egypt’s real GDP growth by 0.4 percent in 2022 to 5.6 percent, compared to the fund’s October 2021 projections, according to Petya Koeva Brooks, the IMF’s deputy director of the research department. Brooks made her comments as an answer to Ahram Online’s question on the IMF’s expectations for Egypt and the MENA region as well as the

key drivers behind them. The IMF held a presser recently to launch its updated report on the world economic outlook. Brooks said that Egypt managed to do well amid the pandemic compared to oil-importer countries, adding that the impact of Covid-19 on the Egyptian economy has been well managed so far.

She also pointed out that there is stronger data coming in terms of

Egypt’s economic performance that drove the revising up of its real GDP growth without giving further details. However, Brooks said that the omicron variant and its impact on the economy may bring uncertainty, especially for Egypt’s tourism sector.

For MENA, Brooks noted that the IMF also upgraded the region’s real GDP growth projections as well by 0.4 percent in 2022, mainly driven by

the growth in oil-exporter countries that is built on higher oil prices. It is worth noting that the World Bank also rose its projection for Egypt's real GDP growth in 2022, according to its global economic prospects report that was issued in January. Accordingly, the World Bank upgraded its forecasts for Egypt's real GDP growth to 5.5 percent in the 2021–22 fiscal year while maintaining the country's outlook for the 2022–23 fiscal year at the same rate of 5.5 percent **r**

Iran serious about petro-refinery development

Due to the country's benefit from oil and gas resources, the development of petro-refineries is much easier and relatively cheaper in Iran than other countries in the world, and the country can play a role in regulating the price of petrochemical products in the world due to its proximity to energy sources and its capacity for the development of petro-refinery. And most importantly, if the country's petro-refinery capacity can be expanded to the level of crude oil feed produced in the country, the sanctions on Iran's oil industry will be practically nullified.

It is why Iran is now serious and determined to develop its petro-refineries, although in previous years, despite the country's upstream economic plans based

on preventing the sale of crude oil and natural gas, and developing refining capacity instead to boost production of export products, there seemed to be no will to build petro-refineries. In order to encourage the government and investors to work hard on the development of petro-refinery industry, the Petro-Refinery Development Law was drafted in the Iranian calendar year 1398 (March 2019–March 2020), and then amendments to this law were drafted in the parliament earlier this year.

Two weeks ago, Iranian Oil Minister Javad Oji said some major domestic banks are going to form a consortium with a total investment capacity of four billion dollars to implement petro-refinery projects across the country. Speaking to the press on January 15, Oji said: "A large part of the financial resources required for the implementation of the country's oil projects will be provided with the support of the Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs, and this includes the financial resources needed for the refining sector as well."

Back in March 2021, Oil Ministry announced starting of a program for constructing petro-refinery plants in the southern coastal regions, calling on capable domestic companies to contribute to the program. Following the announcement, 74 domestic companies were authorized for participating in the mentioned

program. In fact, 117 companies had submitted their requests to the Oil Ministry among which 74 were initially approved. The managing director of Lavan Refinery (in Lavan Island south of Iran) announced the construction of a 150,000-barrel petro-refinery next to Lavan Refinery and efforts to increase the refinery's gasoline production by one million liters per day.

Mohammad-Ali Akhbari said the project to build the mentioned petro-refinery is in line with the oil industry's approach to develop the petro-refining plans. He said that major shareholders have welcomed the investment in the new petro-refinery project, negotiations have been held with the private sector, and a working group has been set up to expedite and facilitate the implementation of this project, which will be completed with continuous follow-up.

Increasing the country's petro-refining capacity, in addition to generating more revenue, new job opportunities, economic prosperity, and reviving other industries, is a key defense mechanism against the impacts of the US sanctions on the country's oil industry **r**

Saudi-Iraqi business forum takes place in Riyadh

The Saudi-Iraqi business forum took place in Riyadh, aiming to strengthen the economic relations between Saudi Arabia and Iraq. The strategic forum included important Iraqi officials and executives including Hamid Al-Ghizi, Secretary-General of the Council of Ministers, Dr. Azhar Al-Rubaie, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Planning and the Iraqi Syndicate of Engineers, and more than 40 Iraqi businesspersons.

During the business forum, Saudi Minister of Commerce and Investment, Majid bin Abdullah Al



Qasabi stressed the importance of holding the second conference in Baghdad, Iraq.

The two nations' ties have been improving the past several years with increased collaborations and investments taking place including establishing the Saudi-Iraqi Business Council and the reopening of the new land port of Jadidat Arar on the border between the two nations.

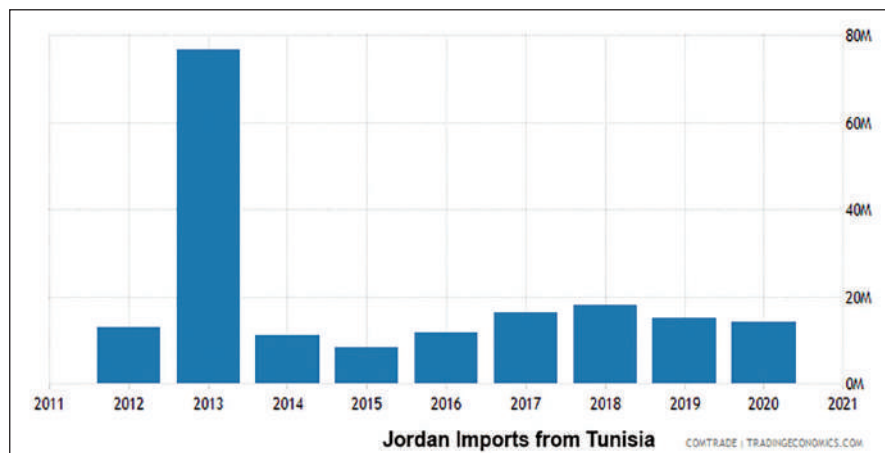
Saudi Arabia and Iraq are seeking to increase the volume of trade by initiating more strategic agreements including Saudi Arabia supplying gas to Iraq to support the country's electricity cuts. The volume of trade between the countries in 2020 was reported to be approximately \$900 million and could be in the billions in the coming years **r**

Jordan-Tunisia trade committee talks economic co-op

Meetings of the first session of the Jordanian-Tunisian Joint Trade Committee were held recently. The meeting, held via teleconference, was attended by Secretary-General of the Ministry of Industry, Trade and Supply Dana Al-Zoubi and Head of the Cabinet of Minister of Trade and Export Development in the Tunisian Ministry of Trade, Khaled bin Abdullah.

Al-Zoubi underlined the importance of the committee's role in highlighting available investment opportunities and capabilities and boosting trade relations by inspecting trade and investment opportunities in the two countries, paving the way for new partnerships between business owners and expanding areas of cooperation between economic businesses in the two countries.

She also stressed the importance of intensifying consultations between senior officials in the two countries,



maintaining the periodicity of holding joint committees, and following up on the implementation of agreements concluded between the two parties in various fields.

The Tunisian official said that indicators are positive on the upward trend of bilateral relations in various fields and sectors, noting that the committee's meeting paves the way for a prosperous era of fruitful cooperation between the two countries based on effective partnership.

In the meeting, it was agreed on many areas of cooperation in the industrial sector, mutual recognition of conformity certificates, preparation and completion of industrial cities and investment, consumer protection, agricultural and customs fields and other topics, while the two sides agreed to start preparing for the meetings of the Higher Committee in its next session.

On the sidelines of the committee, a meeting of the joint technical committee for cooperation in the field of free zones, development zones and industrial cities was held, during which aspects of cooperation between the two sides in this field were discussed. The two sides also made a presentation in the field of free zones to benefit from the experiences and expertise of the two sides in this area **r**

3.1b Kuwait deficit expected in FY23 budget

The Ministry of Finance of Kuwait said the expected deficit in the state's general budget for fiscal (2022–2023) is estimated at 3.1 billion dinars, down 74.2 percent from the current budget that ends on March 31, reports Al-Rai daily.

The daily quoting 'Finance' sources said the draft general budget for fiscal 2022–2023 has been submitted to the Council of Ministers in preparation for the issuance of a decree for deliberation and approval by the National Assembly as the budget that comes into force on April 1, 2022 and ends on March 31, 2023, adding it is calculated on the breakeven price of \$75 per barrel. The Minister of Finance and Minister of State for Economic Affairs and Investment Abdul Wahhab Al-Rasheed was quoted as saying, "Thanks to God, and thanks to concerted efforts and commitment to the directives of the Honorable Council of Ministers to rationalize public spending, the Ministry of Finance has set a budget ceiling that does not exceed 22 billion dinars while maintaining a healthy ratio of capital spending to support the wheel of the national economy."

The ministry confirmed that the expenditures in this budget are less than the current year's budget, as

the specified expenditure ceiling was adhered to, while maintaining a healthy ratio of capital expenditures (construction) to support the economy. It stated that the total estimated revenues were about 18.8 billion dinars, while the estimated oil revenues were 16.7 billion dinars, which reflects an increase of 83.4 percent over the current budget.

It indicated that non-oil revenues were estimated at 2.1 billion dinars, which reflects an increase of 15.3 percent over the current budget, adding that the price of a barrel was estimated on the basis of 65 dollars per barrel as an average for the year.

The ministry said that the total estimated expenditures amounted to about 21.9 billion dinars, explaining that the percentage of salaries and subsidies of the total expenses amounted to about 74.5 percent, while the proportion of capital expenditures of the total expenses amounted to 13.2 percent, and the percentage of other expenses “the rest of the expenses” amounted to about 12.3 percent **r**

Kuwait 5th on Competitiveness of Arab Economies

The report issued by the Arab Monetary Fund titled ‘The Competitiveness of Arab Economies’ shows the competitive edge of the Arab countries which is an

improvement in four countries, the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Qatar and Kuwait, between 2017 and 2020 improvement in a number of sub-sectors while six Arab countries maintained their competitive positions as was recorded in the previous issue of the report, reports Al-Rai daily. The UAE topped the general index of the competitiveness of Arab economies followed by Saudi Arabia in second place, Qatar in third, Morocco fourth, Kuwait fifth and Oman sixth.

The report compared the Arab countries with 9 reference countries from several different regions India, South Korea, Singapore, Thailand, Malaysia, Brazil, Turkey, Spain and South Africa noting that according to that comparison, Singapore ranked first, South Korea in second place, the UAE third, Thailand fourth, Malaysia and Saudi Arabia fifth and sixth, respectively, Qatar ranked seventh, Spain eighth, Morocco ninth and Kuwait tenth, says the daily.

The fifth issue of the “Arab Monetary” report included all Arab countries except for Somalia, Comoros, Djibouti, Syria, and Palestine, due to the lack of sufficient data. On the other hand, the report indicated that the real growth rate of the group of Arab countries shrank by about 5.5 percent in 2020, compared to a

growth rate of 1.7 percent in 2019, attributing this to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, due to the total and partial closure that followed the pandemic, as well as the decline in oil prices globally due to the pandemic, in addition to the impact of the decline in global demand.

The report stated that as a result of the contraction in the real growth rate by 9.1 percent in Kuwait, it ranked 24th among the Arab economies and the nine reference countries in this aspect, explaining that with the exception of the nine countries, Kuwait ranked 15th in the Arab world and the last in the Gulf in the real growth rate.

In the real GDP per capita index, Singapore, Qatar, the UAE, South Korea and Kuwait ranked among the top five, as Qatar scored the highest standard value of 2.57 points at the level of the Arab countries, with the average per capita GDP rising to \$61 thousand above the average between 2017 and 2020, the UAE scored a standard value of 1.57 points, with an average per capita output of about 43 thousand dollars for the same period, while Kuwait scored 0.79 points and Bahrain 0.46 points with an average share of 29.6 thousand dollars per person in Kuwait and 23.7 thousand dollars per person in Bahrain during the same period.

With regard to inflation rates, the report showed that the average inflation rate rose in five Arab countries by more than 13 percent over the average between 2017 and 2020. These countries are the Sudan, Lebanon, Yemen, Egypt and Libya, while Kuwait ranked eighth in the Arab world and first in the Gulf in the average increase in the rate of inflation by recording 2.7 percent over the same period **r**



UK urges airlines to fly more as economy reopens

Airlines must operate more flights in Britain this summer as demand recovers from the pandemic or lose lucrative take-off and landing slots, the UK government warned recently. Carriers operating in Britain are currently using about 50 percent of their slots as the sector continues to recover from the long-running Covid crisis. This has helped to ensure that airlines have avoided carbon-intensive “ghost flights” with none or few travellers during pandemic restrictions.

Carriers operating in Britain have traditionally been required to use 80 percent of their slots, but the target was suspended owing to Covid. From the end of March, carriers must use slots at least 70 percent of the time in order to keep them, the Department for Transport said in a statement. But airlines will also “benefit from added flexibility over when they are justified not to use them,” the DfT said.

During the pandemic, the rule had been eased “to provide financial



stability to the sector and prevent environmentally damaging ghost flights,” added Aviation Minister Robert Courts. “As demand for flights returns, it’s right we gradually move back to the previous rules while making sure we continue to provide the sector with the support it needs.” The news was welcomed by London airports. The move “strikes the right balance between driving recovery and promoting competition,” said a Heathrow spokeswoman.

The aviation sector was slammed by the Covid-19 health emergency that started in early 2020, grounding planes worldwide and decimating demand for air travel.

Recovery has been hampered by frequent changes to travel restrictions and testing requirements following the emergence of the omicron variant late 2021 **r**

IEA warns of potential volatile year for oil market

The oil market could face another volatile year but demand is surging higher as the sector has weathered the impact of the omicron Covid variant, the International Energy Agency said.

The IEA revised its demand estimates, saying it increased by 5.5 million barrels per day in 2021 and would grow by 3.3 million bpd in 2022 200,000 bpd higher than its previous estimate. This will take total demand above pre-Covid levels in 2022, at 99.7 million barrels per day.

While Covid cases have soared, “measures taken by governments to contain the virus are less severe than during earlier waves and their impact

on economic activity and oil demand remain relatively subdued,” the IEA said. But the agency, which advises governments on energy policy, said supply growth expectations were being tempered by “disruptions and production shortfalls” by some members of the OPEC+ group of top oil producers.

“If demand continues to grow strongly or supply disappoints, the low level of stocks and shrinking spare capacity mean that oil markets could be in for another volatile year in 2022,” the IEA said. Oil prices tanked as the pandemic emerged in 2020, but have recovered since then, reaching their highest levels in more than seven years **r**

US, European equities fall ahead US inflation data

US and European stock markets fell on as investors are concerned that a looming interest rate hike awaits all-important US inflation numbers later in the week. Traders have been on the edge since the US Federal Reserve (Fed) signalled last week that it was ready to raise interest rates sooner than expected to tame runaway prices.

“Risk sentiment has been pressured by concerns surrounding rising rates and the Fed’s indication to tighten policy more aggressively,” said a note by market analysts Briefing.com.

Investors will now be keeping a watch on inflation readings out of both the United States and China this week as they try to assess the outlook for the global economy with rocketing energy costs and supply snarls compounding problems caused by the fast-spreading omicron Covid variant.

“With a quiet start to the week for big corporate and economic announcements, markets could remain in a holding pattern until when US inflation figures will reveal just how acute inflationary pressures are in the world’s largest economy,” said AJ Bell investment director, Russ Mould.

Wall Street opened lower, with the Dow Jones Industrial Average down 0.4 percent, the S&P 500 shedding 0.7 percent and the tech-heavy Nasdaq sinking 1.2 percent. Europe’s main markets London, Paris and Frankfurt were all down in afternoon trading, but Asia finished the day higher.

Stock markets had mostly fallen after US data showed fewer new jobs than expected were created in December even as wages saw strong gains. The closely watched non-farm payrolls figure came in well short of forecasts, marking a disappointing end to the year.

Fed officials are now faced with the problem of having to adjust monetary

policy to rein in prices while at the same time avoid damaging the economic recovery and causing a panic on markets as the cheap cash that has fuelled a near-two year rally dries up. The bank has already started tapering its vast bond-buying programme put in place at the start of the pandemic and has signalled it could start lifting interest rates from record lows from March, with some observers predicting three hikes this year.

There were also indications officials were considering reducing its massive bond holdings, putting further upward pressure on lending costs. The yield on 10-year Treasuries, a key indicator of future interest rates, climbed last week at its fastest pace in almost a year.

Bitcoin down

In other markets, oil prices were slightly lower as traders mulled the supply-side impact of ongoing unrest in Kazakhstan, which is a member of the enlarged OPEC+ producers’ grouping. Following a record year in 2021, Bitcoin the world’s biggest cryptocurrency fell below the \$40,000 mark, its lowest level since September. After taking a tumble, it recovered some ground, rising to \$41,198. Its recent decline meanwhile continues to drag down other cryptocurrencies.

“The main culprit behind the slump in crypto prices is the Fed’s decision to withdraw massive liquidity, which has been pumped into markets since the onset of the Covid pandemic,” Naeem Aslam, chief market analyst at Avatrade, said. In corporate news, video game publisher Take-Two announced a \$12.7 billion to acquire Zynga in a transaction that will combine the creators of “Grand Theft Auto” and “Farmville” **r**

IMF slashes global growth outlook amid omicron wave

The omicron variant of Covid-19 is creating an obstacle course for the global economy, which will slow growth this year, notably in the world’s two largest economies, the IMF said. The Washington-based crisis lender cut its world GDP forecast for 2022 to 4.4 percent, half a point lower than the October estimate, due to the “impediments” caused by the latest outbreak, though those are expected to begin to fade in the second quarter of the year.

“The global economy enters 2022 in a weaker position than previously expected,” the IMF said in the quarterly update to its World Economic Outlook, adding that “the emergence of the omicron variant in late November threatens to set back this tentative path to recovery.” Meanwhile, “Rising energy prices and supply disruptions have resulted in higher and more broad-based inflation than anticipated,” which is projected to last longer than previously expected.

After the solid recovery in 2021 when the global economy grew an estimated 5.9 percent, the IMF cut projections for nearly every country with India a notable exception but it was the downgrades to the United States and China that had the biggest impact. “These impediments are expected to weigh on growth in the



first quarter of 2022,” the report said. “The negative impact is expected to fade starting in the second quarter, assuming that the global surge in omicron infections abates and the virus does not mutate into new variants that require further mobility restrictions.”

The International Monetary Fund once again stressed that controlling the pandemic is critical to the economic outlook and urged widespread vaccinations in developing nations, which have fallen short even as advanced economies have moved to deploying booster shots among their already highly-vaccinated populations. “Without this worldwide effort, the virus will be more likely to mutate further and extend the pandemic’s global grip,” the fund said **r**

Omicron slams UK retail recovery

Restrictions imposed in the wake of the omicron Covid variant have “wiped out” much of a recent recovery enjoyed by UK bricks-and-mortar stores, the British Retail Consortium revealed recently. It comes as UK businesses and consumers face mounting fallout from surging inflation, including higher interest rates.

Much of the progress made in late 2021 “was wiped out in December as

surging omicron cases and new work-from-home advice deterred many from shopping in-store, particularly in towns and city centers”, said BRC chief executive Helen Dickinson. “Nevertheless, while UK footfall saw a moderate decline compared to previous months, it remained above levels of other major European economies, as the country avoided some of the more severe restrictions implemented elsewhere,” she added in a statement.

The number of shoppers visiting UK stores slid 18.6 percent in December compared with two years earlier, or before the onset of the Covid pandemic, according to the BRC. “December footfall capped a challenging year for brick-and-mortar stores, which saw footfall down one-third on pre-pandemic levels,” Dickinson added. The UK, already among the worst hit countries in Europe by the pandemic with a virus death toll of nearly 150,000, has seen a fresh surge in cases owing to the arrival of the omicron variant in late November. More than one in 20 people had Covid-19 in the week ending December 31 the highest UK infection rate recorded during the pandemic.

British companies are meanwhile suffering a “huge headache” because of continuing supply chain disruptions, soaring inflation and rising energy costs, a business group warned. The British Chambers of

Commerce said its study of almost 5,500 companies found that a record 58 percent expect an increase to their prices in the quarter. “The persistent weakness in cash flow is troubling because it leaves businesses more exposed to the economic impact of omicron, rising inflation and potential further restrictions,” noted Suren Thiru, head of economics at the BCC.

Despite the unprecedented number of virus cases in the UK, Prime Minister Boris Johnson has opted not to introduce tougher restrictions in England, arguing the rising levels of hospitalizations and serious illness do not yet require more measures. But other UK regions have tightened rules, with devolved governments in Edinburgh, Cardiff and Belfast all rolling out post-Christmas curbs on socialising and large events. The Bank of England, meanwhile in December, lifted its main interest rate to 0.25 percent to combat decade-high British inflation.

The BoE raised the rate from a record low 0.1 percent but left unchanged its massive stimulus package. It marked the first increase in more than three years and made Britain the first of the G7 nations to lift borrowing costs since the start of the pandemic. UK annual inflation rocketed in November to 5.1 percent, more than double the BoE’s 2.0-percent target **r**

Australians are biggest e-commerce spenders: report

Australians are among the biggest e-commerce spenders in the world, a new report reveals, with each consumer dropping more than \$2,700 each year on digital shopping platforms. In its 2022 Global Overview Report, social media marketing firm Hootsuite and creative agency We Are Social state that local consumers might not be the most regular online shoppers,



but spend big when they do log on. Around half of all Australian internet users aged 16 to 64 admitted to buying something online at least once a week, but Australia ranked below the global average for habitual online shoppers.

Similarly, around one in four local respondents said they buy something online each week through their mobile device, below the global average of 30.6 percent. However, Australians admitted to spending an average of \$2,776 per year via e-commerce, well above the global average of \$1,435.

The figure put Australia in 11th place worldwide, behind leaders Hong Kong (\$4,497) and the US (\$4,386), but ahead of comparable economies in Canada (\$2,669) and New Zealand (\$2,474). Average Australian spending per e-commerce user increased roughly \$667 in the 12 months leading to January 2022, the data suggests.

The data comports with local spending habits through multiple rounds of Covid-19 lockdowns through 2021, which forced Australians to become even more familiar with online shopping portals. It also backs up a recent survey of local small business owners, who said that revenue from online sales has surpassed brick-and-mortar takings for the first time. Australia postand logistics giants have also reported massive upticks in parcel deliveries, with a combination of Covid-19 infections and mass demand forcing the former to temporarily suspend pick-ups from e-commerce providers in late 2021 **r**

Soaring German inflation to hit most vulnerable

Germans have good reason to worry about rising consumer prices. With inflation at a 30-year high, it's the country's neediest who will be hit the hardest. It's a rainy and cold day



in January, not the most pleasant conditions for volunteers waiting under a tent set up outside the Bonner Tafel, a food pantry in the western German city of Bonn. But the cold is ideal for the vegetables and other fresh products they collected earlier from nearby supermarkets.

Not quite fresh enough to be sold at market, the random assortment of leftovers will soon be distributed for free to needy locals, including pensioners, young families and unemployed people trying to make ends meet.

"Locals" should be understood in a very general sense. Some spend up to a four-hour round trip making a weekly trek to the Tafel to collect whatever the pantry can offer them that day. "We notice that towards the end of the month, when money is getting tight, then they start asking, "Can I have a bit more?" Then you realize how tight the situation is," Tafel volunteer Günther Giesa tells DW.

"And that's when a solid inflation, which isn't compensated for in some other way, becomes worrisome." Figures out showed that consumer prices in Germany went up 3.1 percent in 2021, the largest spike in 30 years. In December, prices were up more than 5 percent compared with the same month a year earlier.

This is a stark contrast to 2020, when German inflation clocked in at 0.5 percent, and significantly higher than the inflation target of 2 percent the European Central Bank has set for the eurozone, where Germany is located. Consumer prices are exploding in economies around the globe.

The high cost of energy is one of the main culprits. Demand for fuel surged as pandemic restrictions were lifted in 2021. At the same time, OPEC+ has stuck with its plan to only gradually restore cuts in output made during the pandemic. With renewable energy sources not developed enough to make up for the gap in demand, a lot of money is chasing limited supplies.

It's the high energy bills that are pushing up overall production costs, making it difficult to offer competitive prices, manufacturers say. While consumers struggle to keep up with the price hikes, businesses are wondering if they'll be able to keep the lights on.

"Everyone knows that Germany had a thriving textile industry in the 1950s until the business moved almost entirely to Asia because production was cost-prohibitive," Heino Buddenberg, chief technical officer at Waelzholz, a saw blade manufacturer, said in January. "I would really like to avoid such a fate for our industry but I can't rule it out" **r**

সিআইপি কার্ড পেলেন ১৭৬ ব্যবসায়ী

আন্তর্জাতিক বাণিজ্যে অংশগ্রহণের মাধ্যমে দেশে পণ্য উৎপাদন, বিপণন, বৈদেশিক মুদ্রা আহরণ ও বেসরকারি পর্যায়ে কর্মসংস্থান সৃষ্টির মাধ্যমে বেকারত্ব হ্রাসে ভূমিকা রাখায় বিভিন্ন খাতের ১৭৬ জন উৎপাদক-রফতানিকারককে কমার্শিয়াল ইম্পোর্টার্স পার্সন (সিআইপি) কার্ড দেয়া হয়েছে। সম্প্রতি আয়োজিত এক অনুষ্ঠানে এসব ব্যবসায়ীর হাতে সিআইপি কার্ড তুলে দেন বাণিজ্যমন্ত্রী টিপু মুনশি। দেশের সফল রফতানিকারক, শিল্পপতি ও ব্যবসায়ীদের মধ্যে জাতীয় পর্যায়ে উৎসাহ, উদ্দীপনা ও পারস্পরিক সুষ্ঠু প্রতিযোগিতার পরিবেশ সৃষ্টি করার পাশাপাশি তাদের রফতানি বাণিজ্যে উৎসাহিত করতে প্রতিবছর সিআইপি কার্ড দেয় সরকার।

২০১৮ সালে পণ্য রফতানিতে অবদান রাখায় দেশের ১৩৮ জন ব্যবসায়ীকে এবং পদাধিকারবলে ট্রেড ক্যাটাগরি থেকে ব্যবসায়ীদের শীর্ষ সংগঠন এফবিসিসিআইয়ের ৩৮ পরিচালককে সম্প্রতি সিআইপি মর্যাদা দেয়া হয়। এক্ষেত্রে বিবেচিত রফতানি পণ্যের মধ্যে রয়েছে কাঁচা পাট, পাটজাত দ্রব্য, চামড়া জাত দ্রব্য, হিমায়িত খাদ্য, ওভেন

গার্মেন্টস, কৃষিজাত পণ্য, এগ্রো প্রসেসিং, লাইট ইঞ্জিনিয়ারিং প্রডাক্টস, হস্তশিল্পজাত দ্রব্য, ফার্মাসিউটিক্যালস, কম্পিউটার সফটওয়্যার, নিটওয়্যার, প্লাস্টিকজাত পণ্য, স্পেশালাইজড টেক্সটাইল বা হোম টেক্সটাইল ও সিরামিক।

কার্ড প্রদান অনুষ্ঠানে বাণিজ্যমন্ত্রী টিপু মুনশি বলেন, ব্যবসায়ীদের অবদানের কারণে বাংলাদেশকে এ পর্যায়ে আনা সম্ভব হয়েছে। এবার রফতানি আয় ৫ হাজার ১০০ কোটি ডলার ধরা হয়েছে। আপনাদের জন্য এ অর্জন হবে। কারণ, ভিয়েতনাম, চীন থেকে অনেকে বাণিজ্য করতে এ দেশে আসছেন, তা কাজে লাগাতে হবে, যার মাধ্যমে রফতানি বাড়বে। ২০২৪ সালে তা ৮০ বিলিয়ন (৮ হাজার কোটি) ডলার হবে। বাণিজ্যমন্ত্রী বলেন, বাংলাদেশ উন্নয়নের রোল মডেল পর্যায়ে আসতে বিশেষ অবদান রাখছেন সিআইপিরা। পণ্যের বাজার প্রসার ও বহুমুখীকরণের মাধ্যমে এগিয়ে যেতে হবে। করোনার কারণে গত দুই বছর সিআইপি কার্ড দেয়া সম্ভব হয়নি। এবারে পরিস্থিতির কিছুটা উন্নতি হলে কার্ড দেয়ার উদ্যোগ নেয়া হয়েছে।

এফসিসিআই সভাপতি মো. জসিম উদ্দিন বলেন, ব্যবসায়ীদের সিআইপিতে ভূষিত করায় আন্তর্জাতিক পরিমণ্ডলে দেশের মর্যাদা বাড়ছে। ২০২১ সাল অত্যন্ত গুরুত্বপূর্ণ ছিল উল্লেখ করে তিনি বলেন, এ বছরই স্বল্পোন্নত দেশ থেকে উন্নত দেশের মর্যাদা অর্জন করা সম্ভব হয়েছে। মাথাপিছু আয় বেড়ে ২ হাজার ৫৫৪ ডলারে পৌঁছে গেছে। করোনাকালেও বাণিজ্য ও রফতানি বেড়েছে। রমজান মাসে পণ্যের আমদানির ব্যাপারে তিনি বলেন, আমদানি করতেই হবে। কিন্তু বাংলাদেশ ব্যাংকের বেশকিছু সিদ্ধান্তের কারণে ব্যবসায়ীরা ক্ষতিগ্রস্ত হবে। রফতানি বাজার ধরে রাখার জন্য গবেষণা ও উদ্ভাবনে জোর দিতে হবে বলেও মন্তব্য করেন তিনি।

বাণিজ্য সচিব তপন কান্তি ঘোষ বলেন, করোনাকালেও বাণিজ্যে ভালো করছে। গত ছয় মাসে ৩০ বিলিয়ন ডলার রফতানি আয় করা সম্ভব হয়েছে। এবার শুধু আরএমজি থেকেই ৩৫ বিলিয়ন ডলার আশা করা যায়। সরকার ও প্রাইভেট সেক্টর একসঙ্গে কাজ করলে সাফল্য অর্জন হবেই।

বাংলাদেশে মুদ্রানীতির আরো কার্যকর বাস্তবায়ন জরুরী; এডিবি'র পর্যবেক্ষণ

জাতীয় বাজেটে প্রবৃদ্ধির লক্ষ্যমাত্রা নির্ধারণ করে সরকার। আর প্রবৃদ্ধির সে লক্ষ্যকে সহজতর ও ত্বরান্বিত করে কেন্দ্রীয় ব্যাংক। এক্ষেত্রে কেন্দ্রীয় ব্যাংকের অন্যতম প্রধান অস্ত্র হলো মুদ্রানীতি। রেপো, রিভার্স রেপোসহ মুদ্রানীতির প্রধান উপকরণগুলোর সার্থক প্রয়োগের মাধ্যমে মুদ্রাবাজারের গতিপথ নিয়ন্ত্রণ করে কেন্দ্রীয় ব্যাংক। যদিও দেশের মুদ্রাবাজার বা ব্যাংক খাতে মুদ্রানীতির উপকরণগুলো ক্রমেই গুরুত্ব হারাচ্ছে বলে মনে করছে এশিয়ান ডেভেলপমেন্ট ব্যাংক

(এডিবি)। কেন্দ্রীয় ব্যাংকের ঘোষিত মুদ্রানীতির টুলস বা উপাদানগুলোর কার্যকারিতা নিয়ে সংস্থাটির পর্যবেক্ষণ হলো, বাংলাদেশে মুদ্রার সঞ্চালনে গৃহীত নীতিগুলো সঠিকভাবে কাজ করছে না। এখানে অর্থনীতিতে মুদ্রানীতির উপাদানগুলোর (যেমন; সঞ্চিৎ মুদ্রা এবং নীতি সুদহার) বাস্তবিক প্রভাব তাত্ত্বিক বর্ণনা থেকে অনেকটাই ভিন্ন।

এ বক্তব্যের সপক্ষে উদাহরণ দিতে গিয়ে এশীয়

ঋণদাতা সংস্থাটি বলছে, দেশে রিজার্ভ মুদ্রা বৃদ্ধি বা রেপো রেট (নীতি সুদহার) হ্রাস করা হলেও এম২ (অর্থ সরবরাহ) বৃদ্ধি পাচ্ছে না। মুদ্রাস্ফীতিতেও এর প্রত্যক্ষ প্রভাব নেই। এডিবি'র ভাষ্য অনুযায়ী, কেন্দ্রীয় ব্যাংক নীতি সুদহার কমালেও দেশের মূল্যস্ফীতি বাড়ছে না। আবার ব্যাপক মুদ্রার (এম২) বড় পরিবর্তন এলেও সেটি বাণিজ্যিক ব্যাংকগুলোর ব্যালান্সশিটে পরিবর্তন ঘটাতে পারছে না। আবার সরকারের সঞ্চয়পত্র মুদ্রানীতির উপকরণ না হলেও অর্থনীতিতে এর কার্যকর প্রভাব দৃশ্যমান।

মনিটারিং পলিসি ট্রান্সমিশন ম্যাকানিজম অব বাংলাদেশ শীর্ষক এক সাম্প্রতিক প্রতিবেদনে এডিবি'র এ পর্যবেক্ষণ উঠে আসে। অতীতের কয়েকটি গবেষণার উদ্ধৃতি দিয়ে এডিবি বলছে, উন্নয়নশীল দেশগুলোয় মুদ্রানীতির সঞ্চালন ব্যবস্থা তুলনামূলক দুর্বল। তবে বাংলাদেশে মুদ্রার সঞ্চালনে গৃহীত নীতিগুলো সঠিকভাবে কাজ করছে না তা পরিষ্কার নয়। এর একটি কারণ হতে পারে দেশে প্রচলিত ব্যাংকিং পদ্ধতিগুলোর ভিন্নতা। উদাহরণস্বরূপ, রিজার্ভ মুদ্রায় পরিবর্তন এলে বাংলাদেশের বাণিজ্যিক



ব্যাংকগুলোর ব্যালাসশিটে পর্যাপ্ত মাত্রায় প্রভাব নাও ফেলতে পারে। আবার বাণিজ্যিক ব্যাংকগুলোর ঋণ বিতরণ প্রবণতায় রেপো রেটে পরিবর্তনের তেমন কোনো প্রভাব নাও দেখা যেতে পারে। এক্ষেত্রে হয়তো দেশের ব্যাংক খাতের উল্লেখযোগ্য অংশ জুড়ে থাকা ইসলামিক ব্যাংকিং পদ্ধতিটাই পার্থক্য তৈরি করে দিচ্ছে। এছাড়া তুলনামূলক ক্ষুদ্রায়তনের আর্থিক বাজার ও অনুন্নত অ্যাসেট মার্কেটের কারণেও হতে পারে। অর্থনীতিতে আর্থিক বাজারের আয়তন বড় না হলে বা অ্যাসেট মার্কেটের মান ভালো না হলে মুদ্রানীতির সঠিকভাবে কাজ করাটা কঠিন হয়ে পড়ে।

দেশের মুদ্রা ব্যবস্থায় মুদ্রানীতির উপাদানগুলোর প্রভাব জাতীয় সঞ্চয়পত্রের চেয়েও কম বলে মত দিয়েছে এডিবি। সংস্থাটির বক্তব্য অনুযায়ী, মুদ্রা ব্যবস্থায় মুদ্রানীতির উপাদানগুলোর উল্লেখযোগ্য প্রভাব দেখা যাচ্ছে না। আবার অর্থনীতিতে সরকারি সঞ্চয়পত্র এমনভাবে প্রভাব ফেলেছে, যাতে মনে হতে পারে এটি মুদ্রানীতিরই একটি উপাদান। মুদ্রা ব্যবস্থায় সঞ্চয়পত্রকে গুরুত্বপূর্ণ করে তোলার ক্ষেত্রে সরকারের বড় ভূমিকা রয়েছে। সরকারের ঋণগ্রহণে সঞ্চয়পত্রের ব্যবহার মুদ্রা সঞ্চালন নীতির কার্যকারিতাকে দুর্বল করে ফেলেছে। অন্যদিকে এমটি ও মূল্যস্ফীতির ওপর সঞ্চয়পত্রের তাৎপর্যপূর্ণ প্রভাব আছে।

গত কয়েক বছরে সঞ্চয়পত্রের মাধ্যমে জনগণের কাছ থেকে বড় অংকের অর্থ সংগ্রহ করেছে সরকার। বিষয়টি আর্থিক নীতি ও ঋণ ব্যবস্থাপনাকে জটিল করে তুলেছে বলে অভিযোগও উঠেছে। এ বিষয়ে এডিবি মনে করছে, শুধু রাজস্ব নীতি নয়, কেন্দ্রীয় ব্যাংকের সুদহার প্রভাবিত করার ক্ষমতাকে সীমিত করে আনে সঞ্চয়পত্রের ব্যাপক ব্যবহার। এজন্য সঞ্চয়পত্র ইস্যু করার ক্ষেত্রে আরো সতর্ক হওয়া প্রয়োজন।

দেশের ঋণ বাজারকে আরো শক্তিশালী করে তোলার জন্য বন্ড মার্কেটকে আরো সক্রিয় করে তোলার পরামর্শ দিয়ে সংস্থাটি বলছে, ভালোভাবে সক্রিয় হলে বন্ড মার্কেট দেশের পেনশন ব্যবস্থার উন্নয়নেও সহায়ক হবে। এছাড়া পেনশন তহবিলের মতো প্রাতিষ্ঠানিক বিনিয়োগের জন্য দীর্ঘমেয়াদি ঋণের প্রয়োজন পড়ে, যা ঋণ বাজারের বিকাশে অত্যন্ত গুরুত্বপূর্ণ ভূমিকা রাখে। মুদ্রানীতির বাজারভিত্তিক উপাদানকে কাজে লাগানোর পাশাপাশি নিয়মতান্ত্রিক সুদহারকেন্দ্রিক নীতি গ্রহণের মাধ্যমে মুদ্রা সঞ্চালন নীতির উন্নয়ন ঘটানো সম্ভব বলে মনে করছে এডিবি।

অর্থনৈতিক উন্নয়ন ও এসডিজি অর্জনে অপরিহার্য জ্বালানি খাত; আইসিসিবি'র অভিমত

যেকোনো দেশের অর্থনৈতিক উন্নয়নের পেছনের প্রধান সূচক হলো পর্যাপ্ত বিদ্যুৎ সরবরাহ। স্বাধীনতার পর দেশের জনসংখ্যার মাত্র ৩ শতাংশের বিদ্যুৎ ব্যবহারের সুযোগ ছিল। বর্তমানে বাংলাদেশেরসহ ২৩ হাজার মেগাওয়াটের বেশি বিদ্যুৎ উৎপাদন ক্ষমতা রয়েছে এবং ১০০ শতাংশ জনগোষ্ঠী বিদ্যুতের আওতায় এসেছে। বাংলাদেশ পাওয়ার ডেভেলপমেন্ট বোর্ডের (বিপিডিবি) সূত্রানুসারে, বিদ্যুৎ উৎপাদনে উদ্বৃত্ত প্রায় আট হাজার মেগাওয়াট। ইন্টারন্যাশনাল চেম্বার অব কমার্স, বাংলাদেশের (আইসিসিবি) ত্রৈমাসিক বুলেটিনের সম্পাদকীয়তে এমনটা উল্লেখ করা হয়।

সম্পাদকীয়তে উল্লেখ করা হয়, বাংলাদেশের জিডিপি গত এক দশকে অর্থাৎ ২০১০ থেকে ২০১৯ সালে ৬ দশমিক ৫ থেকে ৮ দশমিক ২-এ উন্নীত হয়েছে। ২০১০ সালে সরকারি খাতে বাংলাদেশের বিদ্যুৎ উৎপাদন ক্ষমতা ছিল ৩ হাজার ৫০০ মেগাওয়াট। ২০১০ সালের এপ্রিলে ঢাকায় অনুষ্ঠিত আইসিসি বাংলাদেশের এনার্জি ফর গ্রোথ সম্মেলনে ১৫টি দেশের বিশেষজ্ঞরা অংশ নিয়েছিলেন, তারা ফিদেল রামোসের ফিলিপিন্সের প্রেসিডেন্ট থাকাকালের সাফল্যের কথা উল্লেখ করে টেন্ডার ছাড়াই বেসরকারি খাতের জন্য বিদ্যুৎ খাত উন্মুক্ত করার পরামর্শ দিয়েছিলেন। সরকার পরামর্শটি অনুসরণ করেছে এবং এর ফলে দেশে এখন উদ্বৃত্ত বিদ্যুৎ উৎপাদন ক্ষমতা রয়েছে।

বর্তমানে দেশের বাণিজ্যিক জ্বালানি সম্পদ হলো: দেশীয় প্রাকৃতিক গ্যাস, কয়লা, আমদানি করা তেল, এলপিগ্যাস, আমদানি করা এলএনজি, আমদানি করা বিদ্যুৎ ও জলবিদ্যুৎ। এর মধ্যে

প্রাথমিক এনার্জির প্রায় ২৭ শতাংশ পূরণ করে বায়োগ্যাস এবং বাকি ৭৩ শতাংশ পূরণ হয় বাণিজ্যিক এনার্জি দ্বারা। প্রাকৃতিক গ্যাস বাণিজ্যিক বিদ্যুতের প্রায় ৬২ শতাংশ (৮ শতাংশ আমদানি করা এলএনজিসহ) এবং আমদানি করা তেল দ্বারা বাকি অংশের সিংহভাগের প্রয়োজন মেটানো হয়। এ সময় সাম্প্রতিক বিশ্ব প্রবণতা অনুসারে এলএনজি ও কয়লার সরবরাহ কেবল অনিশ্চিত নয়, কয়লা ও গ্যাসভিত্তিক প্লান্ট থেকে বিদ্যুৎ উৎপাদন ব্যয়বহুল হয়ে উঠতে পারে বলে মন্তব্য করা হয় সম্পাদকীয়তে।

সম্পাদকীয়তে উল্লেখ করা হয়, দেশের ট্রান্সমিশন ক্ষমতা গত এক বছরে ১২ হাজার ৮৮৮ সার্কিট লাইন কিমি থেকে মাত্র ১০৪ সার্কিট লাইন কিলোমিটার বেড়ে ১২ হাজার ৯৯৬ কিমি হয়েছে। আগামী দু-তিন বছরের মধ্যে রামপাল বিদ্যুৎকেন্দ্রে ১ হাজার ৩২০ মেগাওয়াট, মাতারবাড়ী বিদ্যুৎকেন্দ্রে ১ হাজার ২০০ মেগাওয়াট এবং রূপপুর বিদ্যুৎকেন্দ্রে ২ হাজার ৪০০ মেগাওয়াট বিদ্যুৎ উৎপাদন শুরু হলে পরিস্থিতি আরো খারাপ হবে। এছাড়াও, অধিক সিস্টেম লস, নতুন প্লান্ট সম্পূর্ণ করতে বিলম্ব, কম দক্ষতাসম্পন্ন প্লান্ট, অনিয়মিত বিদ্যুৎ সরবরাহ, বিদ্যুৎ চুরি এবং পাওয়ার প্লান্ট রক্ষণাবেক্ষণের জন্য তহবিলের ঘাটতি সমাধানে মনোযোগ দেওয়া উচিত।

বর্তমানে বাংলাদেশের জিডিপি ৪৫৫ বিলিয়ন মার্কিন ডলার, যা ১৯৭১ সালে ছিল মাত্র ৬ দশমিক ২ বিলিয়ন মার্কিন ডলার। আশা করা হচ্ছে যে, ২০২২-২৩ অর্থবছরে জিডিপি ৫১০ বিলিয়ন ডলারে উন্নীত হবে। বিশেষজ্ঞদের মতে, ৭ শতাংশের বেশি অর্থনৈতিক প্রবৃদ্ধি ধরে রাখতে ২০৩০ সালের মধ্যে বাংলাদেশের আনুমানিক ৩৪ হাজার মেগাওয়াট বিদ্যুতের প্রয়োজন হবে। তাই বিশেষজ্ঞরা পরামর্শ দেন যে অন-শোর এবং অফ-শোর গ্যাস ও তেল অনুসন্ধান, বিদ্যুৎ



সঞ্চালন এবং বিতরণ বিভাগগুলোর উন্নয়নের জন্য সর্বোচ্চ অগ্রাধিকার দেয়া উচিত।

সম্পাদকীয়তে বলা হয়, গত এক দশকে অর্থনৈতিক উন্নয়নের ধারাবাহিকতায় বাংলাদেশ বিশ্বের অন্যতম দ্রুততম বর্ধনশীল অর্থনীতির তালিকায় স্থান পেয়েছে। এ সাফল্যের পেছনে রয়েছে বিশাল জনগোষ্ঠী, শক্তিশালী তৈরি পোশাক খাতের রফতানি আয় এবং স্থিতিশীল সামষ্টিক অর্থনীতি। অব্যাহত রফতানি আয় এবং ব্যয় পুনরুদ্ধার চলতি অর্থবছরে অর্থনৈতিক প্রবৃদ্ধির হার ৬ দশমিক ৪ শতাংশে উঠতে সাহায্য করবে। বাংলাদেশের ওপর সাম্প্রতিক বিশ্বব্যাপকের পর্যালোচনায় উপরোক্ত বিষয়গুলো উঠে এসেছে।

রেমিট্যান্সে প্রণোদনা বেড়ে ২.৫ শতাংশ

প্রবাসীদের বৈধ পথে পাঠানো রেমিট্যান্সের ওপর প্রণোদনা বাড়ানো হয়েছে। আগে এ প্রণোদনা ২ শতাংশ ছিল, তবে ২০২২ সালের প্রথম দিন থেকে তা বেড়ে আড়াই শতাংশ করার ঘোষণা দিয়েছে অর্থ মন্ত্রণালয়। সম্প্রতি অর্থমন্ত্রণালয়ের এক সংবাদ বিজ্ঞপ্তিতে এ তথ্য জানানো হয়। বিজ্ঞপ্তিতে বলা হয়, মানুষের সার্বিক জীবনমান উন্নয়ন, বৈদেশিক মুদ্রার রিজার্ভ বৃদ্ধি, মানি লন্ডারিং প্রতিরোধ, কর্মসংস্থান সৃষ্টি ও বাংলাদেশের অর্থনৈতিক উন্নয়নে প্রবাসীদের পাঠানো রেমিট্যান্স অত্যন্ত গুরুত্বপূর্ণ।

সেই বিবেচনায় বিদেশে কর্মরত বাংলাদেশী শ্রমজীবী মানুষের কষ্টার্জিত বৈদেশিক আয় বৈধ উপায়ে দেশে প্রত্যাবাসন উৎসাহিত করার লক্ষ্যে রেমিট্যান্স পাঠানোর বিপরীতে সরকারের ২ শতাংশ প্রণোদনা/নগদ সহায়তা প্রদানের বিদ্যমান হার বাড়িয়ে ২ দশমিক ৫ শতাংশে নির্ধারণের সিদ্ধান্ত নেয়া হয়েছে। বর্ধিত এ হার চলতি ২০২১-২২ অর্থবছরের ১ জানুয়ারি থেকে কার্যকর হবে।

এর আগে ২০১৯-২০ অর্থবছরে প্রথমবারের মতো রেমিট্যান্সের বিপরীতে ২ শতাংশ হারে প্রণোদনা বা নগদ সহায়তা প্রদানের সিদ্ধান্ত নেয়া হয়। যার কারণে ব্যাংকিং চ্যানেলে অর্থ পাঠানোর পরিমাণ বৃদ্ধি পেয়ে ওই অর্থবছরে দাঁড়ায় ১৮ দশমিক ২০ বিলিয়ন মার্কিন ডলার। যা তার আগের অর্থবছরের তুলনায় প্রায় ১৩ শতাংশ বেশি।

নভেল করোনাভাইরাসজনিত মহামারীর মধ্যে অপ্রত্যাশিত হারে বেড়েছিল প্রবাসী আয়। অর্থনীতির প্রতিটি সূচক বিধ্বস্ত হলেও চাক্সা

ছিল রেমিট্যান্স প্রবাহ। ২০২০-২১ অর্থবছরে প্রবাসীরা রেকর্ড পরিমাণ রেমিট্যান্স দেশে পাঠিয়েছিলেন। টাকার অংকে যা ছিল ২ হাজার ৪৭৭ কোটি ডলার। রেমিট্যান্সের এ প্রবৃদ্ধি ছিল ৩৬ শতাংশেরও বেশি। যদিও চলতি ২০২১-২২ অর্থবছরের শুরু থেকেই রেমিট্যান্সের প্রবৃদ্ধির রথ থেমে গেছে। উল্টো অর্থবছরের প্রথম পাঁচ মাসে (জুলাই-নভেম্বর) রেমিট্যান্স কমেছে প্রায় ২১ শতাংশ। শুধু তাই নয়, গত নভেম্বর মাসে রেমিট্যান্স আহরণ গত দেড় বছরের মধ্যে সর্বনিম্ন অবস্থায় নেমে আসে। এমন পরিস্থিতিতে এ খাতে প্রণোদনা বাড়ানোর ঘোষণা দিল সরকার।

সম্প্রতি বাংলাদেশ ব্যাংকের প্রকাশিত প্রতিবেদনে তথ্য বলছে, নভেম্বর মাসে ব্যাংকিং চ্যানেলে প্রবাসী বাংলাদেশীরা দেশে ১৫৫ কোটি ৩৭ লাখ ডলার রেমিট্যান্স পাঠিয়েছেন। প্রবাসী আয়ের এ অংক গত বছরের নভেম্বরের চেয়ে ২৫ শতাংশ বা ৫২ কোটি ৫০ লাখ টাকা কম। গত বছরের নভেম্বরের রেমিট্যান্স এসেছিল ২০৭ কোটি ৮৭ লাখ ডলার। শুধু তাই নয়, নভেম্বরের রেমিট্যান্সের এ পরিমাণ গত ১৮ মাসের মধ্যে সর্বনিম্ন। এর আগে ২০২০ সালের মে মাসের দেশে সর্বনিম্ন ১৫০ কোটি ডলার রেমিট্যান্স আসে। বাংলাদেশ ব্যাংকের তথ্য বলছে, ২০২১-২২ অর্থবছরে প্রথম পাঁচ মাসে (জুলাই-নভেম্বর) দেশে রেমিট্যান্স এসেছে ৮৬০ কোটি ৮৮ লাখ ডলার (বাংলাদেশী মুদ্রায় যার পরিমাণ ৭৩ হাজার ৮৬৪ কোটি টাকা)।

যা আগের অর্থবছরের একই সময়ের তুলনায় ২২৮ কোটি ৫২ লাখ ডলার বা প্রায় ২১ শতাংশ কম। ২০২০-২১ অর্থবছরের প্রথম পাঁচ মাসে রেমিট্যান্স আসে ১ হাজার ৮৯ কোটি ৪১ লাখ ডলার। দেশীয় মুদ্রায় যার অংক ছিল ৯২ হাজার ৬০০ কোটি টাকা।

প্রতিবেদনের তথ্য অনুযায়ী, ২০২১-২২ অর্থবছরের অক্টোবর মাসে দেশে রেমিট্যান্স এসেছে ১৬৪ কোটি ৬৮ লাখ ডলার। সেপ্টেম্বরে এসেছিল ১৭২ কোটি ৬৭ লাখ ডলার, আগস্টে রেমিট্যান্স আসে ১৮১ কোটি ডলার। যা তার আগের মাস জুলাইয়ের চেয়ে ৬ কোটি ১৪ লাখ ডলার কম। চলতি অর্থবছরের প্রথম মাস জুলাইয়ে দেশে রেমিট্যান্স আসে ১৮৭ কোটি ১৪ লাখ ডলার। অন্যদিকে ২০২০-২১ অর্থবছরের অক্টোবর মাসে দেশে রেমিট্যান্স এসেছিল ২১০ কোটি ২১ লাখ ডলার। এছাড়া সেপ্টেম্বরে এসেছিল ২১৫ কোটি ১০ লাখ ডলার, আগস্টে রেমিট্যান্স আসে ১৯৬ কোটি ৩৯ লাখ ডলার। আর গত অর্থবছরের প্রথম মাস জুলাইয়ে দেশে রেমিট্যান্স আসে ২৫৯ কোটি ৮২ লাখ ডলার।

২০২১ সালে রপ্তানির পরিমাণ প্রায় সাড়ে ৪ হাজার কোটি ডলার

নভেল করোনাভাইরাসের প্রভাব কাটিয়ে গত বছর রফতানি খাত তুলনামূলক চাক্সা অবস্থায় ফেরে। রফতানি আয়ে বড় উল্লেখ্য দেখা গিয়েছে। বাংলাদেশ রপ্তানি উন্নয়ন ব্যুরোর (ইপিবি) তথ্য বলছে, সদ্যসমাপ্ত বছরে বাংলাদেশ রফতানি আয় আগের বছরের চেয়ে বেড়ে প্রায় সাড়ে ৪ হাজার কোটি ডলারে দাঁড়িয়েছে। ইপিবির তথ্য অনুযায়ী, ২০১৯ সালে বাংলাদেশ মোট ৩ হাজার ৯৩৩ কোটি ৭৩ লাখ বা ৩৯ বিলিয়ন ডলারের পণ্য রফতানি করে। এর পরের বছর অতিমারীর অভিঘাতে ১৫ শতাংশ কমে পণ্য রফতানি হয় ৩ হাজার ৩১৬ কোটি ৭৮ লাখ ডলারের। তবে ২০২১ সালে রফতানি বেড়ে ৪ হাজার ৪৬৬ কোটি ডলারে পৌঁছেছে।

পুরো বছরই প্রবৃদ্ধির হারে বেশ ওঠানামার চিত্র দেখা গিয়েছে। জানুয়ারি শুরুই হয় নেতিবাচক প্রবৃদ্ধি দিয়ে, যা ২০২০ সালের একই সময়ের চেয়ে ৪ দশমিক ৯৯ শতাংশ কম। দ্বিতীয় মাস ফেব্রুয়ারিতেও রফতানিতে ছিল ঋণাত্মক প্রবৃদ্ধি। তবে মার্চে দুই অংকের প্রবৃদ্ধি হয় পণ্য রফতানিতে। যার হার ছিল ১২ দশমিক ৫৯ শতাংশ।

বছরের প্রথম প্রান্তিকের পর দ্বিতীয় প্রান্তিকে বিশ্ববাজারের আমদানি চাহিদায় বড় উল্লেখ্য দেখা যায়। ২০২০-এর এপ্রিলের তুলনায় ২০২১ সালের এপ্রিলে রফতানি প্রবৃদ্ধি হয় ৫০২ দশমিক ৭৫ শতাংশ। মে মাসেও ছিল বড় উল্লেখ্য। রফতানি প্রবৃদ্ধি মে মাসে ছিল ১১২ দশমিক ১১ শতাংশ। জুনে রফতানি প্রবৃদ্ধি হলেও তা নেমে আসে ৩১ দশমিক ৭৭ শতাংশে।

২০২১ সালের তৃতীয় প্রান্তিকে আবারো নেতিবাচক রফতানি প্রবৃদ্ধি হয়। জুলাইয়ে আগের বছরের তুলনায় রফতানি কম হয় ১১ দশমিক ১৯ শতাংশ। আগস্টে স্বাভাবিক রফতানি প্রবৃদ্ধি হয়, যার হার ছিল ১৪ দশমিক শূন্য ২ শতাংশ। সেপ্টেম্বরে আবারো বেড়ে প্রবৃদ্ধি হয় ৩৭ দশমিক ৯৯ শতাংশ। শেষ হওয়া চতুর্থ প্রান্তিকের প্রথম মাস অক্টোবরে রফতানি প্রবৃদ্ধি ছিল ৬০ দশমিক ৩৭ শতাংশ। নভেম্বরে প্রবৃদ্ধি হয় ৩১ দশমিক ২৫ শতাংশ। আর ডিসেম্বরে প্রবৃদ্ধি হয় ৪৮ দশমিক ২৭ শতাংশ। বছরের শেষ মাসে রফতানি হয়েছে ৪৯০ কোটি ডলারের বেশি মূল্যের পণ্য। যেখানে ২০২০ সালের ডিসেম্বরে রফতানি হয়েছিল ৩৩০ কোটি ৯৮ লাখ ডলারের পণ্য।

ব্যবসার খরচ কমাতে চট্টগ্রাম বন্দরের সক্ষমতা বৃদ্ধির আহ্বান

দেশের অন্যতম সমুদ্রবন্দর চট্টগ্রাম বন্দরের সক্ষমতা বাড়ানো হলে ব্যবসায়িক খরচ অন্তত ৫ শতাংশ কমানো সম্ভব হবে। একই সঙ্গে বিদেশী উদ্যোক্তাদেরও এদেশে বিনিয়োগের অগ্রহ বাড়বে। সম্প্রতি পোর্টস অ্যান্ড শিপিং বিষয়ক এফবিসিসিআই স্ট্যাডিং কমিটির প্রথম সভায় এমন মন্তব্য করেন বক্তারা। এতে প্রধান অতিথি ছিলেন এফবিসিসিআইয়ের সভাপতি মো. জসিম উদ্দিন। সভায় আরো উপস্থিত ছিলেন এফবিসিসিআইয়ের সহ-সভাপতি মো. আমিন হেলালী, সহ-সভাপতি মো. হাবীব উল্লাহ ডন, কমিটির চেয়ারম্যান ড. মো. পারভেজ সাজ্জাদ আকতার, স্ট্যাডিং কমিটির ডিরেক্টর ইনচার্জ এএম মাহবুব চৌধুরী ও কমিটির অন্য সদস্যবৃন্দ।

এফবিসিসিআই সভাপতি মো. জসিম উদ্দিন বলেন, বঙ্গবন্ধু শিল্পনগরসহ দেশের অন্যান্য অর্থনৈতিক অঞ্চলে পুরোদমে উৎপাদন শুরু হলে চট্টগ্রাম বন্দরের ওপর চাপ কয়েক গুণ বাড়বে। তাই এখনই বন্দরের সক্ষমতা বাড়ানো প্রয়োজন। তিনি বলেন, বর্তমানে ঢাকা-চট্টগ্রাম মহাসড়কে পণ্যবাহী যানের গতি ঘণ্টায় ৪০ কিলোমিটার। এ গতি দ্বিগুণ করা গেলে রফতানি খাতের প্রতিযোগিতা সক্ষমতা ৬ শতাংশ বাড়বে। এছাড়া চট্টগ্রাম বন্দর দিয়ে আমদানি করা রাসায়নিক খালাসের আগে আলাদাভাবে পরীক্ষা করাতে হয়। অথচ চট্টগ্রাম কাস্টমসে পর্যাণ্ড পরীক্ষাগার নেই। এ পরীক্ষা করাতে গিয়ে ব্যবসায়ীদের ১০ থেকে ১২ দিন সময় লাগে। বন্দরসংক্রান্ত এসব সমস্যা সমাধানে ত্বরিত পদক্ষেপ নেয়া উচিত বলে মন্তব্য করেন এফবিসিসিআই সভাপতি। এ সময় বন্দরকেন্দ্রিক সমস্যাগুলো চিহ্নিত করে স্বল্প, মধ্য ও দীর্ঘমেয়াদি সমাধান বের করতে স্ট্যাডিং কমিটিকে তাগিদ দেন মো. জসিম উদ্দিন।

সভায় এফবিসিসিআইয়ের সহ-সভাপতি মো. আমিন হেলালী বলেন, ভবিষ্যতে আরো কিছু বন্দরের কার্যক্রম শুরু হবে। পরিকল্পনামাফিক কাজ করতে পারলে, এসব বন্দরের সম্ভাবনা কাজে লাগিয়ে দেশের অগ্রগতিকে আরো ত্বরান্বিত করা যাবে। সভায় চট্টগ্রাম বন্দর দিয়ে গাড়ি আমদানি করলে মোংলা বন্দরের তুলনায় দ্বিগুণ ভাড়া দিতে হয় বলে অভিযোগ করেন এফবিসিসিআইয়ের সহ-সভাপতি মো. হাবীব উল্লাহ ডন। একই দেশের বিভিন্ন বন্দরে ভিন্ন ভাড়ার হার অর্থোক্তিক বলেও মন্তব্য করেন তিনি।

স্ট্যাডিং কমিটির ডিরেক্টর ইনচার্জ এএম মাহবুব চৌধুরী জানান, গত কয়েক বছরে

চট্টগ্রাম বন্দরের মুনাফা কয়েক গুণ বেড়েছে। অলাভজনক সেবামূলক সংস্থা হয়েও মুনাফার পরিমাণ বাড়তে আরো ট্যারিফ বাড়ানোর উদ্যোগ নিচ্ছে বলে অভিযোগ করেন তিনি।

ব্যবসাবান্ধব পরিবেশ সৃষ্টির লক্ষ্যে ট্যারিফ না বাড়ানোর আহ্বান জানান কমিটির চেয়ারম্যান ড. মো. পারভেজ সাজ্জাদ আকতার। তিনি জানান, বেশির ভাগ ট্যারিফ ডলারে পরিশোধ করতে হয়। তাই ট্যারিফ বাড়লে, বৈদেশিক মুদ্রার ব্যয়ও বাড়বে। তাছাড়া বিদেশী জাহাজ মালিকরাও এ সুযোগে ভাড়া বাড়িয়ে দিতে পারে। সেক্ষেত্রে আমদানীকৃত পণ্যের দাম বাড়ার শঙ্কা তৈরি হবে। মুক্ত আলোচনায় আমদানি-রফতানি কার্যক্রমের গতি বাড়তে বন্দর ও কাস্টমস কর্মকর্তাদের সহযোগিতা আশা করেন স্ট্যাডিং কমিটির সদস্যরা।

যুক্তরাষ্ট্রে তৈরি পোশাক রফতানি ৭২১ কোটি ডলার ছাড়াবে

সদ্যসমাপ্ত বছরের ১১ মাসে যুক্তরাষ্ট্রে বাংলাদেশ থেকে সব ধরনের তৈরি পোশাক রফতানি প্রবৃদ্ধির হার বেড়েছে। ২০২১ সালের ডিসেম্বরের হিসাবে এর পরিমাণ ৭২১ কোটি ডলার ছাড়িয়ে যেতে পারে। নতুন বছরের প্রথম সপ্তাহে যুক্তরাষ্ট্রের বাণিজ্য বিভাগের অধীনস্থ অফিস অব টেক্সটাইলস অ্যান্ড অ্যাপারেলসেস (ওটিইএক্সএ) প্রকাশিত প্রতিবেদনে উল্লেখিত তথ্য বিশ্লেষণ করে এ ধারণা করছেন সংশ্লিষ্টরা।

বাংলাদেশ থেকে যুক্তরাষ্ট্রে রফতানি করা পোশাকের মধ্যে কটন ট্রাউজার, নিট শার্ট ও নিট ব্লাউজ উল্লেখযোগ্য। কোভিড-১৯ মহামারীর সময়ে বড় ধরনের প্রতিকূলতার মধ্যে পড়ে বাংলাদেশের তৈরি পোশাক রফতানি খাত। এ সময় উৎপাদন অব্যাহত রাখলেও কঠিন চ্যালেঞ্জের সম্মুখীন হন পোশাক শিল্প মালিকরা। ভ্রমণ নিষেধাজ্ঞার কারণে বাতিল হতে থাকে

একের পর এক ক্রয়াদেশ। উল্লেখযোগ্য হারে কমে আসে রফতানির পরিমাণ। ২০২০ সালের এমন পরিস্থিতি কাটিয়ে উঠতে সময় লাগে ২০২১ সালের এপ্রিল পর্যন্ত। গত বছরের মে মাস থেকে দেশের তৈরি পোশাক রফতানির স্বাভাবিক চিত্র ফিরে আসতে শুরু করে।

যুক্তরাষ্ট্রের প্রকাশিত প্রতিবেদনে উল্লেখ করা হয়, বিদায়ী বছরের প্রথম ১১ মাসে যুক্তরাষ্ট্রে বাংলাদেশের তৈরি পোশাক রফতানি ৩১ দশমিক ১৯ শতাংশ বৃদ্ধি পেয়েছে। ২০২১ সালের জানুয়ারি থেকে নভেম্বর পর্যন্ত দেশটিতে অন্তত ৬৬১ কোটি ডলারের তৈরি পোশাক রফতানি করে ঢাকা। ২০২০ সালের একই সময়ে এর পরিমাণ ছিল প্রায় ৫০৪ কোটি ডলার। ওটিইএক্সএর দেয়া তথ্য অনুযায়ী গড়ে বিদায়ী বছরের প্রথম ১১ মাসের প্রতি মাসে বাংলাদেশ যুক্তরাষ্ট্রে সব মিলিয়ে অন্তত ৬০ কোটি ডলার মূল্যের তৈরি পোশাক রফতানি করে। ২০২১ সালের মে থেকে আগের বছরের একই সময়ের তুলনায় প্রতি মাসেই রফতানি প্রবৃদ্ধি উর্ধ্বমুখী প্রবণতায় রয়েছে। ফলে সংশ্লিষ্টরা মনে করেন ডিসেম্বরের রফতানি প্রবৃদ্ধির অংকও উর্ধ্বগামী ধারাতেই থাকবে। সে অনুযায়ী বলা যায় প্রবৃদ্ধির এ হার ৭২১ কোটি ডলার ছাড়িয়ে যাবে।

এছাড়া বিদায়ী বছরের প্রথম ১১ মাসে যুক্তরাষ্ট্রে বাংলাদেশের শুধু তৈরি পোশাক রফতানি ৩০ দশমিক ৬৮ শতাংশ বেড়েছে। ২০২১ সালের জানুয়ারি থেকে নভেম্বর পর্যন্ত দেশটিতে অন্তত ৬৩৬ কোটি ডলারের তৈরি পোশাক রফতানি করে ঢাকা। এর আগের বছর একই সময়ে এ অংক ছিল প্রায় ৪৮৭ কোটি ডলার। ২০১৯ সালে এক বছরে যুক্তরাষ্ট্রে প্রায় ৫৯২ কোটি ডলারের কটনভিত্তিক পোশাক রফতানি করে বাংলাদেশ। পরিসংখ্যান অনুযায়ী করোনাকালে যুক্তরাষ্ট্রে বাংলাদেশের তৈরি পোশাকের রফতানি ১১ দশমিক ৮২ শতাংশ কমে গিয়ে দাঁড়ায় ৫২২ কোটি ডলারে।



TRADE INFORMATION

January 2022

The following **Trade Inquiries** have been received in the Chamber from different sources abroad. Interested member-firms may like to contact them directly without any obligation on the part of DCCI.

FAIRS & EXHIBITIONS

AAHAR - International Food & Hospitality Fair

Date: 08 March - 12 March, 2022
 Venue: Pragati Maidan, New Delhi, India
 Organizer: India Trade Promotion Organization
 Contact Person: Ms. Rashmi Panwar, Manager
 E-mail: rashmipanwar@itpo.gov.in
 Website: www.indiatradefair.com

ITB Berlin

Date: 09 March - 13 March, 2022
 Venue: Messe Berlin, Berlin, Germany
 Organizer: Messe Berlin GmbH
 Contact Person: Ms. Teresa Baumgarten
 E-mail: teresa.baumgarten@messe-berlin.de
 Website: www.itb-berlin.com

Food Ingredients China

Date: 15 March - 17 March, 2022
 Venue: National Convention & Exhibition Center
 Shanghai, China
 Organizer: CCPIT Sub-Council of Light Industry
 E-mail: info@ccpitsli.org
 Website: www.fic.cfaa.cn

Blockchain Africa Conference

Date: 18 March - 19 March, 2022
 Venue: Virtual
 Organizer: Bitcoin Events Pty Ltd.
 Contact Person: Ms. Sonya Kuhnel
 E-mail: sonya@bitcoinevents.co.za
 Website: www.blockchainafrica.co

The Property Investor Show

Date: 01 April - 02 April, 2022
 Venue: ExCeL London, London, UK
 Organizer: Property Investor Media Ltd
 Contact Number: 0044 20 8877 0610
 E-mail: enquiries@propertyinvestor.co.uk
 Website: www.blockchainafrica.co

Virtual Lagos International Trade Fair

Date: 15 April - 14 April, 2022
 Venue: Virtual
 Organizer: Lagos Chamber of Commerce & Industry
 Contact Person: Mr. SEUN AKINFOLARIN
 Tel: +234 807 750 1982
 E-mail: seun.akinfolarin@lagoschamber.com
 Website: www.lagosinternationaltradefair.com

China Import and Export Fair

Date: 15 April - 19 April, 2022
 Venue: Virtual
 Organizer: China Foreign Trade Centre (Group)
 Contact Number: (07) 3392 1421
 Website: www.thecantonfairchina.com

The Franchise Expo – Toronto

Date: 23 April - 24 April, 2022
 Venue: Metro Toronto Convention Centre, Mississauga, Canada
 Organizer: National Event Management Inc.
 Contact Person: Mr. Michael Hyam
 Tel: 1-800-891-4859 x270
 E-mail: michael@nationalevent.com
 Website: www.franchiseshowinfo.com

China Import and Export Fair (Phase 2)

Date: 23 April - 27 April, 2022
 Venue: China Import and Export Fair(Canton Fair Complex),
 Guangzhou, China
 Organizer: ChinaDirect Sourcing Services Pty Ltd
 Tel: (07) 3392 1421
 E-mail: info@chinadirectsourcing.com.au
 Website: www.thecantonfairchina.com

International Apparel & Textile Fair

Date: 09 May - 11 May, 2022
 Venue: Dubai World Trade Centre, Dubai, UAE
 Organizer: Nihalani Events
 Tel: +971 55 884 6186
 E-mail: bhavna@internationaltextilefair.com
 Website: www.internationalappareltextilefair.com

R+T Asia

Date: 25 May - 27 May, 2022
 Venue: National Convention & Exhibition Center
 Shanghai, China
 Organizer: VNU Exhibitions Asia Ltd.
 Tel: 400 821 3388
 E-mail: rtasia@vnuexhibitions.com.cn
 Website: www.en.rtasia.net

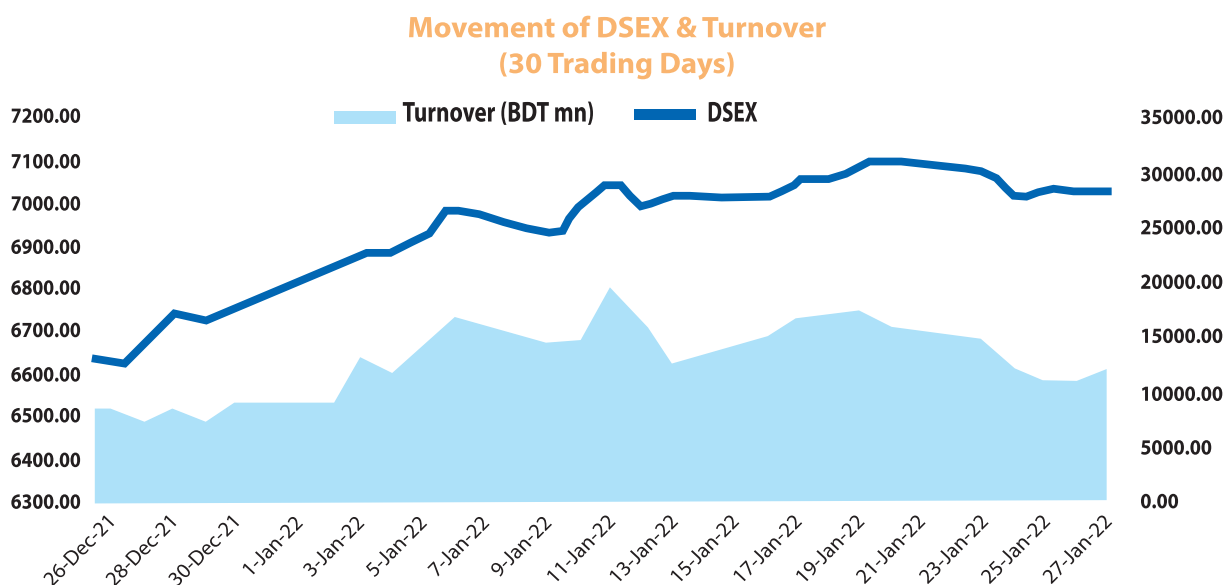
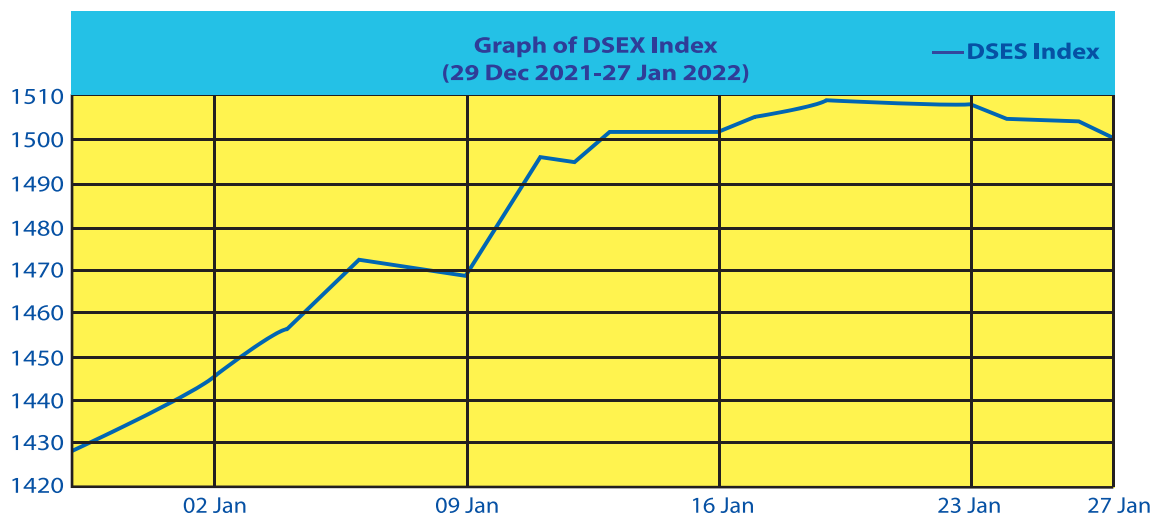
China International Agrochemical & Crop Protection Exhibition

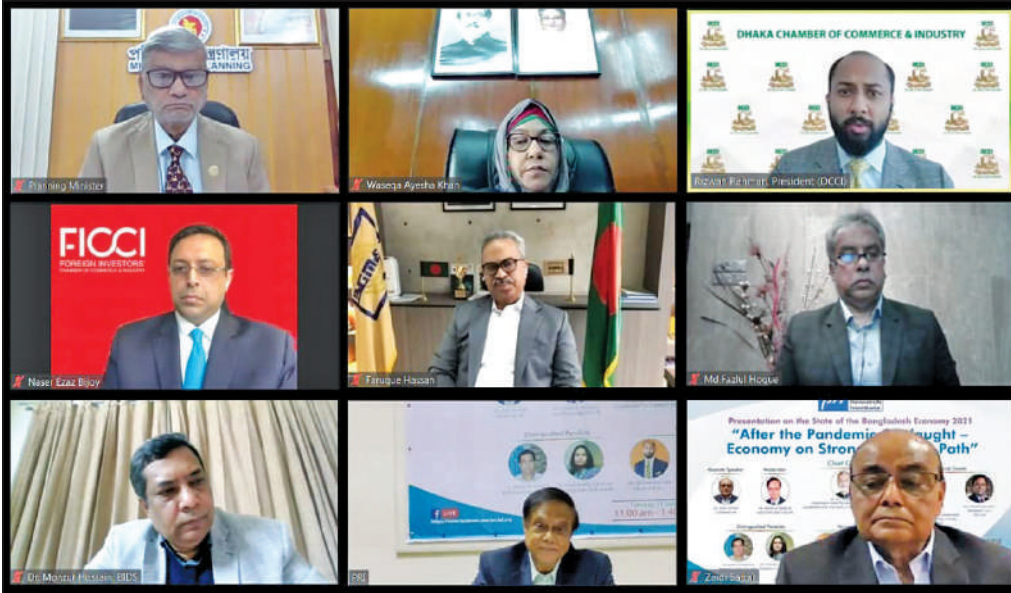
Date: 31 May - 02 June, 2022
 Venue: National Convention & Exhibition Center
 Shanghai, China
 Organizer: CCPIT Sub-Council OF Chemical Industry
 Contact Person: Ms. Maggie Ma, Project Manager
 Tel: 0086-10-64285314
 E-mail: maggie@agrochemshow.com
 Website: www.agrochemshow.com

**Note: Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, information about trade fairs and events may change.
 To get more information, please contact the organizers.**

Share Market (As of January 28, 2022)

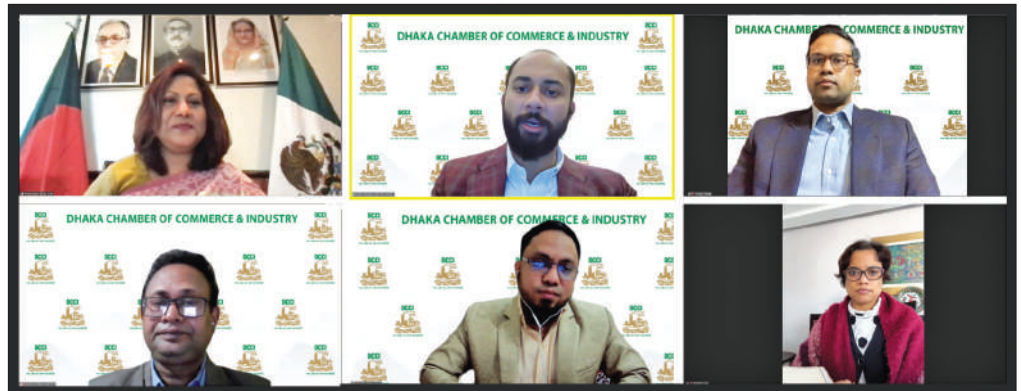
Top 10 Turnover Leaders (DSE) As of 28 Jan				Top 10 Turnover Leaders (DSE) As of 28 Jan			
COMPANY	CLOSING PRICE	% CHANGE	TURNOVER (BDT MN)	COMPANY	CLOSING PRICE	% CHANGE	TURNOVER (BDT MN)
BEXIMCO	153.50	0.3%	611.36	BBS	22.00	10.0%	32.67
BSC	131.30	10.0%	610.00	BSC	131.30	10.0%	610.00
QUEENSOUTH	32.60	9.8%	507.94	QUEENSOUTH	32.60	9.8%	507.94
MALEKSPIN	33.90	-2.3%	354.02	BENGALWTL	24.80	9.7%	16.28
RAKCERAMIC	58.50	2.6%	337.78	NATLIFEINS	226.90	8.3%	243.7
FUWANGFOOD	23.30	7.4%	303.17	BDLAMPS	277.40	7.8%	188.63
POWERGRID	70.20	-1.7%	303.09	VFSTDL	23.60	7.8%	72.13
SAIFPOWER	43.40	1.9%	268.00	FUWANGFOOD	23.30	7.4%	303.17
NATLIFEINS	226.90	8.3%	243.7	KBPPWBIL	13.50	6.0%	26.11
ASIANINS	99.30	-0.7%	243.37	PRIMELIFE	81.90	6.1%	37.68



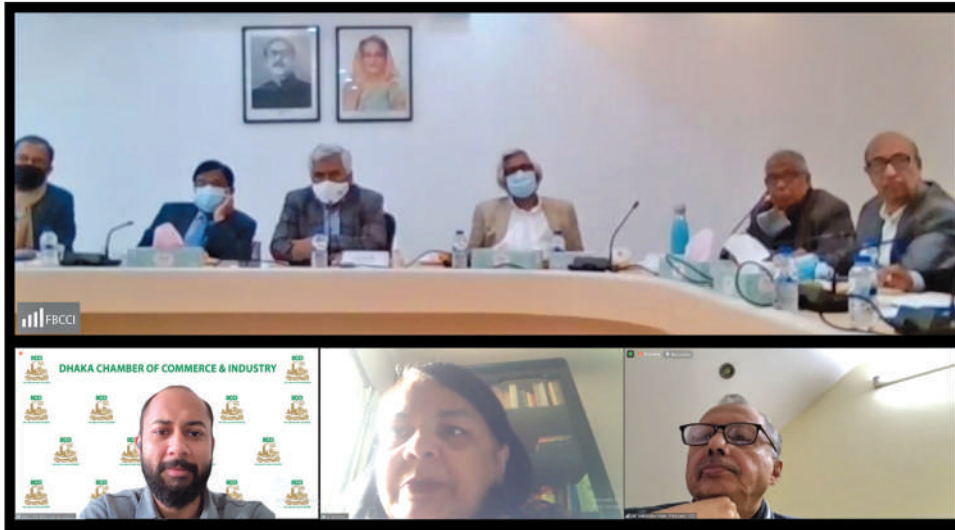


DCCI President Rizwan Rahman joined a webinar on State of the Bangladesh Economy 2021 organized by Policy Research Institute (PRI) as a Panel Discussant on January 11. Planning Minister of Bangladesh M. A. Mannan, MP joined the webinar as the Chief Guest.

DCCI President Rizwan Rahman seen in a bilateral meeting with the Ambassador of Bangladesh in Mexico Abida Islam on January 27. DCCI Senior Vice President Arman Haque also joined the meeting. Both the parties discussed potential trade and investment opportunities between Bangladesh and Mexico.

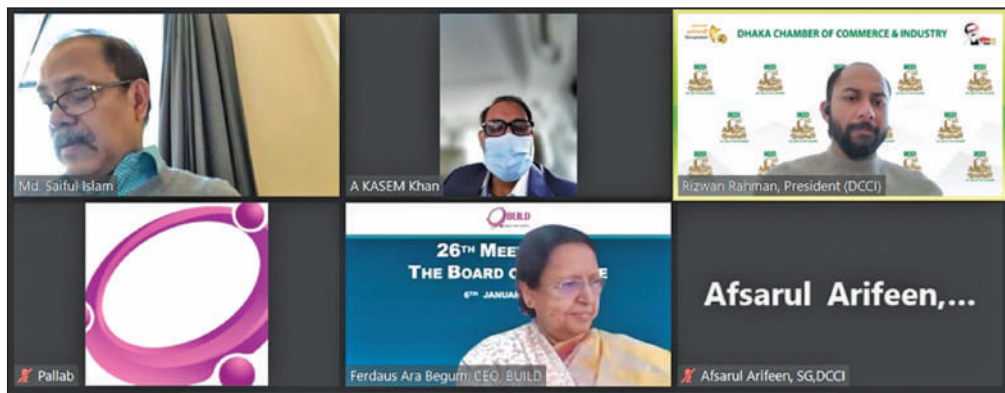


DCCI President Rizwan Rahman attended the meeting of Council of Chamber Presidents organized by FBCCI on January 22. DCCI Senior Vice President Arman Haque also attended the event among other business leaders.



FBCCI arranged a meeting with the business leaders to discuss various issues of new Trade Organization (TO) Rules 2021 held on January 29. DCCI President Rizwan Rahman, MCCI President Barrister Nihad Kabir, CCCI President Mahbubul Alam among other business leaders joined the meeting.

DCCI President Rizwan Rahman presiding over the 2nd Board meeting of DCCI held virtually on January 29. Members of the Board of Directors also attended the meeting.



DCCI President Rizwan Rahman attended the 26th Trustee Board Meeting of Business Initiative Leading Development (BUILD) held on January 6. The meeting was presided over by the Chairperson, BUILD Abul Kasem Khan.



Acting President of DCCI Arman Haque (left) seen speaking at the seminar on “Fourth Industrial Revolution: The Role of Academia and Industry in Bangladesh” as a Panel Discussant organized by Research and Innovation Centre for Science and Engineering of BUET on January 3 at BUET Auditorium.

DCCI Acting President Arman Haque, Vice President Monowar Hossain and trainers of DCCI Business Institute (DBI) joined for a view exchanging meeting held virtually on January 25.



Vice President of DCCI Monowar Hossain (right) seen receiving crest from the Commerce Minister Tipu Munshi, MP (second from left) at the closing ceremony of Dhaka International Trade Fair on January 31. Minister for Textiles & Jute Golam Dastagir Gazi, (Birpratik) (third from left) and FBCCI President Md. Jashim Uddin (left) were also present on the occasion. DCCI has been awarded for its special contribution to organize DITF successfully this year.

Short Training Courses and Workshops of DBI for the month of March 2022

1	Online Training on 'Essential English for Business Writing'	1,650/-	4-5 March 2022 7:30 pm – 9:30 pm
2	Online Training on 'Emotional Intelligence for Greater Results in Professional & Personal life'	1,650/-	4-5 March 2022 7:30 pm – 9:30 pm
3	In-person Workshop on 'Managing Banks, C&F, Customs, Freight Forwarding & Shipping Agents for Export & Import'	6,000/-	11-12 March 2022 10:00 am - 5:30 pm
4	Online Training on 'Professional Behaviour, Manner and Etiquettes'	1,650/-	11-12 March 2022 7:30 pm – 9:30 pm
5	Online Workshop on 'Managing Health & Safety at Civil Construction Project Site'	1,650/-	11-12 March 2022 7:30 pm – 9:30 pm
6	Online Training on 'Team Building Skills for Productivity Development'	1,650/-	18-19 March 2022 7:30 pm – 9:30 pm
7	Online Training on 'Human Resource Management & HR Information System (HRIS)'	1,650/-	18-19 March 2022 7:30 pm – 9:30 pm
8	Training on 'Inventory Control and Effective Store Management'	3,000/-	25 March 2022 10:00 am - 5:30 pm
9	Workshop on 'Public Procurement and e-GP Tender Procedure'	3,000/-	25 March 2022 10:00 am - 5:30 pm
10	Online Workshop on 'Effective Meeting and Report Writing Skills'	1,650/-	25-26 March 2022 7:30 pm – 9:30 pm

Registration Deadline : at least 1 day before starting date

Contact :

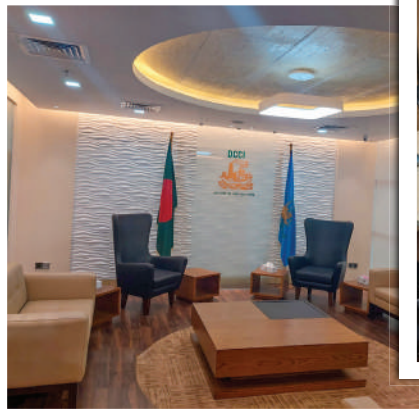
DCCI Business Institute (DBI)
 Dhaka Chamber Building (11th floor)
 65-66 Motijheel C/A, Dhaka-1000, Bangladesh
 Cell : 01913 745 062, 01766 018 659
 Phone : +88 02 47122986 (Hunting) Ext. 124 & 281
 E-mail : dbi@dhakachamber.com | Website : www.dcci-dbi.edu.bd

** Seats are Limited
 * Certificates Awarded
 * Tailor-made Courses
 /Workshops Arranged*

DCCI GULSHAN CENTRE OPEN FOR RENT



MEETINGS | SEMINARS | WORKSHOPS



Rental Chart

SL No.	Event Room	Room Dimension (L X W)	Rent (Per Day-8 Hours) in BDT	Rent (Half Day-4 Hours) in BDT	Remarks
Option : 1	Single Meeting Room (12 Persons)	19'-6" x 14'	15,000/-	10,000/-	20% Service Charge is included
Option : 2	Conference Room (20 Persons)	29' x 19'-6"	25,000/-	15,000/-	
Option : 3	Class Room (30 Persons)	29' x 19'-6"	25,000/-	15,000/-	
Option : 4	Workshop (30 Persons)	56' x 19'-6"	25,000/-	15,000/-	
Option : 5	Executive Lounge (8 Persons)	17'-9" x 26'-8"	10,000/-	6,000/-	

1. Service:

- Full Air Conditioned, Sufficient Light • Newly Furnished Venue • Supporting Staff (2 Persons) • Full Wi-Fi, Two Car Parkings
- Built-in Sound System, 2 Smart Projecting TV (BenQ) • CC TV, Fire Extinguisher • Round Table/Theatre Setup

2. Premium Service: (on payment)

- High Speed Internet - wi-fi or broadband • Printing Service • Zoom / Hybrid meeting facilities • Food - Selected Vendors of DCCI (Rate to be fixed based on selected menu)

DCCI Gulshan Centre

BTI Landmark (level-11), Plot- 16, Block- CWS(A), Gulshan Avenue, Gulshan-1, Dhaka-1212, Bangladesh

Tel+88-02222264246, 01914733559 | Email: habib.rahman@dhakachamber.com