

STOCKS		COMMODITIES		ASIAN MARKETS				CURRENCIES			
DSEX	CSCX	Gold	Oil	MUMBAI	TOKYO	SINGAPORE	SHANGHAI	USD	EUR	GBP	CNY
▼ 0.05%	Flat	\$1,731.56 (per ounce)	\$63.58 (per barrel)	▼ 1.36%	▲ 1.14%	▲ 0.27%	▼ 0.10%	BUY TK 83.95	88.19	114.12	12.62
5,327.21	9,304.98			48,513.14	28,729.88	3,141.71	3,363.59	SELL TK 84.95	101.99	117.92	13.27



star BUSINESS

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Daunting challenges ahead

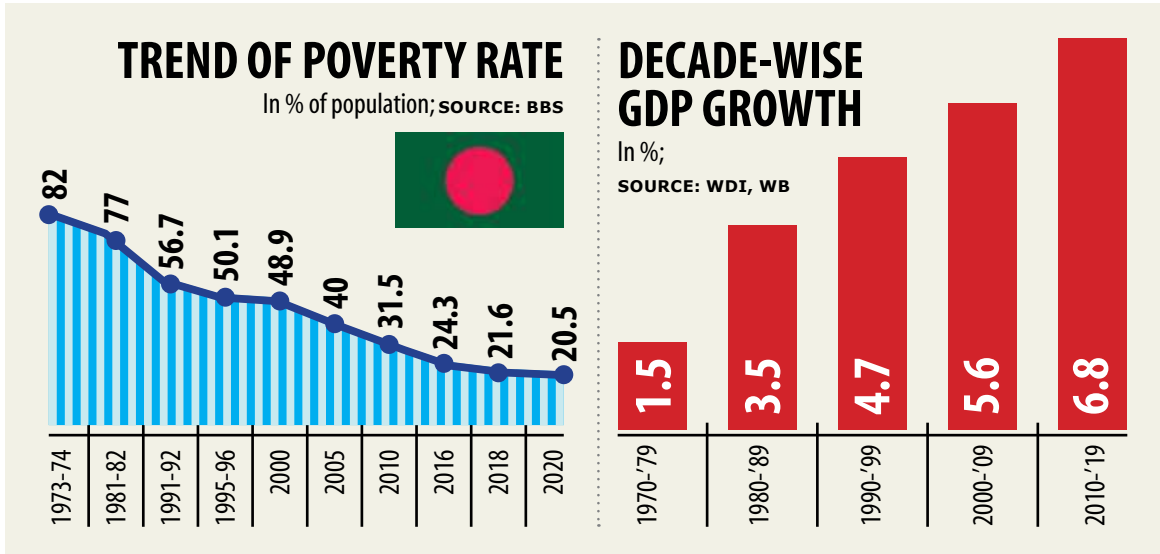
Bangladesh needs to improve infrastructure, education, skills as it celebrates 50yrs of independence: experts

REJAUL KARIM BYRON and
MD FAZLUR RAHMAN

Bangladesh needs to improve infrastructure and standard of education, equip the youth population with market-oriented skills and uproot corruption to become a high-income country, experts say.

Once a byword for disasters, Bangladesh is now a development role model. And experts believe it needs to step up the efforts to transform the economy as Bangladesh today celebrates its 50 years of independence.

"We will have to help the private sector expand further, give it more space and attract more foreign investment," said Ahsan H



Mansur, executive director of the Policy Research Institute of Bangladesh.

"We have to have a congenial investment climate. We have not been successful much in this area."

The problem facing investors in securing land could be sorted as the government has moved to set up 100 economic zones.

"We hope they will be implemented quickly," Mansur said.

Bangladesh has made major strides in electricity generation in the last decade. The government is set to bring 100 per cent of the population under power coverage. But a credible supply of electricity is still a far cry.

Suez Canal blockage may disrupt trade

DWAIPAYAN BARIUA, Cig

Exporters and importers are apprehending prolonged delays in shipments as efforts so far have failed to dislodge a massive container vessel that continues to choke traffic in both directions along the Suez Canal.

This shipping jam in one of the world's busiest shipping arteries is the worst in recent years.

About a quarter mile long (400 metres), the 224,000-tonne container vessel Ever Given ran aground diagonally across the single lane stretch of the

southern canal on Tuesday morning during a dust storm.

As a result, it created another setback for global supply chains, which are already strained by chaotic congestions and a shortage of containers in many ports due to the impact of the pandemic.

On Wednesday, 185 vessels, mostly bulk carriers, container ships and oil or chemical tankers, were waiting to transit the 120-mile canal connecting the Red Sea with the Mediterranean, according to shipping data compiled by Bloomberg.



A giant container ship ran aground in the Suez Canal after a gust of wind blew it off course. The photo was taken on Wednesday.

How much to save regularly? NBR works to cut country's import dependence, says its chairman

SOHEL PARVEZ

Ever since his professional career began a decade ago, Fakhru Islam has kept aside a portion of his regular income as a nest egg for rainy days.

Initially, he saved up to 30 per cent of his salary after meeting his family's expenses.

This habit helped him a lot after his father recently became sick. Islam faced medical bills of about Tk 100,000 for his father's treatment.

"I would have no other option than to borrow if I did not have savings," said Islam, who works at an international non-government organisation (NGO).

"Without savings, it becomes very difficult for a family to face any sudden incidents," he added.

Other than to meet emergency financial needs, keeping aside a



portion of one's income is also vital for ensuring solvency after retirement.

And so, like many others, the 32-year-old Islam understands the importance of savings.

"We work in NGOs and there is no sustainability of jobs, especially in many NGOs. There is often absence of provident fund, gratuity and end

contract benefits," he said.

Islam believes that one should divide his or her savings into two categories: one portion should be kept as emergency funds while the other should be saved in preparation for the long-term. He also suggested saving at least 30 per cent of one's income.

"But I cannot maintain this as regular requirements for family expenses have increased," he added.

Similarly, Rashid Topu, senior executive of mental healthcare service provider LifeSpring, stressed on the importance of saving 35 per cent of one's income.

"It should be a must," she said, adding that 20 per cent of that should be saved to meet long-term needs while the remainder should be used for emergencies and other short-term needs.

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The National Board of Revenue (NBR) wants to prioritise local industries when making considerations for the next national budget in order to strengthen the country's economy.

"The NBR will work to increase local production capacities to decrease the country's import dependency," said NBR Chairman Abu Hena Md Rahmatul Muneem.

Muneem made these comments while addressing a virtual pre-budget discussion with the Economic Reporters Forum (ERF) yesterday.

He also pointed out some new steps the NBR has taken to increase revenue collection.

For example, the NBR is working



with various government and non-government organisations to bring more people under the tax net.

The revenue authority is trying to provide policy support that will make the economy more dynamic and help increase production in different sectors, Muneem said.

Sharmin Rinvi, president of the ERF, put forward a couple of proposals aimed at increasing revenue collection while also providing assistance

to taxpayers under the current circumstances.

She proposed an increase in the tax-free income limit to Tk 4 lakh for individual taxpayers.

SM Rashidul Islam, general secretary of the ERF, urged the NBR to prepare for any challenges Bangladesh may face when it graduates from a least developed country (LDC).

If the duty-free facilities Bangladesh enjoys as an LDC are withdrawn after graduation, the country will have to abide by free trade agreements or preferential trade agreements.

"For this reason, the NBR has to take the initiative from now on," Islam added.

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Stocks drop despite higher dividends given by four firms

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Higher year-on-year dividend declarations from four listed companies could do little to prevent the country's stock market from making a drop yesterday.

The DSEX, the benchmark index of the Dhaka Stock Exchange (DSE), fell 2 points, or 0.05 per cent to 5,327. The day before, the market had come down by 83 points. The stock market is being downed by apprehensions over the spread of Covid-19 infections, said a top official of a stock brokerage firm.

DIVIDEND BY FOUR COMPANIES		
COMPANY	DIVIDEND IN PREVIOUS YEAR	LATEST DIVIDEND
Provati Insurance	12% cash	17% stock
National Housing	10% cash	15% cash
Aman Cotton	10% cash	10% cash
Jamuna Bank	15% cash	17.5% cash

The impact of the dividend declarations was not strong enough to cushion the whole market, he said. Provati Insurance Company, National Housing Authority and Jamuna Bank declared dividends of 17 per cent, 15 per cent and 17.5 per cent respectively for 2020.

All the financial institutions are providing higher dividends this year compared to that the previous year. Aman Cotton Fibrous also declared 10 per cent cash dividend for the year ending on June 30, 2020.

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