ASIAN MARKETS

আস্থাটাও বেশি এসআইবিএল সুপার সেভিংস একাউন্ট পঞ্চান্ন-উর্ধ্ব সিনিয়র সিটিজেনদের জন্য। ১৮-উর্ধ্ব মহিলারাও এই হিসাবটি খুলতে পারবেন। @ 16491 www.siblbd.com

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Pacific Jeans investing \$100m to diversify products

SAJJADUR RAHMAN and DWAIPAYAN BARUA

STOCKS

COMMODITIES

Top denim maker Pacific Jeans is spending \$100 million to set up two new factories in Chattogram in two years with the view to diversifying product base.

One of the units, Pacific Knitex, will produce fabrics, while the other, Pacific Casuals, will make activewear, which would help the company broaden its product offerings from denim.

"Activewear is not a traditional garment product. Rather, it is a specialised product that Bangladesh is yet to explore," said Syed M Tanvir, a director of Pacific Jeans, which exported denim products worth \$400 million in fiscal 2017-18.

He hopes a good business prospect in this segment after seeing the progressive shift towards an active and healthy lifestyle globally.

North America dominates the global activewear industry thanks to its endless appetite for the athleisure trend. Athleisure is a trend in fashion in which

clothing designed for workouts and other athletic activities is worn in other settings such as at the workplace, schools or other casual or social occasions.

The European activewear market is also growing exponentially due to high popularity of

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sporting events, which led to increased participation and high demand for replica team jerseys and outerwear.

Syed M Tanvir

Asia-Pacific, which lags behind the US and Europe in use of activewear, is also expected to witness significant growth from 2018 to 2024 due to an increase in awareness of health and **Sugar Effect Tiles** wellness and a rise in participation of youth population in sports activities, **Nano Crystal Polish Tiles** said Allied Market Research, a US-**Glazed Porcelain Tiles** based research and advisory com-

pany.

Improvement in living standards and the rise in disposable income are expected to boost the growth of



CURRENCIES

SHANGHAI

activewear market in the years to come, it added. Vietnam has done well in activewear, which is made out of man-made fibre, according to Tanvir. "But that's because of Vietnam's duty benefits in the US market."

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Stocks rebound on dialogue prospects



STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Stocks rebounded yesterday on the back of positive development on the political front and the premier bourse's disbursement of funds obtained from the 25 percent stake sell-off to the Chinese consortium.

DSEX, the benchmark index of the Dhaka Stock Exchange, rose 52.56 points, or 1 percent, to close the day at 5,299.07 points.

The Dhaka bourse yesterday handed over the first three cheques among the brokers as part of its plan to distribute a total of Tk 947 crore out of the Tk 962 crore that it received after selling 25 percent stakes to the consortium of Shanghai Stock Exchange and Shenzhen Stock Exchange.

The news of a proposed dialogue between the ruling Awami League and the new political alliance Jatiya Oikyafront tomorrow came as a relief for investors, who believe the talk would create a peaceful environment ahead of the national election, industry insiders said.

Stocks of most of the well-performing companies had fallen to their lowest level because of the fear of a political unrest ahead of the national polls, a top official of a brokerage house said requesting anonymity.

"Investors could not decide whether they will invest or wait further although there has been no chaos."

Now, investors got the signal they were waiting for, he said.

"If the dialogue produces a fruitful result, the market will definitely see a positive impact," he added. Meanwhile, Golden Harvest Argo

Industries said its board has decided to issue rights shares for each of the existing ones at Tk 10 a share, according to a notice published on the DSE website.

The rights issue is an offer of new shares by a company to its existing shareholders, usually at a discounted rate, in proportion to the shares they already own.

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BGMEA chief's company gets IGW licence

MUHAMMAD ZAHIDUL ISLAM

CERAMICS

The government is set to award one more licence for the international voice call routing -- a mindboggling move given the sector is already overcrowded and struggling.

The new licence was given to LR Telecom, a company owned by the president of the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association and his family.

Since 2013, the sector has been controlled by a cartel of International Gateway (IGW) operators. Amidst the backdrop, two months ago, BGMEA

President Siddiqur Rahman, chairman of LR Telecom Limited, suddenly applied to the Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission for a licence. This prompted the telecom regulator to open the proce-

dure for licensing. The BTRC, the licence awarding authority for telecom-

related services, on September 19 invited applications for awarding IGW licence without mentioning the number of licences it would award. Following the BTRC's invitation, 14 companies, includ-

ing LR Telecom, applied for IGW licence and the telecom regulator chose only one company and made the recommendation to the posts, telecommunication and information communication ministry, said official of the regulator. Rahman yesterday said he has no idea whether he got the

His son will run the business as he is the managing director of LR Telecom. Rahman's wife is also a director of the company while the fourth director is a family member too,

licence or not but he has grand plans for this industry.

said a top official of the BTRC. The licence would be awarded upon fulfilment of licens-

ing conditions by LR Telecom, he said. The IGW business started in 2008 after an open auction.

Only three private companies got the licence, with one being the government-owned Bangladesh Telecommunication Company Limited.

Then in 2010, the Awami League-led government, during the first of its two consecutive terms, issued 25 IGW licences, mostly for party-men, ignoring a BTRC assessment that informed that the sector could hardly accommodate four more entities.

The telecom regulator still issued the new licences following pressure from the politically-affiliated businesses.



Sir Fazle Hasan Abed, fifth from right, chairman of Brac Bank, and Selim RF Hussain, fourth from right, managing director, attend the launch of the bank's agent banking services at its head office in Dhaka yesterday.

Cut economic disparity to achieve SDGs by 2030

Experts suggest at PKSF's conference

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

The government should take steps to reduce economic disparity to achieve sustainable development goals by 2030, experts said yesterday.

Sustainable development aims at reducing economic disparity, said Qazi Kholiquzzaman Ahmad, chairman of Palli Karma-Sahayak Foundation (PKSF).

Corruption is the main barrier for the country's economic development and the government will be able to achieve more growth only if corruption is cut, said Abdul Grants Commission.

Mannan, chairman of University Corruption is interrupting the try.

development and widening the disparity, Ahmed said. They spoke at a two-day interna-

tional conference on "Pathways to a

sustainable economy: Vision 2041

Economic growth will accelerate if corruption can be contained

Agenda for Bangladesh" organised by the PKSF at its conference room in Dhaka.

Abdul Karim, managing director Griffith University in Australia. of the PKSF, gave a presentation on the economic progress of the coun-

The growth of the country's gross domestic product was 4 percent in 1990, which improved to 7.86 per-

cent in 2018, Karim said. At present, 12 percent people live and international experts.

below the poverty line in the United States while for Bangladesh it is 22 percent, he said.

The earnings of Bangladeshis have improved significantly but the development achieved is not balanced, he said. He suggested that the government

cut regional economic disparity to achieve sustainable development.

Bangladesh should give more focus on clean energy and develop micro entrepreneurship to make the development sustainable, said Moazzem Hossain, professor of

Hossain, who is also the convenor of the conference, stressed the need

for women empowerment to accelerate the economic development. Three sessions were held on the

three papers were presented by local

first day of the conference where

Brac Bank offers agent banking

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Brac Bank has decided to go big with agent banking in a bid to get business by providing financial services to the unbanked.

"Time will come when there will be no villages in the country out of the range of agent banking," Sir Fazle Hasan Abed, chairman of the bank, said at the launch of its agent banking services at the lender's head office in Dhaka yesterday.

As part of the move, the SME-focused bank plans to recruit 5,000 agents in the next five years.

Abed, also founder and chairperson of microfinance institution Brac, inaugurated the new banking window simultaneously at all eight divisions through a video confer-

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Confidence Cement to get rid of cost-ineffective unit

The company has informed that the board of directors has decided to demolish the Unit-1, which has a production capacity of 600 tonnes per day, as it is cost-ineffective. Maintenance cost and consumption of electricity are so high that the unit is not financially viable.

The board decided to install a slag dryer plant in place of Unit-1 that will ensure uninterrupted operations of Unit-2 and Unit-3. It recommended 15 percent cash and 20 percent stock dividends for the year that ended on June 30, 2018.

Usmania Glass declares dividend despite negative earnings

The board of the state-run company recommended 10 percent stock dividend for the year that ended on June 30, 2018 though it has reported negative earnings per share of Tk 1.50. Net asset value per share stood at Tk 118.50 on the day. It also posted negative EPS of Tk 1.05 in July-September.

