

Stocks return to the black

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Stocks returned to the black yesterday, as investors went on a buying spree on expectation of good corporate declarations in the days to come.

DSEX, the benchmark general index of Dhaka Stock Exchange, closed the day at 3,714 points, after gaining 51 points, or 1.34 percent.

Expectation regarding upcoming quarterly earning declaration created a technical stimulus among the investors' community, IDLC Investments said in its market analysis.

"In the meantime, strong scrip-wise swings in line with investors' focus, especially in micro cap and mini cap stocks, pulled up market sentiment."

LankaBangla Securities, a leading stockbroker, also said the market gained a winning streak with some fresh fund placed into large and mid-cap shares of fuel, non-banking financial institution and engineering sector, and companies listed in the textile sector.

During yesterday's session, textile sector captured leading position by increasing 2.85 percent and also by contributing 22.76 percent in the day's total turnover.

Besides, engineering advanced 2.54 percent, non-bank financial institutions 2.1 percent and cement 2.01 percent, while Insurance was the only losing sector with a 0.19 percent decline.

A total of 0.59 lakh trades were executed, with 4.56 crore shares and mutual fund units changing hands on the premier bourse, generating a value of Tk 189 crore.

Of the 286 issues that traded on the DSE floor, 248 advanced, 22 declined and 16 remained unchanged on the premier bourse.

Argon Denims, which transacted 24.47 lakh shares worth Tk 14.69 crore, was the day's top traded stock.

Anwar Galvanising was the biggest gainer of the day, posting a 10 percent rise, while Kohinoor Chemicals was the worst loser, plunging by 8.38 percent.

Chittagong stocks also rose yesterday with the bourse's selective category index, CSCX, increased by 101.97 points to close at 7,463 points.

Gainers beat losers by 161 to 23, with 17 securities remained unchanged on the port city bourse that traded 55.51 lakh shares and mutual fund units at a turnover of Tk 16.67 crore.



Mohammad Abdul Mannan, managing director of Islami Bank Bangladesh, and Brig Gen Md Sajjad Hossain, president of Proyash School (Jessore campus), sign a deal at a programme yesterday. The bank donated Tk 15 crore to help build the academic building of the school for 400 special children at Jessore cantonment.

Eyes on Apple for new iPads at US event

AFP, San Francisco

Apple is on Tuesday expected to show off slick new iPads to take on rival tablet makers during the prime year-end holiday shopping season.

The culture-changing California company has revealed little about an invitation-only event in San Francisco, but analysts believe a spotlight will shine on the iPad line.

"Job One for Apple is to get something out there on the large-size iPad that gets people excited, then obviously from a specification focus, the Mini needs to catch up with what everybody else has done," NPD analyst Stephen Baker told AFP.

"There are a lot of other things happening in that large-size tablet space and there is a huge amount of choice in smaller devices."

Industry tracker Gartner on Monday forecast that global tablet shipments will reach 184 million units this year in a 53.4 percent rise from last year.

The high-end of the market, where iPads dominate, has seen people opting for small tablets which cost less than full-sized models, according to Gartner.

"Continuing on the trend we saw last year, we expect this holiday season to be all about smaller tablets as even the long-term holiday favorite - the smartphone - loses its appeal," said Gartner research vice president Carolina Milanesi.

The iPad remains the largest-selling tablet, according to surveys, but its market share is being eroded by rivals using the Google Android operating system.

Apple is also under pressure to adapt to the popularity of premium tablets with high-quality screens in the seven- to eight-

inch (18- to 20-centimeter) range where the Mini competes.

This has analysts confident that Apple on Tuesday will show off a Mini with screen quality on par with that of its full-sized iPad.

Emailed invitations to the Apple event revealed little other than the time and place, and bore the message: "We still have a lot to cover."

A graphic in the shape of an iPad showed Apple's iconic logo under a shower of colorful leaves. Unconfirmed reports are that Apple unveilings will include a full-size iPad that will be thinner than its predecessor and boast improved capabilities.

Scrutiny of Apple's supply chain has industry trackers thinking the new iPad will get "narrower, thinner, and lighter" and possibly be built with processors at least as powerful as those used in the freshly-launched iPhone 5S.

Some analysts will be watching whether new iPad models have 64-bit processors as engines in a significant boost that would enable tablets to handle more heavy weight programs and games.

Analysts agreed that top-end, full-size iPads may also get the fingerprint recognition security feature that has been a hit in the iPhone 5S.

"It sounds jaded, but tablets are a maturing market," said Forrester analyst Sarah Rotman-Epps.

"We expect few surprises in this category that Apple kickstarted only three years ago," she continued.

"It will be difficult for Apple to move the needle on new tablet sales, as the strongest growth is coming from emerging markets where customers are more price-sensitive."

China heads to South America in global energy 'scramble'

AFP, Shanghai

China's global hunt for crucial energy supplies is taking it into America's backyard, with two Chinese state firms winning production rights to a multi-billion-barrel deepwater oilfield off Brazil.

China National Petroleum Corp. (CNPC) and China National Offshore Oil Corp. (CNOOC) each took a 10 percent stake in Brazil's "Libra" field, alongside three other companies, at an auction on Monday.

Beijing is seeking oil, natural gas and other raw materials to keep the world's second largest economy moving and the government has been encouraging companies to "go out" and make acquisitions to gain both market access and international experience.

"Everyone is scrambling for resources worldwide," said Li Li, an analyst at consultancy C1 Energy.

"The whole of South America is relatively less developed with both abundant reserves and these kind of resources, so Chinese companies are more interested," she said.

China is already the biggest energy user in the world and the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) says it could also surpass the United States as the largest oil importer by 2014.

The chief executive of CNOOC, China's main offshore oil producer, said the latest deal will allow entry to an "ultra" deepwater field.

"It also aligns with our philosophy of seeking partnerships to expand our global footprints," Li Fanrong said in a statement.

Reckitt Benckiser logs rising quarterly revenues

AFP, London

British household goods firm Reckitt Benckiser said on Tuesday that third-quarter sales rose five percent, driven partly by emerging markets, and raised its full-year guidance.

Revenues climbed to \$4.1 billion in the third quarter of the year, compared with the same part of 2012.

The London-listed company also forecast that full-year revenues would grow by "at least" six percent. The group also revealed that it would begin a strategic review of its drugs division, Reckitt Benckiser Pharmaceuticals.

"Reckitt Benckiser's focus on health and hygiene and emerging markets, along with our move to drive growth in Europe North America through increased investment is delivering good results," said chief executive Rakesh Kapoor.



Mokbul Huda Chowdhury, sales director of Singer Bangladesh, opens a Singer Plus shop in Rangpur recently. MM Ferdous, head of human resources, was also present.

NRB Commercial gets new additional MD

STAR BUSINESS DESK

ASM Bulbul has recently joined NRB Commercial Bank as additional managing director, the bank said in a statement yesterday.

Prior to joining NRB Commercial, Bulbul served National Bank as its deputy managing director.

He started his career as probationary officer with National Bank in 1984, and later worked with Southeast Bank and Mercantile Bank.

Bulbul holds a post graduate diploma in management. He obtained his Master of Arts in history from Dhaka University.



Govt signs \$24m deal with ILO for factory safety

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Addressing the function, Finance Minister AMA Muhi said tragic accidents at the factories are definitely not acceptable.

"For quite some time we have been looking at building safety, fire fighting facilities, easy and safe exits in the factories. For better working conditions, we have been promoting housing colonies and schools for the children of garment workers."

"With the support of our development partners we have eliminated child labour from this sector. But it must be admitted that despite such measures, there are deficiencies in the inspection of factories and enforcement of safety and welfare measures," the minister said.

The finance minister said a safe work environment contributes to lowering the accident rate, which in turn benefits business and earns the sector a good reputation.

Making a brief presentation on the project, Reddy of the ILO said there are five components -- building and fire safety assessment, labour inspection system and support for fire and building inspection, occupational safety and health awareness, rehabilitation and skill training for victims, and better work programmes.

ILO Deputy Director General for Field Operations and Partnerships Gilbert Fossoun Houngbo said this programme will provide support in implementing the National Tripartite Plan of Action on fire safety and structural integrity.

"Successful implementation of the programme will ensure better working conditions and safety for the garment workers in Bangladesh," he said.

The Netherlands ambassador said Rana Plaza and Tazreen became a symbol of what is wrong in the sector. "The image of the sector is shattered. It would not be restored overnight."

Now Bangladesh, supported by the international community, has the chance to get it right, he said. "The Netherlands supports this ILO programme because it contains all the crucial elements to make the garment sector safe and sustainable. For us, this is a perfect example of using aid to promote responsible trade."

He said there is no guarantee that there will not be any new fire or building collapse. "But with this programme, all parties are committed to do their utmost to prevent new disasters and have measures in place."

Labour and Employment Minister Rajiuddin Ahmed Raju, Foreign Minister Dipu Moni and Labour and Employment Secretary Mikail Shipar also spoke.

New project to give BTCL a boost

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Siddique said the project proposal was kept idle from 2009 and is being processed for the last six months.

BTCL did not have any big projects after it was altered to form a company in 2008, and so the project is important for its existence, he said.

Once the proposal is approved, BTCL will be able to provide better telecom services to the customers of both voice and data, as it charges lower than other private operators, the telecom secretary said.

At present, BTCL has around 9 lakh telephone customers with a capacity of more than 14 lakh, with most unused lines based in the district areas, said a BTCL official.

Yunus addresses Nobel peace prize laureates summit

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Yunus also spoke in a plenary session on "human values in the time of crisis" and presented a special Nobel Summit Medal on behalf of the laureates to Jerzy Owsiak, a Polish social activist, who is well known in the country for his work with young people.

Owsiak later invited Prof Yunus to join him at the next Woodstock Festival in August 2014.

Actress and activist Sharon Stone also attended the summit to receive the Peace Summit Award from Prof Yunus. The Bangladeshi Nobel winner also spoke in a session on "Unheard voices. Inequalities in social justice" yesterday and will speak in the session on "Youth in solidarity" today.

Summit attracted some 1,500 young attendees from all over the world and representatives of the Polish public and business leaders.

Laureates and their organisations will run civic academy discussions and workshops every afternoon for the participating youth.

Nokia launches tablet to join Microsoft gadget push

REUTERS, Abu Dhabi

Nokia has unveiled its first tablet and large-screen smartphones, which will form part of Microsoft's global push to become a leading player in consumer devices when it takes over the Finnish company's handset business.

The Lumia 2520 tablet, along with the Lumia 1320 and 1520 phones are among the last products Nokia developed before deciding to sell the devices unit to Microsoft in a deal that is due to close in the first quarter of next year.

Nokia, once the global leader in mobile phones, arrived late to the smartphone race

and has struggled to catch up with Apple and Samsung, who dominate the increasingly crowded market for large-screen smartphones, known as phablets.

The Lumia tablet, which has a 10-inch screen, will also face tough competition from the likes of Apple, which is expected to unveil slimmer, faster iPads on Tuesday.

The phablets, which both have 6-inch screens, will take on a multitude of similar devices from Samsung.

Analysts said the new products, which will retain the Nokia brand after the Microsoft handover, are priced low enough to attract interest.



Ilias Kanchon, executive director of Walton, inaugurates a Walton exclusive distributor showroom at Ramchandrapur of Muradnagar in Comilla recently. Amdadul Haque Sarkar, executive director for marketing, was also present.

Walton has arrived late to the smartphone race