

# Star BUSINESS

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## DSE price indices up, turnover down

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Although share price indices on the Dhaka Stock Exchange (DSE) yesterday shot up following a downturn for three consecutive days, turnover in terms of value dipped.

The turnover on the DSE declined to Tk 21.42 crore, which was Tk 39.38 crore on Wednesday.

DSE All Share Price Index went up by 15.48 points or 1.23 percent to close at 1267.86 points while the DSE General Index gained by 14.89 points or 0.98 percent to close at 1325.05 points.

DSE-20 Index, which comprises blue chips, also rose up by 13.07 points or 0.99 percent to close at 1325.23 points.

Market analysts said the capital market may witness an upward trend in the coming days as Power Grid Company of Bangladesh (PGCB) offloads shares next Monday.

The state-owned power company will join the stock exchanges by releasing 91,08,940 shares with a face value of Tk 100 each to raise around Tk 91.09 crore.

## New 5-taka note hits market Sunday

UNB, Dhaka

Bangladesh Bank will issue Sunday a new five-taka note in reduced size compared to the existing one.

The note by 117 x 62 mm in size instead of the existing 120 X 65 mm, keeping its existing design intact, would be issued simultaneously from Motijheel and Sylhet offices of the central bank.

This note, signed by BB Governor Dr Salehuddin Ahmed, would also be issued from other offices of BB later on.

Three-mm-wide security thread used in the 100-taka note has been used in this new note instead of the existing 0.75-mm-wide security thread. "All other features of the existing five-taka note will remain intact in the new note," said a BB release yesterday.

The existing five-taka note will also be in vogue on the money market along with the new one.

## Shrimp hatcheries at stake

Tech know-how transfer to locals seen urgent

JASIM UDDIN KHAN

Ignorance in natural conservation and use of additional antibiotic by technicians, most of whom are foreigners, in hatching shrimp fry have made the country's Tk 500 crore hatchery industry unstable, industry insiders observed.

They blamed non-transfer of technical know-how to locals and a rat race of producing more fries among entrepreneurs for turning the situation worse.

Sources said the shrimp hatchery industry is entirely run by foreign technicians, mainly from India, Thailand and the Philippines, which poses a serious threat to the sector's stability.

There are allegations that the foreign technicians are used to apply more mother shrimps from the Bay of Bengal than the usual in hatchery instead of applying the natural resource recovery system. Around 70 foreign technicians are now working in

all the 57 shrimp hatchery units.

Taking this reality into consideration, a section of entrepreneurs recently initiated a move to run the industries by local technicians, which proved unrealistic as only 10 local technicians could successfully do the job.

Following the move by the entrepreneurs, the Ministry of Home Affairs recently decided to cancel the work permits of the foreign technicians, but later the ministry surrendered to the situation withdrawing the decision.

"As the entrepreneurs were not aware of how to transfer the technical know-how to the locals, they failed to dictate the foreign technicians to conserve the mother fishes and this failure has led to the risk of ultimate extinction of the mother shrimp resources at the Bay," Nizam M. Selim, chairman of the Bangladesh Shrimp Development Alliance (BSDA), told The Daily Star.

Terming the race among the

entrepreneurs an uneven one, he lamented that this sort of race has made the industry financially unviable, which is burdened with overproduction.

All hatcheries now produce around 1500 crore shrimp fries against the annual demand for 400 crore fries, farming around 1 lakh 50 thousand hectares of land across the country.

Meanwhile, an inter-ministerial meeting held on September 24, with Fishery and Livestock Minister Abdullah Al Noman in the chair, reached a decision to make mandatory the transfer of the technical know-how from the foreign technicians to the locals.

The meeting also decided to establish a training centre on public-private partnership basis within the next three years for the hatchery technicians.

State Minister for Home Affairs Luthfozzaman Babar also attended the meeting.

## RanksTel, TeleBarta sign agreement on interconnectivity

Private PSTN (Public Switched Telephone Network) operator RanksTel Intercom Limited yesterday signed an inter-connectivity agreement with another PSTN operator TeleBarta Limited, the owning company of Jubok Phone.

RanksTel Chief Executive Officer (CEO) A Rouf Chowdhury and Abu Moha-mmad Sayeed, CEO of TeleBarta Limited, signed the agreement in Dhaka.

RanksTel CEO A Rouf Chowdhury said the deal will enable subscribers to make and receive calls from each other's network.

Chowdhury also urged telecoms subscribers to use phone of local companies.

"The deal will open up a new avenue of cooperation," TeleBarta CEO said after signing the agreement.

Zakaria Swapan, chief operating officer (COO), Anwar Hossain, director, Mustak Hossain, head of Corporate Affairs of RanksTel, and Mahmud Hossain, chief technical officer, Masud Reza Bhuiyan, head of Corporate Affairs of TeleBarta, were also present.

## Tata eyes Ritz-Carlton Hotel in Boston

PALLAB BHATTACHARYA, New Delhi

In its continued overseas acquisition spree, the Tata Group plans to buy the Ritz-Carlton Hotel in Boston, US, for 170 million dollars in a move that will help the leading Indian business house expand its footprint in the United States.

The Tata Group, whose interest spans across a range of sectors from steel and automobiles to tea, software services and hotels, is now in due diligence process to execute the deal through the US subsidiary of Indian Hotels Company Ltd which runs Tata's Taj brand of hotels and resorts, according to Indian Hotels Vice Chairman R K Krishna Kumar.

## Tata investment to help raise export to India to \$1b a year

Indian envoy tells Bangladesh

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Bangladesh's exports to India will increase to \$1 billion a year, if it approves Tata's investment proposals, said Veena Sikri, the outgoing Indian high commissioner in Dhaka, yesterday.

She also urged Bangladesh not to consider the trade-related issues politically, which were on many occasions raised in the two countries.

Sikri was talking to journalists after her farewell meeting with Commerce Minister Hafizuddin Ahmed at his Secretariat office.

The commerce minister said if the Indian government steps forward to recognise the product testing laboratories of Bangladesh, one obstacle to augmenting the country's exports to the neighbouring country would be removed.

The minister also stressed the need for modernising the Indian checkpoints in the land port areas so that the Bangladeshi exporters can export their products without hassles.

Sikri said, "Bangladesh's exports to India have gone up five times from \$50 million to \$250 million during the last three and a half years."

As a result, huge trade gap between the two countries is also reducing quite sharply and it will further come down with Bangladesh's approval of the Tata's investment proposals.

Bangladesh has a huge trade deficit with India. According to the Export Promotion Bureau (EPB), in 2005-06 fiscal year, the deficit reached \$1117.64 million as Bangladesh imported goods worth \$1359.60 million from India and exported goods of only \$241.96

million.

On the trade barriers between the two countries, Sikri said Bangladesh and India have exchanged lists of non-tariff and para-tariff barriers in a bid to identify the trade problems.

"We are working on it. But trade issues should not be politicised. We want a positive outcome," she said.

Echoing Sikri's comments, the commerce minister said, "Trade balance is very much in favour of India. So, it is very vital to reduce the trade barriers."

The minister also urged the Indian government to hold the next Joint River Council (JRC) meeting soon, which was scheduled to be held in New Delhi. But it could not organise it so far, he said.

EU LEVIES

## China, Vietnam shoe industries to be hit hard

AFP, Hanoi

China slammed European Union anti-dumping measures on imports of leather shoes as illegal Thursday and threatened retaliation.

Meanwhile, Vietnam's shoe industry officials complained their industry will pay a high price in lost earnings and jobs because of the new European Union anti-dumping measures levied on its exports.

The EU on Wednesday adopted new anti-dumping measures on imports of leather shoes from China and Vietnam after a heated debate between producer countries such as Italy and consumer nations seeking to keep a supply of cheap goods.

Nguyen Gia Thao, president of Vietnam's Leather and Footwear Association (LEFASO), was quoted by the Vietnam News Agency as

saying there had not been any "violations of international trade rules" to justify the levies.

The final cost has yet to be calculated, VNA said, but "it is certain that it will affect the jobs of between 60,000 and 70,000 workers in the industry and some small-scale enterprises will face bankruptcy."

"The EU's anti-dumping measures will not only cause difficulties ... for more than half a million Vietnamese workers ... in the leather and shoe industry, but also for many others whose jobs service the industry and who are already living under the poverty line," it said, citing the industry group.

## Dhaka calls for free access of all LDC products to global market

BSS, Dhaka

Iftekhar Ahmed Chowdhury, ambassador and permanent representative of Bangladesh to the United Nations, called for ensuring duty- and quota-free market access of all products of the least developed countries (LDCs) to the global markets.

He made the call while taking part in a general debate in the Second (Economic) Committee of the United Nations General Assembly Wednesday, said a foreign ministry press release here yesterday.

Chowdhury said the market facilities should be granted immediately if the world's poorest are to be lifted from the state of poverty. He also recommended a 10-point programme for development to the UN.



PHOTO: RANKSTEL

RanksTel Chief Executive Officer (CEO) A Rouf Chowdhury and TeleBarta Limited CEO Abu Mohammad Sayeed exchange documents after signing an interconnectivity agreement in Dhaka yesterday.