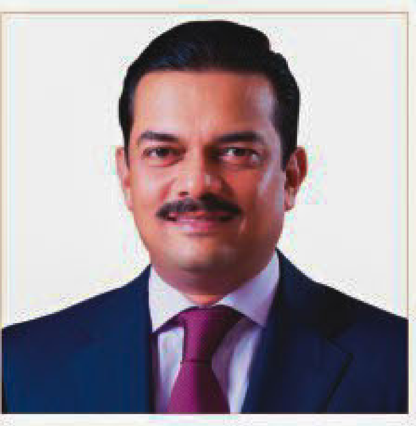
STOCKS Week-on-week		COMMODITIES As of Friday		ASIAN MARKETS Friday closings				CURRENCIES As on Thursday STANDARD CHARTERED BANK				
DSEX	CSCX	Gold	Oil	MUMBAI	TOKYO	SINGAPORE	SHANGHAI		USD	EUR	GBP	JPY
▲ 0.55%	▲ 0.64%	▲ $1,211.42 (per ounce)	▲ $48.96 (per barrel)	▲ 0.67%	▲ 0.18%	▼ 0.20%	▼ 0.24%	BUY TK	77.55	89.14	114.85	0.64
4,968.71	9,224.24			27,458.38	17,197.73	3,338.44	3,285.41	SELL TK	78.55	93.14	118.85	0.68

Star BUSINESS

City

DHAKA SUNDAY JANUARY 11, 2015, e-mail:business@thedailystar.net



Abrar A Anwar

New captain of StanChart: a Bangladeshi

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Standard Chartered Bangladesh yesterday announced Abrar A Anwar as its chief executive officer, the second Bangladeshi to lead the British banking giant's local operations.

Previously the head of corporate and institutional clients at SCB, Anwar will succeed Jim McCabe, who leaves after five years at the helm to join Standard Chartered Sri Lanka as CEO.

He has "delivered impressive revenue growth, diversifying the business beyond traditional banking into sophisticated financial solutions to meet the more complex needs of corporates", SCB said.

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FBCCI seeks legal remedy to end blockades

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

The Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry yesterday threatened to take legal actions against those who call blockades that have brought businesses down to their knees.

"We are looking for options to take legal actions against the blockaders," FBCCI President Kazi Akram Uddin Ahmed said at a press conference in Motijheel, Dhaka.

Due to the ongoing political chaos, the apex trade body also convened an emergency board meeting at its office yesterday.

The FBCCI this time will not take any initiative for dialogues between the two major political parties, Ahmed said. "But, if any party asks us to arrange talks, we may do so."

Before the January 5 national election last year, the FBCCI had taken initiatives to hold dialogues between the major political parties for breaking the political impasse. But the initiative did not work as the leaders of the parties did not respond positively.

Three important sectors -- transport, manufacturing and tourism -- have been hit hard by the ongoing blockades, Ahmed said, adding that more than two lakh buses, trucks, and covered vans are sitting idle.

The disruption in the transport sector has not only been creating troubles for passengers, but also hampering the transportation of goods, he said. "Farmers are counting losses everyday."

More than two million transport workers have become jobless, while the total losses in the transport sector will be more than Tk 200 crore a day, Ahmed said.

"We are deeply concerned about the political crisis," he said. According to different estimates, the country loses Tk 1,500 crore to Tk 2,000 crore a day due to blockades or shutdowns, he said.

He also said Bangladesh needs an additional investment of Tk 2,800 crore for achieving an 8 percent GDP growth. The country should also focus on attracting both local and foreign investment, he said.

Meanwhile, AKM Salim Osman, president of Bangladesh Knitwear Manufacturers and Exporters Association, in a statement urged the political parties to call off blockades for the sake of the economy.

Despite the ongoing blockades, visitors crowd Dhaka International Trade Fair at Sher-e-Bangla Nagar in the capital yesterday mainly due to weekly holidays.

STAR

Biggest fertiliser factory to be ready this year

Industries Minister Amu says work is nearly done

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

The country's biggest fertiliser factory is set to start operations by the year-end, Industries Minister Amir Hossain Amu said yesterday.

The construction of Shahjalal Fertiliser Factory in Fenchuganj of Sylhet is in full swing, Amu said unveiling his ministry's annual performance report. "Ninety-three percent of the work is done and the rest should be complete by June 15."

The factory with the production capacity of 5.8 lakh tonnes a year is adjacent to the age-old state-run Natural Gas Fertiliser Factory.

The new urea plant will ensure wider food safety and save foreign currency from being spent on imports of the soil nutrient, and create jobs, Amu told reporters.

The industries ministry is implementing the Tk 5,409 crore project with technical assistance from the United States and the Netherlands and financial support from China.

China sanctioned Tk 3,987 crore in loans to be repaid in 20 years with a 2 percent interest rate. The rest of the fund came from the Bangladesh government.

Jalalabad Gas Transmission and Distribution Systems Company will supply gas to the new factory.

Shahjalal Fertiliser will be one of the three new fertiliser factories which the government plans to set up. The two other proposed factories are North West Fertiliser Factory Ltd and Bhola Fertiliser Factory, according to industry people.

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Ekhanei.com, OLX go for merger

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Popular online classifieds marketplaces Ekhanei.com and OLX.com.bd have merged with a view to grabbing a bigger share of the growing e-commerce market. The new company would continue to operate under the Ekhanei.com name. OLX users will not have to repost their ads -- they will be migrated to ekhanei.com.

The ease of inserting an ad for free will be maintained.

The venture will be 50.3 percent owned by SnT Classified (an equal shareholding joint venture between Schibsted and Telenor), the parent company of ekhanei.com, and 49.7 percent owned by Naspers, the parent company of OLX.com.bd. The transaction is part of a larger partnership agreement to join forces in selected emerging markets, said a statement.

"By teaming up together, we can accelerate the great momentum we have built to date," Amarjit Singh Batra, chief executive officer of OLX South Asia, said.

SNT Bangladesh Managing Director Arild Klokkerhaug said: "We are delighted to be joining forces with OLX in Bangladesh, and are excited to bring all of our buyers and sellers into a single destination where local Bangladeshis can connect and buy and sell more easily and more quickly than ever."

2014: LOOKING BACK

Large-cap firms perform better

GAZI TOWHID AHMED

All major sectors, except for banks, generated positive returns last year riding on the back of price gains in large cap companies.

Cement, telecoms, food and allied, and pharma performed well for the gains in share prices of multinational companies, LankaBangla Securities said in its yearly review.

The cement sector generated the highest gain of 114.2 percent to stand at Tk 19,916.64 crore in terms of market capitalisation last year, compared to the previous year. It was led by Lafarge Surma's rally, which posted a 267.2 percent gain in terms of price.

In April 2014, the news of the $43 billion merger of the world's two biggest cement makers, Lafarge and Holcim, gave a positive vive to investors, the review said.

In the local market, Lafarge's net profit in nine months grew 48.22 percent at the end of September 2014 backed by a 76.35 percent fall in financial costs, the stockbroker said.

As of September 2014, the company's debt was Tk 309.40 crore, which was Tk 436.90 crore at the end of the third quarter of 2013. Since Lafarge turned profitable in 2011, it is repaying its debt gradually that is leading to a decline in its financial costs.

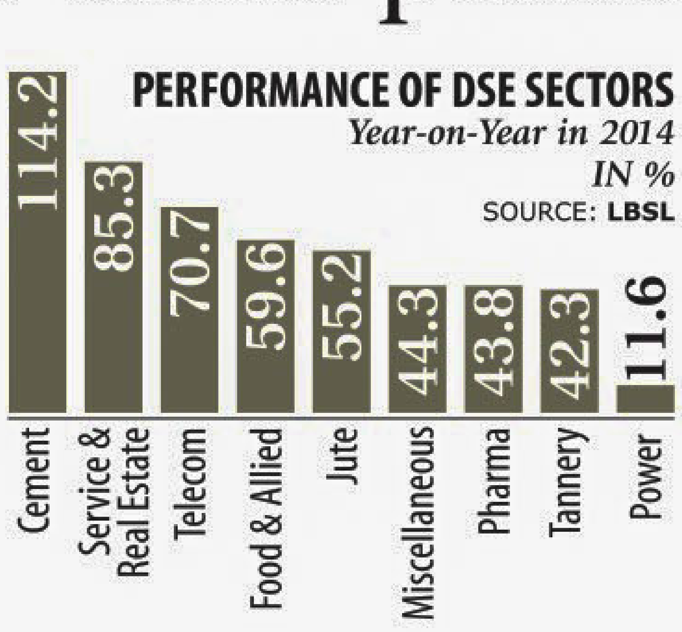
In addition, Lafarge declared a 5 percent interim dividend for the first time in June 2014.

Market capitalisation for telecoms advanced 70.7 percent to Tk 50,616.66 crore as Grameenphone, the largest capitalised stock in the sector, accelerated 80.1 percent in price gains last year, according to LankaBangla.

This was backed by a healthy 48.6 percent growth in profit in the first nine months of last year.

Grameenphone had performed well last year as the company's market share in terms of subscription increased to 42.44 percent in September 2014 from 41.6 percent in the same month a year ago, with its total subscriber base reaching 5.03 crore.

In the first nine months of last year, Grameenphone's EBITDA (earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation and amortisation) margin increased by 3.67 percent year-on-year.



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Japanese insurer threatens to pull out investment plan

SAJJADUR RAHMAN

Japanese insurance giant Taiyo will withdraw its investment plans for Bangladesh if the government does not allow it to hold a 19.9 percent stake, instead of previously proposed 57 percent, in the joint venture firm it planned to form with Summit Group.

Earlier in May 2013, Taiyo in partnership with power and infrastructure giant Summit Group applied to the Insurance Development and Regulatory Authority to set up an insurance company, to be named Taiyo Summit Life Insurance Company.

Taiyo then said it would hold a 57 percent stake in the proposed company, whose paid-up capital would be Tk 150 crore. Summit will have a 39 percent stake, an individual named Rashid 2 percent and the Asian Future the other 2 percent.

Accordingly, in July that year the proposed company got the consent letter from IDRA.

Then in August last year, Taiyo wrote to IDRA to notify of its intent to reshuffle Taiyo Summit Life Insurance Company's stakes, which is a violation of insurance regulations.

As per the revised proposal, Taiyo will hold 19.9 percent stakes, Summit 60.1 percent, Rashid and the Asian Future 10 percent each.

"If IDRA doesn't grant an insurance business licence to the contemplated joint venture life insurance company with the new plans, we have no other choice but to give up the investment itself," Taiyo said in the letter it recently sent to Finance Minister AMA Muhith.

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