

## Stocks

DGEN ▲ 0.008%  
2,926.91

CSCX ▼ 0.11%  
6,414.79

## Asian Markets

MUMBAI ▲ 0.46%  
15,903.83

TOKYO ▼ 1.18%  
10,252.53

SINGAPORE ▼ 1.58%  
2,606.83

SHANGHAI ▼ 1.24%  
3,428.50

## Currencies

	Buy Tk	Sell Tk
USD	68.42	69.42
EUR	96.71	101.94
GBP	113.98	119.46
JPY	0.70	0.79

SOURCE: STANDARD CHARTERED BANK

## Commodities

Gold ▲  
\$964.95  
(per ounce)

Oil ▲  
\$70.94  
(per barrel)

SOURCE: AFP  
(Midday Trade)

## News in Brief

P&G's Q4 profit falls 18pc



AP, Cincinnati

The Procter & Gamble Co says its fourth quarter profit fell 18 percent, as households around the globe kept tight reins on spending in the recession.

The Cincinnati-based maker of such consumer products as Pampers diapers, Tide detergent and Gillette shavers said Wednesday it earned nearly \$2.5 billion, or 80 cents per share, in the three months ended June 30. That's down from \$3 billion, or 92 cents per share, a year ago.

Analysts expected 79 cents.

Revenue fell 11 percent, to \$18.7 billion, as sales fell across the company's broad portfolio. Analysts expected \$19.4 billion.

**Societe Generale posts 52pc drop in net profit**

AFP, Paris

French bank Societe Generale reported on Wednesday a 52-percent drop in quarterly net profits, held back by bad debt provisions but reporting strong trading on financial markets.

The bank made 309 million euros (445 million dollars) in the April-June quarter -- less than half the 644 million euros it made in the same period last year -- after its results were hit by a total of 1.7 billion euros in "non-recurring items."

## Contact Us

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# Green tech puts new face on business

MD HASAN

The green technology is gaining ground in Bangladesh, as several sectors are adopting the innovations, thanks to growing campaigns against carbon emissions, the lead contributor to global warming.

The idea behind green technology encompasses evolving new methods and techniques to generate energy for production of non-toxic products. The concept -- "be green and make business green" -- is up in the air.

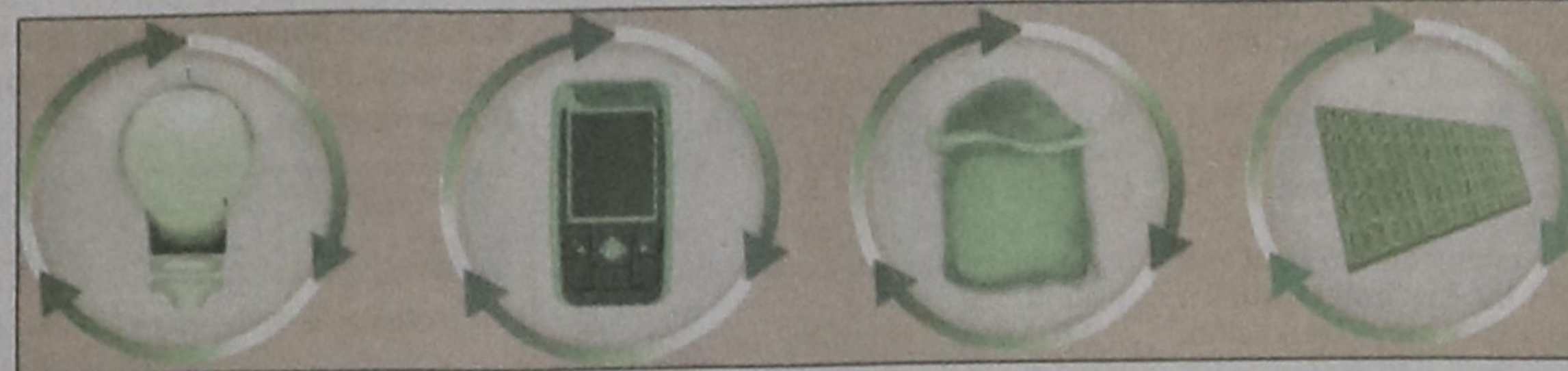
Starting a green business has two advantages over starting any other kind of business, says an expert. First, environmentalism is growing and so green technology-powered businesses will target a growing market. Second, the intangible benefit is that a person investing in green business has the satisfaction of knowing that the contribution is making the world a better place to live in.

Solar energy has emerged strong in the market for green technology over the last twelve years to mitigate the effects of electricity shortages at rural levels.

The need for solar energy is keenly felt as only 40 percent of the population has an access to electricity. Power cuts are common. Demand for electricity is growing at over 500MW a year.

Grameen Shakti (GS), a concern of Grameen Bank, is the market leader in installing solar-based technologies for various uses. Having installed 325,000 photovoltaic solar home systems and 8,000 biogas plants for cooking purposes across the country, it delivers sources of renewable energy.

GS has also launched a programme to promote environment-friendly stoves in Bangladesh to address the high demand for biomass fuel to reduce indoor air pollution caused by cooking on tradi-



tional stoves. So far, 35,000 improved cook stoves have been installed.

"Green technology improves the quality of life," said Dipal Chandra Barua, managing director of Grameen Shakti.

"Our idea is not only to introduce green technology, but to make a green generation," said Barua. "We plan to generate 100,000 green jobs by 2012, by training them on producing and maintaining green technology as a sustainable source of energy."

Grameen Technology Centre (GTC) daily trains hundreds of women.

The growing concerns over where food comes means more people demand organic food.

Apart from GS, 15 organisations provide home-based solar energy system.

GS, Rahimafrooz and some other organisations are developing zero-carbon emitting irrigation pumps and organic fertilisers to produce healthier crops. It has developed solar irrigation pumps to replace the traditional ones that run on diesel. The company is operating nine pumps in crop fields.

"The pumps are powered by solar panels, which emits zero carbon," said Nazmunahar, executive engineer of Rahimafrooz. The company took the

initiative to introduce green technology to the crop fields to produce organic food. From its heavy dominance on chain super shops, Rahimafrooz is one of the promoters of organic food.

A small-scale biogas plant based on cow dung can produce more than 8,000 kilograms of slurry, which is equivalent to 224 kilograms of urea, 1,120 kilograms of TSP and 114 kilograms of mp fertiliser. An entrepreneur can earn Tk 16,000 by selling this slurry for a minimum of Tk 2 per kilogram.

Brickfields are the major sources of greenhouse gas emissions in Bangladesh. An inefficient number of poorly constructed kilns and the use of standard fuels in the kilns contribute to the high level of emission.

Around 4,000 brickfields produce more than 12 billion bricks a year, which has been growing by 10 percent a year due to a boom in real estate.

A United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)-supported pilot project was introduced at Dhamrai, a brickfield hub, to modernise the industry and substantially reduce greenhouse gas emissions. It recommends the use of the environment-friendly Hybrid Hoffman Kiln (HHK) technology to replace the age-old Fixed Chimney Kiln in the

brick-making units.

The 150-year-old kiln technology being used in Bangladesh is mostly based on Bull's Trench Kiln Technology. Under the UNDP project, 31 energy efficient brick kilns will initially be set up in different parts of the country.

In high-tech based industries, telecom comes to the forefront to go green. Bangladesh's largest mobile phone company Grameenphone is making the ultimate transformation to become a "green company".

In Bangladesh, the mobile sector accounts for less than 1 percent of total carbon emission.

"We are all contributors to this global crisis and we all need to be part of the solution," said Oddvar Hesjedal, chief executive of Grameenphone. "An environmental roadmap aims to promote a low-carbon society and the company's first priority is to take responsibility for the excess CO2 emissions being generated by its own operations."

Grameenphone has started adopting green energy solutions for its base stations; two hybrid solar-powered base stations have been operational since last year. The company is also to install an experimental wind-turbine at the base station.

In developed countries, the use of green or renewable energy has emerged in a big way.

"We are not lagging. Some technologies are in place, while many more are being developed," said Muhammad Zamir, chairman of Bangladesh Renewable Energy Society.

Globally, green technology is being used economically and socially. "The government should encourage its use among the mass on a larger scale, at affordable rates," hasan@thedailystar.net

# Falling prices pare down apparel profits



STAR

Apparel exports are on the rise, but persistent low-price offers from foreign buyers are reducing profits of local garment entrepreneurs.

REFAYET ULLAH MIRDHA

Garment exports rose to a record high in the immediate-past fiscal year, but the persistent low price offers from foreign buyers are paring down profits of local entrepreneurs because of global recession.

Shipments of knitted and woven items jumped 15.5 percent to hit a record \$12.34 billion in the fiscal year to June 30, the Export Promotion Bureau said.

Manufacturers said the volume of export orders has marked a rise despite an 18-19 percent decline in apparel purchases globally.

Exporters are offered prices 10 percent lower than they were offered before the recession.

Garment owners say they now run their factories for the time being, especially during the financial downturn, just to maintain the contacts with buyers.

Besides the brunt of global crisis,

they bear a 20 percent higher cost of doing business. Erratic gas and power supply, high freight charges--local and international--yarn price hike, implementation of workers' minimum wages, higher cost of transportation and weak infrastructures have raised the cost of business.

Some apparel makers also blame the poor negotiation skills for lagging in realising a better price for their products from international buyers.

Ismail Hossain, managing director of Sharmin Group, said these buyers are now offering a price far below the minimum.

"The price declining trend started pinching severely since February, which reached its worst level in recent times," Hossain pointed out.

Many manufacturers have already reduced the production capacity as they can hardly run their business with such a throwaway price.

When asked, AK Azad, managing director of Ha-Meem Group, said, "We

have no profit now, we are running our machinery for keeping business alive."

"We are waiting for the next season when the price situation might improve a little on the recession recovery signs," he said.

Safina Rahman, director of Lakshma Sweater Limited, has suggested the government come forward to give stimulus.

According to the latest data of the Export Promotion Bureau (EPB), the price index for manufacturing goods declined by 1.86 percent during July-June period of the immediate past 2008-09 fiscal year.

The data shows \$5.918 billion exports of woven and \$6.429 billion knitwear in last fiscal year.

Meanwhile, exports of Bangladesh made RMG items to the US market marked a 12 percent rise in the first three months of this year, according to the United States Trade Representatives.

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# WB toughens stance on VRS funds

REJAUL KARIM BYRON

The World Bank (WB) has informed the government that it would cancel the allocation of money for Voluntary Retirement Scheme (VRS) if the excess manpower in industrial units were not retrenched.

Citing the observation of a Bank mission, WB Acting Country Director Robert L Floyd in a letter, sent last month to the finance ministry, said the mission may cancel a part of the undisbursed VRS money.

"Given that there is still a sizeable amount of undisbursed VRS money under EGBMP (Enterprise Growth and Bank Modernisation Project) and only 18 months remain before the project closes, the mission is of the opinion that part of the undisbursed VRS money should be cancelled," Floyd said.

The WB senior official has called upon the government to let the donor agency know by August 30 about its stance regarding the VRS programme. If the government fails to do so, the Bank may transfer the money to other components of the project, he said.

However finance ministry high officials said the government has no plan to retrench staff or privatise any more state-owned enterprises (SOEs) due to the global recession, and the message will be conveyed to the WB soon.

The EGBMP was initiated in 2004 and the total outlay by two donors was \$338 million -- the WB financed \$250 million and the UK Department for International Development (DFID) \$88 million.

Of the amount, the allocation for VRS programme was \$245 million.

The WB mission in June conducted a detailed review of the EGBMP, whose tenure will expire next year. Under the WB reform programme of the SOEs, around 50,000 people lost jobs and more than \$200 million was spent for them in line with the VRS.

Under the programme, Adamjee Jute Mills and Chittagong Steel Mills were shut down. Works for turning the two mills into export processing zones are going on. Chittagong Steel Mills has been turned into Karnaphuli EPZ. About 1.5 lakh new jobs will be created once Adamjee and Karnaphuli EPZs go into full operation, the WB mission in its evaluation report said.

The WB official said: "Within a short span some new firms have already become operational in the two zones with new industrial employment, and limited exports have started."

The report said about 70 industrial units are going to be set up in Adamjee EPZ. So far 153 plots have been made ready and handed over to 35 new private investors.

Some entrepreneurs have completed construction works and already are in production, and others are going to join the band soon.

Once Adamjee EPZ becomes fully operational, it will create direct employment for about 70,000 people, the report said.

Karnaphuli EPZ, once fully developed, will have 210 plots. So far 100 plots have been readied and 73 plots have been allotted to 14 new industries. These 14 industries are expected to generate 24,000 new jobs, added the report.

The number of employment will be over 50,000 if the EPZ goes into full operation.

Under the EGBMP, Chittagong Chemical Complex (CCC) and Khulna Newsprint Mills (KNM) were also shut down. The WB mission was earlier informed that the government has decided not to go for refurbishment programme of Khulna Newsprint Mills due to a lack of investors' interest in the potential industrial park in that area.

The mission said it feels that both the CCC and KNM should be dropped from financing under the EGBMP.

# Indian bank workers to strike today

AFP, New Delhi

Hundreds of thousands of Indian bank workers have threatened to launch a two-day strike today, demanding better pay and pensions, a move that could paralyse the banking system, a report said.

The United Forum of Bank Unions (UFBU) said it would press ahead with plans to stage the nationwide strike after talks with the Indian Banks Association over salaries and benefits collapsed, according to the Press Trust of India.

"We are going ahead with the strike" on Thursday and Friday, United Forum of Bank Unions Convener C.H. Venkatachalam told the Press Trust of India.

The forum, which represents public sector bank workers and officers in the banking industry, is an umbrella body made up of nine bank employee unions.

The union said up to one million employees would take part in the strike, expected to snarl banking services in 60,000 branches across the country.

Apart from the public sector bank employees, staff of private and foreign banks were also likely to take part in the strike, Venkatachalam said.

There are 27 public sector banks in India's overwhelmingly state-dominated financial services sector.

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