STOCKS	Week-on-week		COMMODITIES	As of Friday		ASIAN MARKETS			Friday closings		CURRENCIES	STANDARD CHARTERED BANK			As on Thursday
DSEX	CSCX		Gold $1,175.70 (per ounce)	Oil $54.49 (per barrel)		MUMBAI 1.24% 26,230.66	TOKYO 0.47% 18,426.08	SINGAPORE 0.31% 2,919.37	SHANGHAI 0.31% 3,244.48			USD	EUR	GBP	JPY
0.66% 4,823.02	0.68% 9,023.26										BUY TK	78.95	82.65	97.77	0.67
											SELL TK	79.95	86.05	101.17	0.71

BUSINESS

Firms get initial nod to set up 1,200 LPG auto refuelling stations

SAJJADUR RAHMAN

Around a dozen companies got a primary nod from the government to set up 1,200 LPG auto refuelling stations across the country, said a top official of the Department of Explosives.

Beximco, Intraco, Navana, Petromax and Besto are some of the companies that received the approval for the liquefied petroleum gas plants.

"We hope the LPG auto stations will be in operation next year or early 2018," said Shamsul Alam, chief inspector of explosives, told The Daily Star.

Policies on auto gas and bottling plants have already been formulated. Once the franchisee policy is prepared, the department will start issuing the final licences.

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Fifth from right, AMA Muhith, finance minister; Tofail Ahmed, commerce minister; and Natalie Blyth, HSBC's head of global trade and receivables finance, pose with the winners of the sixth HSBC Export Excellence Awards, at Radisson Hotel in Dhaka yesterday.

HSBC honours five high-flying exporters

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Global bank HSBC yesterday awarded five exporters for their outstanding contribution to Bangladesh's steadily growing economy as well as promoting the country on the international stage.

AMA Muhith, finance minister; Tofail Ahmed, commerce minister; and Natalie Blyth, HSBC's head of global trade and receivables finance, handed over the sixth HSBC Export Excellence Awards to the winners at a ceremony at Radisson Hotel in Dhaka.

DBL Group, a fast-growing apparel maker, bagged the award in the category of textile and garment companies with annual export turnover of $50 million or more.

The family-run company, set up in 1991, is one of the largest export-oriented composite knit garment and textile manufacturers in Bangladesh. Its products are exported to more than 47 countries, including Germany, Sweden, Spain, the UK, Canada, the USA, Japan, Brazil, India and China.

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Slovenia to help Bangladesh in honey cultivation

SOHEL PARVEZ

Bangladesh can become a key player in honey cultivation and create more employment for people in rural areas, especially for women.

In this respect, Slovenia, a nation of beekeepers, wants to share skills and knowledge on beekeeping with the people of Bangladesh.

"On the other hand, you could substantially improve yields in agriculture because of better pollination," said Tanja Strniša, state secretary of the agriculture, forestry and food ministry of Slovenia, in an interview with The Daily Star during her visit to Dhaka last week.

This was the first visit to Bangladesh by any Slovenian leader after the independence of the nation in 1991. Bangladesh's State Minister for Foreign Affairs Md Shahriar Alam visited Slovenia in June.

The purpose of her visit is to deepen cooperation between the two countries, said Strniša.

Tanja Strniša

"We have a lot of potential for cooperation in trade," she said, citing that the value of bilateral trade was only 32 million euros in 2015. Of the amount, Bangladesh exported goods worth 28 million euros, mainly clothes. The rest are Slovenian exports to Bangladesh, she said.

"The two-way trade is growing. But the potential is bigger."

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China-funded digital connectivity project gets green light

REJAUL KARIM BYRON

The government will bring two lakh small institutions under digital connectivity to boost trade and economic activity in remote areas.

The cabinet committee on economic affairs on Wednesday approved the proposal, with China's Exim Bank providing 94 percent of the Tk 8,500 crore project.

The digital connectivity project was included in a memorandum of understanding signed in October during Chinese President Xi Jinping's visit to Dhaka.

The connectivity will be provided to educational institutions, health centres, post offices and agriculture offices, according to the ICT ministry's proposal.

Bangladesh will set up 10,000 "points of presence" at business growth centres across the country to expand digital financial services and e-commerce.

Computer labs will be set up at 4,000 primary schools, 10,000 secondary and higher secondary educational institutions and 1,000 colleges.

Besides, various large-scale labs will be set up, including a regulatory lab at Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission, a multi-media lab for media workers and cyber security labs in universities.

Computer training labs will be set up at the offices of the deputy commissioner and upazila nirbahi officer so that staff can be trained to use the digital services.

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China's mobile brand Infinix sets foot in Bangladesh

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

China's mobile handset brand Infinix is making a foray into Bangladesh, aiming to capture a share of the country's fast-growing smartphone market.

The company will roll out three models in Bangladesh this week, all of which will be priced at less than Tk 20,000, said Cooper Ma, country manager of Infinix Mobility Ltd.

"Actually, this market has big potential for us and that's why we are coming here with a big plan," he said, adding that the company studied the market for six months before deciding to step into it.

There are about 120 million active mobile connections in Bangladesh at present, according to the telecom regulator; and Infinix believes the market will grow faster than ever before.

All the models -- Infinix Zero, Infinix Hot and Infinix Note -- will have state-of-the-art technology with long battery support and best after-sales customer service, Ma said.

For instance, Infinix Note will have 4,500mAh battery, fast charging and aerospace cooling technology to avoid overheating.

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