

STOCKS		COMMODITIES		ASIAN MARKETS				CURRENCIES			
Week-on-week		As of Friday		Friday Closings				As on Thursday STANDARD CHARTERED BANK			
DSEX	CSCX	Gold	Oil	MUMBAI	TOKYO	SINGAPORE	SHANGHAI	USD	EUR	GBP	CNY
▲ 0.33%	▲ 0.60%	▲ \$1,898.70 (per ounce)	▲ \$39.27 (per barrel)	▲ 1.65%	▼ 0.67%	▼ 0.19%	▼ 0.20%	BUY TK 83.95	89.74	107.64	12.20
4,995.32	8,575.48			38,697.05	23,029.90	2,496.11	3,218.05	SELL TK 84.95	101.29	111.44	12.83

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Loan rescheduling urge ebbs further amid payment holiday

AKM ZAMIR UDDIN

Loan rescheduling in the banking sector declined further in the second quarter of the year on the back of the ongoing loan moratorium facility introduced to help borrowers weather the fallouts of the coronavirus pandemic.

Between April and June, banks rescheduled defaulted loans amounting to Tk 2,658 crore, down 30.60 per cent from three months earlier and 481 per cent from a year ago, according to data from the central bank.

But there is no scope to be complacent because of the falling rescheduling as loan classification has come to a halt due to the moratorium facility, said experts.

Both the volume of classified and rescheduling of loans will escalate exponentially once the moratorium is lifted, they warned.

On March 19, after the country was struck

with the pandemic, the banking regulator asked lenders not to consider businesspeople as defaulters if they fail to repay instalments until June 30. As the crisis prolongs, the deadline has been extended initially to September 30 and then to December this year.

The banking sector has faced the upheaval of large loan rescheduling in recent years, drawing criticism from different quarters as lenders have done so riding on either the relaxed facility offered by the central bank or sidestepping banking norms.

For instance, defaulted loans to the tune of Tk 52,770 crore were regularised last year -- the highest in a single year -- based on the relaxed loan rescheduling rules. Under the policy, defaulters were allowed to regularise defaulted loans for 10 years by making 2 per cent down payment.

The move helped banks bring down the defaulted loans in 2019, when it stood at 9.32 per cent of their total outstanding loans, down from 10.30 per cent a year earlier.

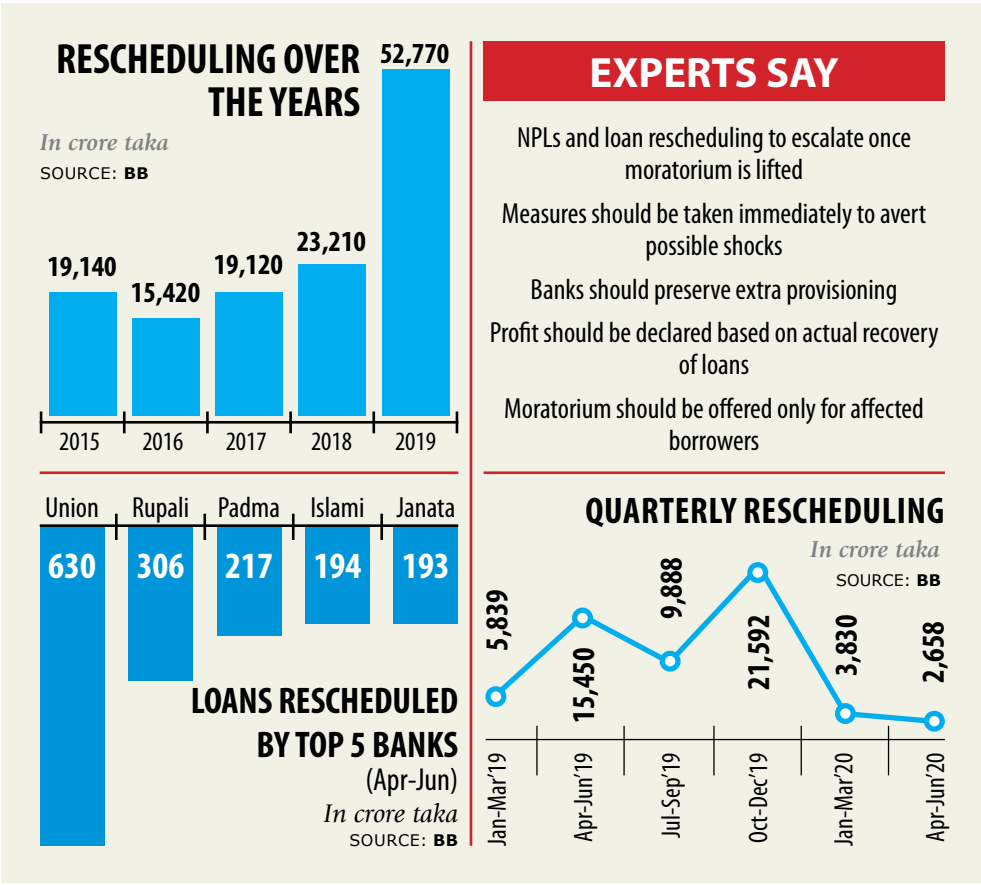
Despite the moratorium, non-performing loans went up to Tk 96,116.65 crore in the first half this year. It was Tk 94,313 crore in December last year.

Some indicators of the financial sectors, including exports, remittances and foreign exchange reserve, have shown an excellent trend in recent months, but the victory from the ongoing

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StanChart to issue Tk 850cr zero coupon bond

STAR BUSINESS DESK

Standard Chartered Bangladesh has received regulatory approvals as the first bank to issue a Tk 850 crore zero-coupon bond in the country.

It is a non-convertible, unsecured, fully redeemable, zero coupon bond, the bank said in a statement.

The maturity period for the product will be five years from the date of issue. Green Delta Insurance Company will act as the trustee for this issue.

It marks another pioneering transaction for the British multinational lender in Bangladesh and is an important milestone in the development of the country's debt capital market, according to the bank.

"As the only multinational universal bank in Bangladesh, we are in a unique position of channelling capital where it matters the most," said Naser Ezaz Bijoy, CEO of Standard Chartered Bangladesh.

"As a trusted and reliable issuer with a 'AAA' credit rating for over a decade, we believe our offering will support the development of Bangladesh's capital market on one hand, while offering depositors a new avenue to invest in a product that offers attractive tax-adjusted returns."

[READ MORE ON B3](#)

MD FAZLUR RAHMAN

Registration of new firms in Bangladesh rose to an all-time high of 11,110 in the last fiscal year, highlighting the expansion of business activities and people's enthusiasm about setting up fresh ventures, official figures showed.

The figure is 24.32 per cent higher from the fiscal year of 2018-19, when 8,936 registrations were taken, according to data from the Office of the Registrar of Joint Stock Companies and Firms (RJSC).

"The economic activities hampered for a few months because of the coronavirus pandemic are now picking up," said Md Mokbul Hossain, registrar of the RJSC.

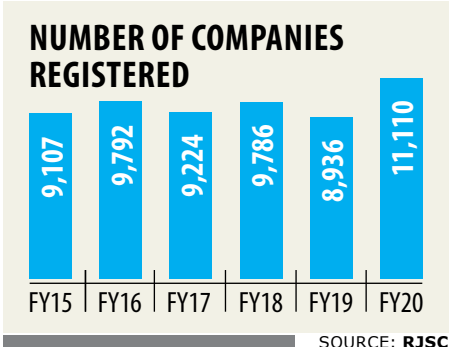
The office of the RJSC is mandated to provide name clearances and registration to all public companies, private companies, liaison offices or branches of foreign companies, trade organisations, societies and partnership firms in Bangladesh.

Registration obtained for setting up new companies rose 50 per cent to 9,010 in FY20 from 6,945 a year ago. Some 250 registrations were taken to establish societies and 1,827 for partnership firms, respectively up from 229 and 1,740 a year ago.

In the first two months of the current fiscal year, 2,279 registrations were

obtained from the RJSC, including 1,892 for companies, 45 for societies and 228 for partnership firms.

Some 245,655 registrations were secured from the RJSC so far. They include 3,532 for public limited companies, 175,932 for private limited companies, 932 for foreign firms, 49,180 for partnership firms, 1,121 for trade bodies and 14,958 for societies.



"The prospective entrepreneurs have to take initiatives, make some investments and go through procedures to start new businesses. With this, they have shown credible interest. So, it is a more meaningful data," said Zahid Hussain, a former lead economist of the World Bank's Dhaka office.

"It also needs to be seen whether all the proposed ventures are set up finally," he said.

The office of the RJSC is the first fully automated office among all government offices in Bangladesh, Mokbul Hossain said.

"All services are provided online."

Service-seekers do not need to come to the RJSC to secure registration. They have to apply online and pay fees online. The name clearance is auto-generated.

After getting the name clearance, companies have to apply for registration and submit the required documents. The registration is given within four hours, which used to take a month in the past. It is also given electronically, said Hossain, also an additional secretary.

Payments to the RJSC can be made through debit and credit cards. The agency is also working to allow payment through mobile financial services.

But the office is yet to be fully paperless. Hard copies of some documents are still accepted.

Copies such as balance sheets, audit reports, share transfers documents, and copies of the annual general meetings have to be submitted in hard-copy forms.

"When you have a file containing 50 pages, it is better to examine and scrutinise

them using hardcopies," Hossain said.

To store documents as per the Companies Act, some hard copies also need to be obtained.

"We have detailed plans to digitalise all services," Hossain said.

He said while transferring shares, people do need to come to visit RJSC offices. Once the digital signature is in place, people will not need to do that. People even can do that anywhere in the world.

The RJSC is now working to introduce digital signatures for service-seekers. "This would allow the agency to scrutinise documents speedily and help establish a paperless office," Hossain said.

Last year, the agency signed agreements with the Bangladesh Investment Development Authority, the Bangladesh Economic Zones Authority, the Bangladesh Export Processing Zones Authority, and the Bangladesh Hi-tech Park Authority to share information and verify information through a one-stop service and put in place data integration.

A data centre and a data recovery centre should be established as soon as possible to keep electronic records, Hossain said.

It also issues certified companies of files and records. Companies need to secure permission from the agency if they want to wind up operations.

Rooftop solar projects beam through pandemic haze

SOHEL PARVEZ

Like any other business, new clean energy ventures are facing disruptions to their tempo for the Covid-19 pandemic. Among them are rooftop-based solar projects focusing factory buildings. Yet some entrepreneurs pushed on with their projects even after the rogue virus brought businesses to their knees.

Paragon Poultry is one of those firms. The leading poultry breeder implemented three new rooftop solar projects of 750 kW during the pandemic to reduce cost and harness other benefits such as a reduction of temperature inside factory premises.

"Initially, the Covid-19 situation was a challenge for us. Later, we were able to overcome that," said Md Moshir Rahman, managing director of Paragaon Group, which also runs feed and frozen snacks businesses.

Paragon said it launched its first rooftop project of 723 kWp capacity in February 2018 and installed the second one in February this year.

Based on the experience, it found that there are a number of direct and indirect benefits of generating power using the otherwise unused space on factory roofs.

"It has a number of direct and indirect benefits. It generates one taka benefit for per watt of electricity compared to electricity bought from public electricity providers," said Rahman.

"We can sell excess electricity to the government too. Apart from the cash benefits, one of the biggest advantages is a reduction in house temperature," he said, citing that it was in the range of 3 to 4 degrees.

He said rooftop solar projects were very effective, particularly for poultry farms.

"Solar energy has an important role in carbon footprint, to reduce CO2 and helps to create a natural green environment," said the top executive of Paragon, whose rooftop-based solar panels have a power generation

capacity of over 1.5 MW.

The group also operates a 10 MW of solar power plant and a solar mini-grid.

Until now, solar projects of 15 MW have been installed on the rooftops of public



A rooftop solar power project of Paragon Poultry at Ghatail in Tangail. The project was launched in July this year.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

[READ MORE ON B3](#)

AT A GLANCE

- Paragon installed 3 new rooftop solar panels for 750KW during pandemic
- It generates more than 1.5MW of rooftop-based solar power
- The company can sell excess electricity to govt
- Rooftop solar panels help reduce temperature of the house
- So far rooftop solar projects for 15MW have been taken by public, private organisations
- Solar projects generate 415MW of electricity in Bangladesh



PJ Ullah and Abdul Gaffar, advisers of Rupayan Group; Mizanur Rahman Dewan, deputy managing director of Rupayan Housing Estate, and Rashadul Hossain Chowdhury, president of Rupayan Shopping Square Shop and Showroom Owners Association, pose at an event at Rupayan City Uttara in Dhaka recently, when Rupayan Housing Estate handed over the ownership of its commercial project Rupayan Shopping Square to the buyers. Rupayan Shopping Square is a 14-storey building located in 43 kathas of land near International Convention City Bashundhara in the capital.

EU trade benefits may continue even after LDC graduation

FROM PAGE B4
If the UN CDP finds the assessment positive, Bangladesh will graduate to the status of a developing country in 2024.

Once the country graduates, all tariff benefits will be lifted. Only the European Union (EU) will allow tariff benefits for Bangladesh for another three years as a grace period.

That means Bangladesh will enjoy the zero-duty benefit to the EU up to 2027 but for other countries, the tariff benefits will be withdrawn from 2024.

As an LDC, Bangladesh currently enjoys zero-duty tariff benefits, preferential trade benefits and regional trade benefits on exports to 38 countries, 28 of which are within the EU.

The other 10 are: Australia, Belarus, Canada, Liechtenstein, Japan, New Zealand, Norway, Russia, Switzerland and Turkey.

In many other countries such as Chile, Brazil and those in Latin America, Bangladesh enjoys a significant reduction in duty rates.

Also, in the US, Bangladesh enjoys zero-duty benefit on 97 per cent of its products but unfortunately, the package excludes some major export items like garments.

As a result, Bangladesh exporters have to face a 15.6 per cent duty on apparel shipments to US markets. Nevertheless, the US is the single largest export destination for Bangladesh.

Bangladesh will face competition in Europe after graduation as Vietnam has

already signed a free trade agreement (FTA) with the EU. Some 74 per cent of Bangladesh's export earnings come under the preferential trade as an LDC.

Of this, 64 per cent comes from the EU and 10 per cent from Japan, Canada and the other developed countries.

Bangladesh's export will decline 5.7 per cent annually if the EU's EBA initiative is not extended as local exporters will then have to face an 8.7 per cent duty on exports to the EU.

So, there is a possibility of losing more than \$2 billion worth of export business annually after graduation, according to the United Nations Industrial Development Organisation.

In early April, WTO economists projected a steep fall in trade in 2020, with the main question being the sheer depth of the decline.

The economic dislocation threatens to reverse hard-won socioeconomic development gains in the LDCs and could potentially delay graduation for some countries.

Economists argue that primarily, all the LDCs should demand deferment of the graduation by at least three years as the global economy is severely affected by the pandemic.

If deferment is possible, it will be better. If not, all the developing and developed countries, including those within the EU, should continue the same trade benefits at least for five years past the graduation.

Rooftop solar projects beam through pandemic haze

FROM PAGE B1

"Industries had come to a halt because of Covid induced disruption. Now, rooftop-based solar projects are picking up," he said, adding that Solaric implemented a rooftop-based solar project of 244 KW for AKH Group during the ongoing pandemic.

Garment manufacturer Comfit Composite Knit plans to execute a 2 MW solar project on its factory rooftops to meet a portion of its requirement, said Hasan Imam Siddiki, head of its corporate finance.

Equipment has been already bought to first materialise a 300 KW solar project at a factory in Mirzapur, Tangail, he said.

The outbreak of the coronavirus disease has slowed the installation process. "We could have been done by this time and entered the second phase," added Siddiki.

The Infrastructure Development Company Ltd (Idcol), one of the major financiers of renewable energy schemes in Bangladesh, is not pushing borrowers to go fast owing to the pandemic-induced business and fund crunch, said its executive director and CEO, Mahmood Malik.

Idcol has so far approved nearly Tk 162 crore-worth loans for 26 rooftop projects having a combined capacity of 31 MW. Of those, nine of 9.6MW capacity have already been realised by entrepreneurs, according to the financial institution.

Rooftop based projects gained pace before the pandemic, said Idcol's Head of Renewable Energy Md Enamul Karim Pavel. And the positive side is that firms which had to suspend work temporarily now want to resume work, he said.

"We are also getting applications for new projects," said Pavel.

India to waive certain interest levies on loans in Covid-19 relief

REUTERS, New Delhi

The Indian government has told the Supreme Court it will waive certain interest levies on loans up to 20 million rupees (\$272,888) under a COVID-19 support plan, a legal filing showed, in a move that will bring relief to millions of borrowers.

An Indian optician from Agra had challenged the plan which allowed skipping repayments for six months but levied an additional "interest-on-interest" on delayed payments which borrowers called unfair.

Other borrowers, such as real estate companies and power utilities, also challenged the plan.

In a filing on Oct. 2 with the Supreme Court, seen by Reuters, the government said it had decided to waive the compounding interest component on small-business and some other loans related to education and housing, and credit card dues.

"The government bearing this burden would naturally have an impact on several other pressing commitments being faced by the

nation, including meeting direct cost associated with pandemic management," the filing added.

It did not estimate the impact on the banking sector from the move but said if it were to consider a complete waiver of interest payments over a six-month period, as some had

sought, it would cost the sector 6 trillion rupees (\$82 billion).

Ganjendra Sharma, the Indian optician who filed the first case in the Supreme Court, applauded the decision.

"I am happy millions of people won today," he told Reuters.



REUTERS/FILE

A view of the Supreme Court building in New Delhi.

Facebook, Twitter, Google CEOs will testify before US Senate committee

REUTERS, Washington

The chief executives of Facebook, Twitter and Alphabet-owned Google have agreed to voluntarily testify at a hearing before the Senate Commerce Committee on Oct. 28 about a key law protecting internet companies.

Facebook and Twitter confirmed on Friday that their CEOs, Mark Zuckerberg

and Jack Dorsey, respectively, will appear, while a source said that Google's Sundar Pichai will appear. That came a day after the committee unanimously voted to approve a plan to subpoena the three CEOs to appear before the panel. Twitter's Dorsey tweeted on Friday that the hearing "must be constructive & focused on what matters most to the American people: how we work together to protect elections."

Loan rescheduling urge ebbs further amid payment holiday

FROM PAGE B1

"Distress in the banking has deepened for years and the ongoing slowdown has pushed this further," said Zahid Hussain, a former lead economist of the World Bank's Dhaka office.

Some good banks have already started taking measures to tackle future crisis as NPLs may increase massively soon after the moratorium ceases to exist, he said.

Regulatory support will require for a long period to diminish the distressing state of affairs in the banking sector, Hussain said.

The moratorium support is one kind of loan rescheduling, said Ahsan H Mansur, executive director of the Policy Research Institute of Bangladesh.

Borrowers now enjoy the loan rescheduling automatically and they are not required to pay any down payment to do so, he said.

"But this will not give any solution as the central bank has extended the facility to all borrowers."

The borrowers who faced a crisis due to the business slowdown should be considered for the facility, said Mansur, also a former senior official of the International Monetary Fund.

India has taken measures only for consumer loans and self-employed borrowers, he said, adding that loan moratorium should be dictated by the relationship between bankers and clients.



Walton Deputy managing directors Eva Rezwana and Nazrul Islam Sarker and Executive Director Amdadul Haque Sarker announce the commencement of "Walton Digital Campaign Season-8" at the electronics brand's corporate office in Dhaka last week.

Bangladesh should make the most of fourth industrial revolution: experts

FROM PAGE B4

Rashid Hamid, team leader for the UN 4IR Study, discussed the global importance of the 4IR and Bangladesh's state-of-readiness. He said any success in the 4IR requires a resilient and advanced internet infrastructure, which in turn requires the implementation of appropriate policies, understanding of data transfer and localisation along with reliable power grid connection.

Abul Kasem Khan, chairman of the Business Initiative Leading Development, stressed on the need to engage private sector stakeholders in policy design to improve the country's investment climate.

He also suggested that incentives for the use of modern technologies and innovations should be provided under a comprehensive policy framework.

Md Sirazul Islam, executive chairman of the Bida, said that

his organisation is committed to working with the industry, academia and research institutions to face any challenges and harness the opportunities as offered by emerging technologies under the 4IR.

The Bida is working with the private sector to provide training on the different skills required to use 4IR tools and promote innovation and entrepreneurship, he added.

Rubana Huq, president of the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association, said the anticipated transition to automation and cyber-enabled modalities will have a great economic impact.

Aurélien Sostaponti, head of industries and cleantech at the Business France, and AKM Hafizullah Khan, project director of the Entrepreneurship and Skill Development Project at the Bida, also spoke.

Rubana Huq, president of the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association, said the anticipated transition to automation and cyber-enabled modalities will have a great economic impact.

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Affordable online learning to ensure efficient human capital for future

FROM PAGE B4

Online learning and teaching is a completely new dimension in Bangladesh and educators need to have additional skills, such as digital literacy.

Some have already declared online classes to be less effective than its physical counterpart but to address this issue, effective measures, initiatives and road maps are a must.

Before that though, the first and most important thing to do is to draft a definite and comprehensive guideline on online learning for both the institutions themselves and their teachers.

As per the renowned American writer and founding father Johan Adams, "Teacher is a maker of man, he is the foundation of all education and thus, of the whole civilisation of mankind, present and future. No nation's reconstruction is possible without the active cooperation of the teacher."

Aside from government and a very few private colleges, the country's remaining educational institutions are registering limited revenues amid the ongoing pandemic and have even faced difficulties to pay their teachers' salaries on time.

Under these circumstances, it will be even more difficult for teachers and other faculty members to own a sufficient digital device and internet connection. Therefore, the government and various college governing bodies should find a way to provide digital devices and bear all other related costs to online learning to make

the initiative a success.

Here in Bangladesh, many students need to work to support their families and due to this pandemic, their numbers will only increase.

Some students may fail to attend online classes or may not have the same merits as others, so the classes should be archived so that the video recordings can help them attain a better understanding.

To facilitate this, there should be a national level archive platform that also features digital textbooks so that students facing financial constraints are not hard pressed to purchase learning materials.

Examinations play an important role in e-learning and provides an array of benefits for both the learner and instructor.

And thus, several types of testing modules, such as planned and surprise monthly, quarterly and half-yearly quizzes should be structured in a way that encourages learners to think back on course materials rather than looking for answers elsewhere.

All of us want to know when the coronavirus crisis will come to an end and when life will return to normalcy but it is probably safe to say we are still nowhere near the end. Recently, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina also asked all concerned to stay prepared as the Covid-19 situation may worsen in winter.

As a proactive measure, the education board needs to take preparation from now regarding at which modality the year end and the final HSC examinations will take place.

Finally, the media can play an important role in enlightening and educating people. Apart from our national assembly session, the state-owned Sangsad Television can be used as full time education broadcast channel.

On top of that we have 30 private TV channels and if each channel telecasts educational shows for at least one hour each day then it adds up to 30 hours per day total and in this crisis, they should come forward to help our nation.

Business organisations should extend their hand for cost sharing. Print media should print more articles related to this issue, mainly to attract the attention of concerned stakeholders. Radios should also air educational programmes.

Digital Bangladesh is one of the nation's dreams and over the last couple of years, Bangladesh has remarkable achievement in different sectors for digitalization but little has been done so far for the education sector, mainly digital teaching, and this pandemic has opened up an opportunity for nationwide inclusion of digital learning.

The author is the head of supply chain and procurement at bkash

StanChart to issue Tk 850cr zero coupon bond

FROM PAGE B1

"I am grateful to our regulators, Bangladesh Securities and Exchange Commission (BSEC) and Bangladesh Bank, especially Prof Shibli Rubayat-UI-Islam, chairman of BSEC, and his team for supporting us in completing this pioneering transaction and their commitment towards the development of the bond market."

The zero-coupon bond will open up alternate investment avenues for corporates and individuals.

With this offering, the bank is leveraging strong investor confidence in its strategy and outlook, and the quality of its financial position, to increase its liquidity.

"The BSEC, in collaboration with our ecosystem of regulators and stakeholders, is working towards the development of Bangladesh's capital markets, particularly debt market, which will be vital for financing long-term needs of our industries and infrastructure," said Prof Islam.

"We hope Standard Chartered's issue will encourage greater participation of our leading corporates, state-owned

enterprises, municipalities in the debt capital, devising optimal financing strategies which will help them grow and prosper sustainably."

Standard Chartered's initiative of issuing its first corporate bond is commendable and will contribute towards setting the right direction for capital markets, he said.

Standard Chartered is leading the debt capital market in Bangladesh as well as an acknowledged global leader in Asia, Africa and Middle East.

Since pioneering in 1997, the capital markets unit of Standard Chartered has arranged over \$7.50 billion equivalent local and foreign currency in power, telecom, infrastructure, food and beverage, textile, service, renewable energy and other key sectors.

The bank operates one of the country's most sophisticated dealing rooms with a diverse range of risk management products, pioneering a number of financial firsts – including FX option in 2006, commodity derivative in 2008, interest rate derivative in 2009, and zero coupon Islamic certificate issuance in 2019.

EU trade benefits may continue even after LDC graduation

Govt officials hope as they will meet EU counterparts online on Oct 12

REEYAT ULLAH MIRDHA

Bangladesh may continue to enjoy duty-free trade benefits in the European Union for a few more years even after its graduation from the group of least developed countries (LDCs) as the pandemic fallouts have ravaged the economy, government officials said.

“We will hold a virtual meeting with the EU trade officials on October 12 to place our demand for an extension of the trade benefits as both the economy and employment have been severely affected by the ongoing pandemic,” said Md Jafar Uddin, commerce secretary.

The EU is set to review its duty-free facilities under the Everything But Arms (EBA) agreement in November. Under the EBA, all imports to the EU from the LDC are duty- and quota-free, with the exception of armaments.

In the meeting, the secretary will lead the Bangladesh delegation, featuring various secretaries from the labour and foreign ministries and two other government bodies that he could not immediately mention.



LDCs, such as Bangladesh, which are set to graduate within the next few years are demanding their developing and developed counterparts to extend the duty-free benefits for preferably the next five years as most economies have been badly affected by this unprecedented global crisis.

At the meeting, Bangladesh will mainly raise the issue of continuing the EU’s Generalised System of Preferences (GSP) facility, Uddin said.

Officials of other countries with also make the same demand as their economies have also been affected by Covid-29, the commerce secretary added.

Another facility that could be extended is the duty-free benefit for LDCs outlined by the World Trade Organisation (WTO).

On behalf of all LDCs, the African nation of Chad already submitted a proposal to the WTO last month, seeking an extension of the GSP facilities on exports to developed and developing countries for a few years.

Bangladesh is a major player in the LDC group under the WTO initiative.

“I hope the WTO initiative will be successful because it is a step that was taken collectively by all LDCs,” Uddin said.

Earlier, Bangladesh joined hands with its peer LDCs to appeal to the WTO for a continuation of the trade benefits they currently enjoy following graduation to developing nations considering the pandemic’s ill-effect on economies.

Noting Bangladesh’s economic development record, the UN Committee for Development Policy (UN CDP) is scheduled to complete the final round of assessment for the country’s graduation in 2021.

READ MORE ON B3

BSEC gets tough on Doel Group

Four of its companies, two debentures will be delisted; Tk 57cr will be returned to investors

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

The Bangladesh Securities and Exchange Commission (BSEC) has decided to delist four companies and two debentures of Doel Group of Industries, which will compel the group to return around Tk 57 crore to its investors.

The companies are Bangladesh Chemical Industries, Bangladesh Dyeing & Finishing

“Investors will get back at least some of their money,” he added.

The stock exchanges will have to maintain an escrow account to return investor’s money at face value or a negotiated price, the commission said in a press release on Tuesday.

An escrow account is an account where funds are held in trust whilst two or more parties complete a transaction.



Industries, Bangladesh Luggage Industries and Bangladesh Zipper Industries.

All the companies are listed with the over-the-counter market. They are not performing well and have not paid any dividends to investors for at least the last decade.

This prompted the BSEC to permanently remove the companies from the country’s stock exchanges.

The debentures that are going to be delisted are BD Zipper 14 per cent Debenture and BD Luggage 14 per cent Debenture.

Now, Doel Group will have to return around Tk 57 crore to the investors for the delisting, said a top official of the stock market regulator.

Doel Group of Industries started its venture in 1981 through manufacturing and marketing of artificial leather and rexine materials by setting up the Bangladesh Chemical Industries in Pagla, Narayanganj, according to the company’s website.

It later added knit and woven fabrics, zippers, nylon and tafetta fabrics, readymade garments and sweaters, sportswear, jackets, travel bags, soft luggage, polypropylene tapes and Portland cement.

Entrepreneurs raise money for a period by issuing debentures, a type of debt instrument that is not backed by any collateral. There are eight debentures on the DSE board now.

All currently listed debentures are

DOEL GROUP'S COMPANIES TO BE DELISTED FROM OTC MARKET		
Company name	Paid-up capital (in crore taka)	Sponsor shareholding
Bangladesh Chemical Industries	11.75	43%
Bangladesh Dyeing & Finishing	12	40%
Bangladesh Luggage Industries	20	50%
Bangladesh Zipper Industries	8.8	34%

DEBENTURE FUNDS TO BE RETURNED TO INVESTORS			
Bond Issuer	Fund raised (in crore taka)	Listing year	Coupon rate in %
Bangladesh Luggage Industries	13.5	1996	14
Bangladesh Zipper Industries	2.24	1995	14

matured and are still listed due to some incomplete legal proceedings, according to the BSEC’s website.

As a result, they have not returned the money to investors, prompting the BSEC to come up with a strict move.

Investors welcomed the BSEC’s decision.

“The decision will enhance investors’ confidence as investors will get their money back which was almost gone,” said Abdur Razzaque, a retired government official, who has an investment in the stock market.

“It will give a message to other issuers that there is no way to cheat investors,” he added.

On Tuesday, the commission approved an open-ended mutual fund, SAML Income Unit Fund. The targeted fund is Tk 10 crore.

Of the amount, Tk 1 crore will be funded by sponsors and the rest will be open for investors.

The fund manager is Shahjalal Asset Management and the trustee and custodian of the fund would be Sandhani Life Insurance and Brac Bank respectively.

Bangladesh should make the most of fourth industrial revolution: experts

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

A clear understanding of automation, the use of modern technologies and presence of skilled human resources are essential to adapting to the fourth industrial revolution (4IR) and making opportunities out of the challenges presented by the prevailing situation, experts said yesterday.

“This is a need to clearly understand the challenges faced by any industry in order to design a solution that will help it become successful in this world dominated by the internet-of-things (IoT), and automation,” said Mehdi Anwar, a professor of electrical and computer engineering at the University of Connecticut.

Anwar made the comments while making his keynote presentation at a webinar styled “Challenges & Opportunities for Entrepreneurship and Employment in the context of current status of Skill Development and readiness for Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR)”.

The event was jointly organised by the Bangladesh Investment Development

Countries like China, South Korea and Taiwan have successfully managed to mitigate the pandemic's economic fallouts by utilising 4IR tools such as artificial intelligence and big data

Authority (BIDA) and the France Bangladesh Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCIFB).

Aside from understanding the challenges, there is a need to establish relevant communication-related infrastructures and generate a qualified workforce to reap the full benefit of 4IR, Anwar said.

Planning Minister MA Mannan assured that the government would provide full support for the formulation and implementation of a national strategy to make Bangladesh 4IR-responsive.

He emphasised a collective effort from

the academia, industry and the government to use different 4IR tools to address any challenges and harness opportunities to promote innovations, investments and growth in line with the country’s sustainable development goals.

CCIFB President Syed Mahmudul Huq said the Covid-19 pandemic has put immense pressure on individuals, enterprises and societies, forcing them to accelerate the use of 4IR tools.

Countries like China, South Korea and Taiwan have successfully managed to mitigate the pandemic’s economic fallouts

by utilising 4IR tools such as Artificial Intelligence and Big Data.

By deploying the same tools and technologies, local manufacturers could create new products, industries and jobs, Huq added.

Satya Prasad Majumder, vice-chancellor of the Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology, said that planning for the 4IR requires identification of possible challenges posed to local industries, assessment of technology gaps, and a trained workforce.

There is a need to formalise the establishment of a network of universities, both local and international, and industries to promote innovation and address local and global challenge and generate a qualified workforce, he said.

Identifying financial resources while forming a marketing strategy in partnership with local and global partners and participating universities and industries to support the establishment of the network could be another good option, he added.

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Affordable online learning to ensure efficient human capital for future



MOHAMMAD RASHEDUL ALAM

Bangladesh, the world’s eighth most populous country, has a very youthful population with currently about 34 per cent being under the age of 15.

The country’s population pyramid is a clear indication of its possibilities for future economic growth, which has a strong correlation with human capital.

Human capital is a key factor behind sustained economic growth and poverty reduction for many nations in the 21st century, the World Bank said in a statement.

Theodore William Schultz, a famous American Nobel Laureate for economics, once said there are five ways to develop human capital, of which the most effective is education.

Over the last two decades, the government has consistently

improved upon this sector as Bangladesh’s human development index (HDI) has gone from 0.39 to 0.61, a 58.3 per cent increase, between 1990 and 2018.

However, the country still ranks below Sri Lanka, India and Bhutan on this index.

In 2020, the ongoing coronavirus pandemic created the biggest disruption to the education system in history but developed countries fared better in this aspect compared developing nations.

Currently, there are 3.6 million students out of school and in light of the situation, the government introduced online admissions for HSC students and completed the process by September 17.

This year, a total of 1.69 million students passed the SSC or equivalent examinations while about 1.40 million applied for college.

Secondary education creates a bridge that ensures regularity and continuity for further education and this stage is crucial for any student given that it is a part of developing human capital.

To make the government’s target to introduce distance learning for HSC students from October onwards a reality, a combined effort is needed



Online education is expensive in Bangladesh as a student needs a suitable electronic device, such as a smartphone or laptop, along with a strong internet connection.

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to ensure that online classes are held routinely and effectively.

As per the statistics from a couple of years ago, 26 to 28 per cent of all HSC students dropped out of school for numerous reasons but mainly due to financial constraints.

It is well known that Covid-19 has had significantly adverse impacts on the employment and income levels among medium and

low-income groups.

So under these circumstances, the government should provide special financial support for the education sector and recommend full waivers for college admission fees, monthly tuition and other costs according to a student’s needs.

Online education is actually more expensive than traditional learning in Bangladesh as a student needs to have

a suitable electronic device, such as a smartphone or laptop, along with strong internet connectivity to attend virtual classes.

Since many students do not have the financial capacity to buy the required devices, the government, its development partners and business houses should come forward to lend their support in this regard.

By simply owning a computer,

Since many students do not have the financial ability to buy the required devices, the government, development partners and business houses should come forward to lend their support in this regard

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