

| STOCKS | | COMMODITIES | | ASIAN MARKETS | | | | CURRENCIES | | | | |
|----------|----------|-------------|--------------|---------------|-----------|-----------|----------|------------|-------|--------|--------|-------|
| DSEX | CSCX | Gold | Oil | MUMBAI | TOKYO | SINGAPORE | SHANGHAI | USD | EUR | GBP | CNY | |
| ▼ 0.50% | ▼ 0.74% | \$1,780.30 | \$64.66 | ▼ 0.73% | ▼ 0.19% | ▼ 0.4% | ▲ 0.55% | BUY TK | 83.95 | 100.03 | 115.40 | 12.81 |
| 5,475.98 | 9,544.37 | (per ounce) | (per barrel) | 51,324.69 | 30,236.09 | 2,908.85 | 3,675.36 | SELL TK | 84.95 | 103.83 | 119.20 | 13.46 |

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Listed companies sprint to pre-Covid profit level

AHSAN HABIB
Combined profit of the majority of the listed companies surpassed the pre-Covid level in October-December quarter, pointing to a fast rebound in business and economic activities.

An analysis of 185 listed companies representing pharmaceuticals, fuel and power, textile and apparel, IT and telecom, steel, cement, ceramic, automotive, leather, food and consumer goods

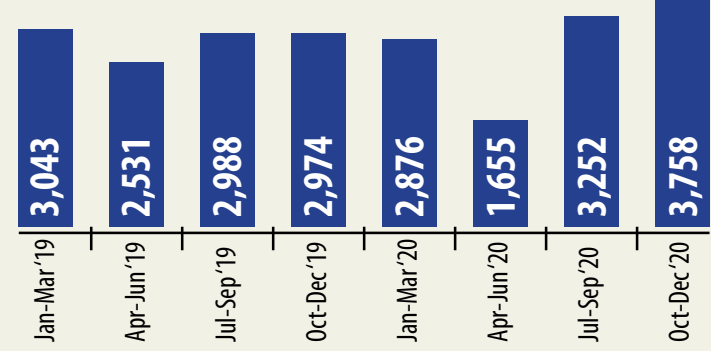
showed that the combined profits rose 26 per cent year-on-year to Tk 3,758 crore in the last quarter of 2020.

The cumulative profit was Tk 3,252 crore in the July-September period because of a pickup in business and consumer confidence, thanks to the reopening of the economy following a strict nationwide shutdown in April and May.

Average quarterly profit of the listed companies was Tk 2,882 crore in the five quarters to March.

TOTAL PROFITS OF LISTED COMPANIES

In crore taka; SOURCE: PRIME FINANCE AMC



It dropped 34 per cent year-on-year to Tk 1,655 crore in the April to June period as demand hit rock bottom after the health crisis wiped out millions of jobs and created an additional 20 per cent new poor in Bangladesh.

"The economy depends on how companies fare. So, their profits do indicate the economy's trend," said AB Mirza Azizul Islam, a former chairman of the Bangladesh Securities and Exchange Commission.

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Stimulus for small businesses, farmers raised to Tk 10,000cr



STAR/FILE

Micro-businesses can't take loans from banks since they fail to provide necessary documents.

REJAUUL KARIM BYRON and MD FAZLUR RAHMAN

The government has decided to expand the size of a fresh stimulus package for small traders, entrepreneurs and farmers to Tk 10,000 crore as they were largely left out of credit support despite being hit hard by the coronavirus pandemic.

On January 17, the government approved a new package amounting to Tk

1,500 crore for small traders, entrepreneurs and farmers, who have no access to finance from banking channels.

Now, the government plans to raise it by Tk 8,500 crore as various state agencies that disburse funds among small borrowers are seeking more funds, said an official of the finance ministry.

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An entrepreneur who stayed ahead of the curve

MAHMUDUL HASAN

In 1992, when people of the country knew little about computers and the internet, a woman and young entrepreneur Luna Shamsuddoha founded Dohatec New Media to provide software solution designs and development services to institutions, government agencies and corporations globally.

Luna's vision and indomitable appetite for technological advancement helped the company to grow as a leading software company in Bangladesh that has also attained worldwide glory.

Since its inception, Dohatec products and services have maintained a global and demanding client base which includes international organisations such as the World Bank, Pan American Health Organization, World Health Organization and United States



Luna Shamsuddoha

Postal Service in Washington DC, and United Nations Development Programme in Dhaka.

Periodic major electronic publications of the World Bank and WHO in Washington DC were developed on Dohatec software.

Competing with leading global IT solution providers, it has already

built e-procurement system for Bhutan and Nepal, a milestone for a local IT company.

Since 2006 Dohatec has been in the Identity and biometric space. A key accomplishment was the Voter Enrolment Software with implementation of biometric face and finger matching Dohatec developed for the Bangladesh Army. Using Dohatec's solution and support, the Bangladesh Army implemented the project and completed the registration of over 80 million voters, capturing their photographs and fingerprints, for the first time in Bangladesh history, in 11 months.

Dohatec New Media is also a Certifying Authority (CA) and issues digital certificates, web SSL certificates and public key infrastructure (PKI) enablement tools and services in Bangladesh.

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Commodity import for Ramadan to be double this year: Tipu Munshi

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Commerce Minister Tipu Munshi yesterday said the government was trying to import essential commodities like edible oil, chick peas, date and onion through the Trading Corporation of Bangladesh in large quantities ahead of the holy month of Ramadan aiming at keeping prices stable.

The imports will be double in quantity compared to that of previous years, he informed.

"We have also talked with the business people who assured that the prices would be kept at a reasonable level in Ramadan," he said.

The minister was replying to queries of journalists after the inaugural ceremony of Bangabandhu Memorial Gallery at the head office

of Bangladesh Tea Board at Bayezid area in Chattogram city in the afternoon.

About fixing the price of edible oil, the minister said the price has increased by 67 per cent in the global market, reaching \$1,150 from \$700.

Ninety per cent of the country's demand for edible oil needs to be met through imports.

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SME definition needs revision: DCCI

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

The definition of the small and medium enterprises (SMEs) needs to be revised in the next industrial policy for easing the formulation of financial policies for different industrial sectors, said the Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry (DCCI) yesterday.

The DCCI proposed to redefine the SMEs and bring the medium category out of cottage, micro and small ones and add it to the large category of industries in the upcoming industrial policy. The DCCI feels it would bring ease for the cottage, micro and small enterprises to get financial and policy benefits, the DCCI said in a statement.

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BATBC, IDLC and IPDC stocks drop despite positive disclosures

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Despite making positive disclosures, stocks of some major companies dropped yesterday.

DSEX, the benchmark index of the Dhaka Stock Exchange (DSE), fell 27 points, or 0.53 per cent, to 5,475.98 yesterday.

British American Tobacco Bangladesh (BATBC) announced yesterday that its board of directors approved an investment decision amounting to Tk 192.5 crore to increase the manufacturing capacity of their Savar factory.



The decision came to enhance the upcoming export opportunities of cigarettes from Bangladesh. The investment would be funded from internal financing.

Despite the announcement, stocks of the BATBC dropped 0.66 per cent to Tk 1,592.

It was the same fate for the IPDC and IDLC although they logged higher profits amid the pandemic.

IDLC Finance declared 35 per cent cash dividend as its profits rose 49 per cent to Tk 254 crore for the year ending on December 31 of 2020 compared to the previous year.

IPDC Finance recommended 12 per cent cash dividend while its profits rose 25 per cent to Tk 70.5 crore last year. However, the IDLC and IPDC Finance stocks fell 0.43 per cent and 0.75 per cent respectively.

The overall market situation was dull because investors are confined to within some stocks, a merchant banker said.

So when these stocks fall, then investors cannot trade without incurring losses, he said, adding that three or four companies were on top of the demand list among investors in the recent few months.

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Banglalink's revenue up 2.4pc in Q4

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Banglalink, the third-largest mobile phone operator in terms of subscribers, said its revenue rose 2.4 per cent year-on-year to Tk 1,140 crore in the October-December quarter because of massive growth in data revenue.

"Thanks to our employees' dedicated efforts and consistent support of our customers and partners, we succeeded in

maintaining the performance despite hurdles caused by several unprecedented situations," said Erik Aas, chief executive officer of the operator, in a press release.

Banglalink said it maintained a satisfactory performance in 2020. It posted a 22.1 per cent year-on-year growth in earnings from mobile data usage in the fourth quarter.

"Apart from our efforts, the impressive economic turnaround of

the country and customers' growing reliance on digital services contributed to our performance," said Aas.

Despite higher revenue growth in the fourth quarter, Banglalink's annual revenue grew 0.7 per cent year-on-year to Tk 4,560 crore in 2020.

The company said its major achievement in 2020 came from providing internet service across the country.

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The Daily Star IPDC Present

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