

# China launches antitrust probe into Tencent-backed property broker KE

REUTERS, Beijing

China's market regulator has begun an investigation into suspected anti-competitive practices by KE Holdings, the country's biggest housing broker whose top backer is Tencent Holdings, two people who know of the matter said.

The investigation is the latest into China's big so-called "platform" companies that match sellers and buyers, several of which have been accused by regulators of exploiting consumers.

KE Holdings, which operates housing platforms Lianjia and Beike in China, was warned last month by the State Administration for Market Regulation (SAMR), along with dozens of internet companies, against any abuse of market dominance and told to conduct self-inspections.

SAMR has been formally investigating in recent weeks whether KE Holdings forces real estate developers to list housing information only on its platforms, including Lianjia and Beike, a tactic known as "choose one from two", the people said, declining to be named because the information is not public.

The investigation has not been publicly announced. It is not known when it will be wrapped up or what it could entail for KE Holdings.

KE Holdings declined to comment to Reuters but in a later statement on



A woman wearing a face mask following the coronavirus disease outbreak rides past real estate broker Lianjia near a residential compound in Beijing, China on August 11, 2020.

its Chinese social media accounts. Beike denied that "SAMR had opened a case against Beike".

SAMR did not immediately respond to a request for comment. KE's New York-listed shares fell as much as nearly 10 per cent in pre-market trading on Tuesday, after the Reuters report.

Last month, SAMR hit Alibaba Group with a record \$2.8 billion fine after finding that the e-commerce giant had been preventing its merchants from using other online e-commerce platforms since 2015.

Tencent itself is in the firing line, with SAMR preparing to levy a fine of at least \$1.5 billion on the gaming and social media behemoth, Reuters reported in April. SAMR also announced an investigation last month into Tencent-backed food delivery giant Meituan.

SAMR has stationed inspectors since late April in 17 companies that operate platforms, including KE Holdings, to enhance the efficiency of antitrust inspections, one of the sources said.

KE Holdings, which also counts SoftBank Group Corp among its major backers, launched Lianjia, formerly known as Beijing Homelink Real Estate Brokerage, 20 years ago.

It grew into one of China's largest bricks-and-mortar property agents and later set up Beike as a separate online housing platform matching buyers and sellers, renters and landlords, as well as providing home finance.

It listed in New York in August, and after sharp gains last year the shares are down 15 per cent so far in 2021. Still, it has a market value of about \$62 billion.

On top of the antitrust probe, KE Holdings faces uncertainty following the death last week of its 50-year-old founder and chairman, Zuo Hui, due to an illness. Co-founder Peng Yongdong was appointed chairman this week.

Its biggest revenue sources are from existing home and new home transactions, with market shares of 26 per cent and 35 per cent, respectively, of gross transaction volume in 2020, according to TF Securities, a relatively high proportion in China's fragmented housing market.

KE Holdings posted stellar first quarter financial results last week, with net revenue up 191 per cent on the year, bolstered by China's robust property market that quickly rebounded last year from the coronavirus crisis.

# Lessor SMBC orders 14 additional 737 MAX jets from Boeing

REUTERS, Dublin

Aircraft leasing firm SMBC Aviation Capital has agreed to buy an additional 14 Boeing 737 MAX aircraft with a low-cost carrier configuration, with deliveries due to begin later this year, it said on Tuesday.

The company, a major Boeing customer, had previously disclosed firm orders for 89 MAX jets and a commitment to a fleet of 133.

But last year during the grounding of the MAX and at the height of the Covid-19 pandemic it deferred delivery of 68 of those jets by four years until 2025-2027 and indicated it had not ruled out cancellations.

"We are pleased to have concluded an agreement with Boeing for the purchase of 14 low-cost carrier configured 737 MAX

aircraft which is an aircraft we are seeing increased customer demand for following its successful return to service," Chief Executive Peter Barrett said in a statement.

Aircraft leasing firms, which control over 40 per cent of the global fleet, are among the largest MAX customers.

Industry sources told Reuters last week that Boeing had drawn up preliminary plans to boost 737 MAX output to as many as 42 jets a month in fall 2022 from single digits now as it prepared for a recovery from overlapping safety and Covid-19 crises.

Production was halted in 2019 after Boeing's fastest-selling model was grounded in the wake of fatal crashes. It resumed last May at a fraction of its original pace while Boeing navigated regulatory approvals and a fragile supply chain.

# Litchi season to be fleeting this year

FROM PAGE B4

Md Munna, a farmer of Mashimpur village under the same upazila, said litchi would become pricier if the ongoing nationwide lockdown was withdrawn.

Traders from other districts are being able to visit Dinajpur unhindered only from this week as previously public transportation had remained suspended amid a slew of measures imposed by the government to curb the spread of Covid-19.

Even though the traders from surrounding districts started coming to Dinajpur on small trucks, their numbers are not high enough to make decent profits, Munna added.

According to data from the Department of Horticulture's Dinajpur office, litchi was grown on 5,600 hectares of land this year with total production likely to be around

45,000 tonnes, which is about 30 per cent lower than that last year.

The market value of the produced litchi is around Tk 550 crore.

Proddip Kumar Guha, deputy director of the horticulture office, said production due to high temperatures between December and January.

There are around 4,000 commercial litchi orchards in Dinajpur.

Other than Dinajpur, Thakurgaon and Panchagarh, litchi plucking also started in other districts, including Pabna.

According to the Directorate of Agricultural Extension in Dhaka, annual litchi production was around 2.40 lakh tonnes. In 2018-19, the country produced around 2.30 lakh tonnes of the fruit with a lion's share coming from the Dinajpur and Pabna districts.

# Summer boom beckons for German economy after winter Covid blues

REUTERS, Berlin

German business morale brightened to hit a two-year high in May as Covid-19 curbs were eased and infections fell, heralding a swift summer recovery after the economy shrank more than expected in the first quarter.

With many firms reporting a build-up of supply bottlenecks, Tuesday's Ifo business climate index readout showed a jump to 99.2, up from April's revised 96.6 and beating the

98.2 forecast in a Reuters poll of analysts.

"The German economy is picking up speed," Ifo President Clemens Fuest said.

The survey among some 9,000 firms in manufacturing, the service sector, trade and construction showed that businesses were more satisfied with their current situation and optimistic regarding the coming six months.

It pointed to a quarterly growth rate of 2.6 per cent from April to June and 2.8 per cent from July to September,

Ifo economist Klaus Wohlrabe told Reuters.

In the first quarter, GDP contracted by 1.8 per cent quarter on quarter and by 3.1 per cent on the year, significantly weaker readings than the euro zone average, Federal Statistics Office data showed earlier on Tuesday.

Coronavirus curbs in force during those months also spurred consumers to put more money than ever into savings, with the savings rate ballooning to an unprecedented 23.2 per cent.

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার  
বঙ্গ অধিদপ্তর  
বঙ্গ ও পাট মন্ত্রণালয়  
বিটিএমসি ভবন (১০ম তলা)  
৭-৯, কাওরান বাজার, ঢাকা-১২১৫

তারিখঃ ১১ জ্যৈষ্ঠ ১৪২৮ বঙ্গাব্দ  
২৫ মে ২০২১ খ্রিষ্টাব্দ

### Invitation for Tender

Sealed tender is hereby invited from the reputed manufacturers/suppliers/wholesaler for "Procurement of Air conditioner" and "Procurement of Health Protection Item" for Department of Textiles. As per PPR-2008, terms and conditions are follow:

1. Ministry/Division	Ministry of Textiles and Jute.
2. Agency	Department of Textiles.
3. Procuring entity name	Director General, Department of Textiles.
4. Procuring entity district	Dhaka.
5. Invitation for procurement goods	Procurement of Air conditioner and Health Protection Item.
6. Invitation Ref No.	24.02.0000.001.07.714.19-115
7. Date	25/05/2021

**KEY INFORMATION**

8. Procurement method	Open Tender Method (OTM).
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**FUNDING INFORMATION**

9. Budget and source of funds	GoB.
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**PARTICULAR INFORMATION**

10. Tender package No.	GD-01.
11. Tender package name	Procurement of Air conditioner and Health Protection Item.
12. Tender publication date	26/05/2021
13. Tender last selling date	08/06/2021 Time: 5:00pm
14. Tender closing date and time	08/06/2021 Time: 5:00pm
15. Tender opening date and time	09/06/2021 Time: 2:00pm
16. Name & address of the office for selling and receiving tender document	(1) A. K. M Rajibur Rohaman, Deputy Director (Finance), Department of Textiles, BTMC Bhaban (9th Floor), 7-9, Kawran Bazar, Dhaka-1215.
17. Office for opening tender document	Conference Room, Department of Textiles, BTMC Bhaban (9th Floor), 7-9, Kawran Bazar, Dhaka-1215

**INFORMATION FOR TENDERER**

18. Brief eligibility and qualification tender	Valid trade license (FY: 2020-21); updated income tax clearance certificate; e-Bin (VAT) registration certificate; other qualifications as specified in TDS.
19. Brief description of goods	Procurement of Air conditioner and Health Protection Item.
20. Brief description of related services	Not applicable.
21. Price of tender document (Tk) (non-refundable)	1000 Tk (one thousand Taka) in cash.

Lot No.	Identification of lot	Location	Tender security amount (Tk)	Completion time in days
Lot-1	Procurement of Air conditioner	Department of Textiles, BTMC Bhaban (9th Floor), 7-9, Kawran Bazar, Dhaka-1215	15,000 (fifteen thousand)	07 days
Lot-2	Procurement of Health Protection Item	Department of Textiles, BTMC Bhaban (9th Floor), 7-9, Kawran Bazar, Dhaka-1215	15,000 (fifteen thousand)	07 days

**PROCURING ENTITY DETAILS**

23. Name of official inviting tender	Md. Nuruzzaman.
24. Designation of official inviting tender	Director General.
25. Address of official inviting tender	Department of Textiles, BTMC Bhaban (9th Floor), 7-9, Kawran Bazar, Dhaka-1215.
26. Contact details of official inviting tender	Tel. No. 48118692
27. The procuring entity reserves the right to reject all tenders or annul the tender proceedings according to PPA, 2006 and PPR, 2008.	

**A. K. M Rajibur Rohaman**  
Deputy Director (Finance)  
Department of Textiles

GD-1063

## Looking forward to better external sector management

FROM PAGE B4

Economists across the developing world have also been talking of healthy imports to generate higher exports in the future. With our number two position in the global apparel trade and strong inward remittance, I don't think we have much to worry about, provided our policy support to the national exports continues despite some noises here and there, and people are encouraged to go for further investments.

On the other hand, FDI and foreign aid disbursement depend on how Bangladesh positions itself among the global investment community and how many quality public interest or export facilitation projects we can put up on the table convincingly for the development partners.

While talking of export facilitation, economists were, therefore, focusing on import liberalisation too, in order to garner support for a better trade regime. While the Bangladesh Investment Development Authority (Bida) is quite focused on bringing in positive changes to our doing business index, we also need to go for further liberalisation of the international trade and foreign exchange policy regime.

The interesting part is Covid-19 has put most of the countries in the world in economic doldrums, forcing them to invest or divert more public money for the public interest and putting the reforms agenda in the backyard, at least temporarily. Hence, any focused work in this direction will ensure better results in the future.

The author is an economic analyst.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh  
National Board of Revenue  
Rajswa Bhaban, Segunbagicha, Dhaka  
[www.nbr.gov.bd](http://www.nbr.gov.bd)

### Corrigendum-2

**Tender Name:** Supply, Installation and Commissioning and Testing of 10 (ten) X-ray Baggage Scanners and 01 (One) MW Human Body Scanners.  
**Tender Number:** File-08.01.0000.067.42.012.20  
**Corrigendum No:** File-08.01.0000.067.42.012.20  
Date: 25/05/2021

Due to unavoidable circumstances, the Tender Invitation Notice published for "Supply, Installation and Commissioning and Testing of 10 (ten) X-ray Baggage Scanners and 01 (One) MW Human Body Scanners" has been changed as follows:

Serial Number as per Invitation Notice	Description of the content	As per tender schedule content	Amended content
16	Tender last selling date	21/06/2021, Time-3.00pm	12/07/2021, Time-3.00pm
17	Tender closing date & time	22/06/2021 Time-3.00pm	13/07/2021 Time-3.00pm
18	Tender opening time	22/06/2021 Time-3.40pm	13/07/2021 Time-3.40pm
20	Place/date/time of pre-tender meeting	Conference Room, VAT Online Project, 7 <sup>th</sup> Floor, 160/A, IDEB Bhaban, Kakrail, Dhaka-1000. Date-30/05/2021, Time-11.00am, Queries will be taken in written within 23/05/2021 before 3.30pm.	Conference Room, VAT Online Project, 7 <sup>th</sup> Floor, 160/A, IDEB Bhaban, Kakrail, Dhaka-1000. Date-22/06/2021, Time-11.00am, Queries will be taken in written within 14/06/2021 before 3.30pm.
Tender schedule	Description of the content	Existing content	Amended content
Tender Data Sheet, Page No. 28	ITT 10.1	The Pre- Tender meeting shall be chaired and held: Member (Customs Audit, Modernization and International Trade), Conference Room, VAT Online Project, 7 <sup>th</sup> Floor, 160/A, IDEB Bhaban, Kakrail, Dhaka-1000. City: Dhaka, Country: Bangladesh, Time: at 11.00am, Date: 30-05-2021	The Pre- Tender meeting shall be chaired and held: Commissioner (Customs Bond Commissionerate, Dhaka), Conference Room, Customs Bond Commissionerate, Dhaka. 342/1, Segunbagicha, Dhaka-1000. City: Dhaka, Country: Bangladesh, Time: at 11.00 am, Date: 22-06-2021
Tender Data Sheet, Page No. 30	ITT 38.1	The deadline for submission of tenders is: Time & Date: 22/06/2021 at 3.00pm	The deadline for submission of tenders is: Time & Date: 13/07/2021 at 3.00pm
Tender Data Sheet, Page No. 31	ITT 44.1	The Tender opening shall take place at: Member (Customs Audit, Modernization and International Trade), National Board of Revenue, Rajassha Bhaban, Segunbagicha, Dhaka-1000	The Tender opening shall take place at: Member (Customs Audit, Modernization and International Trade), National Board of Revenue, Rajassha Bhaban, Segunbagicha, Dhaka-1000 The deadline for opening of Tenders is: Time & Date: 13/07/2021 at 3.40pm

02. All other terms and conditions of the tender document will remain unchanged.

**Zakia Sultana**  
Member (Customs Audit, Modernization and International Trade)  
National Board of Revenue  
Rajassha Bhaban, Segunbagicha, Dhaka  
Phone: 8391200

GD-1065