

Troubled markets in focus

Dhaka bourse leaders meet new chairman of SEC

STAR BUSINESS REPORT
Top leaders of the Dhaka Stock Exchange (DSE) yesterday called on the newly appointed chairman of the Securities and Exchange Commission, M Khairul Hossain, and member Helal Uddin Nizami. DSE President Shakil Rizvi, Senior Vice President Ahasanul Islam Titu, Chief Executive Officer Satipati Moitra and other directors were present at the meeting at the SEC in Dhaka. "We discussed how to restore investors' dented confidence," said Rizvi. "The chairman has assured us that he would not favour anybody, as his concept about the capital market is very clear." "We discussed how we can help industrialisation in the

country through capital market," said the DSE chief. Rizvi said the delegates also requested the commission to issue new directives for the greater interest of investors. He said some old securities laws should be amended as soon as possible. The commission should also give power to DSE so that the country's premier bourse can issue approval to open new brokerage branch. "The issue of increasing the number of new initial public offerings in the market was a major part of the discussion with the new chairman," Rizvi told The Daily Star. Titu said: "It is very critical moment for the stockmarket so the commission should issue investors-friendly directive to restore their confidence."

Meanwhile, stocks gained flat yesterday through topsy-turvy trend, as the investors went for buying shares with new-found confidence. Some of them also took profits. The benchmark general index of DSE gained 2.95 points, or 0.05 percent, to close at 5,791 points, riding on a 175-point climb on Sunday. The selective categories index of Chittagong Stock Exchange gained 13.95 points, or 0.13 percent, to close at 10,397. Investors anticipate the government is very serious about implementing the recommendations of the probe report, said retail investors. "Market started with positive note as investors reacted positively to the appointment of new boss of the regulator as the part

of the stockmarket reform. But the profit-booking after consecutive previous sessions' gain reined in the rally," said Lankabangla Securities in his daily market analysis. "Intraday volatility was very high as many investors were yet to get full confidence and rather preferred to wait some sessions to see the stability of market," it said. On the day, pharmaceuticals lost 0.71 percent, fuel and power 0.74 percent and ceramic 2.96 percent, while banks gained 1.17 percent. Total turnover stood at Tk 609 crore, 8.2 percent higher on the previous day. Of the 251 issues traded on the DSE floor, 93 advanced, 151 declined and seven remained unchanged. Beximco topped the turnover

chart with 11.20 lakh shares worth Tk 19.61 crore changing hands. Kay and Que was the biggest gainer of the day, posting an 8.69 percent rise, while Janata Insurance was the worst loser, shedding 49.52 percent. Also yesterday, the board of directors of DSE approved listing of three companies including two mutual funds. Of them, EBL NRB Mutual Fund and Southeast Bank First Mutual Fund will make debut on today, while Barakatullah Electro Dynamics will make debut on Sunday. However, the board did not take any decision on the listing of MI Cement Factory Ltd. "We will discuss the MI Cement issue with the SEC chairman on Sunday to reach a decision," said Titu.



SIBL
Muhammad Ali, managing director of Social Investment Bank, launches the bank's own debit card in Dhaka on Sunday. Nurul Alam Chowdhury and Md Shafiqur Rahman, deputy managing directors, were also present.

Banglalion gets 1 lakh subscribers

STAR BUSINESS REPORT
Wireless broadband service provider Banglalion has clocked up 1 lakh subscribers, the operator said yesterday. "When we got Wimax licence in November 18, 2008, we promised that we would work to spread hi-speed internet connectivity throughout the country to help strengthen the economy and build a digital Bangladesh," said Abdul Mannan, chairman of the company, at a press meet at Sonargaon Hotel in Dhaka. "I don't think it is only the success for Banglalion, rather it is the step toward digital education and improving standards of living in Bangladesh." Banglalion will be able to establish its network in seven divisional cities, and will spread the network to 30 more districts this month, he said. It will also connect the rest of the districts by the year-end, he added. "The operator has set up some 500 base transceivers in seven divisional cities. By the end of this year, Banglalion will set up 1,200 transceivers all over the country," said Mannan. Banglalion announced its new prepaid and post-paid packages on the day. Neil Graham, chief executive officer, Shafiqur Haque Chowdhury, chief commercial officer, and Avraham Kaikobad, chief marketing officer, were

Airtel makes rapid network roll-out

STAR BUSINESS DESK
Airtel Bangladesh has undertaken efforts to go for rapid network expansion to bring the whole country under blanket coverage as soon as possible, the mobile operator said in a statement yesterday. "Under the network expansion plan, Airtel has already launched 200 new network sites in the last few weeks and an additional 700 new network sites are ready for launch," Airtel said. As many as 160 new towns have been already brought under the airtel network. "Our aim is to offer our consumers seamless connectivity in terms of not only network, but also product availability and customer service," said Chris Tobit, managing director and chief executive of Airtel Bangladesh. "We already have an existing set-up of 124 relationship centres, over 100 service centres and five experience centres across Bangladesh that provide customers with state-of-the-art customer service. We are now poised to undertake the fastest network roll-out in the history of the country to ensure that we have blanket coverage within the next year or so," he said. Airtel has already signed infrastructure-sharing contracts with other leading operators for rapid network expansion. Green energy solutions such as solar cells are being used at a number of sites in the coastal and remote areas where there is no power supply from the national grid, Airtel said. "Special types of DC generators, which consume less fuel and create minimum noise, have also been

BNP Paribas plans Hong Kong listing

AFP, Hong Kong
French banking giant BNP Paribas is planning to list its shares on the Hong Kong stock exchange, a report said Monday, in a bid that is likely to boost its profile in Asia, especially China. The lender has submitted an application to the southern Chinese city's bourse, with a listing planned as early as July, the Chinese-language Ming Pao Daily News reported, quoting an unnamed source. The banking group does not plan to raise new funds in a so-called listing by introduction, according to the newspaper. "We do not comment on market rumours," a spokeswoman from BNP Paribas office in Hong Kong said in a statement to AFP when asked to confirm the report. Unlike an initial public offering, a listing by introduction simply adds another trading venue to boost the profile of a company's existing shares, and gives investors the ability to buy or sell the shares in their local currency. In December, Brazilian mining giant Vale made its Hong Kong trading debut by listing its shares in the form of common share depositary receipts, but did not raise new money. The miner was already listed in Brazil, New York and Paris. Companies are increasingly looking to Hong Kong as a gateway to the Chinese market, with Russian mining giant UC Rusal raising US\$2.2 billion in



MJL BANGLADESH
Mohammad Mejhbahuddin, energy secretary, and Azam J Chowdhury, managing director of MJL Bangladesh, attend the launch of a new product of MJL, Omera grease, at a programme in Dhaka recently.



BRAC BANK
BRAC Bank Managing Director Syed Mahbubur Rahman speaks at the inauguration of a two-day workshop on import and export management for SME customers, jointly organised by the bank and SouthAsia Enterprise Development Facility, at Westin Dhaka Hotel on Saturday.

NCC Bank goes for cluster financing

STAR BUSINESS REPORT
National Credit and Commerce (NCC) Bank has taken a new approach to banking for cluster financing to help innovative initiatives flourish across the country. The private sector bank has already offered a maximum of Tk 5 lakh collateral-free loans to the entrepreneurs of different sectors in Tangail, Rajshahi and Syedpur districts. In a press briefing yesterday, Managing Director Nurul Amin announced the initiatives on the occasion of its 25th founding anniversary. NCC Bank's acting chairman and lawmaker Harunur Rashid, Additional Managing Director Golam Hafiz Ahmed and deputy managing directors AK Md Siddique, Mohabbat Khan and TM Faruque Chowdhury were also present. Amin said the bank has taken the initiative to help prospective entrepreneurs in different parts of the country who are not getting any help now to flourish. He said the initiative will help increase the country's growth and create employment. Amin said the bank gave loans to 1,000 weavers in a remote village of Rampur at

Kalihati upazila in Tangail district. The loan amount of Tk 5 lakh was collateral free, but if a person seeks Tk 10 lakh loan, he needs to produce a guarantor. In case of cluster financing the rate of interest is 9 percent. Amin said, in the first phase they have begun the financing programme in three areas and they have been evaluating it through the bank's branches. They have plans to expand the programme to cover other areas. Besides, the bank is taking an area-based approach through which it plans to give adequate loans to entrepreneurs of an area where a crop or business has high prospects. Amin projected the progress of the bank in the last 25 years and said, in 2010 the paid-up capital of the bank was Tk 600 crore, which was Tk 228 crore in 2009. The amount of classified loan of NCC Bank is now only 2.27 percent. The bank also plans to introduce a system for loan disbursement and realisation through mobile phone. The bank will soon start services of sending remittance through cell phones, Amin said. NCC Bank has signed an agreement with a cell phone company for remittance services.

No representation of Bangladesh at ITU yet

World Telecom and Information Society Day today
ABDULLAH MAMUN
Bangladesh is yet to nominate its representative to the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) although the country received the membership of the ITU council in October last year. The telecoms ministry lauded the membership as a great achievement of the government. The council election of the United Nation's body on information and communication technology takes place once every four years. Bangladesh became an ITU member in 1973. As there was no representation from Bangladesh, it could not attend the meetings, conferences or workshops of ITU in the past, said an official of Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (BTRC). Pakistan lost ITU council and radio regulation board memberships due to the government's poor performance in the council, he added. "Bangladesh is still in poor performance or in no performance, as it failed to nominate any official from the BTRC or the telecoms ministry to represent at the ITU." Sunil Kanti Bose, telecoms secretary, said a director of the ministry has recently been selected to represent Bangladesh in the ITU. The name has been sent to the ITU, Bose added. ITU will have its council meeting in September. According to the ITU website, every month the organisation arranges a number of meetings relating to spectrum, policy, technology, regulation, cost, tariff, cyber security, education, connectivity under its various departments named radio telecommunications, standardisation and development. Today is the World Telecommunication and Information Society Day. The day is themed "Better life in rural communities with ICTs", adopted by the ITU council in 2009. The day also marks the anniversary of the signing of the first International Telegraph Convention and the creation of the ITU. abdullah.mamun@thedailystar.net



BIFC
Abdul Mannan, chairman of Bangladesh Industrial Finance Company, presides over the company's 15th annual general meeting in Dhaka on Thursday. The company declared 25 percent stock dividends for 2010. Mahmood Malik, managing director, was also present.



EBL
Ali Reza Iftekhar, managing director of Eastern Bank, inaugurates the seventh financial kiosk and 75th ATM booth of the bank at Afmi Plaza in Chittagong on Saturday.