

News Blaze of the Week

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Editorial Panel

- Fahmida Chowdhury
EVP & Principal, DBTI
In charge R&DU
- Farzana Afroz
PO, R&DU

Contact us:

rnd@dhakabank.com.bd

Quotation Corner

Great things never come from comfort zones.

Success doesn't just find you. You have to go out and get it.

The key to success is to focus on goals, not obstacles.

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A 'youth cell' under PMO is in order

- A youth cell should be formed under the Prime Minister's Office to effectively implement the action plan for youth development and reap the benefits of demographic dividends, Planning Minister MA Mannan said yesterday.
- The youth development programme will bring better outcome through coordination and cooperation among different ministries and divisions, he said while addressing a virtual discussion on "Youth budget framework: an appraisal". The discussion was jointly organised by the South Asian Network on Economic Modeling (SANEM) and ActionAid Bangladesh.
- Some officials are preparing faulty development project proposals (DPPs), which get detected later, the minister said. So, a cell should be established to strongly monitor the preparation of the DPPs. Since 2010, the ministry has been receiving Tk 30,000 crore on average every year, which are used for youth development, said Md Belayet Hossain Talukdar, additional secretary of the secondary and higher education division.
- Integrity is highly needed to ensure quality education for the youth, he said. It is the young population who go abroad and send a good amount of remittance every year, said Md Nazibul Islam, additional secretary of the expatriates' welfare and overseas employment ministry. Around 60 per cent of the education system needs to be technical knowledge-based for a nation to develop, he said.
- Now the enrolment of technical education reached only 17 per cent against the target of 21 per cent by 2020 while in 2001 it was only 1 per cent, he said. The ministry is working with young women for their skills development to let them get involved in economic growth, said Ferdousi Begum, deputy secretary of the women and children affairs ministry.

Source: <https://www.thedailystar.net/business/news/youth-cell-under-pmo-order-1936329>

MoA to buy 51,300 farm machines

- The Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) has reached a final decision to provide the farmers with 51,300 farm machines under its mechanization project. The farm mechanization project worth Tk 30.2 billion is the biggest of its kind in the country under which farmers will get 50-70 per cent incentives to purchase 13 kinds of modern farm machines, ministry officials said.
- The project styled 'Agricultural Mechanization through Coordinated Management' has been taken up to help minimize production cost and boost crop output, said MoA secretary Md Nasiruzzaman. The secretary also said it is a dream project for the country's farm sector which could move the sector forward.
- The Planning Commission has also recently approved the project under which the farmers could purchase 15,500 units of combined harvesters dedicated for rice or wheat at 50-70 per cent of incentives. Under the project, farmers will also be able to buy 4,000 reapers, 2,000 reaper binders, 3,000 rice transplanters, 5,000 seeders, 5,000 power threshers, 5,000 maize shellers and 5,000 dryers.
- Farmers will also get 2,000 power sprayers, 500 power weeders, 3,000 potato diggers, 300 carrot washers and 1,000 potato chipmakers. Haor farmers could purchase a machine at maximum 70 per cent of incentives. Farmers in other regions could get machines at 50 per cent incentives, according to MoA.

Source: <https://today.thefinancialexpress.com.bd/trade-market/moa-to-buy-51300-farm-machines-1595690234>



Central Bank Regulation

BB cuts key policy rates

- The central bank unveiled on Wednesday an expansionary monetary policy for the current fiscal year aiming to speed up recovery of the pandemic-hit economy.
- As part of the expansionary policy stance, the Bangladesh Bank slashed overnight repurchase agreement (repo) rate by 50 basis points to 4.75 per cent while cut reverse repo rate to 4.00 per cent from 4.75 per cent.
- The central bank cut the policy rates to ensure the availability of cheaper funds for banks and greater flow of funds into the economy.
- Besides, the bank rate has been re-fixed at 4.0 per cent from 5.0 per cent to rationalise it with the current interest rate regime. The BB's latest move came after slashing the cash reserve requirement (CRR) by 1.5 percentage points to 4.0 per cent from 5.50 per cent to help the banks implement the government-announced stimulus packages aimed at boosting investments in productive sectors.
- The BB projects GDP (gross domestic product) growth of 8.20 per cent for FY '21 while 12-month average inflation to be 5.4 per cent in June 2021 in line with the projection made in the national budget. The private sector credit growth target has been set at 11.5 per cent and 14.8 per cent respectively for the first half (H1) and the second half (H2) of the FY '21 while the public sector credit growth target at 35.6 per cent and 44.8 per cent respectively.

Source: <https://today.thefinancialexpress.com.bd/first-page/bb-cuts-key-policy-rates-1596045914>

Banks and Financial Institutions

The two-day long "Half Yearly Business Meet 2020" of Bank Asia Ltd. ended through digital platform on Saturday

- The two-day long "Half Yearly Business Meet 2020" of Bank Asia Ltd. ended through digital platform on Saturday. Mr. A Rouf Chowdhury, Chairman of the bank, was the Chief Guest of the program. Mr. Rumea A Hossain, Chairman of Board Executive Committee, Mr. Dilwar H Choudhury, Chairman of Board Audit Committee, Prof. M. A. Baqui Khalily, Chairman of Board Risk Management Committee, Mr. Enam Chowdhury, Ms Romana Rouf Chowdhury, Mr. Ashrafal Haq Chowdhury, Mr. Md. Abul Quasem, directors of the Bank, Mr. Md. Arfan Ali, President & Managing Director seen.

Source: <https://today.thefinancialexpress.com.bd/stock-corporate/the-two-day-long-half-yearly-business-meet-2020-of-bank-asia-ltd-ended-through-digital-platform-on-saturday-1595689216>

Shahjalal Islami Bank Limited (SJIBL) organized "Half-Yearly Business Conference-2020" on Saturday through a digital platform.

- Shahjalal Islami Bank Limited (SJIBL) organized "Half-Yearly Business Conference-2020" on Saturday through a digital platform. The inaugural ceremony of the conference was presided over by Managing Director & CEO Mr. M. Shahidul Islam, while the Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Bank Mr. Md. Sanaullah Shahid was present as the Chief Guest.

Source: <https://today.thefinancialexpress.com.bd/stock-corporate/shahjalal-islami-bank-limited-sjibl-organized-half-yearly-business-conference-2020-on-saturday-through-a-digital-platform-1595689514>

Md Ahsan-uz Zaman reappointed as Midland Bank managing director

- Md Ahsan-uz Zaman has been re-appointed as managing director and CEO of Midland Bank (MDB) for another three-year term. Mr. Zaman joined the bank in July 2014 as CEO, the bank said in a statement yesterday.

Source: <https://www.thedailystar.net/business/news/md-ahsan-uz-zaman-reappointed-midland-bank-managing-director-1936321>

Banks and Financial Institutions

MTB digital fair brings all under one roof

- As businesses increasingly go online to meet customers' demand for home deliveries of all types of products due to the coronavirus outbreak, a recent five-day digital fair said to have brought them all together.
- Concluding on July 20, MTB Digital Lifestyle Fair 2020 is said to have offered the best combinations of products and services from home loans, appliances, furniture and automobiles to cattle and real estate. From among the partners, ABC Real Estate offered flats with a 10 per cent down payment.
- MTB customers who bought flats from building technology & ideas (bti) got complimentary furnished kitchens. Anwar Landmark provided up to 15 per cent discount on all its ongoing projects and Structural Engineers Tk 250 on every square feet.
- Assure Group, UPSL and Manama also provided different discounts on their products. Auto loan partners Toyota, Nissan, Hyundai, Ssangyong, KIA, Peugeot, Motors Garages and Renault offered discounts on different models of automobiles. Furniture carried discounts of up to 40 per cent from Athena's, Hatil, Hatim, Isho, Navana, Nadia, Omega and Regal.
- Discounts on home appliances of ACI Electronics, Bosch, Konka, Gree, Esquire, iPhone, Samsung, Singer, Sony Rangas, Transcom Digital, Walton, Vision and oikko.com reached up to 64 per cent. MTB card holders bought cattle from Bengal Meat, Cowhaat, Daraz and PriyoShop.

Source: <https://www.thedailystar.net/business/news/mtb-digital-fair-brings-all-under-one-roof-1936333>

Bank branches in RMG industrial areas remain open on Friday

- Branches of the scheduled banks in the readymade garment (RMG) industrial areas will remain open on July 31 (Friday) for the convenience of paying the workers' salaries. Branches of the scheduled banks located near garments industrial areas in Dhaka city, Ashulia, Tongi, Gazipur, Savar, Bhaluka, Narayanganj and Chattogram will remain open from 10:00 am to 1:00 pm to facilitate the payment of salaries, bonuses and other allowances to workers and employees of the garment industry ahead of Eid-ul-Azha.

Source: <https://today.thefinancialexpress.com.bd/trade-market/bank-branches-in-rmg-industrial-areas-remain-open-on-friday-1595957752>

Banks and Financial Institutions

Mercantile Bank opens seven new 'Agent Banking Outlets'

- Mercantile Bank Limited launched seven more new 'Agent Banking Outlets' across the country to provide basic banking services to the unbanked population of the country in this coronavirus situation, said a statement. The bank's Managing Director & CEO Md. Quamrul Islam Chowdhury inaugurated the 'Agent Banking' outlets on Tuesday virtually.

Source: <https://today.thefinancialexpress.com.bd/stock-corporate/mercantile-bank-opens-seven-new-agent-banking-outlets-1595954546>

IPDC shines against all odds

- IPDC Finance, Bangladesh's first private sector non-bank financial institution (NBFI), witnessed higher profits in the first half of 2020 despite headwinds brought about by the ongoing coronavirus pandemic. Over the past six months, the IPDC's revenue surged 24.9 per cent compared to the same period in 2019.
- The NBFI has registered net profits of Tk 31.6 crore during the period, which is 1 per cent higher than what it was for the same period a year before. The IPDC has held its default loan rates steady at 1.59 per cent, which is one of the industry's lowest, while maintaining a capital adequacy ratio of 17.28 per cent. The company also reached the half-year mark with a liquidity cushion of Tk 665 crore.
- Currently, the IPDC has 12 branches in operation across the country. The NBFI recently introduced Southeast Asia's first digital supply chain finance platform, called Orjon. It also established the country's sole retail financing platform, "IPDC Dana", that provides working capital for retailers in a bid to facilitate financing in an easy, low cost, collateral-free and structured manner. As of yesterday, stocks of IPDC Finance were traded at Tk 24.40 per unit.

Source: <https://www.thedailystar.net/business/news/ipdc-shines-against-all-odds-1937961>

Banks and Financial Institutions

DBBL holds half yearly managers' conference

- The Half Yearly Managers' Conference-2020 of Dutch-Bangla Bank was held on Saturday through virtual platform to review the Bank's overall performance during January-June, 2020 and discuss the business plan and strategy for achieving targets for the year 2020.
- The Conference was presided over by Mr. Abul Kashem Md. Shirin, Managing Director of the bank. Branch Managers from 195 branches of the bank virtually participated in the conference. The Deputy Managing Directors, Mr. Khan Tariquul Islam, Mr. Shahidur Rahman Khan, Mr. Md. Abedur Rahman Sikder, Mr. Md. Ahteshamul Haque Khan, Mr. K. M. Awlad Hossain, all CXOs, Divisional Heads and senior executives of Head Office of the bank also participated at the conference.
- In his address, the Managing Director critically analyzed the strategies for achieving business target for the year 2020. He also expected that the Managers who have not been able to achieve the respective targets for the first 06 months of 2020, will make all out efforts to achieve the targets set for the last 06 months of the year 2020.
- He also emphasized on increasing the business of the Bank by taking advantages of the largest On-line banking, Fast Tracks, ATMs, as well as Mobile Banking "Rocket", Agent Banking networks, POS terminals and NexusPay during the year 2020 and directed the branch managers for improving the standard of customer services. All branch managers committed to achieve the budgetary targets for the year 2020, said a statement.

Source: <https://today.thefinancialexpress.com.bd/stock-corporate/dbbl-holds-half-yearly-managers-conference-1595780464>



Banks and Financial Institutions

National Housing recommends 10pc cash dividend

- The 218th Board of Directors Meeting of National Housing Finance and Investments Limited was held on Thursday through virtual platform, said a statement. The Board of Directors reviewed and approved Financial Statements for the year 2019 and recommended 10.00% cash dividend for the shareholders for the year 2019.
- The Board of Director in that meeting also approved Financial Statements for the quarter ended 31st March 2020 and 30th June 2020. National Housing is one of the largest Financial Institutions in the country engaged with home loan & lease finance.
- Total shareholders' equity of the company is Tk. 1,985.74 million as on June 30, 2020. The company earned Tk. 236.81 million as net profit after tax during the year 2019 and Tk. 93.61 million for the half year ended June 30 2020.

Source: <https://today.thefinancialexpress.com.bd/stock-corporate/national-housing-recommends-10pc-cash-dividend-1595780248>

IPDC's net profit after tax rises in the first half of the year

- After setting aside adequate provisioning due to difficult times ahead, IPDC Finance registered a net profit after tax of Tk. 316 million in the first half of the year 2020, which is one per cent higher than the first half of last year.
- The revenue of IPDC Finance rose 24.9 per cent in the first half of the year, as against first half of 2019 while its default loan rate remained steady at 1.59 per cent. IPDC Finance's customer deposit has increased by 8.7% compared to December 2019, it has maintained a solid capital adequacy ratio of 17.28%. The company has also ended H1'20 with a strong liquidity cushion of Tk. 6.65 billion.
- IPDC's half yearly financial highlights are a testimony of its good corporate governance, proactive planning, and taking responsibility of its customers, employees and the community. We thank all our clients and partners for keeping their faith in us. Our efforts lie in maintaining the momentum with which we are moving forward and extend our hands to help the community emerge out of this crisis together.

Source: <https://today.thefinancialexpress.com.bd/stock-corporate/ipdcs-net-profit-after-tax-rises-in-the-first-half-of-the-year-1595866979>

Banks and Financial Institutions

Mahfuzur Rahman new Chairman of Janata Bank

Dr SM Mahfuzur Rahman has been appointed as the chairman of the board of directors of Janata Bank Limited (JBL), said a press release. He is also Vice-Chancellor of BGMEA University of Fashion and Technology. Earlier, he served as the chairman of the Department of Finance and Director of the MBA, Professional Masters, International Business and Finance Departments while he was working at the University of Dhaka as a Professor since 1984. In addition, he worked as director, Rupali Bank Limited, Bangladesh Development Bank Limited and also as chairman of Investment Corporation of Bangladesh.

Source: <https://today.thefinancialexpress.com.bd/trade-market/mahfuzur-rahman-new-chairman-of-janata-bank-1596048200>

New independent director joins Bank Asia

Helal Ahmed Chowdhury has recently joined Bank Asia Ltd as an Independent Director, said a statement. A seasoned banker with around four and a half decades of banking experience, Mr Chowdhury started his career at Pubali Bank in 1977 as a Class-I Officer through Superior Service Examination and was promoted in course to MD & CEO (2006-2014) in the same bank which is a rare event and record.

Source: <https://today.thefinancialexpress.com.bd/stock-corporate/new-independent-director-joins-bank-asia-1596047757>

Banks and Financial Institutions

MTB launches MRewardz Online

- With a view to enhancing digital banking experience for its credit cardholders, Mutual Trust Bank Limited (MTB) launched MRewardz Online recently, said a statement.
- MRewardz Online is a state-of-the-art digital platform through which credit cardholders can redeem their MRewardz points instantly, anywhere and anytime.
- With the launch of this innovative service, the bank's credit cardholders will be able to explore numerous redemption offers on the web portal -mrewardz.mutualtrustbank.com and avail exciting rewards, both locally and internationally.
- With MRewardz Online, MTB Credit Cardholders will be able to book air tickets and hotel rooms, rent a car, shop online, pay credit card bills and get gift cards/vouchers in addition to availing free online registration, enhanced security with One-Time PIN (OTP) for each redemption, confirmation SMS & email for each redemption, etc.

Source: <https://today.thefinancialexpress.com.bd/public/stock-corporate/mtb-launches-mrewardz-online-1596642177>



Stock Market Update

DSEX crosses 4,100-mark on buying spree

- The key index of the prime bourse on Sunday crossed the 4,100-mark after nearly five months, as the buoyant investors showed their appetite on large-cap issues amid optimism. DSEX, the core index of the Dhaka Stock Exchange, went up by 48.13 points or 1.18 per cent to settle at 4,129 during the four hours trading. It was the highest level of DSEX since March 12, 2020, although trading was closed for two months (March 26 to May 30) due to government holidays to flatten the spread of deadly Covid-19 virus.
- Market operators said gradual reopening of the economy and the stock market regulator's assurance not to lift floor price restriction until the market got stable, led investors for buying shares at possible lowest prices. Gradual reopening of the economy and static number of Covid-19 cases led investors to strike bargains on promising issues, commented UCB Capital, in its regular market analysis. The large-cap BATBC's share price jumped 3.73 per cent, followed by Square Pharma with 3.49 per cent and GP share soared 2.91 per cent.
- The securities regulator's hard stance on ensuring mandatory 2.0 per cent shareholding by each director of listed companies had a positive impact on the stock prices, said a merchant banker. The stock market regulator has recently asked 61 directors of 22 listed companies to ensure a minimum 2.0 per cent shares in their own companies within 45 days to continue their directorship. Two other indices also ended higher. The DS30 index, comprising blue chips, rose 23.08 points to finish at 1,397 and the DSE Shariah Index advanced 17.53 points to close at 963.
- Turnover, another important indicator of the market, stood at Tk 3.71 billion on the country's prime bourse, which was 42 per cent higher than the previous day's turnover of Tk 2.62 billion. Most of the shares remained stuck at the trading. Of the issues traded, 172 remained unchanged while 116 issues advanced and 58 declined on the DSE floor. A total number of 79,599 trades were executed in the day's trading session with a trading volume of 7.48 million shares and mutual fund units.
- The market-cap on the premier bourse also rose to Tk 3,217 billion on Sunday, from Tk 3,175 billion in the previous session. Meanwhile, Sonali Paper & Board Mills resumed trading Sunday on the main boards on the bourses under 'Z' category, after remaining in the OTC market since 2009, subject to one year lock-in to be imposed on the shares of the company's existing directors. Each share of the company traded between Tk 273 and Tk 296.80, before closing at Tk 296.80 on the DSE, soaring 8.72 per cent. Its share also closed at Tk 296.80 on the CSE, gaining 8.72 per cent.

Source: <https://today.thefinancialexpress.com.bd/stock-corporate/dsex-crosses-4100-mark-on-buying-spre-1595780305>

Stock Market Update

DSE turnover crosses Tk 4.0b-mark after one month

- Stocks kept the gaining streak for the second consecutive session on Monday as the buoyant investors continued their appetite on large-cap issues amid optimism. DSEX, the key index of the Dhaka Stock Exchange, went up by 16.30 points or 0.39 per cent to settle at 4,145 during the four hours trading. Market operators said gradual reopening of the economy and the stock market regulator's assurance not to lift floor price restriction right now, led investors for buying shares.
- Gradual reopening of the economy and static daily number of Covid-19 cases led investors to strike bargains on promising issues, said a merchant banker. The securities regulator's hard stance on ensuring mandatory 2.0 per cent shareholding by each director of listed companies had a positive impact on the stock prices, he said.
- The stock market regulator has recently asked 61 directors of 22 listed companies to ensure a minimum 2.0 per cent shares in their own companies within 45 days to continue their directorship. The gradual reopening of the economy and no major spike in daily Covid-19 infected cases led investors to take position in sector-wise stocks, said the UCB Capital. Two other indices also ended higher.
- The DS30 index, comprising blue chips, rose 3.20 points to finish at 1,400 and the DSE Shariah Index advanced 1.99 points to close at 965. Turnover, another important indicator of the market, stood at Tk 4.37 billion on the country's prime bourse, which was 18 per cent higher than the previous day's turnover of Tk 3.71 billion.
- General insurance, power, financial institutions, pharma and banking sectors gained, 4.20 per cent, 0.80 per cent, 0.50 per cent, 0.40 per cent and 0.40 per cent respectively. Food and telecom sectors lost 2.10 per cent and 1.0 per cent respectively. Most of the shares remained stuck at the trading. Of the issues traded, 160 remained unchanged while 117 issues advanced and 67 declined on the DSE floor.
- A total number of 93,273 trades were executed in the day's trading session with a trading volume of 132.61 million shares and mutual fund units. The Chittagong Stock Exchange also ended higher with its All Shares Price Index (CASPI)-gaining 46 points to close at 11,796 and the Selective Categories Index - CSCX -rising 29 points to finish at 7,152. Of the issues traded, 74 gained, 46 declined and 102 remained unchanged on the CSE. The port city bourse traded 2.81 million shares and mutual fund units with turnover value of Tk 95 million.

Source: <https://today.thefinancialexpress.com.bd/stock-corporate/dse-turnover-crosses-tk-40b-mark-after-one-month-1595867375>



Stock Market Update

BSEC chief puts thrust on high quality financial statements

- BSEC chairman Professor Shibli Rubayat-UI-Islam said inclusion of professional cost and management accountants in relevant sectors would be better for the stock market development of Bangladesh. Institute of Cost and Management Accountants of Bangladesh (ICMAB) organized the webinar.
- The chairman of Bangladesh Securities and Exchange Commission (BSEC) graced the programme as the Chief Guest. National Board of Revenue (NBR) would be able take right steps in giving tariff protection to the really deserving local manufacturers taking decisions from the research output conducted by Cost Auditors.
- The government would also be benefited in combating corruption and money laundering by doing cost audits of public spending. In conclusion, they said that cost audit is not a burden for the business houses and government organizations; rather it is an investment to assess the ability of an organization to continue as a going concern, improve efficiency and performance, fight corruption and protect public interest as well; but the corporate leaders are not aware of the uses and benefits of Cost Audit.

Source: <https://today.thefinancialexpress.com.bd/stock-corporate/the-two-day-long-half-yearly-business-meet-2020-of-bank-asia-ltd-ended-through-digital-platform-on-saturday-1595689216>

Stocks stay afloat amid optimism

- Stocks kept the gaining momentum for the fourth straight sessions on Tuesday as the bargain hunters continued their appetite on selective issues amid gradual improvement of economic activities. DSEX, the key index of the Dhaka Stock Exchange, went up by 11.16 points or 0.26 per cent to settle at 4,156 during the four hours trading.
- The core index added nearly 80 points in the four consecutive sessions. The DS30 index, comprising blue chips, also advanced 1.66 points to finish at 1,402. However, the DSE Shariah Index fell 2.08 points to close at 963. Turnover, another important indicator of the market, stood at Tk 4.45 billion on the country's prime bourse, which was 1.83 per cent higher than the previous day's turnover of Tk 4.37 billion. Most of the shares remained stuck at the trading.
- The Chittagong Stock Exchange also ended higher with its All Shares Price Index (CASPI)-gaining 38 points to close at 11,834 and the Selective Categories Index - CSCX -advancing 23 points to finish at 7,175. Of the issues traded, 79 gained, 54 declined and 96 remained unchanged on the CSE. The port city bourse traded 3.18 million shares and mutual fund units with turnover value of Tk 72 million.

Source: <https://today.thefinancialexpress.com.bd/stock-corporate/stocks-stay-afloat-amid-optimism-1595954662>

Reckitt Benckiser's profit jumps 53pc in Q2

- Reckitt Benckiser Bangladesh's profit after tax jumped more than 53 per cent in April-June, 2020 quarter due to strong revenue growth driven by increased demand of personal hygiene products during pandemic. The board of directors of the company in a virtual meeting on Sunday approved the un-audited financial statements for April-June, 2020 period.
- Reckitt Benckiser is engaged in manufacturing and marketing of household and toiletries, pharmaceuticals and food products. The personal care products manufacturer's profit after tax rose to Tk 158 million in April-June, 2020 which was Tk 103 million in the same quarter of the previous year. In six months for January-June, 2020, the company's profit after tax was Tk 271.73 million as against Tk 176.14 million for January-June, 2019.
- Accordingly, the company's earnings per share (EPS) jumped to Tk 33.47 for April-June, 2020 as against Tk 21.82 for April-June, 2019. In six months for January-June, 2020, the company's EPS was Tk 57.51 as against Tk 37.28 for January-June, 2019. The net operating cash flow per share (NOCFPS) was Tk 211.98 for January-June, 2020 as against 72.22 for January-June, 2019.
- The net asset value (NAV) per share was Tk 200.15 as on June 30, 2020 and Tk 142.64 as on December 31, 2019. Listed in 1987, each share of the Reckitt Benckiser closed at Tk 3,573.70 on Monday, losing 2.29 per cent over the previous day. Its share traded between Tk 2,330 and Tk 3,775 in the last one year. The company's paid-up capital is Tk 47.25 million, authorised capital is Tk 250 million and the total number of securities is 4.72 million.

Source: <https://today.thefinancialexpress.com.bd/stock-corporate/reckitt-benckisers-profit-jumps-53pc-in-q2-1595867318>



Trade Market Update

BD auctions white tea for first time

- For the first time in the history of tea auction in the port city of Chattogram, white tea was sold in the auction on Monday. White tea was sold in the regular auction of the season. Only 10 kilogram of white tea was displayed at the auction and it was sold at Tk 2,500 per kilogram.
- Earlier, green tea was sold in the auction. But for the first time in Bangladesh, white tea was sold in the auction of tea here. The price of white tea at retail level is Tk 8,000 to Tk 9,000 per kilogram.

Source: <https://today.thefinancialexpress.com.bd/trade-market/bd-auctions-white-tea-for-first-time-1595868360>

China to fast-track construction of its economic zone in Ctg

- China has finally decided to speed up the development of the dedicated Chinese Economic and Industrial Zone (CEIZ) in Chattogram mainly to benefit from the competitive advantage Bangladesh enjoys in global trade. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina had offered creation of the zone during her visit to China in 2014.
- In 2015, the Executive Committee of the National Economic Council had given approval for CEIZ to be set up exclusively for Chinese investors on 774.25 acres of land in Anwara upazila.
- China Harbour said the \$100 million was ready to be brought in while it had got businesses interested through promotional activities and follow ups based on Bangladesh's favourable investment environment and global reputation of its parent company, China Communications Construction Company (CCCC). Over 60 enterprises have expressed their willingness to invest nearly \$280 million to set up businesses in CEIZ and wanted to take 40 per cent of the land of the zone through sub-lease.
- The CEIZ will be able to eventually attract more than \$1 billion in foreign investment, create 60,000 to 90,000 new jobs, directly or indirectly, and ultimately boost industrialisation and develop the economy of the surrounding Chattogram district. Policy stability was needed to help investors prepare their business plan and avoid uncertainties as the world's second-largest economy looked to broaden its footprint in Bangladesh through investments and relocating factories, they said.

Source: <https://www.thedailystar.net/business/news/china-fast-track-construction-its-economic-zone-ctg-1937345>

Norway to provide \$1.5m to support improved ship recycling

- Norway has committed approximately US\$1.5 million (14 million Norwegian Kroner) to support improved ship recycling in Bangladesh, reports UNB.
- The third phase of an International Maritime Organisation (IMO)-implemented project to enhance safe and environmentally sound ship recycling in Bangladesh has been given the go-ahead, said the IMO.
- SENSREC Phase III will focus on improving ship recycling standards in compliance with the Hong Kong Convention and enhancing capacity building for the Government of Bangladesh on legislation and knowledge management.
- The Agreement follows the successful implementation of Phase I (2015-17) and Phase II (2018 - 2020) of the SENSREC Project, both mainly funded by Norway.
- With the additional funding, Phase III of the project will be implemented over 18 months, starting from November 2020.
- Former Ambassador of Norway to Bangladesh Sidsel Bleken said that the SENSREC Project had already achieved significant progress, thanks to the commitment of the Government authorities as well as the ship-recycling industry of Bangladesh.

Source: <https://today.thefinancialexpress.com.bd/trade-market/bd-auctions-white-tea-for-first-time-1595868360>

AIIB to invest in infrastructure of tomorrow

- Jin Liqun will retain his position as the president of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) for a second term, the multilateral development lender said yesterday. The organisation invests in projects that improve the peoples' lives and is slowly establishing itself in global capital markets.
- The decision to re-elect Liqun was taken by the bank's board of governors during their fifth annual meeting held yesterday. Under his leadership, AIIB has grown from its 57 founding members to over 100 approved members from around the world. Eventually, the AIIB approved a \$250 million loan for Bangladesh that was co-financed by the Asian Development Bank.
- Unlike other multilateral lenders, the AIIB typically lends to nations in the Indo-Pacific region to build infrastructure, regardless of the country's state of development. In recent years, Bangladesh has performed exceedingly well with an annual average growth of 7.4 per cent over the last five years, DJ Pandian, vice-president for investment operations at AIIB, had said when the \$250 million was approved.
- The programme also has specific targets to support at least 1.5 million workers, of whom at least half are women, in export-oriented industries by way of providing extended salary support. Meanwhile, the development bank had also previously approved a \$404 million loan to improve Bangladesh's intercity travel and cross-border connectivity.

Source: <https://www.thedailystar.net/business/news/aiib-invest-infrastructure-tomorrow-1937965>

Japan offers \$330m to BD in budgetary support

- Japan will provide \$330 million to Bangladesh as an official development assistance (ODA) loan in budgetary support.
- To this end, Japanese ambassador in Dhaka ITO Naoki and economic relations division secretary Fatima Yasmin signed an exchange of notes on Wednesday. This financial assistance is provided with very favourable terms. The interest rate of the loan is 0.01 per cent.
- The repayment period is 11 years after the grace period of four years, says a spokesperson for the Japanese embassy in Dhaka.
- The loan will be co-financed with the Manila-based Asian Development Bank in a bid to ensure rapid and effective utilisation of the loan. Up until now, Japan has provided support to the tune of 13-million dollars in emergency response.
- Covid-19 in Bangladesh through international organisations and provided personal protective equipment to hospitals through JICA.
- Additionally, Japan and Bangladesh on July 16 signed an exchange of notes on \$10-million grant aid 'Economic and Social Development Programme' for medical equipment like CT scanner and X-ray machine.

Source: <https://today.thefinancialexpress.com.bd/public/first-page/japan-offers-330m-to-bd-in-budgetary-support-1596647337>

Gold hits record high as US-China ties worsen

- Gold hit an all-time high on Monday as tit-for-tat consulate closures in China and the United States rattled investors, boosting the allure of safe haven assets, although sentiment was mixed with tech gains supporting some Asian stocks. MSCI's ex-Japan Asia-Pacific index rose 1.3 per cent as Taiwan's TSMC, Asia's third-largest company by market capitalisation, rose almost 10 per cent.
- The chipmaker's gains boosted other tech stocks in the region and came after rival Intel signalled it may give up manufacturing its own components due to delays in new 7 nanometer chip technology. Also soothing sentiment, Chinese shares eked out gains after big falls late last week, with CSI300 index rising 0.5 per cent. S&P500 futures were last up 0.4 per cent in choppy trade while Japan's Nikkei fell 0.5 per cent, resuming trade after a long weekend and catching up with falls in global shares late last week. Global shares had lost steam last week after Washington ordered China's consulate in Houston to close, prompting Beijing to react in kind by closing the U.S. consulate in Chengdu. Gold rose 1.0 per cent to a record high of \$1,920.9 per ounce, surpassing a peak touched in September 2011, as Sino-U.S. tensions boosted the allure of safe haven assets, especially those not tied to any specific country.
- Concerns about the U.S. economic outlook started to weigh on the dollar, reversing its inverse correlation with the economic well-being over the past few months. The dollar index dropped 0.3 per cent to its lowest level in nearly two years. The euro gained 0.3 per cent to \$1.1693, hitting a 22-month high of \$1.16590 as sentiment on the common currency improved after European leaders reached a deal on a recovery fund in a major step towards more fiscal co-operation.
- Against the yen, the dollar slipped 0.5 per cent to 105.605 yen, a four-month low while the British pound hit a 4 1/2-month high of \$1.2832. Oil prices dipped on worries about the worsening Sino-U.S. relations. Brent futures fell 0.46 per cent to \$43.14 per barrel while U.S. crude futures lost 0.44 per cent to \$41.11.

Source: <https://www.thedailystar.net/business/news/gold-hits-record-high-us-china-ties-worsen-1937333>

Gold roars to record high, dollar dives again

- Gold soared to an all-time high on worsening ties between the United States and China, a sinking dollar and ultra-low interest rates on Monday, while stock markets faltered before a deluge of corporate earnings. Europe's main stock markets were still hurting after their first weekly drop in four and as the euro's fastest gains since early 2016 took past \$1.17, but it was weakening dollar and precious metals surge that dominated.
- Gold made a 1.6 per cent jump to surpass its 2011 highs and put \$2,000 per ounce in its sights. Silver climbed another 7.5 per cent, to take its July streak past 30 per cent, which would be its best month on record. A lot of factors were in play for markets, said Shafali Sachdev, the head of FX Asia at BNP Paribas Wealth Management in Singapore, from U.S.-China tensions to a second wave of coronavirus outbreaks. Travel and leisure stocks were down nearly 2.5 per cent, with airlines and tour operators such as TUI AG,
- Easyjet, British Airways owner IAG falling between 7.5 per cent and 12 per cent after Britain imposed a 14-day quarantine on travellers returning from Spain, where coronavirus cases are rising again. Asia was also choppy. A 10 per cent rally in Taiwanese chipmaker TSMC helped the tech sector, after U.S. rival Intel saw its shares plunge more than 16 per cent on Friday.
- Elsewhere, mainland Chinese shares gave up most of their early gains, with the CSI300 index closing up just 0.2 per cent, after steep losses on Friday too. Japan's Nikkei fell 0.2 per cent, though S&P 500 futures steadied and were last up 0.5 per cent in Europe. The euro gained 0.5 per cent to a 22-month high of \$1.1725, continuing a winning streak since last week's agreement on a 750 billion-euro post-pandemic EU recovery fund.
- Against the yen, the dollar slipped 0.7 per cent to 105.355 yen , a four-month low. The British pound hit a four-and-a-month high of \$1.2868 and benchmark Bunds and Treasuries gained ground in the bond markets. Oil prices were capped on worries about the worsening Sino-U.S. relations and both new and returning waves of the coronavirus around the world, which have now infected more than 16 million people and killed nearly 650,000. Brent futures were at \$43.40 per barrel and U.S. crude futures at \$41.44.

Source: <https://www.thedailystar.net/business/news/gold-roars-record-high-dollar-dives-again-1937945>

EU countries must urgently diversify 5G suppliers: European Commission

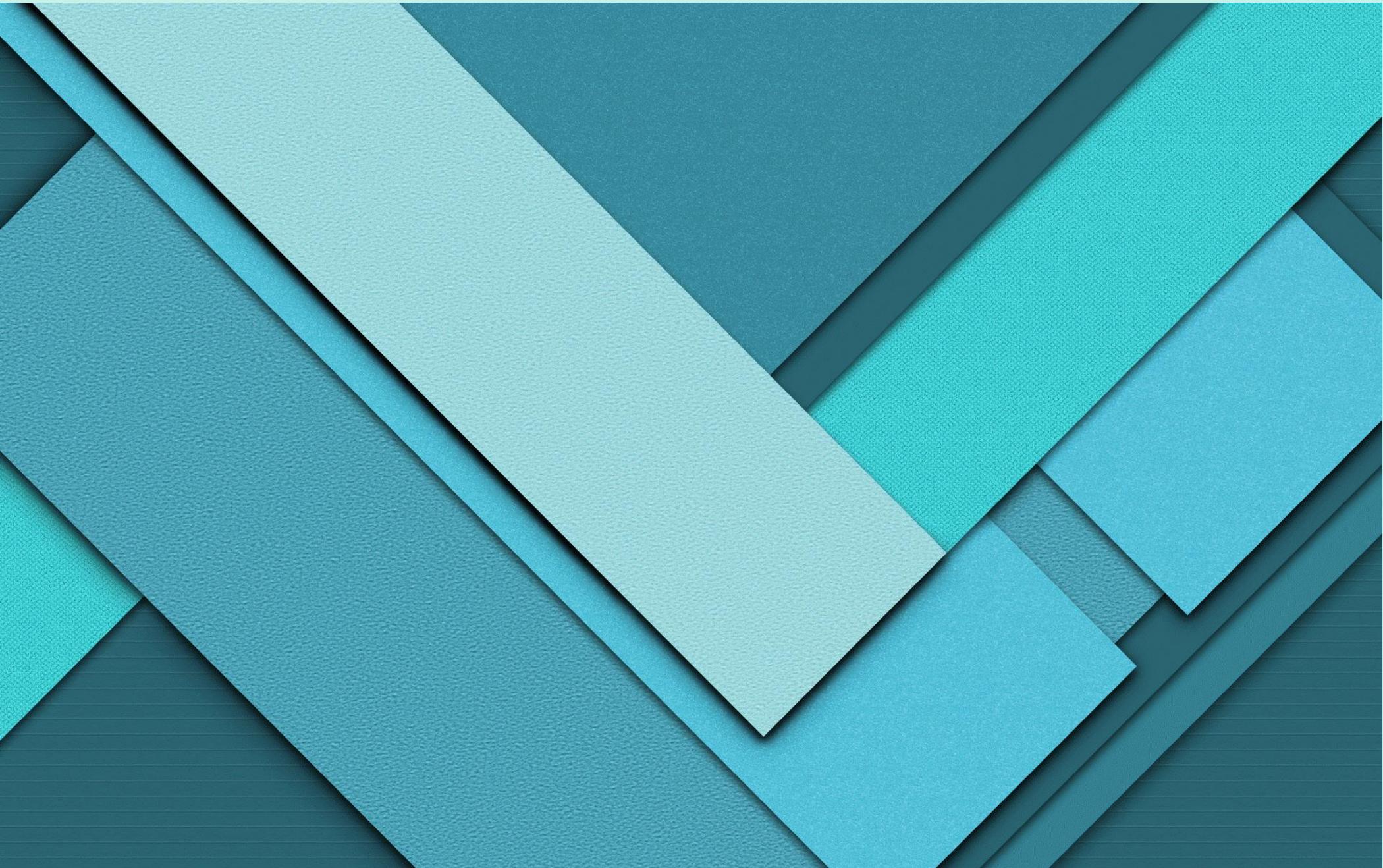
- EU countries must take urgent action to diversify their 5G suppliers, the European Commission said on Friday, a move set to shrink Huawei's presence in Europe as the United States pressured the bloc to follow Britain and ban the Chinese company from 5G networks.
- In November last year, the European Union agreed to take a tough line on 5G suppliers to reduce cybersecurity risks to next-generation mobile networks, seen as key to boosting economic growth and competitiveness.
- The strategy included reducing countries' and telecoms operators' dependency on one supplier. World No. 1 telecoms equipment maker Huawei competes with Finland's Nokia and Sweden's Ericsson. While some progress has been made, a lot of work needs to be done, the Commission said.

Source: <https://www.thedailystar.net/business/news/eu-countries-must-urgently-diversify-5g-suppliers-european-commission-1936317>

Boeing to delay 777X as demand drops for big jets

- Boeing Co is preparing to delay its all-new 777X jet by several months or up to a year, three people familiar with the matter said, as the COVID-19 crisis exacerbates a drop in demand for the industry's largest jetliners.
- Boeing hopes to bring the jet to market as passenger travel rebounds after a downturn caused by the pandemic. It would also hope for a detente in a trade war between Washington and Beijing, which has sidelined crucial Chinese aircraft buyers.
- But stretching out the development opens up fresh risks for Boeing, such as losing engineering attention and momentum, and tougher scrutiny from the U.S. Federal Aviation Administration during the years-long certification process. The 777X - composed of two models, the 777-8 and the larger and more closely watched 777-9 which seats 406 passengers and is due to be delivered first - competes with the Airbus A350-1000, which seats about 360 passengers.

Source: <https://www.thedailystar.net/business/news/boeing-delay-777x-demand-drops-big-jets-1936309>



Graphics and Design

Farzana Afroz
PO, R&DU



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Research and Development Unit
SEL Trident Tower [Level 14]

57 Purana Paltan Lane, VIP Road, Dhaka- 1000

Email: rnd@dhakabank.com.bd