

# Stocks lose 3pc in choppy trade

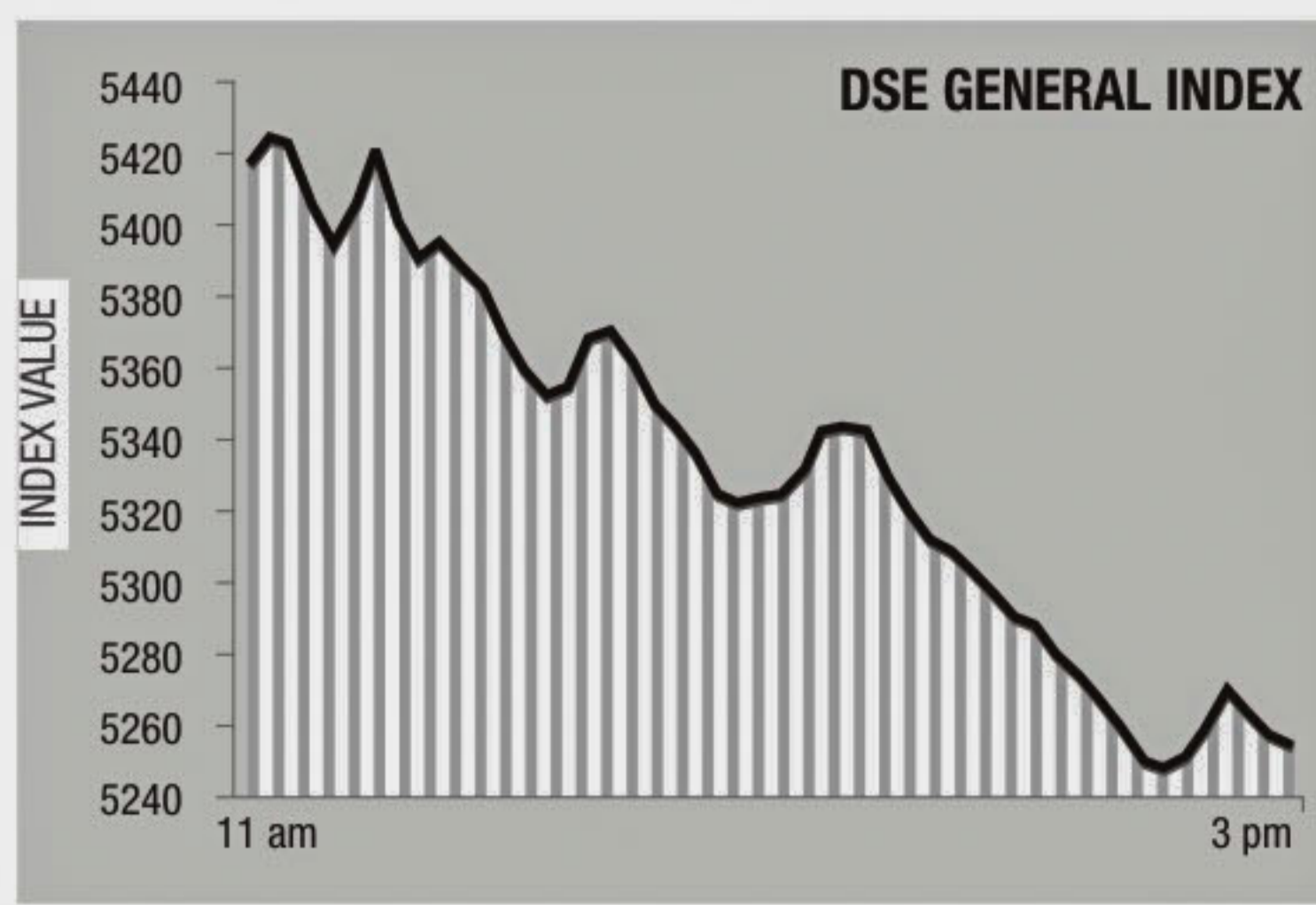
STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Stocks declined 3.03 percent yesterday amid investors' apprehensions that the economy may face fresh troubles and speculations over a fresh move to tighten monetary tools to control inflation.

The benchmark General Index (DGEN), the gauge of Dhaka Stock Exchange, declined 164 points to 5,253.47 at the 3pm close.

"Investors refrained from investing anew following the warning of a trade body on the liquidity crisis, high inflation and low forex reserve," said Akter H Sannamat, a chartered accountant and market analyst.

Sannamat said a group of investors sold off their holdings



fearing that the central bank may take further action to control inflation.

Investors stepped back to see how the market would react to any tightened monetary policy

and economic gloom in future, LankaBangla Securities said its daily market analysis.

"It is a rumour that the central bank may tighten the monetary policy for January-June 2012,"

said Fakhor Uddin Ali Ahmed, former president of Chittagong Stock Exchange.

The market started the day with a straight downward trend as buyers were offering much lower prices than the previous day's closing level.

Of the total 265 issues traded on the DSE: 12 advanced, 245 declined and five remained unchanged.

Turnover declined 12.4 percent, compared with the previous day. A total of 1.43 lakh trades were executed, generating a turnover of Tk 538 crore where 10.63 crore shares were traded.

Grameenphone topped the turnover leader with 15.39 lakh shares worth Tk 27.41 crore changing hands.

Information Services Network rose 4.11 percent to become the biggest gainer of the day. Kohinoor Chemicals was the worst loser, slumping by 8.44 percent.

Among the major sectors, non-bank financial institutions lost the most, declining by 4.3 percent.

The Chittagong Stock Exchange declined yesterday with the Selective Categories Index losing 269.64 points or 2.72 percent, to end the day at 9,632.53.

Losers beat gainers 187 to eight with five securities remaining unchanged on the port city bourse. More than 1.17 crore shares and mutual fund units were traded with a value of Tk 56.01 crore.



Majedur Rahman, additional managing director of AB Bank, and Raihan Shamsi, chief executive officer (current charge) of Grameenphone, exchange documents after signing a deal in the capital recently. AB Bank branches across the country will offer services to Grameenphone for payment of its electricity bills.

## Airtel launches mBazaar

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Airtel launched an ad related service -- mBazaar -- yesterday which will enable Airtel users to receive buy or sell classifieds through messages.

The ads will be sourced from Clickbd.com, an e-commerce portal for selling and buying products, the mobile phone operator said in a statement.

Airtel users can subscribe the service's monthly package at Tk 30 by sending a text writing "mbazaar" or "buy" or "mbazar" to 3003 or by dialing \*321\*451#.

Customers can create profiles on the basis of their required item's type, category, budget and location, the operator said.

Subscribers can select classified postings from different categories, including mobile phone, computer and laptop, game, electronics, cars. A subscriber will receive alert as soon as the posting is listed.

"With the growing need of m-commerce and faster easier solutions, this is a unique innovation brought by Airtel," said Chris Tobit, managing director of Airtel Bangladesh.

## Rolls-Royce posts record car sales

AFP, London

German-owned British luxury carmaker Rolls-Royce announced Monday that sales rocketed to an all-time high last year, smashing its 33-year-old record, driven by demand from China and the United States.

The group, which is owned by German auto giant BMW, said in a statement that production leapt 31 percent to 3,538 cars in 2011.

That compared with 2,711 in the previous year and was the highest-ever output in the 107-year history of Rolls-Royce. The 2011 performance beat the previous record of 3,347 cars set in 1978.

Rolls-Royce, which is based at the Goodwood factory in West Sussex, southern England, also said China and the United States were now the "most significant individual markets" for the maker of ultra-luxurious vehicles.

"We had an outstanding year in 2011 and we should take a moment to reflect on this great British success story," said Torsten Müller-Ötvös, chief executive officer at Rolls-Royce Motor Cars.

"Our business is in excellent shape. We are developing our dealer network, moving into new markets like South America, expanding our manufacturing operation in West Sussex to meet global demand

## Acer unveils world's thinnest laptop

AFP, Las Vegas

Acer on Sunday unveiled the world's thinnest laptop computer as an array of "ultrabook" rivals prepared to debut this week at the Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas.

The Taiwan-based computer titan will begin shipping Acer Aspire 5 models in the second quarter of this year, with prices to be disclosed in coming weeks.

"That S5 is quite significant," analyst Tim Bajarin of Creative Strategies said after the Acer press event.

"It looks like the thinnest and lightest, and it sets the bar for the rest of the ultrabook vendors," he continued.

The Aspire S5 has a 34-cm (13.3-inch) screen and is 15 mm at its thickest point. The ultrabook weighs slightly less than 1.35 kg (three pounds).

"We are committed to evolving this technology," said Acer chief executive J.T. Wang. "By the second quarter of this year we will have four models of ultrabook and more to come."



Hassan O Rashid, general manager for SME of Standard Chartered Bank, exchanges the documents of a memorandum of understanding with Rokia Afzal Rahman, president of Bangladesh Federation of Women Entrepreneurs, for training and development of women entrepreneurs recently.



AKM Manjurul Haque, director general of Youth Development Directorate, and Safiqul Islam, director of BRAC Education Programme, attend a deal signing ceremony at BRAC Centre in the capital yesterday. The members of BRAC Multipurpose Community Learning Centre will receive institutional and non-institutional skill development training from the directorate.

## PDB pens power deals with Sinha Energy

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The Power Development Board (PDB) yesterday signed agreements with Sinha Energy to set up two power plants.

The concern of Sinha Group will construct the furnace oil-based plants with a capacity of 52.5 megawatts each at Homna in Comilla and at Kathpotti in Munshiganj, an official of PDB said.

Under the deal, which was signed at Bidyut Bhaban in the city, Sinha Energy will start supplying electricity to national grid within a year at Tk 6.96 per kilowatt-hour.

Earlier, on July 15 last year, the company signed another agreement with PDB to set up a 50MW furnace oil-based power plant near Amnura Railway Station in Chapainawabganj.

The plant is scheduled to go into production this month where a unit power was priced at Tk 7.77, said

# Think small: US firms bid to retake luxury car market

AFP, Detroit, Michigan

US luxury cars manufacturers like Cadillac and Lincoln, respectively run by GM and Ford, are struggling to win back a share of the expanding luxury car market, largely controlled by Japanese and German automakers.

These brands, which once embodied the very essence of luxury cars, saw quality decline in the years before the industry crisis, and drivers abandoned them in their droves.

Now they must recover their former glory by improving entry-level models, which was not their strong suit, but which represented the fastest-growing luxury market last year.

"The appetite for smaller luxury cars is relatively new in this country," David Cole, director of the Center for Automotive Research, told AFP. "It was part of the industry for a while in the other countries."

On Sunday, the eve of the opening of the Detroit Auto Show, Cadillac unveiled its new sedan, ATS 2013.

The compact, which is similar to the BMW 3 Series, Mercedes C Class and Audi A4, is "intended to

challenge the world's best premium cars," its creators told reporters.

Lincoln, for its part, was set to unveil on Tuesday a new "concept car," MKZ, with which its builders are trying to define a new strategy and recover sales.

"The problem we had at Cadillac is that we couldn't invest in a complete line up," acknowledged Mark Reuss, president of General Motors North America.

"Now we are going go head to head with the competition and we are going to win," he told a group of reporters after a press conference.

The challenge is huge. BMW and Mercedes-Benz have secured for themselves the top two positions in the high-end US car market.

BMW sales rose 12.6 percent in 2011 to 247,907 cars, surpassing Mercedes just by a whisker, whose sales rose 13.3 percent to 245,231 vehicles.

"In 2011 the BMW Group sold more premium vehicles worldwide than any other manufacturer," said Ludwig Willisch, director of BMW North America.

Lexus, a Toyota brand, which was number one in the United

States for 11 years, fell to third place, with a decline in sales from 13 percent to 198,552 units due to serious logistical problems caused by last year's tsunami in Japan and floods in Thailand.

Cadillac and Lincoln lag far behind: the first sold 152,389 cars last year, up 3.7 percent, while the sales of Lincoln fell by 0.2 percent to 85,643 cars.

Both brands have younger customers. "I think it's very important," said GM's Reuss.

"People do spend more on cars at a younger age," industry analyst Cole agreed.

And these young drivers start off by buying smaller cars.

"Before luxury was associated only with larger vehicles," Cole explained. "Now it's about feature content, the quality of the interior, sophisticated leather. There's a broader definition of luxury than before."

Ludwig Willisch insisted that "a different customer" was now driving the premium car market.

"Customers are more complicated and have changed in post-recession years," he said. "Although their portfolios may have taken a hit, price has not become the key factor in their purchase decision."

## Huawei showcases broadband tech

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Chinese telecom vendor Huawei Technologies yesterday started a four-day roadshow to demonstrate the latest mobile and fixed broadband technologies.

Hasanul Haq Inu, chairman of the parliamentary standing committee on the post and telecommunication ministry, inaugurated the roadshow at Ruposhi Bangla Hotel in the city.

Inu said the future of the country lies with the technology.

The government plans to digitise all its offices as well as educational institutions. The high-speed internet is required for all these activities, he said.

Inu urged the government to waive all kinds of taxes and tariffs from import of telecom equipment as well as SIM tax.

The roadshow, "Smart Mobile Broadband for Transformation", showcased Huawei's equipment related to broadband services.

Huawei's CEO for Bangladesh Baker Zhou said Huawei is consistently committed to introducing world-class telecom technologies to educate and train more communication experts.

Chinese Ambassador Zhang Xianyi also spoke.



Md Nader Khan, former chairman of Prime Bank, inaugurates the 81st ATM booth of the bank on Jubilee Road in Chittagong recently. M Reazul Karim, deputy managing director, was also present.



Mohd Noor Ali, chairman of Eastern Bank, unveils the foundation plaque of the bank's corporate office building on Gulshan Avenue in Dhaka on Sunday. Ali Reza Iftekhar, managing director, was also present.



Anant Goenka, deputy managing director of CEAT Tyres, India, speaks at a programme that focused on corporate governance of family businesses, at The Westin Dhaka Hotel on Sunday. Farooq Sobhan, president of Bangladesh Enterprise Institute, and Amjad Khan Chowdhury, president of Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry, were also present.