



Md Sirazul Islam

Bida gets new exec chairman

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Former secretary to the health and family welfare ministry Md Sirazul Islam has been appointed executive chairman of Bangladesh Investment Development Authority (Bida).

A public administration ministry circular on Monday said Islam would enjoy senior secretary status for the two-year term, which would come into effect from September 4.

An admin cadre of the 1982 batch of Bangladesh Civil Services, Islam will succeed Kazi Aminul Islam, the first person to hold the post and a former principal secretary to the Prime Minister's Office.

Bida was formed on September 1, 2016 through a merger of the Board of Investment and the Privatisation Commission. It has a 17-member governing body with the prime minister as chairman and finance minister as vice chairman.

India's central bank unveils \$24b windfall for govt

AFP, New Delhi

India's central bank has announced a \$24-billion windfall for the cash-strapped government, giving a much-needed boost to Prime Minister Narendra Modi as he seeks to kickstart growth in Asia's third-biggest economy.

But the payout will likely stoke fresh concerns about the Reserve Bank of India's independence following a standoff that has seen top officials quit amid accusations of government interference.

Modi has come under increasing pressure to fire up the economy, which has slowed in each of the past three quarters -- losing its status as the world's fastest-growing -- with unemployment at its highest since the 1970s.

The auto sector has been particularly badly hit, with car sales plunging in July for the ninth month running, while weak consumer spending and high taxes have hit demand for everything from biscuits to hair oil.

The RBI said it had approved a transfer of 1.76 trillion rupees (\$24.4 billion) to government coffers, including a dividend of 1.23 trillion rupees and 526 billion rupees in excess reserves following the adoption of a new methodology for assessing market risk.

Monday's announcement came days after Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman announced a slew of measures to help the economy, including bringing forward a \$10-billion liquidity lifeline for credit-shy banks and rolling back an extra levy on equity sales that had spooked foreign investors.

Sujan Hajra, an economist at Anand Rathi Securities, said that the latest announcement is a "positive move" for the economy and for public finances.

"As the RBI said, despite this fund transfer, India will still have one of the best capitalisations of the central banks globally and it does not reflect poorly on either the government or the



A man checks his phone outside the Reserve Bank of India headquarters in Mumbai.

REUTERS/FILE

central bank," Hajra told AFP.

Ashutosh Datar, an independent economist from Mumbai, agreed, telling AFP: "The amount looks huge but it is not and there is no raid on RBI reserves."

However, the bank's independence has already been called into question after it cut interest rates four times this year to a nine-year low, reportedly under government pressure.

Governor Urjit Patel resigned in December following a public spat with the Modi government -- which was re-elected earlier this year -- accusing it of trying to undermine it.

He was followed in June by deputy governor

Viral Acharya citing the same reasons, although the bank insisted this was unrelated and he had left for personal reasons.

The government is "clueless about how to solve their self created economic disaster", tweeted Rahul Gandhi, the outgoing head of the opposition Congress party.

"Stealing from RBI won't work - it's like stealing a Band-Aid from the dispensary & sticking it on a gunshot wound. #RBILooted".

Indian stocks rose on Tuesday, with the Sensex up half a percent, adding to a 2.2-percent rise on Monday on the back of Friday's stimulus measures, traders said.

Chinese brand Baseus makes landfall

STAR BUSINESS DESK

Products of Chinese brand Baseus such as power banks, headphones, chargers and mini phones are now available in Bangladesh.

Hoque Brothers became the brand's authorised distributor and is providing a warranty card with the products, says a statement.

German court suspends cartel office ruling on Facebook

AFP, Berlin

Facebook scored an interim victory when a German court Monday temporarily suspended restrictions the national competition watchdog had placed on the social network's data collection practices.

The Federal Competition Office (FCO) immediately said it would appeal the ruling by the Duesseldorf regional court before the Federal Court of Justice.

The FCO had found in February that Facebook abused its dominant market position to gather information about users for their advertising business.

It ruled that users should be asked for consent before data collected by the group's subsidiaries Whatsapp and Instagram and on third-party websites was combined with their social network account.

The body also ruled that Facebook could not shut out users who refused, and gave the US company four months to present a "concept" for compliance and a year to implement it, or face heavy fines.

Facebook responded by saying it would appeal the FCO's decision.

On Monday the Duesseldorf court found it had "serious doubts" about the FCO's February ruling.

"Even if the data processing in question infringed data protection provisions, this would not at the same time constitute a breach of competition law," the court said in a statement.

It therefore issued a temporary injunction and ruled that, pending a final settlement of the issue, "Facebook does not have to implement the decision of the Federal Cartel Office for the time being".



Rumea A Hossain, chairman of the executive committee of Bank Asia; AKM Nurul Fazal Bulbul, vice chairman of Islamic Banks Consultative Forum (IBCF), and Syed Waseque Md Ali, CEO of First Security Islami Bank, pose with participants of a daylong training on "Shariah Governance in Islamic Banking: Global Experience" organised by the IBCF Research and Training Academy at the Bangladesh Association of Banks in the capital's Gulshan recently.

US consumer confidence dips in August

AFP, Washington

US consumers remained solidly optimistic about the American economy in August despite turmoil in trade relations, as a key confidence measure dipped only slightly after a surge in July, according to a survey released Tuesday.

"Consumer confidence was relatively unchanged in August, following July's increase," said Lynn Franco of The Conference Board.

However, consumer expectations dimmed while feelings about the current economic situation rose, according to

the survey.

But the cutoff date for the survey was August 16, so it did not capture last week's upheaval in President Donald Trump's trade war with China, which included new rounds of tariffs from both sides, and an angry tweet ordering US companies to leave China.

Although "consumers have remained confident and willing to spend," Franco cautioned that "if the recent escalation in trade and tariff tensions persists, it could potentially dampen consumers' optimism regarding the short-term economic outlook."

Gaibandha rawhide traders face huge losses

FROM PAGE B1

He stockpiled more than one hundred pieces of cow hides and is waiting for the price to rise. Mizanur Rahman, a retail trader, came to the market from Joypurhat to sell 60 pieces of cow hide.

"No prominent buyer is visible in the market."

Atiqur Rahman, a hide trader from Lalmonirhat district, said he was facing a great problem as buyers had offered rates that were far below the prices he had paid.

The condition of goat skin vendors is even worse as no buyers were looking at their stock. As a result, the demand for the hide has hit rock bottom. Abdul Malek, a goat skin trader, invested Tk 20,000 to buy goat skins but was later compelled to sell them at Tk 10,000.

"I have decided to give up hide trading," he said.

Shafiqul Kabir Mintu, the lease-holder of the market, said there has been no toll collection because of the thin presence of buyers. "If similar situation prevails, I will not invest in leasing the market."

Oil rises as hopes grow for US-China trade breakthrough

REUTERS, London

Oil prices rose on Tuesday after US President Donald Trump predicted a trade deal with China after positive comments by Beijing, calming nerves after a round of tit-for-tat tariff hikes had sent markets reeling.

Brent crude was up 69 cents, or 1.2 percent, at \$59.39 a barrel by 1110 GMT, after falling 1 percent in the previous session, dropping for a third day in a row.

US West Texas Intermediate crude futures were up 74 cents, or 1.4 percent, at \$54.38, having also dropped 1 percent on Monday for a fourth daily decline.

Trump on Monday said he believed China was sincere about wanting to reach a deal, while Chinese Vice Premier Liu He said China was willing to resolve the dispute through "calm" negotiations, settling global markets.

"While 'de-escalation' and the

expectation of a temporary truce in the trade war may be what is lifting sentiment and oil prices this morning, the resolution of the US-China trade rift will take time," said Harry Tchilinguirian, global oil strategist at BNP Paribas in London.

"Oil prices appear to be getting a reprieve from the past week's US and Chinese announcements of retaliatory trade measures."

Oil prices have fallen by about 20 percent from 2019 highs reached in April, partly because of worries that the US-China trade war is hurting the global economy, which could dent demand for oil.

China's Commerce Ministry last week said it would impose additional tariffs of 5 percent or 10 percent on 5,078 products originating from the United States, including crude oil, agricultural products and small aircraft.

In retaliation, Trump said he was

ordering US companies to look at ways to close operations in China and make products in the United States.

"A relative sense of calm has been restored, but it is simply impossible to know how long it will last," said Tamas Varga of oil broker PVM.

"Any market optimism will only prevail when the ink has dried on a new US-China trade agreement".

The measures are prompting reactions from Chinese companies, with Sinopec seeking a tariff exemption for importing US oil in the coming months, sources told Reuters.

Meanwhile, US crude oil and gasoline inventories are expected to have fallen last week, while distillate stockpiles were seen higher, a Reuters poll showed on Monday.

Five analysts polled by Reuters estimated, on average, that crude inventories fell by 2.1 million barrels in the week to Aug. 23.

Truck terminal to be built at Benapole port

FROM PAGE B1

According to the proposal, the design change of the project included new components, expansion of flyover length and increase in cost for additional land acquisition.

Similarly, the cost of a project to build a medical college and hospital has gone up by 72 percent to Tk 1,057 crore from Tk 615 crore.

The construction work of Colonel Malek Medical College in Manikganj started in July 2015 and was scheduled to be completed by June 2019. Now, the implementation period has been extended to June 2021.

The number of beds of the hospital has been doubled to 500 from initial 250 and a number of components have been included.

The Ecnc also gave go-ahead to a Tk 226 crore project titled "Construction of rest houses for drivers of goods-carrying vehicles on four national highways and to build sustainable and safe highways".

Under the project, food, snacks, entertainment and sleeping facilities will be provided at the rest houses.

The four rest houses will be set up at Nimsra in Cumilla, Jagadishpur in Habiganj, Panchila in Sirajganj and Laxmikandor in Magura on four national highways from Dhaka to Chattogram, Sylhet, Rangpur and Khulna respectively, which are mostly used by export import vehicles.

Prudent credit practices to help banks lower lending rates: BIBM

FROM PAGE B1

Banerjee said outcome of this study and valuable comments by the discussants will not only enrich the findings of the study, but will also give a direction to the regulator as well as the bankers in implementing the recommendations for the betterment of the banking sector.

Mohammed Sohail Mustafa, associate professor; Rexona Yesmin, assistant professor, and Md Abdul Kayum, faculty member of BIBM, were in the study team.

No tech transfer from consortium yet

FROM PAGE B1

If technological advancement happens foreign investors will become interested to invest on the DSE.

"So, it should be a priority," he added.

One of the leaders of the DSE Brokers' Association said the information disclosure platform would be very helpful for general investors.

Japan to hire skilled workers from Bangladesh

FROM PAGE B1

The 14 fields/sectors are: care worker, building cleaning management, machine parts and tooling industries, industrial machinery industries, electric, electronics and information industries, construction industry, shipbuilding/ship machinery industry, automobile maintenance, aviation industry, accommodation industry, agriculture, fishery and aquaculture, manufacture of food and beverages, food service industry.

Jahan said the government is taking various initiatives to match the abundance of skilled workforce with Japan's demand for manpower.

The expatriates' welfare and overseas employment ministry has started offering a four-month Japanese language course through its 26 technical training centres all over the country since February 2018, she said.

Besides, many private organisations are taking initiatives to teach Japanese language.

Rabab Fatima, Bangladesh's ambassador to Japan, was also present at the signing ceremony.



A delegation of the Institute of Cost and Management Accountants of Bangladesh (ICMAB) headed by its president, M Abul Kalam Mazumdar, calls on M Anis Ud Dowla, chairman of ACI Group, at his office in Dhaka on August 25.

China hopes US can create conditions for trade talks

REUTERS, Beijing

China's foreign ministry reiterated on Tuesday that it had not heard of any recent telephone call between the United States and China on trade, and said it hopes Washington can stop its wrong actions and create conditions for talks.

Ministry spokesman Geng Shuang made the comment at a news briefing, after US Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin said there had been contact between the two sides but declined to say with whom.

US President Donald Trump on Monday predicted a trade deal with China, citing what he described as increasing economic pressure on Beijing and job losses in China.