



## Stocks

DGEN 0.42%  
3,138.63

CSCX 1.15%  
6,034.38

## Asian Markets

TOKYO 1.59%  
14,435.57

SHANGHAI 1.53%  
3,369.91

## Currencies

	Buy TK.	Sell TK.
USD	68.00	69.00
EUR	103.58	108.17
GBP	131.85	136.98
JPY	0.64	0.68

SOURCE: STANDARD CHARTERED

## Commodities

Oil \$124.28 (per barrel)

SOURCE: AFP

## More News

**DSE turnover hits all-time high at Tk 498.52cr**  
Turnover at the Dhaka Stock Exchange (DSE) yesterday hit an all-time high at Tk 498.52 crore, evidence of a gradual heating up of the stock market in the country. The previous highest turnover was at Tk 494 crore on May 20, this year. B-2

**Budget allocation for ethnic communities demanded**  
Proper planning and allocation in budget needed to improve the living conditions of the ethnic communities, a seminar was told yesterday.

**Hefty duty on imported sugar sought**  
Bangladesh Sugar and Food Industries Corporation (BSFIC) has proposed to the government a huge increase in duties on imported sugar in the upcoming budget to cut down on the losses incurred by the sugar mills of the country. B-3

## International

**Hazardous life of Cambodian children**



Cambodia's growing demand for recyclables has seen a sharp rise in the number of child scavengers trawling through the capital's waste heaps, many of them press-ganged into what advocates say is one of the world's most hazardous forms of labour. B-4

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# Four govt jute mills resume operations next month

Peoples, Karnafuli, Alim mills, Forat-Karnaphuli Carpet go under private management

JASIM UDDIN KHAN

Operations of four state-owned jute mills will resume in a full swing from next month under private management.

The four jute mills are Peoples Jute Mills Limited, Karnafuli Jute Mills Limited, Forat-Karnaphuli Carpet Industries Limited and Alim Jute Mills Limited. These mills are among the 8 jute mills the government brought under its new scheme allowing operations of those by private entrepreneurs.

As per a private lease agreement, initially for a period of five years, with the government recently, four organisations will go into production from the first day of July.

Bangladesh Jute Mills Corporation (BJMC) Chairman Md Atharul Islam yesterday told The Daily Star, "We have signed a roadmap with the lease holders which directed that these four mills will go into commercial operation from the first day of July."

Presently, there are 20 jute mills under the state-run

BJMC.

The Council of Advisers' Committee on Economic Affairs approved the initiative last October to handover the loss making mills to private operators.

"Our efforts are to resume production in the closed jute mills as well as to run existing mills viably in a larger target to create the opportunity for workers' employment, and to some extent, for re-employment of retrenched workers," the BJMC chief said.

According to the deal, the government will get a lease fee, apart from a share of profits if the private operators can make the mills commercially viable. The operators will bear all liabilities during the lease period. However, the government will have to shoulder the previous liabilities and loans. The lease fee will be used by the BJMC for the reimbursement of some of these liabilities.

On the possible job opportunities for the retrenched workers, the BJMC chairman said such re-employment is



A file photo shows farmers taking jute plants out of the water where those have been put to rot so that the jute fibres can be extracted. Operations of four state-owned jute mills will resume in a full swing from next month under private management.

the leaseholders' choice, as it is not mandatory for the new management to consider the matter.

The BJMC will open an office on the premises of each of the leased-out mills to monitor the mill properties, ownership of which lies upon the government.

Atharul Islam said the four

other factories under the scheme—Qaumi Jute Mills, MM Jute Mills, RR Jute Mills Limited and Dhaka-Baghdad Jute Mills—will shortly be brought under private management.

Meanwhile, 6000 workers, who were retrenched after closure of the four jute mills that have already been leased

out, demanded their reinstatement in the mills on humanitarian ground.

Sarder Motaharuddin, convener of the Khulna regional unit of Patkal Sangram Parishad, has urged the government to make it mandatory for the mills' new management to re-employ workers at state-owned Peoples Jute Mills and

Alim Jute Mills to avert unwanted situation in the industrial belt.

People's Jute was shut down on August 1, 2007, while Alim Jute was laid off for one month from September 22, 2007.

The decision to lease out the loss making jute mills has been hailed by some jute exporters. Ehsanul Alim Didar, an exporter, said the government will now be able to revitalise the ailing jute sector and save the public sector jute mills from accumulated loss of Tk 47.70 billion until 2006.

At present about 55 lakh bales of jute are produced from 12 to 14 lakh acres of land in the country, but some 70 lakh bales were cultivated on 20 lakh acres in the sixties. In the sixties, the demand for raw jute in the world market was more than 60 lakh bales.

Bangladesh earned US\$ 242.89 million from exports of jute goods during the first nine months (July-March) of the current fiscal, marking a 1.40 percent decline over the last year's level.

The country fetched \$ 127.94 million from raw jute exports during the period, which is a 13.27 percent rise over the last year's corresponding period's performance. [jasim@thedailystar.net](mailto:jasim@thedailystar.net)

**BTRC rejects plea for another re-registration chance**

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Around one million mobile phone connections will be cut off for good, as the telecoms regulator yesterday finally rejected operators' plea to offer customers another chance for re-registration.

In a meeting with the country's telecoms operators, Bangladesh Telecommunication and Regulatory Commission (BTRC) said it will not change its position and asked the operators to provide a list of all the disconnected mobile numbers by June 12.

"We requested the regulator to extend the deadline once more as we believe around 1 million customers may face a disconnection," said an official of a mobile phone company.

"As the regulator refused our plea, we are sorry to the unregistered customers," he added.

However, BTRC said the customers, who registered before the deadline but did not receive the confirmation message from the respective operators, will be connected if they provide the registration documents.

Earlier in August last year BTRC issued an order to Grameenphone, AKTEL, Banglalink, Citycell and TeleTalk to re-register the customers who bought connections before February 28, 2006. BTRC had to extend the deadline four times.

# US banking chain Wachovia opens office in Dhaka today

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Wachovia Corporation, one of the largest banking chains in the United States, is going to open a new representative banking office in Dhaka today, demonstrating Wachovia's increasing commitment to Bangladesh.

"We have been doing business in Bangladesh since 1999, and we are extremely excited about expanding our presence in this important country," said Chuck Silverman, managing director and area head for the

Asia South region. "Bangladesh is a growing and vibrant market for international trade, and supporting our correspondent banking clients is consistent with Wachovia's global strategy of providing payment, collections, trade and capital markets solutions to financial institutions," he said.

"With our expanded physical presence, we are well-positioned to continue providing excellent coverage to our correspondent partners in

Bangladesh," said Yusuf S Saadat, Wachovia's chief representative in Dhaka.

Michael Heavener, executive vice-president and head of Wachovia's Global Financial Institutions and Trade Services Group, is expected to inaugurate the Dhaka representative office.

Wachovia is a diversified financial services company that provides a broad range of banking, asset management, wealth management, and corporate and investment banking products and services.



Afghan technicians work at Hochpharma Corporation in Kabul on Tuesday, the only company producing medicines in Afghanistan. Hoechst Afghanistan was established by Hoechst Germany in the Afghan capital in 1969. The main product of Hotchpharma is branded generic. The next step will be the production of botanical medicines, since Afghanistan has its own long-standing tradition of herbal and botanical medicines. Imported medicines are highly expensive in Afghanistan.

# Security at RMG units sought to ensure export growth

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Maintaining a 20 percent annual growth in the export of garment items for the next five years largely depends on ensuring security in garments manufacturing units, exporters think.

They said the recent trends of export orders from foreign buyers indicate that the country has the potential to maintain such an export growth for the next five years.

"But, the realisation of this potential totally depends on the security of the production

units," Anwar-Ul-Alam Chowdhury, president of Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA), told a press conference in Dhaka yesterday.

The BGMEA chief said if the recent rampage trends in garment factories continue the attainment of the export target may not be achieved.

"The government should introduce the industrial police to maintain security at the production units," Parvez said, adding that some vested quarters and so-called non-

governmental organisations (NGOs) are directly involved in the recent ransacking of some garment factories, even after 99 percent of the garment owners already ensured payment of minimum wages.

The BGMEA chief said 203 production units were forced to close from November of 2007 to May of this year on the rise in business cost and labour unrest, adding that during the period 83 new garment production units came into operation.

He said the government's special forces should find out

those who were involved in the ransacking of at least 60 garment factories, at Ashulia over the rumour concerning the death of two workers last Tuesday.

He also demanded punishment of the real culprits.

The productivity in the garment sector dropped significantly due to frequent power outages and errant gas supply, he said.

In the current fiscal the export earning from the garment sector might reach \$10.6 billion against a target of \$11.9 billion.

## AB BANK LIMITED

Head Office: BCIC Bhaban, 30-31, Dilkusha C/A, Dhaka

## CREDIT RATING REPORT

	Long Term	Short Term
Entity Rating 2007	A <sub>2</sub>	ST-2
Entity Rating 2006	BBB+	ST-4
Date of Rating	15 May 2008	

Credit Rating Agency of Bangladesh Limited (CRAB) has assigned A<sub>2</sub> rating in the long term and ST-2 in the short term to AB Bank Limited for the year 2007.

The Bank rated A<sub>2</sub> in the long term is adjudged to be strong bank, characterized by good financials, healthy and sustainable franchises, and a first rate operating environment. This level of rating indicates strong capacity for timely payment of financial commitments, with low likeness to be adversely affected by foreseeable events.

The Bank rated ST-2 in the short term is considered to have strong capacity for timely repayment, characterised with commendable position in terms of liquidity, internal fund generation, and access to alternative sources of funds is outstanding.

Dated: May 15, 2008

By order of the Board  
Sd/-  
Company Secretary

**AB Bank**