

Stocks break losing streak

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Stocks returned to the black yesterday, breaking a three days' losing streak, as institutional investors became active.

DGEN, the benchmark General Index of the Dhaka Stock Exchange, finished the day at 4,467.77 points, after surging 15.84 points or 0.35 percent.

Institutional investors went for buying, while small investors adopted a wait-and-see policy to observe the sentiment of the market, analysts said.

"Among the major sectors, investors were a bit upbeat about bank and non-bank financial institutions after the recent sales pressure. As some scrips of the energy sector were approaching to corporate declaration, investors were active in those on earnings expectation," said IDLC Investment.

Investors remained watchful throughout the session and made cautious movement, the merchant bank said.

Turnover declined 23.28 percent to Tk 530 crore, compared to the previous day.

A total of 1.21 trades were executed

with 12 crore shares and mutual fund units changing hands on the Dhaka bourse.

Of the total 270 issues that traded on the DSE, 172 advanced, 83 declined and 15 remained unchanged.

Most of the major sectors closed up. Non-bank financial institutions rose 1.53 percent, general insurance 1.25 percent and banks 0.39 percent.

United Airways featured on the most traded stocks' chart with 1.90 crore shares worth Tk 56.98 crore changing hands.

Jamuna Oil and Meghna Petroleum were the next popular stocks of the day.

DBH First Mutual Fund was the biggest gainer, as it posted a 10 percent rise, while Deshbandhu Polymar was the worst loser, plunging by 18.29 percent.

CSCX, the Selective Categories Index of the Chittagong Stock Exchange, finished the day at 8,703.17 points, after gaining 10.69 points or 0.12 percent.

Gainers beat losers 100 to 83, while five remained unchanged on the port city bourse that traded 1.65 crore shares and mutual fund units worth Tk 63.54 crore.

Floods affect cotton production in Jamalpur, Sherpur

AMINUL ISLAM, Mymensingh

The cotton farmers in Jamalpur and Sherpur districts may fail to reach their production target this year due to the recent floods in Mymensingh region.

Farmers of the two districts where more than 100 hectares of the land are used in cotton cultivation said floods have caused partial or total damage to their fields.

Cotton is produced in 15 places in the region on around 1,554 hectares of land and production target for the region was around 10,943 bales this year, according to the officials of the Cotton Development Board.

Cotton farmers at Nandina in Jamalpur said they will suffer a loss of over Tk 25 lakh this season although they hoped to get good profits on spiraling cotton prices in recent years.

Now, there is no time to sow cotton seeds again to repair the loss, they said.

Jamalpur, Sherpur, Tangail and Mymensingh districts have the potential to produce good quality cottons, said Md Habibur Rahman, chief cotton development officer in Mymensingh.

Two local varieties of cotton -- CB-9 and CB-12 -- are cultivated in the region, said Rahman.

The board expects to reach the region's cotton production target successfully, as there is no flood in other than the two districts, he said.

India to allow sugar exports for 2012-13

REUTERS, New Delhi

India, which is likely to produce a sugar surplus for its third year in a row, has decided to allow exports for another year, Food Minister KV Thomas said, reflecting confidence about domestic supplies in the world's top consumer of the sweetener.

Mills and traders will have to wait for a formal order to export sugar in the new season that began on October 1, however. India, also the world's top producer after Brazil, has been exporting for the past two years.

But the country has not been able to sign fresh export deals in the recent past due to rising domestic prices.

The decision indicates ample availability, especially during the current festival season, said Mukesh Kuvadia, secretary of the Bombay Sugar Merchants Association.

Yellow arranges fashion show

STAR BUSINESS DESK

Yellow, a fashion house of the Beximco Group, showcased its products by arranging a fashion show at the BGMEA University of Fashion and Technology (BUFT) in the city recently.

This was the second event titled "Yellow Fashion Fest 2012" in a span of three months after it arranged the first one at AIUB in July.

'Fashion Fest' is a new initiative of Yellow designed to introduce students to the fashion world through practical training and workshop.

The fest for students was divided into two parts -- the first one was a workshop on "trends in fashion" by Yellow's international team of fashion designers and the second one was a fashion show.

The event helped students gain knowledge about the current trend of fashion, marketing and merchandising.

Some of Dhaka's reputed colleges and universities have already made deals and many more will come soon to host a fashion festival episode at their institutes.

Prof Syed Masud Husain, vice chancellor of BUFT, attended the event at its auditorium on October 4.

"The fashion show performed by the enthusiastic students is really impressive. These events have encouraged us to arrange more. So, we plan to offer Fashion Fest in days to come to all major colleges and universities so that fashion lovers can gain maximum benefits from it," said Yellow Executive Director Shehryar Burney.



Micheal Kuehner, managing director of Robi Axiata, receives the ISO 9001:2008 certificate for management from Ronald Biswas, country manager of Intertek Bangladesh, at a ceremony at Robi's office at Gulshan in Dhaka yesterday.



Mohammed Nurul Amin, managing director of NCC Bank, and Md Abdur Rahman Sarker, managing director of Shahjalal Islami Bank, attend a programme where the banks signed a deal in Dhaka yesterday. All outlets of Shahjalal Bank will offer the services of Express Money.

Germany raises power price to finance renewables

AFP, Berlin

Germany's electrical grid operators said they were raising by nearly half the charge to consumers used to finance subsidies for renewable energy as the country phases out nuclear power.

Consumers will be asked to pay 0.05277 euros (\$0.06839) per kilowatt hour of electricity consumed in 2013, the firms announced, compared to a 0.03592-euro surcharge this year.

For an average three-person house, this 47-percent increase amounts to an additional 60 euros per year, taking overall additional power taxes up to about 185 euros.

In total, the network operators hope to collect more than 20 billion euros to subsidise renewable energies.

On Thursday, German Environment Minister Peter Altmaier said that the Germany, with Europe's top economy, wanted to have 40 percent of its energy needs from renewable sources by 2020, up from a previous target of 35 percent.

By 2050, the government aims to supply four-fifths of Germany's power needs from alternative energy sources such as solar or wind energy.

"It's clear that the energy switch-over that we all want and that I want to succeed, won't come free," he told Monday's edition of mass-circulation daily Bild.

Claudia Kemfert, from the DIW economic institute, warned that the poorer off in society needed to be shielded from the hike but stressed that the renewable

energy sector in Germany would continue to create jobs.

"The increase in this charge is manageable for many households, but there are also very poor, low-income households which could be negatively affected by this type of price rise," she said.

"We need to think about ways to help these households financially, so they can save energy and electricity," she added.

Nevertheless, the renewables sector already employed 400,000 people in Germany and "this number will rise," she noted. "Therefore, this is a positive development for Germany."

However, an association representing the chemical industry slammed the rise as a "bottomless pit."

Firms that use a lot of electricity, such as the chemical sector, can apply for an exemption in paying the charge or benefit from a lower amount. More than 2,000 companies have applied for special treatment for next year.

Karl-Ludwig Kley, head of the German chemical industry association, said: "The costs for consumers and industry of the electricity price charge for renewable energy has risen to an unbearable degree."

The costs for the chemical sector would rise from 550 million euros this year to 800 million euros in 2013, Kley said.

Germany decided in the immediate wake of Japan's 2011 Fukushima nuclear plant disaster to shut down its nuclear reactors by 2022 and ramp up the use of renewable energy.

Arrest of Hall-Mark MD not enough

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Azad also suggested the same measures taken against the Destiny Group for the Hall-Mark Group.

Azad's comments came during his speech at the inauguration ceremony of the "11th National Furniture Fair 2012" organised by the Bangladesh Furniture Industry Owners Association at the Bangabandhu International Conference Centre.

"The main objectives of the fair are to promote the locally-produced furniture and create awareness about their quality, at home and abroad," said Salim H Rahman, chairman of the association.

A total of 60 local furniture companies -- including the well-known brands such as Akhtar Furnishers, Brothers, Furnitec, Hatil, Navana and Partex -- are showcasing their products at the 200-odd stalls at the fair.

"The furniture industry in Bangladesh has witnessed substantial growth in the last decade, and is showing promises of further progress. It is high time we take steps to boost it," said KM Akhteruzzaman, Bangladesh Furniture Exporters Association's chairman.

He further said there is immense potential to export as the sector has made tremendous progress in terms of quality and design.

Around 90 percent of Bangladesh's export comes from six items, including readymade garments, home textiles, leather and frozen foods, according to Shubhashish Bose, vice-chairman of Export Promotion Bureau.

"It is one of our weaknesses. But the furniture could be another promising sector for export as the country is offering competitive prices."

Bose added that the government is working to diversify the export basket through provision of policy support.

The seven-day fair was inaugurated by Railways Minister Mujibul Haque, and has no entry fee.

The fair will remain open from 10am to 9pm everyday except Wednesday and Thursday, when it would open at 12 pm, and on Saturday, when it would open at 3 pm.

Hall-Mark closes factories as workers rally for wages

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Tushar Ahmed, general manager (commercial) of the group, told The Daily Star last month that they had a total of 38,000 workers. Since May, 20 percent of its workers left the group each month.

"No bank wants to work with us after the incident (loan scam). What will they (workers) do?" he said.

Hall-Mark has become a news item in the media since May after the central bank detected a loan scam of Tk 2,686 crore by the Group from Sonali Bank.

The Anti-Corruption Commission filed 11 cases with Ramna Police Station on October 4 against 27 officials of Hall-Mark and the Sonali Bank for misappropriating of Tk 1,568 crore.

On October 7, the ACC arrested Hall-Mark Group Managing Director Tanvir Mahmud and General Manager Tushar Ahmed.

Reliance Industries Q2 profit down

REUTERS, Mumbai

Reliance Industries posted its fourth consecutive drop in quarterly profit but met street estimates as refining margins rebounded and treasury gains from its huge cash pile bolstered profits.

Net profit fell 5.7 percent to 53.76 billion rupees for the fiscal second quarter that ended in September from 57.03 billion rupees a year earlier, the company said on Monday.

The company posted gross refining margin of \$9.5 per barrel for the quarter.

Reliance, which operates the world's biggest refining complex in western India, was expected to post a net profit of 53.9 billion rupees, according to a Reuters poll of nine brokerages.

In recent years, the company has looked to widen beyond its core energy businesses and has outlined a big drive into consumer-focused businesses such as

BB asks banks to accept valid IBPs

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"The environment of mistrust that has been created in the bankers and clients relationship due to the Hall-Mark loan scam is not right," Amin said, while pressing Sonali Bank to accept the valid IBPs.

Shafiqul Islam Mohiuddin, the president of Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association, said the garment exporters are facing difficulties as some commercial banks are showing reluctance in purchasing IBPs.

Mohammad Hatem, the acting president of Bangladesh Knitwear Manufacturers and Exporters Association, and Jahangir Alamin, the president of Bangla

All Nippon Airways restarts Myanmar flights

APP, Tokyo

Japan's All Nippon Airways (ANA) on Monday restarted direct flights to Myanmar's commercial capital Yangon after a 12-year hiatus, underscoring renewed interest in the fast-reforming nation.

The carrier pointed to the rising number of business travellers and tourists headed to Myanmar, a one-time international pariah state that has recently introduced a raft of democratic reforms as it opens up to the world.

ANA, which suspended flights in 2000 due to political instability in the country, said it would have three flights a week between Tokyo's Narita airport and Yangon.

Myanmar, also known as Burma, has seen a number of dramatic changes

since last year such as the release of hundreds of political prisoners and the election of opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi to parliament. Yangon, Myanmar's largest city and former capital, has high potential for economic growth. A lot of Japanese firms have already decided to make inroads into Myanmar and many others are planning to do so," ANA President Shinichiro Ito said Monday, according to Kyodo News.

Other airlines including Hong Kong's Dragonair and Singapore Airlines have announced plans for regular flights to Yangon.

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Govt again asks Google to remove anti-Islamic clip from YouTube

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The governments of the USA, Turkey, Brazil and Russia have also requested Google to remove the clip, but the company refused to do so on the grounds that the video did not violate any of the website's guidelines.

The government is reviewing the next steps and is