

Singer approves 70pc dividend for 2016

STAR BUSINESS DESK

Singer Bangladesh approved 70 percent cash dividend for 2016. The announcement came at the 37th annual general meeting of the company held in Dhaka on May 11.

Gavin Walker, chairman of the company, presided over the meeting. Singer Bangladesh said in a statement yesterday.

"Singer enjoyed significant sales increase in many product categories, in particular refrigerators by 52 percent, computers by 77 percent, furniture by 65 percent and washing machines by 45 percent," Walker said.

"Singer's market share continues to increase demonstrating the quality of our products, strong after sales service and motivated sales teams. Singer has operated in Bangladesh for over 100 years and is the leading international brand in the market."

The company also announced its unaudited results for the first quarter ended March 31, 2017, according to the statement.

Singer Bangladesh reduced its operating expenses to 20.9 percent in 2016, down from 22.6 percent in the previous year, the company said. Its profit after tax increased by 23.7 percent to Tk 7.59 crore in 2016 compared with the previous year.

Singer's associate company, International Appliances Ltd which commenced commercial production of refrigerators in July 2016, turned profitable for the first time in the first quarter with a profit after tax of Tk 93 lakh.



From left, AF Nesaruddin, independent director of Singer Bangladesh; Syed Ferhat Anwar, independent director; Mohammad Sanaullah, company secretary; Gavin J Walker, chairman; MHM Fairoz, managing director; Akram Uddin Ahmed, chief financial officer, and Gelmart M Gellecano, director, attend the 37th annual general meeting of the company at Spectra Convention Centre in Dhaka on May 11.

China-led AIIB approves seven new members

REUTERS

The China-backed Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) said on Saturday it had approved seven new members to join the bank, a day before China's biggest diplomatic event of the year kicks off.

Leaders from 29 countries will attend China's new Silk Road forum in Beijing on Sunday and Monday, an event orchestrated to promote President Xi Jinping's vision of expanding links between Asia, Africa and Europe underpinned by billions of dollars in infrastructure investment.

Delegations from around the world will attend including the United States and North Korea.

The new members are Bahrain,

Bolivia, Chile, Cyprus, Greece, Romania and Samoa, bringing the bank's total membership to 77 countries.

The bank's president Jin Liqun held a joint press conference with Chilean President Michelle Bachelet to announce the new members.

"Better infrastructure across Asia will allow Chilean goods to access new markets, more investment in Chilean infrastructure in turn will further bind together the two great continents of Asia and Latin America," said Jin.

"We think there are a lot of projects that can link Asia with or through Latin America," said Bachelet, adding that she had spoken with Jin about the possibility of

investing in a Trans-Pacific optic fiber cable to improve digital connectivity between Asia and Latin America.

"The cable could be considered a part of the 'One Belt, One Road Initiative' and transform the Pacific Ocean into a bridge between our regions," she added, using another name for China's "Belt and Road Initiative" or new Silk Road plan.

Other investments could include tunnels and highways across the Andes Mountains and ports to link Latin America and South America to Asia, Bachelet added.

Thirteen prospective new AIIB members from around the world, including Canada, were approved

in March.

"Expanded membership to Africa, Europe and South America, along with the addition of further members in Asia shows the level of global commitment towards the bank's mission and illustrates the momentum that has gathered since 20 countries signed initial memoranda on establishing the bank less than three years ago," said Jin.

The multilateral institution, seen as a rival to the Western-dominated World Bank and Asian Development Bank, was initially opposed by the United States but attracted many U.S. allies including Britain, Germany, Australia and South Korea as founding members.

South Korea orders major Hyundai, Kia recall after whistleblower report

REUTERS, Seoul

South Korea ordered Hyundai Motor Co and affiliate Kia Motors Corp to recall 240,000 vehicles over safety defects flagged by a whistleblower - a sharp slap on the wrist that will exacerbate reputational woes for the automakers.

The move marks the first compulsory recall ordered by the transport ministry for Hyundai and Kia, which had resisted an earlier request for a voluntary recall, and gives fresh credence to allegations made by Kim Gwang-ho, a Hyundai engineer with 26 years at the company.

The ministry has also asked prosecutors in Seoul to investigate whether the automakers allegedly covered up the five flaws, which affect 12 models, including the Elantra, Sonata, Santa Fe and Genesis.

Hyundai and Kia, which had previ-

ously argued that the flaws presented no danger to driving safety, said in a joint statement on Friday they would cede to the order.

They added there had been no reports of injuries or accidents due to the problems which include defects in parking brake warning lights, and denied that there had been any cover-up.

In the first whistleblower case to hit South Korea's auto industry, Kim has made allegations about 32 problems to local regulators. The latest recalls covers five of those problems.

Kim also flew to the United States last year to report safety lapses to authorities there and the automakers have since issued a voluntary recall for a combined 1.5 million vehicles in North America and in South Korea over a defect that could cause engines to stall.



Eastern Bank Director Md Showkat Ali Chowdhury opens the EBL Skylounge at Chittagong's Shah Amanat International Airport on May 9. Directors Meah Mohammed Abdur Rahim, Ormaan Rafay Nizam, Mufakkharul Islam Khasru and Managing Director Ali Reza Iftekhar were also present.

IEA to review oil demand outlook after China, India signal auto policy shifts

REUTERS, Singapore

The International Energy Agency will review its electric vehicle (EV) use and oil demand forecasts after India and China recently signaled new policies in favour of electric cars and vehicles using other alternatives to gasoline.

In its current policies scenario, last updated in November 2016, the IEA expects vehicle demand for oil to rise until 2040.

But after the world's two fastest growing oil markets, China and India, indicated they are likely to take radi-

cal turns away from gasoline, the IEA says it will need to review its forecasts.

"We will therefore revisit our analysis of future EV market penetration on the basis of these new announcements for the next World Energy Outlook 2017, to be released on 14 November," an IEA spokesman told Reuters.

In its "road map", released in April, China said it wants alternative fuel vehicles to account for at least one-fifth of a projected 35 million annual vehicle sales by 2025.

India is considering even more radical action, with an influential govern-

ment think-tank drafting a report in support of electrifying all vehicles in the country by 2032, according to government and industry sources.

"There has been further policy momentum in support of electric cars, in particular from China and India," the IEA said. The IEA says that China and India currently consume 11 percent and 2 percent of global gasoline demand respectively.

"The choices made by China and India are obviously most relevant for the possible future peak in passenger car oil demand," the IEA said.

China, India plans for electric cars threaten to cut gasoline demand

REUTERS, Singapore/Kuala Lumpur

Demand for gasoline in Asia may peak much earlier than expected as millions of people in China and India buy electric vehicles over the next decade, threatening wrenching change for the oil industry, oil and auto company executives warned.

They said refiners should prepare for a future in which gasoline, their biggest source of revenue, will be much less of a cash cow.

Change is being prompted by policy moves in India and China, where governments are trying to rein in rampant pollution, cut oil imports, and compete for a slice of the fast-growing green car market.

In its "road map", released in April, China said it wants alternative fuel vehicles to account for at least one-fifth of the 35 million annual vehicle sales projected by 2025.

India is considering even more radical action, with an influential government think-tank drafting plans in support of electrifying all vehicles in the country by 2032, according to government and industry sources interviewed by Reuters late last week.

"We will see a clear shift to electric cars. It's driven by legislation so electric cars are coming, it's not a niche anymore," Wilco Stark, vice president for strategy and product planning at German car maker Daimler, told Reuters.

Stark and other executives were interviewed during the Asia Oil & Gas Conference in Kuala Lumpur this

week.

Daimler sees electric vehicles contributing 15-20 percent of its overall sales by 2025 and at least an additional 10 percent of sales coming from hybrids, he said.

Electric cars currently make up less than 2 percent of the global car fleet, and any faster-than-expected growth in that percentage will materially impact oil demand and the refining business.

"Technology is moving fast. In 10-15 years... our gasoline market might not be the same as it is today," said Dawood Nassif, board director at the state-owned oil company Bahrain Petroleum Company (BAPCO).

With gasoline responsible for up to 45 percent of refinery output, and one of the highest profit-margin fuels, a slowdown or fall in demand will have far-reaching implications.

Credit agency Moody's says that the fast pace of technological development makes accurate predictions difficult, but warned that direct financial effects from falling oil demand, including gasoline, "could be material by the 2020s."

The changes are so big that the influential International Energy Agency (IEA) plans to revisit its analysis of electric vehicle trends and oil demand.

"The choices made by China and India are obviously most relevant for the possible future peak in passenger car oil demand," an IEA spokesman told Reuters.

In its current policies scenario, last updated in November 2016, the IEA still expects oil demand from vehicle use to rise until 2040.

It's not just China and India that are changing fast.

Asia's major car makers, Japan and South Korea, already sell significant volumes of hybrid vehicles - which operate off gasoline and electricity - while fuel efficiency gains will continue to cut gasoline consumption for standard vehicles.

There will, though, be some major hurdles before a country like India goes mostly electric. High battery costs would push up car prices and a lack of charging stations and other infrastructure in India means car makers may hesitate to make the necessary investment in the technology.

Asia has long been the main driver of future oil demand thanks to supercharged growth in sales of autos.

China sells more than 2 million new cars a month and is challenging the United States as the world's biggest oil consumer. India now is the world's third-biggest oil importer, ahead of Japan.

More than a third of the world's refineries are in Asia, up from just 18 percent in 1990.

For refiners, the growth of vehicles that run on electricity and other alternative fuels is a wake-up call. They can tweak the products they make from crude oil to an extent, but still mostly rely on gasoline consumption for revenue.

22nd BERGER YOUNG PAINTERS' ART COMPETITION 2017

সৃষ্টি সুখের উল্লাসে

22nd Berger Young Painters' Art Competition 2017

PRESS CONFERENCE

Mohsin Habib Chowdhury, senior general manager for sales and marketing at Berger Paints; AKM Sadeque Nawaj, general manager for marketing, and Monirul Islam, chairman of the jury committee of Berger Young Painters' Art Competition, attend a press meet to announce the beginning of the contest, at Gulshan Club in Dhaka yesterday.

BERGER PAINTS BANGLADESH

ONE Bank

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18th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Sayed H Chowdhury, chairman of One Bank, chairs the 18th annual general meeting of the bank, at Police Convention Hall in Dhaka on May 11. The bank announced 13 percent cash and 10 percent stock dividends for its shareholders. M Fakhru Alam, managing director, was also present.

ONE BANK