

Business leaders seek more trade with EU

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Officials of Business Initiative Leading Development (BUILD), a public-private policy reforms body, yesterday urged the European Union to invest more in Bangladesh for higher business between the two trading partners.

"We look for investment not only in terms of money, but we also strongly believe that foreign direct investment can bring innovation, technology and expertise," said Syed Nasim Manzur, chairman of BUILD, at a meeting with Pierre Mayaudon, the EU ambassador in Bangladesh, at the envoy's office in Dhaka.

Manzur also urged development partners to join hands with the business community in Bangladesh to attract FDI, according to a statement from BUILD.

Referring to the Gulshan terror attack, Manzur said it has not stopped two-way trade between the EU and Bangladesh. "Bangladesh is still open to EU investors and others as well," he added.

He said major trade bodies like the

Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry and Chittagong Chamber of Commerce and Industry have come under one umbrella to take initiatives like BUILD to resolve all the trade and investment related issues they have been facing for years.

The EU envoy also assured businesses of more trade between Bangladesh and EU as the country has been enjoying the duty benefit under its Everything But Arms scheme.

As for EU investment in Bangladesh, the ambassador referred to the EU Business Council (EUBC) that was formed to facilitate trade between the two trading partners.

EUBC is comprised of diplomats and business leaders, while BUILD works with business leaders and bureaucrats, which is a great initiative and quite similar to EUBC, the ambassador added.

Asif Ibrahim, adviser to the BUILD trustee board, said since its inception, BUILD has been able to convince the government to go for a number of policy reforms for creating a better investment climate.

Mehmood Husain, new CEO of NRB Bank

STAR BUSINESS DESK

Md Mehmood Husain has recently joined NRB Bank as chief executive officer with effect from August 1.

Prior to joining NRB Bank, he has been serving Bank Asia as president and managing director.

A postgraduate in eco-



Md Mehmood Husain

nomics from Dhaka University, he started his banking career with National Bank as probationary officer in 1984.

In his 32-year-long banking career, he has also served Prime Bank as additional managing director.

Husain is also a member of the Association of Bankers, Bangladesh, the bank said in a statement.

Honda profit dented even as airbag crisis impact fades

AFP, Tokyo

Honda on Tuesday said quarterly net profit slipped from a year ago, despite the fading impact of an exploding airbag crisis at supplier Takata.

The Japanese automaker blamed an income tax increase for its net profit in the April-June quarter slipping 6.1 percent to 174.6 billion yen (\$1.7 billion).

However, the bottom line figure still beat market expectations owing to stronger sales in the United States and China, the world's biggest vehicle market.

Honda also said operating profit rose 11.5 percent as cost cuts helped offset a

rally in the yen -- which takes a bite out of exporters' profits -- and temporary production shutdowns at factories in southern Japan.

The region was hit by two strong earthquakes in April that left 49 dead and caused widespread damage.

Some of the country's biggest firms, including Honda and rival Toyota, were hit by factory outages in the wake of the disaster.

Last week, Japan's number-two automaker Nissan blamed the yen's surge and struggles in its home market for the first decline in April-June net profit in four years. Toyota reports quarterly results this week.

Mahia Juned, first female DMD of City Bank

STAR BUSINESS DESK

Mahia Juned has recently been promoted to the deputy managing director (DMD) of City Bank.

She is the first female DMD in the bank's history of 34 years, the bank said in a statement. She also became the first female member of the bank's management committee in 2013. Prior to the promotion, she has been serving the bank as senior executive vice president and head of operations.

Juned completed her BBA from the Assumption University in Thailand, according to the statement.

She started her career in 1994 with Citibank, NA Bangladesh as an operations officer and left the bank in 2001 as resident vice president and head of operations.

She joined City Bank in 2007 as head of project management and subsequently became head of operations in 2011.



New top brass for NCC Bank



Abdus Salam



ASM Mainuddin Monem

STAR BUSINESS DESK

The Board of Directors of NCC Bank has recently elected its director Abdus Salam as chairman and re-elected director ASM Mainuddin Monem as vice chairman.

Salam completed his BSc in electrical engineering from Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology in 1965. He has over 50 years of experience in construction, transportation, heavy lifting, logistic activities and electrical and mechanical erection.

Monem has completed his MBA from Harvard Business School Business, the bank said in a statement.

He is also a graduate from Boston University, USA, according to the statement.

He is also the deputy managing director of Abdul Monem Ltd and managing director of Abdul Monem Economic Zone Ltd.

German new car sales drop

AFP, Frankfurt

New car registrations in Germany, a key indicator of consumer demand, suffered a sharp drop in July, official data showed on Tuesday.

Almost 279,000 new cars took to the road in July 2016, down 3.9 percent compared with the same month last year, the federal transport authority KBA said. It was the first drop in new registrations after several months of growth.

Car manufacturers' association VDA noted that calendar effects had accounted for a large part of the fall in sales, with two fewer working days in July 2016 than July 2015.

"We expect that the August figures will show a corresponding shift back," VDA president Matthias Wissmann said in a statement. "It would be better to look at the two months combined". But analysts at Ernst and Young suggested that the market "has reached a high level of sales from which there can be little further expectation of strong growth".

Over the seven months to July as a whole, new car registrations increased 5.4 percent compared with 2015's figures at just over two million.



MH Khusru, director and CEO of DataFort, and Dhruva Jyoti Banerjee, managing director of ACI Godrej, exchange the signed papers of a deal, at a programme on Sunday. DataFort will provide electronic document management software, scanning and indexing of documents and physical records archiving solutions to ACI Godrej.

Remittance falls 29pc in July

FROM PAGE B1

Remittance from the Middle East countries fell due to their currencies' depreciation against the dollar, said Zahid Hussain, lead economist of the World Bank's Dhaka office, last month.

Although remittance flow dropped last fiscal year, the outflow of migrant workers jumped more than 62 percent year-on-year to 6.84 lakh.

There are about 70 lakh Bangladeshis currently working abroad, according to official statistics.

Banks' costs mounting

FROM PAGE B1

Egypt posted the lowest average cost-to-income ratio at 27.7 percent in the world, as of December 31 last year, according to Standard & Poor's Global Market Intelligence analysis.

Chinese banks had an average ratio of 32.73 percent. Banks in Qatar, Kuwait and the UAE posted average ratios of 33.12 percent, 36.86 percent and 37.04 percent, respectively.

The average cost-to-income ratio of Indian private banks was 40.81 percent last year. Banks in Brazil were the least efficient in the analysis, with an average cost-to-income ratio of 98.17 percent.

Aid disbursement reaches new high

FROM PAGE B1

However, a handsome amount of foreign aid is still lying in the pipeline, which crossed the \$23 billion-mark in the beginning of the current fiscal year.

Normally, it is assumed that if 20 percent of the unused foreign aid in the pipeline can be used in a particular year, it is considered to be a better performance.

To achieve that, Bangladesh will have to spend \$4 billion each year, which has not been possible yet.

Sonia Kabir gets award from Bill Gates

FROM PAGE B1

Sonia was chosen from Asia Pacific and was given the award at Microsoft's annual general meeting held in the US last week, before an audience of over 10,000 enthusiastic employees.

The Founders award is given for superior leadership, innovation and significant contributions to the business with outstanding impact, Microsoft said in a statement yesterday.

Individuals are selected from the Platinum Club Outstanding Achiever winners to be given this honour. Founders award winners receive a Rolex watch with Bill Gates initials and awards initials.

Sonia has also been awarded Microsoft's highest award for outstanding achievement, the Circle of Excellence Platinum Club.

Less than 2 percent of Microsoft's nearly 100,000 employees received this award this year, which recognises the company's strongest contributors and top performers.

The Bangladesh business has had an incredible turnaround over the last two years under Sonia's leadership.

Sonia said: "I was truly humbled and surprised by both the awards. It is a great recognition and I am super excited about the future of Microsoft in Bangladesh especially aligning with our Prime Minister's Digital Bangladesh initiative. As we transform as a company I am deeply moved by the focus of our company to empower everyone in the planet to do more. It is an awesome time to be

working for a tech giant like Microsoft."

Microsoft said: "The team has delivered another strong year, achieving what was thought to be impossible and doubling from what it was just two years ago. The team has worked well together to drive growth across the entire business, improve morale and teamwork, and raise the visibility and relevance of Microsoft Bangladesh in the country, thanks to Sonia's leadership."

The Windows Women Campaign (Digital literacy training for women), led by Sonia, has been recognised globally as an outstanding best practice.

This relevance is especially noteworthy in the engagement with the government. In addition to addressing piracy, partnering with the Prime Minister's Office via Windows Women, and signing the first Microsoft Enterprise Agreement with the Bangladesh government, the planning ministry, the team has also partnered with the telecom ministry on cybersecurity.

The Platinum Club awarded by Microsoft's Chief Executive Officer Satya Nadella recognised Sonia's contributions to Microsoft's success in achieving its key company objectives, according to the statement.

Winners of the Platinum Club are influential leaders that have surpassed expected achievements and have gone above and beyond their line of duty. This club represents Microsoft's ongoing commitment to recognising its finest and reflects the value Microsoft places on its peak performers.

P&G earnings rise, eyes sales growth

AFP, New York

Procter & Gamble reported a jump in fiscal fourth-quarter earnings Tuesday and predicted that sales would return to positive growth next year.

Net income for the quarter ending June 30 at the maker of Bounty paper towel and Vicks cough drops was \$2.0 billion, up 274 percent from the year-ago period, which included a large charge related to currency devaluations in Venezuela.

Revenues were down three percent to \$16.1 billion.

The consumer products giant, which has been stymied by the effects of the strong dollar on overseas markets, said sales grew in all five of its product offerings when currency effects were stripped out.

However, sales were down three percent including currency swings.

Bhutan keen to import internet bandwidth from Bangladesh

FROM PAGE B1

Bangladesh will be connected with the second submarine cable—SEA-ME-WE 5—in December; the country will get another 1,300gbps internet bandwidth from the connection.

Tarana along with the top officials of BSCCL also met with Tripura's Chief Minister Manik Sarkar and officials of BSNL and called for importing more bandwidth from Bangladesh.

Besides Tripura, there is demand for internet bandwidth in India's other eastern states, including Meghalaya, Manipur, Nagachal and Mizoram.

After Bhutan, Bangladesh will seek to export bandwidth to Nepal, said a senior official of BSCCL.

Regulator approves Tk 200cr mutual fund

FROM PAGE B1

The BSEC also allowed Southeast Bank to raise Tk 500 crore by issuing non-convertible subordinated bonds and the fund will be used to fulfil the requirements of Basel-II.

The bank will issue the non-convertible, unlisted, fully redeemable and floating rated subordinated bonds with a maturity period of seven years.

The face value of the bond, which can be issued to only local financial institutions, corporate and eligible investor through private placement, will be Tk 10 lakh per unit.

The regulator also gave a final nod to the amendments of Qualified Investor Offer by Small Capital Companies Rules, 2016 and Depository Guideline, 2003.

In another move, the BSEC fined Sinha Securities Tk 10 lakh for breaching securities rules.

BB officials visit Manila to seek recovery of heist money

FROM PAGE B1

At 6.27 pm on that day, a temporary hold was placed on the accounts at the branch, pending further investigation into the "validity of the remittances and nature of the funds", according to one memo that was sent on March 21 by the head of RCBC's human resources group, Rowena F. Subido, to Ismael S. Reyes, its national sales director for retail banking.

Some officials at RCBC's headquarters, also in Manila, had questioned the transfers after about \$22.7 million of the money was withdrawn from one of the accounts in cash at 3.16 pm that day only to be then deposited to another account that was opened at around 3 pm that day at the same branch, according to the notice sent to Reyes.

However, the hold on the accounts

was shortlived. By around 7.30 pm it was lifted after then Jupiter Branch Business Manager Maia Deguito's "representation to her superiors" that the transactions were legitimate, according to another memo sent to Reyes. Deguito was fired by the bank earlier this year and is under investigation by the Philippines' anti-money laundering council.

Ferdinand Topacio, lawyer for Deguito, said that RCBC could not escape blame by singling out employees for mistakes. "If she had any fault, she was negligent and she was naive," Topacio said. He said RCBC did not act urgently on the stop payment requests from the Bangladesh central bank.

The documents show that when the bank reopened on Tuesday, Feb. 9 after the Chinese New Year holiday, RCBC's settlements department

received messages as early as 9.15 am from Bangladesh Bank, alerting it about the fraud. It sent four emails, between 10.59 am and 11.30 am, to its Jupiter Street branch, asking it to recall or freeze the remaining funds, the documents show. The reasons for the delay in sending those emails could not be ascertained.

The branch processed withdrawals, totalling \$58.15 million, between 10.24 am and 11.35 am, the documents show. According to former Senator Sergio Osmena, who led a Philippines' Senate probe into the events, only \$15.2 million of this was withdrawn before 11.19 a.m.

"RCBC did not perform its role properly," Bangladesh Bank's Saha said. "RCBC is similarly liable as those parties who took money in their accounts."



Ilias Kanchan, brand ambassador of Walton, opens an exclusive showroom of the company—ML Traders—at Aditmari in Lalmonirhat on July 30. Md Amdadul Haque Sarkar, executive director for marketing, was also present.