

STOCKS		COMMODITIES		ASIAN MARKETS				CURRENCIES			
DSEX	CSCX	Gold	Oil	MUMBAI	TOKYO	SINGAPORE	SHANGHAI	USD	EUR	GBP	JPY
Flat 5,227.49	▼ 0.16% 9,702.85	\$1,502.50 (per ounce)	\$59.78 (per barrel)	▼ 0.20% 37,328.01	▲ 0.55% 20,677.22	▲ 0.24% 3,135.95	▼ 0.11% 2,880.00	BUY TK 83.50 SELL TK 84.50	91.57 95.37	100.39 104.19	0.77 0.81



এসআইবিএল
সুপার ডিপিএস
বিশেষ সঞ্চয় কিম

প্রাকল্পিত মুনাফা:

৩ বছর	৫ বছর	১০ বছর
৯.২৫%	৯.৫০%	১০%

ইসলামী শীর্ষাধিকার এর মূল্যবান
মিহিহ ডিভিডেন্ডে পরিণত।

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DHAKA WEDNESDAY AUGUST 21, 2019, BHADRA 6, 1426 BS starbusiness@thedailystar.net

Stock manipulators target five insurers

AHSAN HABIB

Five insurance companies' stock prices trebled in a space of two months and then came crashing down at a time when leading insurers saw next to no movement, in a stunning case of smash-and-grab by a section of players.

In the first two months of the year, stocks of Sonar Bangla Insurance soared to Tk 68 from Tk 15.3, according to data from the Dhaka Stock Exchange (DSE). Yesterday, the insurer's stock traded at Tk 31.

Not only Sonar Bangla, there was ebb and flow in four other insurers' stocks in the last eight months. And in the process, many retail investors lost their money as they mopped up their stocks seeing their prices spiral.

United Insurance's stock jumped to Tk 83 from Tk 22 within two months and then fell to Tk 62.

Provati Insurance's rose to Tk 43 from Tk 17 and fell to 24. Agrani Insurance's stocks rose to Tk 43 from Tk 15 and then downed to Tk 24. Asia Insurance was also jumped to Tk 39 from Tk 16 and then again dropped to Tk 24.

Such a rise and fall can only be



"Gamblers are doing it, sometimes, with the help of the company, brokerage houses and investors. They are very smart now and know how to play the game cleanly, without getting the regulator on their tails."

Mohammad Musa, dean of United International University's School of Business and Economics

orchestrated by rumours, said Mohammad Musa, dean of United International University's School of Business and Economics. "Gamblers are doing it, sometimes, with the help of the company, brokerage houses and investors.

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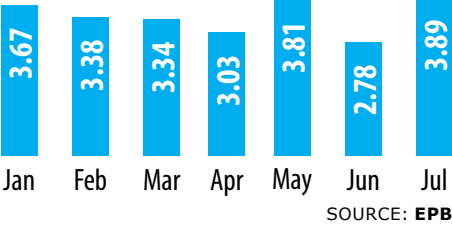
REFAYET ULLAH MIRDHA

Exports brought home record amounts in July, in a development that will bring a huge sigh of relief for the government battling sizeable balance of payments deficit.

Last month, overseas shipments fetched \$3.89 billion, up 8.66 percent year-on-year, according to data from the Export Promotion Bureau. The amount also exceeded the month's target by

EXPORT EARNINGS

In billions of dollars



SOURCE: EPB

\$60.86 million.

The amount bested the record for the highest single month export earnings of \$3.81 billion logged in May.

Of the sum, garment shipments fetched \$3.31 billion, up 9.60 percent year-on-year and \$97.48 million more than the target for the month.

"This is a peak month and therefore it is not unnatural for exports to grow," said Rubana Huq, president of the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA).

Besides, the US-China trade war is working in Bangladesh's favour, she added.

The growth in value terms gives a partial

picture of the garment trade, said Asif Ibrahim, vice-president of Newage Group, a leading garment exporter.

"We should look at it from the value-addition point of view as well," he added.

"For now, I think this is a reflection of pre-Eid hurried shipments, and growth in August will not be good."

Leather and leather products, the next great export hope, also fared well. It raked \$106.10

million, up 16.39 percent, and \$14.17 million more than the target.

Frozen and live fish exports rose 1.54 percent to \$41.60 million, tea 52.00 percent to \$0.38 million, vegetables 34.94 percent to \$8.38 million, pharmaceuticals 29.95 percent to \$11.41 million, plastic goods 37.33 percent to \$12.95 million, handicrafts 53.28 percent to \$1.87 million and jute and jute goods 0.83 percent to \$74.88 million.



STAR/FILE

Garment shipments brought home \$3.31 billion in July, up 9.60 percent year-on-year and \$97.48 million more than the target for the month.

Inflation edges up in July

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Inflation rose 10 basis points to 5.62 percent in July as both food and non-food prices moved upwards.

In June, inflation was 5.52 percent, down 11 basis points compared to the previous month, because of a decline in both food and non-food prices.

Planning Minister MA Mannan released the monthly consumer price index report of the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics at the National Economic Council in Dhaka yesterday.

He said the inflation slightly increased in the first month of the fiscal year as prices of vegetables rose because of heavy rains and floods in the rural areas.

The floods and rains hampered production and disrupted the supply chain.

Besides, people bought more products in Eid-ul-Azha, pushing up the price of both food and non-food items.

Food inflation was up two basis points from 5.40 percent in June to 5.42 percent in July, while non-food inflation rose to 5.94 percent last month, up 23 basis points from 5.71 percent a month ago.

Zahid Hussain, a former lead economist of the World Bank Bangladesh, said floods were likely to have caused the increase in food inflation in July relative to June, while implementation of the new VAT law and the upward revision in gas prices contributed to the rise in non-food inflation both relative to June 2019 and July 2018.

He said a very strong growth in remittance in

July is likely to have boosted demand pressure on both food and non-food inflation.

The spending on the occasion of Eid-ul-Azha added about Tk 40,000 crore to the economy, up 29 percent year-on-year.

About Tk 28,687 crore came from cattle sales and the remaining Tk 15,000 crore through the sales of commodities, refrigerators, freezers, clothing and furniture alongside transportation and tourism.

This expenditure hit the inflation in July, according to a BBS statement.

Vegetables became significantly pricier throughout July largely due to inundated farmlands.

Green chili was sold at Tk 180 to Tk 200 a kg at kitchen markets in the capital last month, up from Tk 70 to Tk 90.

Prices of onion and garlic were up by Tk 10 to Tk 30 per kg.



No need to visit VAT office for registration: NBR

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Getting registered for value added tax (VAT) does not require any visit to revenue offices as it can be done online, stressed the National Board of Revenue (NBR) on Monday.

Allegations have surfaced of businesses being asked to bring over documents even if they had already applied online for the registration.

"This is undesirable and unexpected," said the revenue authority in a circular, warning of stern action against officials involved in any such irregularity.

The VAT registration is a precondition for engaging in manufacturing, export, import and supplying business in Bangladesh. The new VAT law has provisions facilitating the online registration.

It stipulates that an applicant be provided the VAT registration certificate, which contains a business identification number (BIN), within three working days of the application's submission, said the NBR.

If there is any inconsistency in the application, the official concerned has to inform the applicant within the same time frame, it added.

However, assistance should be extended

to anyone voluntarily coming over to an office, said the notice signed by Md Tariq Hassan, second secretary (VAT policy) of the NBR.

In another notification, the NBR said companies getting one central BIN instead of individual ones for every branch or unit would have their accounts audited on a mandatory basis every year.

A VAT official said under the new law, companies would no longer need to pay VAT before delivering goods to other units or branches.

That is why, the provision of compulsory audit has been incorporated to ensure compliance, he said.

The NBR also said even if a firm uses two or more places to supply homogenous products, it would need to get just a single VAT registration.

All such details, alongside address of headquarters and purchase of raw materials, import and export and goods supplies, will be listed under this sole registration, it said.

read more on b3

However, such businesses will need to keep records of goods supplied to branches or units while branches will keep record of all sales. The information should be furnished with returns every month, says the notification.

Muhith allowed to import SUV duty-free

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

The National Board of Revenue (NBR) has allowed former finance minister AMA Muhith to import a luxury car duty-free, a facility provided to serving members of parliament.

Muhith opened a letter of credit to import a land cruiser near the end of his tenure as a lawmaker in the 10th parliament.

The vehicle arrived at the Chattogram port after the dissolution of the 10th parliament and expiry of his parliament membership.

Officials of the NBR said the law allows a lawmaker to make a duty-free import of one car per parliament term.

Having been the finance minister for two consecutive terms till 2018, Muhith is not a member of the current 11th parliament and accordingly was not entitled to the benefit.

The NBR said it took into account overall circumstances to extend the benefit.

NBR Chairman Mosharraf Hossain Bhuiyan said, "He (Muhith) did not avail the opportunity during the initial days of the last parliament. He completed all the formalities in the last days when he was an MP and the car has arrived late."

As he would be unable to release the SUV duty-free without permission, the NBR has granted the benefit, he said.

"We have had such instances in the past. We gave similar benefit to clear another MP whose car arrived at the port after his death. Then we granted permission based on a request of the honourable Speaker," said Bhuiyan.

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Saudi firm looks to invest in Bangladesh's port infrastructure

JAGARAN CHAKMA

Red Sea Gateway Terminal (RSGT), one of the largest terminal operators in Saudi Arabia, is keen on making investments under public-private partnership to develop Bangladesh's port infrastructure and maritime sector.

The RSGT has proposed investing in port infrastructure development and providing technical support for the existing Chattogram, Mongla and Payra ports, said Abdus Samad, secretary to the shipping ministry.

The Saudi firm, known internationally for world-class port terminal services, has built the newest flagship container terminal at Jeddah Islamic Port.

The secretary said the RSGT would prepare a plan for investment in multiple port-related infrastructure projects in Bangladesh and share operational expertise.

The Saudi company has recently signed a memorandum of understanding with the shipping ministry to explore investment

opportunities and provide expertise to Bangladesh.

"We are aiming to leverage Bangladesh's geographic location between South and Southeast Asian countries to position the country as a key regional transport hub," Samad said.

Bangladesh needs to expand its port facilities as economic activities are accelerating and export and import will increase in the next decade.

But the existing infrastructure and facilities will not be adequate when economic zones start operations within a few years, Samad said. "So, we need this type of investment."

Chattogram Port, the main port of Bangladesh, handles 80 percent of the country's export-import. In 2018 it dealt with three million twenty-foot equivalent units (TEUs) and about 3,700 vessel calls.

The secretary said the MoU was signed in relation to projects involving operations and optimisation of the existing berthing facility at Chattogram Port and new inland

container services at the inland container depot in Pubail of Gazipur.

The RSGT may pursue the scope for opportunities in other Bangladeshi ports and identify mechanisms available for building projects and a strategic partnership.

Kazi M Aminul Islam, executive chairman of Bangladesh Investment Development Authority (Bida), said more Saudi investment would flow in as Bida was trying to attract large amounts in foreign investment.

A number of investment proposals on infrastructure development from Saudi Arabia, China, Korea and other countries are in the pipeline, he said.

In a recent article on web portal Container Management, Gagan Seksaria, director of global investments at the RSGT, said, "Bangladesh's remarkable trade-led growth of recent years has meant high utilisation of its port and transport infrastructure making it an ideal market for investment in advanced port systems and technology."

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স্মরণ



এনসিসি ব্যাংক লিঃ এর উদ্যোক্তা ও সাবেক চেয়ারম্যান, বিশিষ্ট মুক্তিযোদ্ধা, শিক্ষাবিদ
প্রিন্সিপাল এম. ওয়াজিউল্লাহ ভূঁইয়ার
আজ ৯ম মৃত্যুবার্ষিকী।

আমরা তাঁকে গভীর শ্রদ্ধায় স্মরণ করছি এবং
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পরিচালনা পর্ষদ এক ব্যবস্থাপনা কর্তৃপক্ষ



এনসিসি ব্যাংক
অপারিং সার্ভিস, সফলতা।

Indian govt panel recommends across board corporate tax cut to 25pc

REUTERS, New Delhi

An Indian government panel has recommended cutting the corporate tax rate to 25 percent from 30 percent for all companies and scrapping surcharges on tax

payments, an official said on Tuesday, part of a major overhaul of the six-decades old tax act. India has one of the highest corporate tax rates in the world even after Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman this year

cut the rate to 25 percent from 30 percent for companies with annual sales of up to 4 billion rupees (\$56 million). The panel headed by Akhilesh Ranjan, a member of the central board of direct taxes, delivered its

report to Sitharaman on Monday. It was not made public and a finance ministry spokesman declined to comment on its contents. A finance ministry source who reviewed the report said it recommended an overhaul of the Income Tax Act. "The committee has said the government should move away from surcharges on income and reduce corporate tax to 25 percent," the source who declined to be identified told Reuters.

India imposes a 30 percent corporate tax rate on domestic companies and 40 percent on foreign firms, plus a 4 percent health and education surcharge on total tax payments. It also charges a surcharge of 12 percent for domestic companies and 5 percent for foreign companies if their taxable income exceeds 100 million rupees, according to Deloitte, a global tax consultancy.

The panel was formed in 2017 and tasked with bringing the income tax law in line with other countries, and incorporating best practices according to the needs of the economy.

The finance ministry will study the report before taking a decision on its recommendations, the ministry source said, adding that they may be included in the government's 2020/21 budget proposals.



REUTERS/FILE

A commuter walks past the building of India's Ministry of Finance during dusk in New Delhi.

WhatsApp in talks to launch mobile payments in Indonesia

REUTERS, Jakarta

Facebook Inc's messaging service WhatsApp is in talks with multiple Indonesian digital payment firms to offer their mobile transaction services, in a bid to tap the nation's fast growing e-commerce sector, people familiar with the matter said. Indonesia could become the second country worldwide where WhatsApp introduces such services, as it awaits regulatory approval from India, its biggest market by users, that has been delayed due to local data storage rules.

But unlike in India where it plans to offer direct peer-to-peer payment services, WhatsApp will simply serve as a platform in Indonesia supporting payments via local digital wallets due to tough licensing regulations, the sources told Reuters.

The Indonesia model could become a template for WhatsApp to adopt in other emerging markets to get around regulations on foreign players creating their own digital wallets, the sources said.

Indonesia, home to 260 million



REUTERS/FILE

Silhouettes of laptop and mobile device users are seen next to a screen projection of WhatsApp logo in this picture illustration.

people and Southeast Asia's largest economy, is one of the top-five markets globally for WhatsApp, with over 100 million users.

The nation is set to see its e-commerce industry tripling to \$100 billion by 2025, according to some estimates, but it also has

some of the region's strictest digital payments regulations.

WhatsApp is in advanced talks with several digital payments firms including ride hailer Go-Jek, mobile payments firm DANA, backed by China's Ant Financial, and fintech startup OVO,

which is owned by Indonesian conglomerate Lippo Group and is also backed by ride hailing company Grab, the sources said.

Deals with the three firms are expected to be finalised shortly, the people said, declining to be named as the talks are private.

WhatsApp has also approached state-owned Bank Mandiri, which operates a digital wallet, they said.

The Indonesia plan comes after Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg announced earlier this year that it would be rolling out WhatsApp payments to "some countries".

"As Mark has said earlier this year... we are looking to bring digital payments to more countries," a Facebook spokeswoman told Reuters.

"WhatsApp is in conversations with financial partners in Indonesia about payments, however the discussions are in early stages and we do not have anything further to share at this stage."

Go-Jek declined to comment. DANA, OVO and Bank Mandiri did not immediately respond to requests for comments.

New figures show UK economy a little larger than thought

REUTERS, London

Britain's economy is slightly larger than previously thought, according to new official estimates published on Tuesday that take into account new methodology and data.

The Office for National Statistics added around 26 billion pounds (\$31 billion) to the size of the world's fifth-biggest

between 1997 to 2016 is now estimated at 2.1 percent, up from 2.0 percent previously.

"These new figures are produced using new sources and methods, giving significantly improved estimates of how money moves around the UK economy," Rob Kent-Smith, head of GDP at the ONS, said.

"While these figures are calculated using



REUTERS/FILE

Shoppers browse through the aisles in a supermarket in London.

economy in 2016, a rise equivalent to around 1.3 percent of gross domestic product and bringing total output to just under 2 trillion pounds.

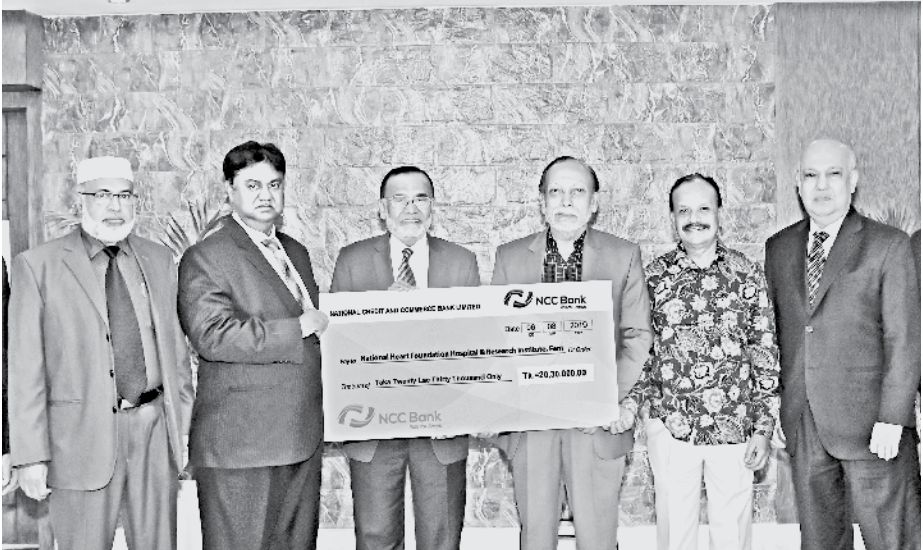
The ONS regularly updates its methods for measuring the economy, which usually results in slight increases to its size.

The latest estimates used new surveys on costs faced by businesses and "significant" changes to the way capital assets such as buildings and machinery are measured.

Average annual growth in the economy

more and better information than was previously available, overall, they paint a very similar picture about the size and growth in the economy to our current estimates."

The new figures showed the economy contracted by 6.0 percent during the financial crisis, a smaller drop than the 6.3 percent estimated previously. The economy also returned to its pre-crisis peak in early 2013, slightly sooner than thought beforehand.



NCC BANK

Md Nurun Newaz Salim, chairman of NCC Bank, hands over the lender's donation of around Tk 20 lakh to Abdus Sattar, president of the executive council of the National Heart Foundation Hospital and Research Institute, Feni, and Mir Hossain Miru, general secretary, at the bank's head office in Dhaka recently.



BDBL

Mohammad Mejbahuddin, chairman of Bangladesh Development Bank Ltd (BDBL), presides over the bank's 9th annual general meeting at its head office in Dhaka yesterday. The bank earned Tk 74.89 crore in net profit after tax in 2018. Md Abdul Matin, managing director (additional charge), was present.

G7 summit seen ending without communique due to gaps on trade

REUTERS

A Group of Seven summit to be held this weekend in France will likely end without a joint communique due to gaps between member nations on trade, a Japanese government official with knowledge of the matter said on Tuesday.

It would be the first time a G7 summit ends without a communique since meetings began in 1975, underscoring the rift U.S. President Donald Trump's "America First" trade policies has created among the G7 advanced economies.

"It's crucial for everyone to create a common understanding through thorough debate. But it's hard to deliver messages to the rest of the world when a communique isn't going to be issued," the official said, confirming an earlier report by Japan's public broadcaster NHK that there was

no plan so far to issue a communique after the G7 leaders' meeting.

"There's no doubt the G7 will discuss the impact trade frictions could have on the global economy," the official told Reuters on condition of anonymity because he is not authorised to speak to media.

The summit, to be held in the southwestern French city of Biarritz on Aug 24-26, comes at a time when the U.S.-China trade war and volatile financial markets are putting pressure on policymakers to step up efforts to avert a global recession. Finding common ground between allies has become increasingly tough at the annual summit with the United States, an outlier in its approach to handling disputes over trade and the environment.

Last year, Trump threw the G7's efforts to show a united front

into disorder by leaving early and backing out of a joint communique, undermining what appeared to be a fragile consensus on the trade row between Washington and its top allies.

Trump has expressed his preference for bilateral trade pacts over multilateral agreements and is locked in a lengthy trade war with China. He also pulled the United States out of the landmark Paris agreement to limit the effects of climate change against European opposition.

As this year's G7 chair, France is keen to make progress on a global debate on universal taxation on digital giants. But the leaders are unlikely to break new ground at the summit, the official added. The G7 comprises the United States, France, Britain, Japan, Germany, Italy, Canada and the European Union.

Japan allows further exports of high-tech material to South Korea

REUTERS, Seoul

Japan has approved shipments of a high-tech material to South Korea for the second time since imposing export curbs last month, two sources said, ahead of talks by government officials this week to resolve a dispute stemming from their wartime past.

Relations between the two US allies worsened late last year when a South Korean court ordered Japanese companies to compensate some of their former laborers forced by the firms to work during World War Two.

In early July, Japan tightened controls on shipments to South Korea of three materials used in chips and displays, threatening to disrupt the global tech supply chain. Japan also announced a plan to remove South Korea's fast-track export status from later this month.

The material cleared for Japan's exports to Samsung Electronics Co Ltd in South Korea is photoresists, which are crucial for the tech giant's advanced contract chipmaking production, the people who were familiar with the matter said on Tuesday. A Samsung Electronics spokeswoman and a South Korean trade ministry spokeswoman declined to comment. A Japanese official in charge of the issue was not available for comment.

An official at South Korea's presidential office confirmed the exports at a briefing, but said that "uncertainties" will remain until Japan completely removes the tighter export controls it has instituted.

"Tokyo's latest export approval is positive for the local industry, but I don't see Japan's move as a conciliatory message to South Korea," another South Korean government

official told Reuters, requesting anonymity because of the sensitivity of the matter.

Earlier this month, Japan gave the green light to the export of photoresists to Samsung Electronics for the first time since it imposed the restrictions. Samsung Electronics shares ended up 1.95 percent on Tuesday, leading the wider market's .KS11 gain of 1.05 percent.

Japan's latest move comes ahead a meeting between Japanese Foreign

wide differences over how to resolve forced labor issue between the two neighboring countries. "I hope there will at least be a handshake," Ahn said.

"We will have to actively express our position, but it is a very difficult (situation)," Kang said at an airport in Seoul on Tuesday before leaving for Beijing. Separately, South Korean President Moon Jae-in pledged to nurture the local carbon fiber industry, as part of efforts to reduce dependence on



REUTERS/FILE

A businessman walks near a cargo area at a port in Tokyo.

Minister Taro Kono and his South Korean counterpart, Kang Kyung-wha, in Beijing on Wednesday.

"This is a signal that Japan would not further escalate tensions. This is positive in that it creates an atmosphere for talks," said Ahn Duk-geun, a international studies professor at Seoul National University.

But he said he does not expect a breakthrough in the stalemate, citing

Japan imports for high-tech materials. Moon attended an event by South Korean firm Hyosung Advanced Materials (298050.KS) to announce a total of 1 trillion won (\$828.55 million) investment by 2028 in expanding production of carbon fiber, one of the items potentially subject to tighter export controls and used to make parts of hydrogen cars and aircrafts.



Md Arfan Ali, president and managing director of Bank Asia, opens the bank's "Central Foreign Exchange Reporting Hub-Gulshan" in the capital yesterday. The hub aims to ensure automated reporting of foreign trade related transactions for secured customer service for its Dhaka north zone branches. **Mohammad Borhanuddin** and **Md Sazzad Hossain**, deputy managing directors, were present.

Sonali, Rupali MDs swap seats, Agrani's MD unchanged

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

The managing directors of Sonali Bank and Rupali Bank yesterday swapped seats for the next three years, in what can be viewed as a baffling round of musical chairs.

Ataur Rahman Prodhon, who was the MD of Rupali Bank, will join Sonali. Mohammad Shams-Ul Islam, who was the MD of Agrani Bank, will continue in the same post for the next three years. The Financial Institutions Division of the finance ministry sent letters to the boards of the state lenders, giving its consent about the appointments. The boards will now obtain no-objection certificate from the central bank in this regard, a finance ministry official said.



Obayed Ullah Al Masud



Ataur Rahman Prodhan



Shams-Ul Islam

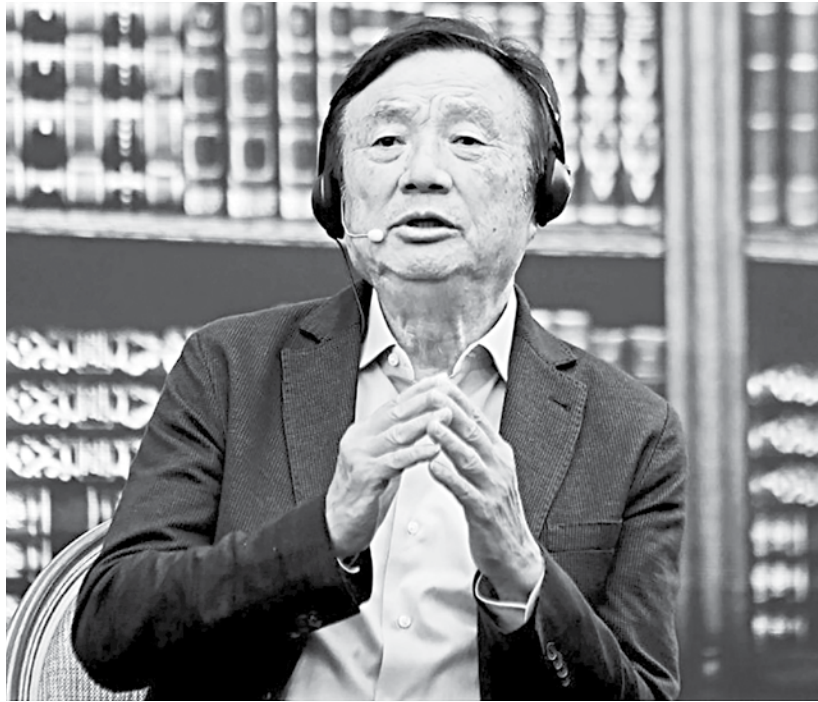
Huawei founder details 'battle mode' reform plan to beat US crisis

REUTERS, Hong Kong

China's Huawei will spend more on production equipment this year to ensure supply continuity, cut redundant roles and demote inefficient managers as its grapples with a "live-or-die moment" in the wake of US export curbs, founder Ren Zhengfei said. His remarks come as the United States said this week it will extend by 90 days a reprieve that permits Huawei Technologies to buy components from US companies to supply existing customers, but it also moved to add more than 40 of Huawei's units to its economic blacklist. In a memo sent to employees

on Monday loaded with military metaphors, 74-year-old Ren asked staff to work aggressively towards sales targets as the firm goes into "battle mode" to survive the crisis. "The company is facing a live-or-die moment," Ren, a former Chinese army officer, said in the memo, which was seen by Reuters. Huawei confirmed the contents of the memo. "If you cannot do the job, then make way for our tank to roll; And if you want to come on the battlefield, you can tie a rope around the 'tank' to pull it along, everyone needs this sort of determination!" Huawei is a key theme in a broader, year-long US-China trade war, with Washington slapping it with the trade

ban in May citing national security risks. Huawei, however, posted a 23 percent revenue jump in the first half, helped by strong smartphone sales in its home market. Ren said in the memo, "In the first half, our results looked good, it is likely because our Chinese clients were sympathetic and made payments in time, the big volume made cash flow look good, this doesn't represent the real situation." But he expressed confidence in Huawei's full-year results and said it needs to "spend the money and solve the production continuity issue" by ramping up strategic investment on things including production equipment. According to the memo, Huawei, which employs nearly 190,000 people around the world, is reforming its operation globally by granting more power to the frontline, cutting out reporting layers and eliminating inefficient posts. "In 3-5 years time, Huawei will be flowing with new blood," Ren said. "After we survive the most critical moment in history, a new army would be born. To do what? Dominate the world," Ren said. While Ren said in June the ban was worse than expected and that Huawei's revenue may stay flat in the next two years, in the memo he called on staff to try their best in meeting the sales target outlined at the start of the year before the ban - which was to grow its revenue to around \$125 billion from more than \$100 billion in 2018. He also warned of cash flow risk if receivables are not paid in time. He asked staff to be conservative in ensuring dues were paid in time by clients, because otherwise the lack of liquidity could be fatal to the company.



Huawei founder Ren Zhengfei

White House mulling tax cut to avoid recession: report

AFP, Washington

The White House is considering cutting taxes or reversing tariffs to head off a recession, US media reported on Monday, despite President Donald Trump's insistence the economy was in rude health. Senior White House officials are mulling several moves to stimulate the economy including temporarily cutting the payroll tax to increase workers' monthly take-home pay, The Washington Post reported. Also under consideration is reversing new tariffs the Trump administration imposed on Chinese goods, according to The New York Times.

The discussion is still in the early stages, and officials have not brought up the idea with Trump, who would have to seek approval from Congress, the newspapers said. The White House disputed the reports in a statement to the Post, saying "cutting payroll taxes is not something under consideration at this time." Trump on Sunday pushed back against talk of a looming recession after a raft of US data reports last week gave a mixed outlook for the economy. "I'm prepared for everything. I don't think we're having a recession. We're doing tremendously well," Trump told reporters. "And most economists actually say that we're not going to have a

recession." Earlier on Monday, a survey was released showing that a majority of economists expect a US recession in the next two years -- right around the time of the 2020 election in which Trump is standing for a second term. Only two percent of the survey's 226 respondents predicted a recession this year, but 38 percent expected a downturn to hit in 2020 and 34 percent in 2021, according to the polls from the National Association for Business Economists. Payroll taxes were cut temporarily during President Barack Obama's term in 2011 and 2012, in an effort to counteract a sluggish recovery from the 2008 recession.



CHEVRON BANGLADESH

Information Minister Hasan Mahmud hands over an "Emerging Woman Leader in STEM" award at the closing of the **AUW Math and Science Summer School** at the Asian University for Women (AUW) in Chattogram recently. The AUW, with Chevron's support, conducted a five-week programme providing 61 meritorious female high school students selected from across the country competence and skills necessary to further studies and careers in the fields of science, technology, engineering and mathematics. **Lawmaker Waseqa Ayesha Khan**, **Chevron Bangladesh Director for Corporate Affairs Ismail H Chowdhury** and **AUW's registrar Dave Dowland** were present.

Visa critical of India's move towards no-fee debit card transactions

REUTERS, Mumbai

Global card payments group Visa is critical of the Indian government's decision to boost adoption of electronic payments by requiring banks and card payment networks to offer no-fee debit card transactions, a senior Visa executive said. Last month, India's Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said that businesses with annual turnover of 500 million rupees will not have

to pay a merchant discount rate on debit card and other digital modes of transactions, excluding credit cards. The discount rate is paid by the merchant to banks, card payment networks, and other financial intermediaries for handling a digital transaction. For debit cards, the fees are on average between 0.40 percent and 0.80 percent of the transaction amount, according to industry officials. "I find the logic a bit fallacious

because the cost is not free ... I am a firm believer in low economics, but no economics student can believe in no economics," T.R. Ramachandran, Visa's India and South Asia head, said on Monday, speaking on a panel at an industry conference. Ramachandran said if the government, the merchant and the consumer are all saving on the cost of cash via an electronic payments mechanism then the stakeholders should be adequately compensated.

Stock manipulators target five insurers

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They are very smart now and know how to play the game cleanly, without getting the regulator on their tails." The regulator cannot say anything if an investor buys shares legally, but it has to be vigilant of serial trading or the company hiding price-sensitive information, he added. The latest report of the Insurance Development and Regulatory Authority (IDRA) shows Popular, Fareast, National, Pragati and Prime are the well-performing listed life insurers based on premium and claims settlement. But the insurers' stocks hardly

saw any movement in the last eight months. It is the same for general insurance companies: stocks of Green Delta, Pioneer, Reliance, Pragati and Republic did not rise or fall much. "Speculation fuelled those companies' stock prices," said Sheikh Kabir Hossain, president of the Bangladesh Insurance Association (BIA). Sometimes, it is seen that the share price of a company rises without no logical ground and the company is helpless in stopping it. "However, insurance companies will grow in future because many

problems of the sector are being solved," said Hossain, also the chairman of Sonar Bangla Insurance. A top official of the Bangladesh Securities and Exchange Commission said, requesting not to be named, they always follow the surveillance system to see if anyone is doing anything illegal. "But, the gamblers are playing the game jointly within the legal framework, so we can't stop them. Moreover, we have fined some gamblers recently for their wrongdoing," he said, adding that general investors should be cautious about putting their money in risky stocks.

US states ready antitrust probe of tech titans: report

AFP, San Francisco

Top prosecutors from a group of US states are readying a joint investigation into whether major technology firms have violated antitrust law, the Wall Street Journal reported Monday. The alliance of state attorneys general could formally announce next month that they are delving into whether leading internet firms and technology platforms have used their clout to thwart competition, the Journal reported, citing unnamed people familiar with the matter. The US Department of Justice last month announced it is reviewing "whether and how market-leading online platforms have achieved market power and are engaging in practices that have reduced competition, stifled innovation, or otherwise harmed consumers." Lawmakers and activists have raised concerns about the growing dominance of online giants such as Google, Facebook and Amazon in key segments of the digital economy. Once seen as the darlings of Washington, Silicon Valley firms have become targets for politicians of all stripes. US regulators recently imposed a record \$5 billion fine on Facebook for lapses in privacy and data protection, including the leaking of private data for political consultancy Cambridge Analytica.



LANKABANGLA FINANCE

Khurshed Alam, head of retail business of LankaBangla Finance Ltd, and **Mohammad Zahidul Hoque**, CEO of Bio-Kin Cosmeceuticals, attend a deal signing ceremony on Sunday facilitating discounts on cosmetics or skincare services for LankaBangla cardholders.

Muhith allowed to import SUV duty-free

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He, however, could not immediately name the MP and the amount of duty waived for Muhith's SUV. Muhith could not be reached on his mobile phone despite repeated attempts. The NBR, in its special order issued on August 19 regarding the import of the duty-free car by Muhith, said it received a recommendation from the Jatiya Sangsad secretariat through the Internal Resources Division.

Saudi firm looks to invest in Bangladesh's port infrastructure

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The facility in Saudi Arabia has an annual capacity of 2.5 million TEUs. It is Jeddah's only terminal that can accommodate next-generation container ships of up to 23,000-plus TEUs. The RSGT is also located next to LogiPoint, Saudi Arabia's first export and re-export zone, which provides an integrated logistics hub on the coast of the Red Sea and potential operational synergies in cargo handling, the article said.