



UNILEVER
Lawmaker Asaduzzaman Noor, British High Commissioner to Bangladesh Robert Chatterton Dickson and Unilever Bangladesh Chairman and Managing Director Kedar Lele attend the launch of "Jatra: The Story of Unilever in the land of red and green", a book marking the multinational's over 55 years' journey in Bangladesh, from Lever Brothers to Unilever, at the Radisson hotel in the capital on Saturday.



SOCIAL ISLAMI BANK
Quazi Osman Ali, CEO of Social Islami Bank, receives an ICMAB Best Corporate Award-2019 in private commercial bank (Islamic operation) category from Commerce Minister Tipu Munshi at Radisson Blu Dhaka Water Garden on Thursday.



BANK ASIA
Mohammad Borhanuddin, deputy managing director of Bank Asia, poses with its 48 officials at a daylong training on "Service-Level Standard and Work Process Flow of CTPC (Central Trade Processing Centre)" at the Bank Asia Institute for Training and Development at Lalmatia in Dhaka on Saturday.



MERCANTILE BANK
Khondkar Morshed Millat, general manager at Bangladesh Bank's sustainable finance department, and Md Quamrul Islam Chowdhury, CEO of Mercantile Bank, exchange documents recently after signing an agreement over a "Refinance Fund for Technology Development/Upgradation of Export Oriented Industries".

China's factory activity expands at a slower pace in February, misses expectations



REUTERS/FILE
Employees work on a drilling machine production line at a factory in Zhangjiakou, Hebei province, China.

REUTERS, Beijing

China's factory activity expanded in February at a slower pace than a month earlier, hitting the lowest level since last May and missing market expectations after brief COVID-19-related disruptions earlier in the year. The official manufacturing Purchasing Manager's Index (PMI) fell to 50.6 from 51.3 in January, data from the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) showed on Sunday, remaining above the 50-point mark that separates growth from contraction.

Analysts had expected it to decline to 51.1. Chinese factory activity normally goes dormant during the Lunar New Year break as workers return to their home towns. This year, the government appealed to workers to remain local to curb the spread of COVID-19. Generally, China's economic recovery has been gathering pace due to robust exports, pent-up demand and government stimulus. The official PMI, which largely focuses on big and state-owned firms,

showed the sub-index for new export orders was 48.8 in February compared with 50.2 in January, slipping back into contraction after months boosted by overseas demand.

A sub-index for activity among small firms stood at 48.3 in February versus 49.4 a month earlier. Smaller firms were more affected by the seasonal effects of the Lunar New Year, said Zhao Qinghe, an official with the NBS in comments released with the data.

A sub-index for employment in the official PMI stood at 48.1 in February, down from January's 48.4 as firms laid off more workers and at a faster pace.

Still, some manufacturing sector firms are seeing increasing pressure from rising labour costs and a shortage of workers, said Zhao.

China's factory gate prices rose on year in January for the first time in a year, as months of strong manufacturing growth pushed raw material costs higher.

China eked out 2.3 per cent economic growth last year. This year, the government may avoid setting a growth target for fear of provincial economies feeling pressured to take on more debt, policy sources previously told Reuters.

China will reinforce policy support for foreign trade and ensure the smooth operation of supply chains, its new commerce minister said earlier this week. In the services sector, activity expanded for the 11th consecutive month but at the slowest pace in a year.



DHAKA BANK
Dhaka Bank CEO Emranul Huq and Additional Managing Director Mohammad Abu Jafar and Energypac Electronics Director Humayun Rashid and CEO Md Nurul Aktar attend a deal signing ceremony recently facilitating cash management services and payroll banking services for the latter.

Airline CEOs urge White House support for greener aviation fuel

REUTERS, Washington

The CEOs of American Airlines, United Airlines and Delta Air Lines and other airline officials met virtually with White House officials Friday to discuss tackling aviation pollution and urge US support for greener aviation fuel.

United Chief Executive Scott Kirby made clear the carrier was fully committed to confronting the climate crisis and sought White House support for "incentives for sustainable aviation fuel and carbon capture in the forthcoming economic stimulus proposal," the airline said in a statement.

White House National Climate Advisor Gina McCarthy, economic

adviser Brian Deese and Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg took part in the meeting, including discussion of using biofuels to power air travel and reduce carbon emissions. Reuters first reported the planned meeting.

US airlines and renewables companies have been lobbying the Biden administration to back a big increase in subsidies for lower-carbon aviation fuel, arguing new incentives are needed to help fight climate change and will also make their recovery from the pandemic much greener.

The White House said in a statement the officials were "optimistic to hear airline leaders share information about the industry's ongoing and future efforts to address climate change, and they offered the administration's

support to strengthen and advance the airlines' climate goals."

Currently, Airlines for America (A4A), the industry trade group, uses only about 1.5 million gallons of green plane fuel in the United States a year, out of a total commercial jet fuel market that exceeds 620 million barrels.

The price of sustainable aviation fuel can be three or four times higher than traditional jet fuel, making it uneconomical without government support, A4A told Reuters earlier.

A4A CEO Nick Calio said airlines had "a positive, constructive conversation about our shared commitment to fighting climate change. Airlines are ready, willing and able partners."



INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT COMPANY
Jabed Emran, chief risk officer of Infrastructure Development Company, receives an ICMAB Best Corporate Award-2019 in non-bank financial institution category from Commerce Minister Tipu Munshi at Radisson Blu Dhaka Water Garden on Thursday.



GREEN DELTA INSURANCE COMPANY
Syed Moinuddin Ahmed, additional managing director of Green Delta Insurance Company, receives an ICMAB Best Corporate Award-2019 in insurance category from Commerce Minister Tipu Munshi at Radisson Blu Dhaka Water Garden on Thursday.