

Stock investors protest continuous fall in prices

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Small investors staged a demonstration in front of the Dhaka Stock Exchange building yesterday and demanded resignation of the finance minister as stocks continue to suffer losses.

Angry investors, under the banner of Bangladesh Share Investors' Association (BSIA), also urged the government high-ups to refrain from making imprudent comments on the stockmarket.

Finance Minister AMA Muhith castigated the market terming it 'evil' in his speech in parliament on June 11.

Ataullah Nayeem, international relations secretary of the association, said Muhith's repeated negative remarks on the stockmarket caused it to fall.

The market started falling again

after he made the negative comments, said Nayeem.

The benchmark general index of the DSE was down by 2.48 percent or 114 points to finish the day at 4,506.04 points yesterday.

During the last seven trading sessions, the index lost a total of 285.94 points.

"It seems that the investors could not keep patience due to the continuous slide," said IDLC Investments in its market analysis.

A lack of confidence is pushing them to liquidate, it said.

Market analysts said the investors wanted to observe the final outcome of the ongoing legal battle between the company directors and the Securities and Exchange Commission.

Also, investors of different brokerage houses faced problems in transaction due to the newly

launched "MSA plus" software, the analysts said.

However, turnover rose 9.47 percent, compared to the previous day, to Tk 168 crore.

Of the 259 issues that were traded on the DSE, 228 declined, 22 advanced and nine remained unchanged.

A total of 0.71 lakh trades were executed with 3.9 crore shares and mutual fund units changing hands on the Dhaka bourse.

None of the major sectors could gain yesterday. Telecoms lost 1.14 percent followed by pharma's 1.93 percent.

Power fell by 2.49 percent and banks 2.73 percent and non-bank financial institutions 3.28 percent.

Bangladesh Submarine Cable Company, which went up by 6.5 percent, featured at the top gainers' chart of the day.

Bangladesh to buy six new ships

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Bangladesh Shipping Corporation (BSC) signed a deal on Friday with China National Machinery Import and Export Corporation (CMC) to buy six new ships from China at around Tk 1,400 crore.

"The buying process of the vessels was set out according to a government to government preferential loan from China to Bangladesh after the CMC gave a proposal around five months ago," said Md Nasir Uddin Chowdhury, assistant manager of BSC.

"Currently 10 of our fleet of 13 ships are older than 25 years," Chowdhury said. "Due to financial constraint and other administrative complexity, we could not buy any new ship in the last two decades."

The purchase will save a

huge amount of foreign currency that was spent for renting ships, he said.

Two of the six ships are product carriers, two are bulk carriers and two are container ships. Each of the product and bulk carrier ships have the capacity of around 40,000 tonnes while the capacity of each container ship would be 1,200 twenty equivalent units.

A six-member delegation of the BSC headed by Commodore Moksumul Kader, managing director of BSC, is currently visiting China as part of the new purchase.

Three ships of BSC -- Banglar Doot, Banglar Mookh and Banglar Shikha -- were built by China. Four of the rest were built by Japan, two by Germany, and one each by Denmark, Spain and France.



BENGAL SOLAR
Humayun Kabir, director of Bengal Solar, and Md Nazrul Hasan, managing director of Dhaka Power Distribution Co Ltd, attend a programme where the companies signed a deal, at Bidyut Bhaban in Dhaka recently.

Indian firm hopes to grow S African motorbike market

AFP, Johannesburg

The call on Alex FM radio is aimed at the residents in the overcrowded Johannesburg sprawl of shanties and houses: "Stop walking and start riding, it is time to get liberated!"

It's made by the representative of the main Indian motorcycle manufacturer which wants to flood South Africa's townships with cheap bikes, despite there being no local culture of two-wheelers which rule the road elsewhere in Africa.

"South Africa is a very particular market," said Karan Patni, southern Africa marketing manager for Bajaj which has opened four outlets around Johannesburg to target the untapped bike market.

"The black South Africans who live in townships, they don't have their own means of transport. They have to walk to a taxi rank, take a taxi and probably take another one. They spend a lot of money, and waste a lot of time."

Since the fall of apartheid in 1994, private car use has leaped in South Africa alongside a growing black middle class with more than 50,000 new and used cars sold in May alone this year.

But the overwhelming majority of locals are forced to use the privately run mini-bus industry which has a shocking record of deadly accidents and violence.

Only one in 10 of 40 million blacks own a car, with massive unemployment and poverty pushing even a 70,000 rand (\$8,300, 6,600 euros) budget Chinese model out of the reach of most.

In contrast, a basic 150cc motorbike costs

Light rail opens in S Korea amid financial fears

AFP, Uijeongbu, South Korea

With sleek railcars sliding along elevated tracks, South Korea's newest light railway is a smooth ride, and the hope is that it can avoid the fiscal train wreck facing similar projects.

But passenger estimates for the rubber-wheeled, driverless light rail transit (LRT) system, which will open to the public in Uijeongbu city north of Seoul on July 1, have already been scaled back.

And government researchers say the 11.1-kilometre (6.9 mile) stretch of line, which was built under a public-private partnership deal, will cost taxpayers 10 billion won (\$8.6 million) a year for the next decade on top of the vast sums already spent.

"Other LRT projects in the country went awry but we believe this one will be different," said Lee Myung-Se, vice president of Uijeongbu LRT Co.

"Unlike other LRTs, there will be enough demand as it passes through the most populated areas and carries commuters fast to a station where they can transfer to the main subway line linked to Seoul."

Competition bill gets a go-ahead in parliament

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Independent lawmaker Fazlul Azim, who also submitted an amendment to the proposal, raised his suggestions. But all of his proposals were rejected by voice vote.

As per the bill, the government will constitute the BCC immediately after it is made into a law.

The BCC will be headquartered in Dhaka, but can set up branch offices outside the capital and it will have its own secretariat with necessary manpower.

The bill also has provision for imposing a bar on any individual from signing any agreement with a producer of any commodity or service that may have a negative impact or create a monopoly or oligopoly.

Upon investigation, the BCC can order the individual to refrain from signing such an agreement or misusing any power. It may also impose a fine on individuals if found guilty.

Defending the bill, GM Quader said different countries in the world had enacted such law. "People will



UCB
M Shahjahan Bhuiyan, managing director of United Commercial Bank, and Lutfor Rahman, vice chancellor of Daffodil University, attend the signing ceremony of an agreement between the organisations, in Dhaka yesterday. The university became a corporate client of the bank.



EBL
M Gaziul Haque, chairman of Eastern Bank, presents a trophy to the bank's first "Priority Banking" customer at the launch of a revamped version of the product, at EBL Consumer Night-2012 at Bangabandhu International Conference Centre in Dhaka on Saturday. Ali Reza Iftekhar, managing director, was also present.

Japanese agro processing plant in Chittagong

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Chittagong

Hisayuki Mutoh of City Network Incorporation (CCK) of Japan yesterday announced their plan to set up an agro processing plant in the port city.

He spoke at a programme where a delegation of CCK met with the leaders of Chittagong Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCCI) at the chamber's office in Chittagong.

Mutoh said labour cost in Bangladesh is more reasonable than any other South Asian country and "the weather here is also very agriculture-friendly".

He urged the CCCI to establish a joint platform to ease export of locally produced vegetables to Japan.

Nurun News Selim, acting president of CCCI, said Japanese investment in the country is a must to reduce the trade gap between the two countries, as Japan is an important partner in the socio-economic development of Bangladesh.

"Bangladesh has become very suitable for foreign investment because of favourable environment and advantageous geographical location," Selim said.

He also requested the Japanese entrepreneurs to relocate their factories to Bangladesh and, he also assured them of providing all out cooperation from CCCI in this respect.

Govt approves Rangunia EPZ

BSS, Dhaka

The board of governors of Bangladesh Private Export Processing Zone (BPEPZ) yesterday approved Rangunia Export Processing Zone, paving way for establishing another private export oriented industrial hub in the country.

The approval was given at the 17th meeting of the board, at the Prime Minister's Office with its chairperson Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in the chair.

Abul Kalam Azad, the PM's press secretary, said the meeting discussed the progress of the development of other private EPZs in the country, including the Korean EPZ in Chittagong.

The prime minister asked the BPEPZ authorities to give final allocation of 500 acres of land initially with all clearances, including environment for Korean EPZ, to set up industries quickly.

Hasina also asked the KEPZ authorities to present its whole investment plan to the government.

GM Quader, commerce minister; Rezaul Karim Hira, land minister; Hasan Mahmud, environment and forests minister; Enamul Haque, state minister for Power; Moshir Rahman, prime minister's adviser; and SA Samad, executive chairman of the investment board, were also present.

Facebook to pay \$10m to settle suit

REUTERS, San Francisco

Facebook Inc has agreed to pay \$10 million to charity to settle a lawsuit that accused the site of violating users' rights to control the use of their own names, photographs and likenesses, according to court documents made public over the weekend.

The lawsuit, brought by five Facebook members, alleged the social networking site violated California law by publicizing users' "likes" of certain advertisers on its "Sponsored Stories" feature without paying them or giving them a way to opt out, the documents said.

A "Sponsored Story" is an advertisement that appears on a member's Facebook page and generally consists of another friend's name, profile picture and an assertion that the person "likes" the advertiser.

The settlement was reached last month but made public this weekend. Facebook declined to comment on Saturday.

The proposed class-action lawsuit, filed in federal court in San Jose, California, could have included nearly one of every three Americans, with billions of dollars in damages, according to previous court documents.

In the lawsuit, Facebook Chief Executive Mark Zuckerberg was quoted as saying that a trusted referral was the "Holy Grail" of advertising.

In addition, the lawsuit cited comments from Facebook chief operating officer Sheryl Sandberg, saying that the value of a "Sponsored Story" advertisement was at least twice and up to three times the value of a standard Facebook.com ad without a friend endorsement.

US District Judge Lucy Koh said the plaintiffs had shown economic injury could occur through Facebook's use of their names, photographs and likenesses.

"California has long recognized a right to protect one's name and likeness against appropriation by others for their advantage," Koh wrote.

The settlement arrangement is known as a cy-pres settlement, meaning the settlement funds can go to charity.

The case in US District Court, Northern District of California is Angel Fraley et al., individually and on behalf of all others similarly situated vs. Facebook Inc., 11-cv-1726.

Facebook shares closed at \$30.01 on Friday, down 21 percent since the company's initial public offering last month.



CCCI
Nurun News Selim, president-in-charge of Chittagong Chamber of Commerce and Industry, and Hisayuki Mutoh, an official of City Network Incorporation of Japan, attend a meeting where a delegation of CCK met the chamber's leaders at the office of the chamber in Chittagong yesterday.



MEDIACOM
The team of Mediacom Ltd poses with one of the four gold and one silver awards that the team won at the fourth Dhaka Adfest, organised by the Advertising Club Dhaka, at Sonargaon Hotel in the capital recently.

Le Méridien opens doors next year

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"IDLC is delighted to partner with Metro Group in this exciting project and also believes the hotel will boost the economic activity in Dhaka city," said Hussain.

The hospitality sector in Bangladesh has been booming in recent years, with three five-star hotels having opened in the past six years, fuelled by the increase in business travellers for the garment and telecom industries.

According to industry analysts, Dhaka currently has around 1,300 five-star rooms, which are occupied fully only during the winter. However, an average occupancy of around 75 percent is sufficient to