

# Novoair to operate additional flights during Eid

STAR BUSINESS DESK

Novoair will operate additional flights on the Saidpur and Jessore route to mark the Eid-ul-Azha, the airline said in a statement yesterday.

Daily two additional flights will fly to Saidpur while there will be one additional flight to Jessore during August 30 to September 1, according to the statement.

Currently, the private carrier operates daily four flights from Dhaka to Chittagong, two flights to Cox's Bazar, two flights to Jessore, one flight to Sylhet, two flights to Saidpur and one flight to Kolkata.

# JC Penney hits record low on wider loss

REUTERS

JC Penney Co Inc's stock hit a life-low as sweeping store closures and a challenging retail environment drove the embattled department store chain to report a bigger-than-expected quarterly loss and took a toll on comparable sales.

Penney's results were in contrast to those from industry stalwarts Macy's Inc and Nordstrom Inc, both of which beat market expectations for second-quarter profit and comparable sales.

Shares in Penney, which were down 16 percent at \$3.96 in morning trading, have tumbled 43 percent since the start of the year.

# Nepal revives railways as China, India vie for influence

AFP, Janakpur, Nepal

Three years after its last train hit the buffers, landlocked Nepal is building a new railway network to boost its ailing economy -- helped by the rivalry between its powerful neighbours, China and India.

The railway to India was a lifeline for the small southern frontier town of Janakpur, used to import everything from sweets to clothes and cosmetics and fuelling a vibrant border economy.

But it fell into disrepair after years of neglect and since 2014 the train has sat stationary, its rusting carcass now a playground for local children, while Janakpur's markets are empty.

"When the train was running, we would have a lot of business. I was easily providing (for) my family," said Shyam Sah, whose small family-run cosmetics shop has suffered an 80 percent drop in profits since the railway closed.

Now it is being rebuilt with Indian backing, one of three new rail lines -- one funded by China in the north and a third by Nepal itself -- that the country hopes will help boost international trade.

Nepal remains largely isolated from the global economy, dependent on aid and remittances.

Growth slowed dramatically after a 2015 earthquake but is expected to normalise at 5 percent from 2018 -- one of the slowest rates in South Asia -- according to the World Bank.

In recent years it has courted its two large neighbours for investment in an attempt to plug itself into a rail network that links the far eastern reaches of Asia with Europe.

But geography is not on its side. The Himalayas form a natural border between Nepal and China, leaving it largely dependent on India -- with which it shares a 1,400 kilometre (900 mile) open border -- for the majority of its imports and exports.

In recent years Kathmandu has tilted towards Beijing as part of a nationalist drive to decrease the country's reliance on New Delhi.

China has responded, ramping up its diplomatic ties with Nepal -- mostly through large-scale infrastructure investments.

In 2017, Beijing pledged \$8.3 billion to build roads and hydropower plants in Nepal, dwarfing India's commitments of \$317 million.

Feasibility studies are also underway for a Beijing-backed railway connecting Kathmandu to Lhasa in Tibet, cutting straight through the Himalayas at an estimated cost of \$8 billion.

Ankit Panda, senior editor at The Diplomat magazine, said that could be a game-changer for the small country.

"The rail line with China holds potential depending on the demand side of the equation, on how China allows Nepal to leverage that link for commercial growth opportunities," he said.



Blangdeshi students joined a 20-day international children camp in Russia. Rosatom Russia's state nuclear energy corporation, and Rosstrudnichestvo, the country's federal agency for international co-operation, supported the event, attended by 126 children of eight countries. The camp ended on August 6.

# Rupali's share price spiralling abnormally

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"Moreover, recovery from default loans also improved, which contributed to the profit margin," he said. Rupali's loan recovery from its top 20 defaulters last year was 69 percent of the Bangladesh Bank-imposed target of Tk 1,500 crore.

In 2015, the bank managed to recover only 9.33 percent of the target.

At the end of March, Rupali's default loans stood at Tk 4,264 crore, up 57 percent from the preceding three months.

At the end of December last year, the bank had a capital shortfall of Tk 714 crore.

The government holds 90.19 percent of Rupali's shares and the rest are floated on

the stock market.

Yesterday's market Though most of the stocks declined yesterday, the DSE ended in the green riding on bank shares. The broad index gained 19.78 percent to close at 5,921 points. Turnover was Tk 777 crore.

Of the traded securities, 197 declined, 102 advanced and 30 remained unchanged at the end of the trading session.

Bank shares dominated both turnover and top gainer charts. Of the top 10 gainers, 8 were banks.

BBS Cables topped the turnover list, followed by IFIC, Fortune, City Bank, Uttara Bank and ifad Autos.



Shah Alam Sarwar, CEO of IFIC Bank, attends a ceremony on Saturday where 59 children of the bank's employees received cash rewards and certificates for achieving brilliant results in SSC or O-level and HSC or A-level examinations in 2016.

Nur Mohammed, chairman of Jamuna Bank Foundation, and Shafiqul Alam, managing director of Jamuna Bank, attend a ceremony at the Institution of Diploma Engineers, Bangladesh in the capital where the foundation awarded scholarships to 116 underprivileged, differently-abled meritorious students and the children of the employees of Jamuna Bank who got GPA-5 in SSC and Dakhil examinations this year.



JAMUNA BANK FOUNDATION

# Waterlogging plagues Kalurghat industrial area

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He said all the factories in Kalurghat, including many consumer goods, food and beverage production and processing units, together export goods worth more than \$500 million a year.

Islam said sometimes water enters one of his units, forcing him to stop production for many days until the water recedes.

Waterlogging occurs mainly for the absence of a canal to drain the water out, he said, adding that exporters and factory owners also face the challenge posed by dilapidated roads while transporting goods to the Chittagong port.

Mahbubul Alam, president of the Chittagong Chamber of Commerce and Industry, said Kalurghat is not the only area that has been affected by waterlogging. In fact, all types of business activities in Chittagong are being hampered by the waterlogging, caused by the incessant rain over the past two to three months.

Businesses in Khatunganj, Chaktai and Atanganj areas, where the country's largest wholesale commodity markets are located, have been hit by the waterlogging, he said.

Alam, however, acknowledged that waterlogging has been occurring for a long time in Kalurghat where nearly 400 small, medium and heavy industrial units are located.

Heavy industrial units are located at the BSCIC (Bangladesh Small and Cottage Industries Corporation) in Kalurghat. But there are many small and medium-sized industries that are located outside of it.

"The factories both inside and outside of the BSCIC deserve protection from the waterlogging as they have created jobs for thousands of workers and earn millions of dollars every year in exports," Alam said.

# Uber, beset by scandal, faces battle over 'destructive' lawsuit

REUTERS, San Francisco

Ride-services company Uber is facing a divided board of directors and angry shareholders after investor Benchmark Capital filed a lawsuit against the company's ousted chief executive, Travis Kalanick, dealing another blow to the firm as it struggles to recover from a series of scandals and hire a new leader.

On Friday morning, three Uber investors asked Benchmark to divest its shares and step down from Uber Technologies Inc's board, according to an email published by news website Axios and confirmed by Reuters.

Also on Friday, members of the board of directors sent an email to Uber staff expressing dismay over the Benchmark lawsuit, according to a copy of the note obtained by Reuters.

"The Board of Directors is disappointed that a disagreement between shareholders has resulted in litigation," the directors wrote. "The Board has urged both parties to resolve the matter cooperatively and quickly, and the Board is taking steps to facilitate that process."

Benchmark, in its lawsuit filed on Thursday, is seeking to force Kalanick off the board, and accuses him of

concealing a range of misdeeds and scheming to retain power at the company even after he was forced to resign as chief executive in June.

Benchmark was among the Uber investors in June who pressed Kalanick to step down after a string of setbacks.

Investors Shervin Pishevar of Sherpa Capital, Ron Burkle of Yucaipa Companies and Adam Leber, an angel investor who works for music company Maverick, on Friday wrote an email to shareholders and board members calling for Benchmark to remove itself from the company board and divest enough of its shares so that it would no longer have the right to appoint other board seats.

"We have investors ready to acquire these shares as soon as we receive communication from Benchmark that they are willing to withdraw their lawsuit and sell a minimum of 75 percent of their holdings," the email said, according to Axios.

Reuters confirmed the email with a source close to one of the investors. The three investors and Benchmark could not be reached for comment.

The division and hostility emerging among Uber investors and direc-

tors opens a new front in a highly unusual public battle for Silicon Valley. It is rare for a venture firm to sue the central figure of a valuable portfolio company, and equally unexpected for investors to make a counter-move to push out a fellow investor backing the same company.

Pishevar, Burkle and Leber -- who are not members of the board of directors -- said Benchmark's lawsuit harms Uber's valuation, interferes with fundraising efforts and impedes the company's search for a new CEO to replace Kalanick.

Benchmark's tactics are "ethically dubious and, critically, value-destructive rather than value enhancing," the investors wrote in the email, according to Axios.

The email from the board of directors was signed by Yasir Al-Rumayyan, Ryan Graves, Arianna Huffington, Wan Ling Martello and David Trujillo. Missing were the signatures of Kalanick and Benchmark board member Matt Cohler. It assured staff that there were "several outstanding candidates" for the CEO job.

One Uber investor told Reuters that Kalanick's continued role at the company has complicated the CEO search and scared off some good candidates.

# Western Marine hands over \$18m vessel built for Kenya

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While talking to reporters after the ceremony, Muhith said the government has already provided bonded warehouse facility and some cash subsidies to the shipbuilding sector.

The incentives will continue at least for the current term of the government.

Muhith, however, said the government does not have a plan for a separate fund for the sector at the moment.

WMS Managing Director Md Sakhawat Hossain said if the government extends support to the shipbuilding industry it could be as successful as the garment sector.

# Two firms to take internet to 2,600 unions at Tk 378cr

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The project, which was mainly financed by China, concluded in June this year. Under the project, the ICT division also distributed 2,500 tablet computers to government officials.

BCC also connected Bangladesh Secretariat, seven divisional and all district and 485 upazila level government offices. They also set up 800 video conferencing systems, 254 e-agriculture service centres, telemedicine services in 25 healthcare centres, disaster data recovery centres and specialised training labs at universities across the country in the last two years.

# Trade through Akhaura land port resumes as flood water recedes

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He said several villages and the Bangladesh portion of Dhaka-Agartala international highway were also submerged.

Agartala was among the worst hit places in Tripura, with unprecedented water-logging in residential areas and roads, according to the report of the Hindu.

All major rivers, including the Howrah along Agartala, are flowing above the danger level, the report said.



Dulal Chandra Sarker, deputy general manager of the Bangladesh Financial Intelligence Unit (BFIU) of Bangladesh Bank, and MA Al Mamun, chief anti-money laundering and compliance officer of Dutch-Bangla Bank Ltd (DBBL), attend a workshop on "Prevention of money laundering and tourist financing with special focus on trade based money laundering". BFIU and DBBL jointly organised the event at Narayanganj Club on Saturday for employees of all banks in Narayanganj.



Md Hsan-uz Zaman, managing director of Midland Bank, cuts a ribbon to open the bank's agent banking booth at Bajitpur upazila in Kishoreganj on Thursday.