



**PHILIPS**  
sense and simplicity  
Home Theatre System  
Model No.: HTS 3357  
TRANSCOM ELECTRONICS 8855366-8, 01712-665463

## Stocks

DGEN	0.60%
2,969.52	
CSCX	0.79%
4,961.16	

## Asian Markets

MUMBAI	0.16%
14,833.46	
TOKYO	1.50%
11,964.16	
SINGAPORE	1.46%
2,833.58	
SHANGHAI	3.96%
3,668.90	

## Currencies

	Buy TK.	Sell TK.
USD	68.30	69.30
EUR	106.24	110.86
GBP	135.08	140.27
JPY	0.70	0.74

SOURCE: STANDARD CHARTERED

## Commodities

Oil	\$106.06
(per barrel)	

SOURCE: AFP

## More News

### Dhaka's five-star boom



In recent years, the hospitality sector in Bangladesh has been booming with the five star hotel segment a symbol of the increasing number of well off visitors coming to the country.

B-4

## International

### No country immune from financial turmoil: WB

No country is immune from the ongoing financial crisis, World Bank President Robert Zoellick said Monday, rejecting the theory that Asia's fast-growing economies are de-coupled from Western countries.

### S Korea aims to be top 10 investment market

The South Korean government on Monday outlined the key goals it wants to achieve by 2012 so as to make Korea globally competitive. They include the broad-based adoption of global standards, increasing the nation's self-sufficiency, and making this country an investment attraction.

B-4

## Bangla Biz Lexicon

Hartal-a Gujarati expression signifying closing down of shops and warehouses with the object of realising a demand. In Bangladesh, hartal is a constitutionally recognised political method for articulating demands.

## Contact Us

If you have views on Star Business or news about business in Bangladesh, please email us at [business@thedailystar.net](mailto:business@thedailystar.net)

# Best Air in talks to buy six new planes

SOHEL PARVEZ

Best Air has opened talks with aircraft makers to purchase six new planes in a multi-million-dollar deal as part of its plan to launch several international routes.

The move comes hot on the heels of the announcement by Biman and GMG Airlines that they are also making major aircraft acquisitions and is further evidence of the increasing competition in the nation's aviation industry.

"We have plans to expand our routes to the Middle East, Far East and Europe in the coming days. It's also a part of our efforts to offer premium services to our passengers," M Haider Uzzaman, chairman of Best Aviation, said after a meeting with a visiting team of European plane maker Airbus in Dhaka yesterday.

On Sunday, GMG Airlines said it would buy six new generation aircraft from Boeing at \$900 million (Tk 6,200 crore), while on Sunday Biman signed the \$1.265 billion (equivalent to Tk 8,728 crore) deal with the same supplier to get eight new aircraft.

Haider however said it was not the aircraft purchasing competition rather a complementary step considering the current volume of passengers in Bangladesh's aviation market.

"It's quite a big market. We see about 2 lakh passengers on an average a month. If we all are



A file photo shows an aircraft of Best Air that started operations in January. The local airline is in talks to purchase six new planes in a multi-million-dollar deal. The airline's move comes after the announcement by Biman and GMG Airlines that they are also buying aircraft.

better equipped, we, the local carriers, would be able to recover our market lost to foreign operators," he said.

"We want to start our international flights to Bangkok in early April," Haider said.

The Best Air chairman said the Airbus gave a presentation of its products. "They will make their financial offers to us for a fleet of four A-320 and two A-330 aircraft shortly," he

said. "We have presented the salient features of our products here. We are more than happy talking to Best Air," said Paul Moultrie, area sales director of Airbus Middle East following the meeting with Best Air.

Haider however said Best Air also wants to sit with the Boeing before taking any final decision.

Majority controlled by

Kuwait-based Aqeeq Aviation Holding, the Best Air started its operation on country's busiest Dhaka-Chittagong route on January 14 this year with a single Boeing 737-200.

The carrier launched operation at a time when Bangladesh aviation industry is growing at about 7.6 percent a year with foreign carriers control about 90 percent of the total volume of annual air traffic due mainly

to weakness of Biman.

The Best Air according to its chairman has yet to reach a break-even point, although it recorded a load factor, or seat occupancy, of about 60 percent in February from about 34 percent in January.

"We hope to reach a break even point by April," the Best Air chairman hoped.

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# Annisul Huq set to become new chief of FBCCI

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Annisul Huq is set to become the next president of the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI), as his panel swept elections to the apex trade body.

According to official results, Annisul's panel bagged 19 posts of directors out of 24, while MA Rouf Chowdhury-led panel got only five directors' seats.

With the 19 posts and his own one, Annisul has emerged as the majority panel. Annisul is a nominated director by the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA). Annisul has also the majority supports from the nominated directors in the chamber and association groups.

The election for the post of one president and two vice-presidents will be held at 4pm today.

There are 24 directors -- 12 each from chamber and association groups -- who are elected through direct balloting in first phase, and 14 other directors -- seven each from the leading chamber and association groups -- who are nominated by respective chambers and associations. The 38 directors elect a president and two vice-presidents in the second phase, for a two-year term.

"The voters gave their verdict in favour of us because of our sincerity, commitment and leadership quality. We need to keep our promises. We need to do a lot of things in the coming days for the country's economy," Annisul said talking to The Daily Star.

The result of the association group's balloting was announced at dawn yesterday. Of the 12 directors, Annisul's panel bagged eight posts, while Rouf's grabbed the rest four posts.

Winners of Annisul-led panel from association group are Obaidur Rahman (882 votes) of Bangladesh Aluminium Manufacturers' Association, Shafquat Haider (854 votes) of Bangladesh Association of Software &



Annisul Huq

Information Services, Farukul Islam Shova (805 votes) of Bangladesh Dress Makers' Association, Mohammad Jalal Uddin (715 votes) of Bangladesh Bread Biscuit and Confectionery Manufacturers Association, Anwar Hossain (692 votes) of Bangladesh Jewellery Manufacturers & Exporters Association, Abdul Haque (635 votes) of Bangladesh Reconditioned Vehicles Importers & Dealers Association, Abu Alam Chowdhury (625 votes) of Bangladesh Craft and Giftware Exporters Association, and Mohammad Belayet Hossain (621 votes) of Bangladesh Chemical & Perfume Merchant Association.

The winners of Rouf-led panel from association group are Jasim Uddin (767 votes) of Bangladesh Plastic Goods Manufacturers & Exporters Association, MA Rouf Chowdhury (645 votes) of Bangladesh Vegetable Oil Refiners & Vanaspati Manufacturers Association, Mir Nizam Uddin Ahmed (624 votes) of Bangladesh Electrical Association, and Dilder Ahmed (618 votes) of Bangladesh Jewellers' Association.

Earlier on Monday night, Annisul's panel clinched 11 seats out of 12 from the chamber group, while Rouf's got only one post.

On Monday, the voting took place amid huge enthusiasm among the business community, with around 93 percent turnout of voters.

This year 1,551 voters -- 316 from the chamber group and 1,235 from the association group -- were enrolled.

# 50pc rise in CI sheet prices in 2 years

KAWSAR KHAN

High import cost of raw materials soared the prices of corrugated iron (CI) sheet over 50 per cent in the last two years, halving the demand for the product that is mostly used by low-earning rural people.

A market survey says the CI sheet is now selling at a price ranging from Tk 11 lakh 7 thousand to Tk 11 lakh 9 thousand a tonne, which was Tk 97-98 thousand just two weeks back.

The sector people attributed such a price hike to the surge in the prices of raw materials in international market and imposition of VAT 9 value added tax on the raw materials since the 2004-05 fiscal year.

Two years ago the cost of per tonne of CR (cold roll) coil, the main raw material for making CI sheet, was \$500 million, but it is now sold at \$900, pushing up the price of end products.

The prices of zinc ingot, another raw material, have also increased to \$ 4,000 a tonne from \$1,000.

"Due to this rise in the prices and less demand for the product, the 6-7 CR coil manufacturers are only utilising 25 per cent of their production capacity," said Khalilur Rahman, president of Bangladesh CR Coil Manufacturers and Exporters Association.

He went on saying "two years ago we imported 8 million tonnes of raw materials a year for our industries, but last year we imported only 3 lakh tonnes.

According to data showed by



Corrugated iron (CI) sheets are seen at a shop in Dhaka. High import cost of raw materials increased the prices of corrugated iron over 50 percent in the last two years.

the association, the local manufacturers can produce 8 lakh tonnes of CI sheet per annum if those utilise the full capacity against the domestic demand of 6 lakh tonnes.

Generally the demand for CI sheet increases during January-April period, as people prefer to build or repair their houses on the harvest of paddy. But this year the sales of such sheets have slowed down.

"During the period 2 years ago, I used to sell 7-8 bans (a counting unit which means 6-10 pieces as per the size of the

item) of CI sheets every day, but I hardly can sell three bans a day now," said a retailer at French Road, the biggest CI sheet market in the city.

"Now on an average per ban of CI sheets is being sold at around Tk 6,000, but the rate was around Tk 4,000 two years ago," said Aminul Islam Uzzal of Nazrul and Brothers, the exclusive distributor of Abul Khair Steel.

As increasing prices of essentials causes additional expenditure, the potential users of CI sheets are finding it

very difficult to spend extra amount of money on buying CI sheets.

"Many customers visit my shop every day, but they leave without buying and say that they are unable to buy it at this exorbitant price," said M Sayeed, manager of Zahid Corporation, a CI sheet wholesaler.

"If this situation continues we will have to close our industries," president of the association said, urging the government to reduce tax on the industry.

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# SEC rejects Grameen Mutual Fund prospectus

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

The Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) has rejected the prospectus of Grameen Mutual Fund Two for failing to fulfill necessary requirements.

The SEC said prospectus of the largest mutual fund was rejected, as necessary bank certificate had not been submitted with the proposal for floating Tk125 crore mutual fund.

The rejection came at a meeting of the stock market regulator in Dhaka yesterday with the SEC Chairman Faruq Ahmad Siddiqi in the chair.

SEC officials, referring to the securities rules on mutual fund scheme, said AIMS, manager of the fund, did not show any banking documents regarding Tk17 crore the institution raised through pre-IPO placement of Grameen Mutual Fund One.

However, Yawer Sayeed, managing director and chief executive director of AIMS, said they had sought commission's permission for the pre-IPO placement of Tk17 crore.

"We have already declared the record date for entitling the prospective unit holders of Grameen Mutual Fund Two, and we have also sent a letter to the commission in this regard," he said.

Earlier in January this year, the AIMS of Bangladesh, the asset management firm of Grameen Bank, submitted the prospectus seeking permission for floating the second scheme of Grameen Mutual Fund One.



## Sub-editors and Reporters Wanted

The Daily Star is Bangladesh's most read and influential English language newspaper. As part of our continual efforts to improve the service we give our readers, we have strengthened and expanded our business coverage and are now looking for sub-editors and reporters to make the section even better.

Applicants for sub-editors must be able to work effectively in a deadline-driven environment, must have a strong sense of grammar, sharp eyes for detecting mistakes in copy, and be computer literate. Experience of work with English language newspapers will be an extra qualification.

Applicants for reporters must have an excellent command over both spoken and written English and be able to work to tight deadlines. They must be prepared to find their own stories and report with authority on some of the key sectors of the country's rapidly growing economy. Knowledge and contacts in some of the country's fast growing sectors such as RMG, finance, pharmaceuticals, telecoms or construction and property would be an asset.

Interested candidates may send in their applications along with complete bio-data and a recent passport-size photographs to reach the following address by March 31, 2008.

The Daily Star  
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Dhaka-1215

Envelopes must carry 'Application for Business Sub-editors' or 'Application for Business Reporters' inscribed at the top

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