

STOCKS		COMMODITIES		ASIAN MARKETS				CURRENCIES			
Week-on-week		As of Friday		Friday Closings				As on Thursday			
DSEX	CSCX	Gold	Oil	MUMBAI	TOKYO	SINGAPORE	SHANGHAI	USD	EUR	GBP	CNY
▼ 0.30%	▼ 0.13%	\$1,743.10	\$62.95	▼ 0.31%	▲ 0.20%	▼ 0.06%	▼ 0.92%	BUY TK 83.95	98.60	114.59	12.59
5,254.78	9,190.42	(per ounce)	(per barrel)	49,591.32	29,768.06	3,184.54	3,450.68	SELL TK 84.95	102.40	118.39	13.23



Star BUSINESS

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ONLINE ACCOUNT OPENING

More banks jump on the bandwagon



AKM ZAMIR UDDIN

People can open bank accounts from anywhere as an increasing number of lenders have made digital options available, helping customers avail financial services without visiting branches during the coronavirus pandemic.

Digital account opening that takes a maximum of six minutes has put an end

to fill out paper documents and highlights the changes in the behaviour of banks and customers brought in by the unprecedented crisis. Many people are nervous about leaving their homes, let alone visiting bank branches. They have moved to digital platforms to work, shop, communicate and get entertained.

It prompted many banks to embrace the new system based on the central bank's e-KYC (electronic know your customers) guideline unveiled in January last year.

The guideline, which was formulated just two months before the pandemic hit the country, came in handy as it let the banks and other financial institutions open accounts to help people access the essential service throughout the crisis period.

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PALASH KHAN

These small light engineering workshops churn out products worth Tk 10,000 crore a year, meeting a third of the local demand of Tk 30,000 crore, according to Bangladesh Light Engineering Industry Owners Association. Electrical product makers say the local market for their items is worth Tk 20,000 crore to Tk 25,000 crore, and they cater to a portion of the gigantic market. The photo was taken at Dholaikhal in the capital last week.

ELECTRICAL, LIGHT ENGINEERING SECTORS

Tk 300cr industrial park in the making

SUKANTA HALDER

The government is developing the country's first industrial park for electrical and light engineering product manufacturers at a cost of Tk 300 crore in Munshiganj, which could herald a beginning to bring the highly scattered and unorganised industries under a single platform.

Already 83 per cent of the project work has been completed, and the Bangladesh Small and Cottage Industries Corporation (BSCIC) said the industrial city would be ready by June next year.

This is going to be the first organised industrial enclave for electrical products and light engineering items manufacturing units,

which have sprung up in an unplanned manner across the country.

The BSCIC is developing the industrial area to provide all infrastructural facilities to engineering and electrical products making industries that cater to the huge domestic market.

The light engineering sector makes products worth Tk 10,000 crore, meeting a third of the local demand of Tk 30,000 crore annually, according to the Bangladesh Light Engineering Industry Owners Association.

Electrical products makers say the local market for electrical items is Tk 20,000 crore to Tk 25,000 crore, and they cater to a portion of the gigantic market.

"While allotting plots in the industrial park,

we will give priority to the manufacturers that make fans, switches, sockets, light fittings, and small-scale substation equipment," said Enayet Hossain Chowdhury, a director of the Bangladesh Electrical Merchandise Manufacturers Association (BEMMA).

The association represents more than 700 members.

The number of plots is 362 in the industrial park. Half of them will go to the electrical products' makers and the rest to the light engineering makers.

"We will need more plots," said Chowdhury, also a former president of the organisation.

The project will create 10,750 jobs.

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RMG exporters want factories up and running

Union leaders favour closure with full payment as lockdown looms

REFAYET ULLAH MIRDHA

Garment factory owners and union leaders are at loggerheads over the imminent tough lockdown the government is set to impose across the country to curb the rising cases of coronavirus infections.

Owners want to keep their factories up and running, while union leaders called for a closure of factories and a full payment of the wages for workers during the lockdown period.

The government plans to go for a large-scale lockdown from April 14 for seven days as its current efforts have not had much impact on bringing down the infection rate.

"We do not have the luxury to shut our factories as we have been on a recovery path from the devastating impacts of the first wave of Covid-19," said Fazlul Hoque, managing director of Narayanganj-based Plummy Fashions Ltd.

When international buyers are placing orders for the next autumn and winter seasons, any pause in production will put the industry in deep trouble.

"The order may be shifted to other countries as they have not imposed any lockdown. We will be isolated from the rest of the world if the lockdown is imposed. No competing countries such as China, Vietnam and Cambodia are in lockdown at the moment," he said.

Local suppliers will face order cancellation, deferral payment, discount for delayed shipment, or expensive air shipment if the production is halted due to the lockdown, Hoque said.

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If lockdown is imposed, garment suppliers will face work order cancellation, deferred payment, and expensive air shipment, an exporter said.

PHOTO: STAR/FILE

BD Finance eyes \$2b US investment

Signs deal with a company

JAGARAN CHAKMA

Bangladesh Finance and Investment Company Ltd (BD Finance) has signed a deal with US-based Sovereign Infrastructure Group (SIG) to attract \$2 billion worth of investment in infrastructure projects in the next two years.

BD Finance, a concern of Anwar Group, inked the agreement in Washington on Thursday, according to a joint press release.

The embassy of Bangladesh in Washington hosted the deal signing ceremony to commemorate the execution of a memorandum, which will serve as a long-term collaboration framework intended to enable SIG to bring American capital market investors to infrastructure projects in Bangladesh through BD Finance. "This is a commitment for the largest-ever foreign funding brought by a Bangladeshi financial institution," Manwar Hossain, chairman of BD Finance and group managing director of Anwar Group, told The Daily Star on Thursday.

With a project pipeline of more than \$2 billion, BD

66 stocks can fall max 2pc a day

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Stocks of 66 listed companies, for whom the floor price was recently lifted, will be allowed to fall a maximum of 2 per cent a day instead of the usual 10 per cent.

The market has a circuit breaker or trading curb which limits abnormal price fluctuations to 10 per cent in both directions for all stocks.

However, the latest decision of the stock market regulator has kept unchanged the upper limit, meaning a 10 per cent rise will be allowed a day.

The floor price, which is essentially a limit on how low prices can go, was set for all stocks on March 19, 2020 by the Bangladesh Securities and Exchange Commission (BSEC).

It was aimed at stopping the index from falling amid the pandemic-induced rout.

The figures were calculated based on the stocks' average prices for the preceding five days.

But the decision was criticized as it impacted normal trade.

This prompted the BSEC to decide on April 7 this year to free the 66 in the first phase.



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The whole market's impact that day was an 82-point plunge of the index.

Thanks to the new circuit breaker, the impact will be at most 5 points, even if all the companies fall, said BSEC Spokesperson Mohammad Rezaul Karim.

The order has already been issued and will take immediate effect from today (Sunday), he said.

"We have taken the decision as per investors and stakeholders' demand," he said.

The main reason behind

taking the decision is to save investors, he said, adding that investors were in panic, so some shares might be downed to a high extent within the next three to four days.

When general investors sell off the shares, a vested group buys those, taking advantage of the low price. "We don't want to give them that opportunity," he added.

The BSEC also informed that the stock market would remain open in upcoming strict lockdowns if banks were kept open.

INVESTMENT AREAS

- Agribusiness
- Education
- Energy
- Financial institutions
- Healthcare
- ICT
- Industrial/manufacturing
- Transport
- Urban Development
- Water/sanitation

Finance has mandated SIG on the initial financing of a direct loan of \$40 million to be used for on-lending to SMEs, green energy projects, women entrepreneurs, social housing, economic empowerment initiatives for transgender individuals, and the refinancing of existing BD Finance obligations.

"We will finance different banks and financial institutions under the fund. BD Finance will utilise around \$150 million from this fund," Hossain said.

"This is a historic event for the banking and financial sector of Bangladesh. This is the largest foreign investment effort by a financial institution in Bangladesh.

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