

STOCKS		COMMODITIES		ASIAN MARKETS				CURRENCIES			
DSEX	CSCX	Gold	Oil	MUMBAI	TOKYO	SINGAPORE	SHANGHAI	USD	EUR	GBP	CNY
▲ 0.87%	▲ 1.14%	\$1,814.10	\$73.19	▲ 0.69%	▲ 1.82%	▼ 0.18%	▲ 1.97%	BUY TK 83.95	98.59	115.80	12.75
6,481.56	11,318.14	(per ounce)	(per barrel)	52,950.63	27,781.02	3,161.22	3,464.29	SELL TK 84.95	102.39	119.60	13.40

# Star BUSINESS

DHAKA TUESDAY AUGUST 3, 2021, SRABAN 19, 1428 BS • starbusiness@thedailystar.net

## ADP spending rebounds

But still nowhere near pre-pandemic level

REJAU KARIM BYRON and  
MID FAZLUR RAHMAN

Development spending in Bangladesh rebounded in the last fiscal year although the implementation rate was still one of the lowest in three decades because of the disruption caused by the coronavirus pandemic and structural weaknesses.

The pace of execution of the annual development programme (ADP) sank to a 27-year low of 80.18 per cent in the fiscal year of 2019-20 as projects halted for two months in April and May last year after the government was compelled to enforce a countrywide shutdown to curb the rising cases of infections.

It bounced back to 82.21 per cent in the last fiscal year of 2020-21 after the government spent Tk 209,272 crore out of the Tk 209,272 crore set aside for the ADP projects, shows data from the Implementation Monitoring & Evaluation Division (IMED) of the planning ministry.

It is nowhere near the average implementation rate of 90 per cent in the pre-pandemic level

and was, in fact, the third-lowest since FY1993-94, according to the Bangladesh Economic Review.

The development spending stood at Tk 49,920 crore in June, up 7.77 per cent from Tk 46,319 crore in the same month a year ago.

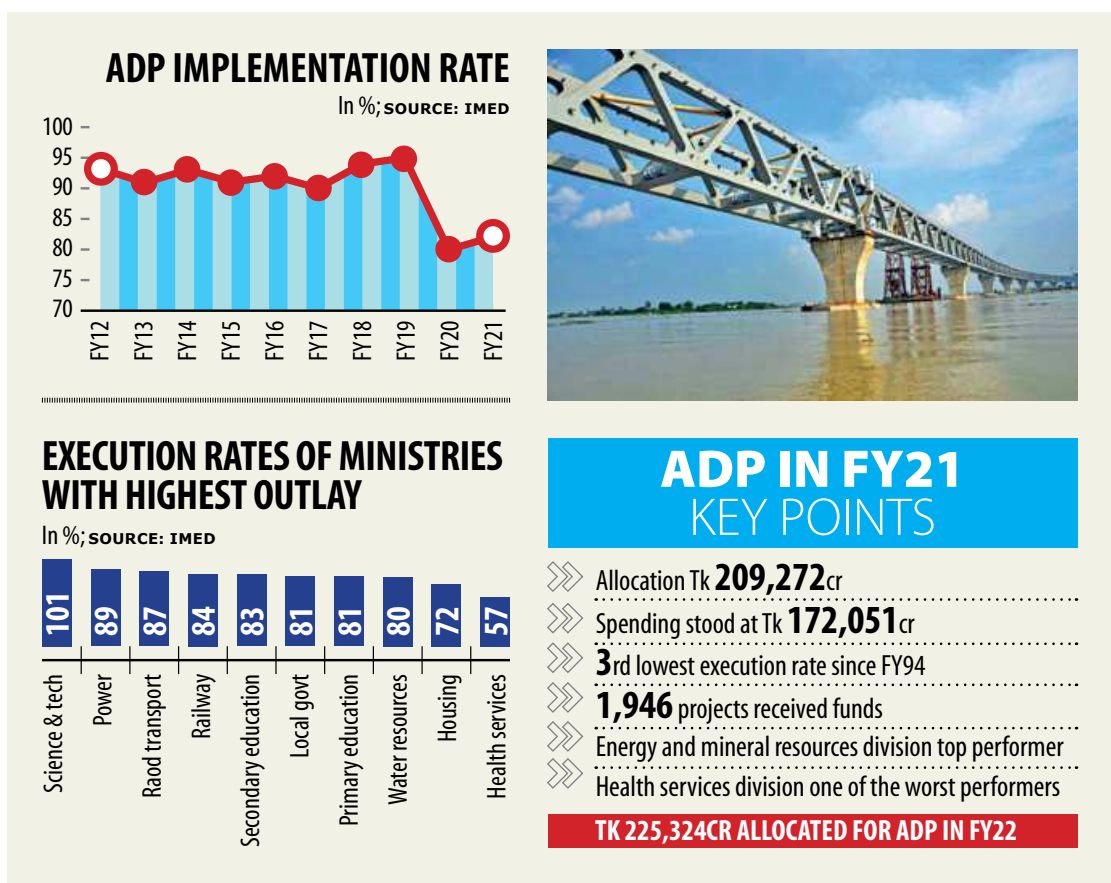
In FY21, the government expended Tk 111,981 crore from its coffers, which is 83.17 per cent of the allocation. The expenditure, however, went past the pre-pandemic level of Tk 111,165 crore.

It used up Tk 52,462 crore from the development assistance, which accounted for 83.27 per cent of the target.

Zahid Hussain, a former lead economist of the World Bank's Dhaka office, said, "Something never changes in our budgetary management. ADP implementation is surely one of them."

"It has not kept pace with the increase in the size and number of projects. Despite the implementation shortfall, we do not see change in these aspects."

The root causes of the problem



## Remittance slips to 5-month low

Post-Eid effects, fewer working days for banks to blame

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Remittance flow to Bangladesh fell to a five-month low of \$1.87 billion in July because of the post-Eid effects and fewer working days for banks.

The receipts are down 28 per cent year-on-year and 4 per cent from a month ago, according to data from the Bangladesh Bank.

In February, the Bangladeshi diaspora sent home remittance amounting to \$1.78 billion. Since then, the inflow ranged between \$1.9 billion and \$2 billion a month before declining in July.

It had hit an all-time high of \$2.6 billion in July last year.

BB officials say migrant workers usually send a significant amount of remittance before Eid-ul-Fitr and Eid-ul-Azha to their near and dear ones. So, remittance decreased sharply in the last week of July.

Bangladesh celebrated Eid-ul-Azha, one of the largest religious festivals for Muslims, on July 21. Banks were also closed during the three-day holiday.

"The inflow declines after the festivals to some extent," said Md Arfan Ali, managing director of Bank Asia.

In addition, the number of working days for banks was also lower than usual in July, putting an adverse impact on the inflow, he said.

Banks were closed between July 1 and July 4.

July 1 was the Bank Holiday. Banks also did not open on July 2 and July 3 because of weekends.

In addition, the central bank asked them to remain shut on July 4 as part of the government efforts to contain the coronavirus pandemic.

Syed Mahbubur Rahman, managing director of Mutual Trust Bank, says it is too early to comment on the remittance trend as it might bounce back in the coming months.

"It will take at least three to four months to understand the situation."

Remittance posted 36 per cent year-on-year growth last fiscal year, the sharpest in 30 years. Expatriates sent home \$24.78 billion in 2020-21 in contrast to \$18.20 billion a year ago.

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## IPDC profit jumps 30pc

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

IPDC Finance witnessed around 30 per cent growth in profits in the first half of 2021 despite the second wave of Covid-19 infections sweeping across Bangladesh.

The listed non-bank financial institution, which started its journey in 1981, logged net profits of Tk 41 crore during the period this year while it was Tk 31.6 crore in the same period last year.

The company's credit portfolio rose 15.7 per cent to Tk 6,202 crore compared to that on January 1, 2021. During the same period, its customer deposits registered growth of 4.1 per cent to reach Tk 4,307 crore.

In the first half of the year, its revenue rose 4.2 per cent to Tk 169 crore while expenses rose 4.7 per cent to Tk 59 crore.

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## Let restaurants reopen after Aug 5

Owners say 60,000 outlets at risk of permanent closure

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Restaurant owners have urged the government to allow their shops to reopen after August 5 as roughly 60,000 enterprises in the sector are at risk of permanent closure due to the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic.

The Bangladesh Restaurant Owners' Association (BROA) made this plea at a press conference held at the Dhaka Reporter's Unity yesterday.

At least two crore people that are either directly or indirectly employed by the sector have been leading miserable lives ever since the pandemic began in March last year, according to BROA Secretary General Imran Hasan.

Around 80 per cent of the country's eateries are closed amid the current nationwide lockdown that began on July 23. The situation was similar during the two-month lockdown last year.

"As a result, the sector lost thousands of crores of taka, forcing many to sell their assets to keep their businesses afloat," Hasan said.

"Please save us, many of us cannot run their business," he added. Over the past decade, the number of restaurants in Bangladesh soared amid increased demand



Around 80 per cent of the restaurants in the country are closed amid the current nationwide lockdown that began on July 23. The situation was similar during the two-month lockdown last year.

STAR/FIELD

for eating out.

The total number of restaurants rose 59 per cent to 4.36 lakh in 2019-20 from that a decade ago.

A survey by the Bangladesh Bureau of

Statistics found that restaurants employed 22.8 lakh people as of 2019-20, up from 9 lakh a decade ago. "So, let us open the restaurants at half capacity if not in full-swimming amid the pandemic," Hassan said.

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REPLY TO SHOW CAUSE NOTICE

## Panel to decide on Evaly's plea for more time

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

The commerce ministry will form a committee to decide whether it would provide six months to Evaly after the digital platform sought the time to respond in detail to the show-cause notice it received.

On July 19, the ministry sent a letter to Evaly, asking it to explain by August 1 how it would settle its current liabilities to customers and merchants. Evaly's reply came on the last day of the deadline.

The notice ordered the e-commerce site to come up with an explanation why no legal action would be taken against it to protect customers and merchants and prevent the digital commerce sector from any negative impact.

It also inquired about the company's business practices. "The company has given a reply and sought six months to provide its response in full. A committee will decide whether the ministry will give it the time," Hafizur Rahman, additional secretary of the ministry, told The Daily Star.

A committee will be set up after August 5, and it would sit immediately, he said.

The body will comprise representatives of Bangladesh Bank, the home affairs ministry, the Directorate of National Consumer Rights Protection, and e-Commerce Association of Bangladesh.

READ MORE ON B3



## We Mourn

We, Dhaka Bank Limited express our deepest sympathy and grief at the sad demise of Mrs. Najma Dowla, Director of ACI Limited and its subsidiaries. She was the wife of Mr. M Anis Ud Dowla, Chairman of ACI Limited, a renowned industrialist.

The Board of Directors and Management of Dhaka Bank are praying to the Almighty Allah for the salvation of the departed soul and to grant her Jannatul Ferdous. We convey our heartfelt condolences to the bereaved family to bear the loss.



Najma Dowla

DHAKABANK LIMITED  
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**আমরা শোকাহত**

এসিআই গ্রুপের পরিচালক মিসেস নাজমা দৌলা গত ২৮ জুলাই ২০২১ রাত ১১:৪৫ মিনিটে পরলোকগমন করেন (ইন্না লিল্লাহি ওয়া ইন্না ইলাইহি রাজিউন)। তিনি এসিআই গ্রুপের চেয়ারম্যান জনাব মোঃ আনিস উদ দৌলার সহধর্মিণী।

ঠাঁর মৃত্যুতে যমুনা ব্যাংক পরিবার গভীরভাবে শোকাহত এবং আমরা মহান আল্লাহ্ তা'আলার দরবারে মরহুমার বিদেহী আত্মার চির শান্তি কামনা করছি।

JAMUNA BANK



**Kazi Ziaul Islam**

## Mashreq Bangladesh gets chief country representative

STAR BUSINESS DESK

Financial institution Mashreq of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) has named Kazi Ziaul Islam as its chief country representative of Mashreq Bangladesh.

Kazi will look after the overall business operation with a focus on origination, cross sell, and regulatory matters, says a press release.

He earlier served at Standard Chartered Bank and HSBC Bank Bangladesh.

Kazi obtained an MBA degree in finance from the Institute of Business Administration, the University of Dhaka.



**SM Momtazul Islam**

## Golden Harvest Group appoints new DMD

STAR BUSINESS DESK

Golden Harvest Group has recently witnessed the appointment of its new deputy managing director (DMD).

The appointee, SM Momtazul Islam, was previously serving Golden Harvest Ice Cream and Golden Harvest Agro Industries as chief executive officer, says a press release.

His 30 years' professional career included posts in Coca-Cola, Igloo Ice Cream and Milk, Polar Ice Cream, Bengal Meat, Bellissimo Ice Cream, Deshi Meat and Lovello Ice Cream.

## Keep travel simple to reopen economy: Heathrow CEO

REUTERS, London

The boss of London's Heathrow Airport told Britain on Monday to rebuild confidence in travel by making it easier to go abroad, as speculation grew that the government was poised to slap yet more new rules on arrivals.

Britain reopened its borders to large parts of the world on Monday, scrapping quarantine for fully vaccinated arrivals from the European Union and the United States, in a boost for airlines and travel companies brought to their knees by the pandemic.

But just as families and business travellers arrived at airports like London Heathrow, the industry faced a new headache over potential Covid-19 warnings against holidays to Spain.

Heathrow's chief executive called on the government not to throw new barriers in the way of travel just as it finds its feet again.

"Let's just make it easier now for people to travel," he told Reuters in the arrivals hall.

"I think we just need to keep things simple. We need to build confidence in travel."

Heathrow, like many airports and airlines across the world, is forecasting that it will be two to three years before travel returns to pre-pandemic levels.

# Brac Bank contributes Tk 4.54cr in Covid support

STAR BUSINESS DESK

Brac Bank has initiated a special CSR programme to stand by the families affected with Covid-19 on August 1.

The bank has recently signed an agreement with Brac, the world's largest NGO, to implement the project, said a press release.

Bangladesh Bank requested all the scheduled banks to allocate a special CSR fund equivalent to one per cent of the banks' 2020 profits.

The fund is necessitated to support with essential food or equivalent support in cash, or health and hygiene materials, or medicare of suspected Covid patients, or financial support to those who have lost their livelihood and are affected by Covid-19.

Brac Bank, accordingly, has allocated a fund of Tk 4.54 crore to support the Covid-affected families across the country.

Brac will be transferring the fund, on behalf of the bank, through mobile wallet bKash. About 30,267 families all over the country will receive emergency food support.

Each family will receive Tk 1,500 which

will enable them to buy essential food and other emergency necessities for two weeks.

Some 10 districts exposed to high risk of Covid transmission and under strict lockdown will be prioritised in this initiative. The districts are Khulna, Satkhira, Bogura, Magura, Dinajpur, Natore, Joypurhat, Bagerhat, Chuadanga, and Chattogram.

"We greatly appreciate this timely support from Brac Bank. It will contribute to our initiative, Dakhe Abar Desh, to bring food to the vulnerable households for whom the lockdown continues to prove particularly harsh," said Asif Saleh, executive director of Brac.

"We are thankful to Bangladesh Bank for their thoughts and guidance on supporting the Covid-affected families. We would also thank Brac for helping us in executing this enormous task, following the regulatory guidelines, to reaching out to the actual needy families," Managing Director and CEO Selim RF Hussain said.

In addition, Brac Bank employees contributed Tk 1.73 crore from their August salary as emergency food support to Brac's "Dakhe Amar Desh" initiative last year.



SOUTH BANGLA AGRICULTURE AND COMMERCE BANK

Zahidur Rahman, representing Thakurgaon 3 constituency in parliament, inaugurated a Pirganj sub-branch of the South Bangla Agriculture and Commerce Bank in Thakurgaon yesterday. Moseleh Uddin Ahmed, managing director and CEO, and Shafiuddin Ahmed, deputy managing director, virtually attended the programme.

# Oil prices hit by concern over Chinese economy

REUTERS, London

Oil prices fell on Monday as worries over China's economy resurfaced after a survey showing growth in factory activity slipped sharply in the world's second-largest oil consumer, with concerns compounded by higher crude output from OPEC producers.

Brent crude oil futures slid by 87 cents, or 1.15 per cent, to \$74.54 a barrel by 1145 GMT after touching a low of \$74.10. US West Texas Intermediate (WTI) crude futures dropped \$1, or 1.4 per cent, to \$72.95 after slipping to a session low of \$72.77.

"China has been leading economic recovery in Asia and if the pullback deepens, concerns will grow that the global outlook will see a significant decline," said Edward Moya, senior analyst at OANDA.

China's factory activity growth slipped sharply in July as demand contracted for the first time in more than a year, a survey showed on Monday.



REUTERS/FILE

A petrol station attendant prepares to refuel a car in Rome, Italy.

The weaker results in the private survey, mostly covering export-oriented and small manufacturers, broadly aligned with those in an official survey released on Saturday. Also weighing on prices, a Reuters survey found that oil output from the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) rose in July to its highest since April 2020.

# UK factories lose a bit more pace in July

REUTERS, London

Britain's factories reported a further slowing of growth in July - although it was still one of the fastest paces on record - as they struggled with staff shortages and supply chain problems caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, a survey showed on Monday.

The IHS Markit/CIPS UK Manufacturing Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) dipped to 60.4 from June's 63.9. The July reading was unchanged from a preliminary "flash" figure.

The index peaked at an all-time high of 65.6 in May as the sector - which accounts for about 10 per cent of British economic output - rode a wave of demand the coronavirus lockdowns were lifted.

Growth in output and new work eased

to four-month lows in July and some firms reported clients brought forward purchases to guard against supply-chain issues.

Seventy-two percent of manufacturers reported higher costs for a wide range of inputs such as chemicals, commodities, cardboard, electronics, foodstuffs, metals, packaging and timber, with Brexit causing problems alongside the pandemic. In response, factories increased their prices by almost as much as June's record jump.

"Amid growing indications that many supply chain disruptions and raw material shortages are unlikely to be fully resolved until 2022, the outlook remains one of constrained growth combined with high inflation for the foreseeable future," Rob Dobson, a director at IHS Markit, said.

# New Zealand housing crisis sparks human rights inquiry

REUTERS, Wellington

New Zealand's housing crisis is having a "punishing impact" on marginalised communities and leaving many people homeless, the human rights commission said on Monday as it launched an inquiry into the country's red-hot property market.

A raft of cooling measures enforced by Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern earlier this year has had no impact on runaway house prices in New Zealand, as investors cashed in on historically low interest rates and cheap access to capital under the government's pandemic-inspired stimulus spending.

Property prices in New Zealand have soared by the most among OECD nations, rising about 30 per cent in just the past 12 months.

"The housing crisis in Aotearoa is also a human rights crisis

encompassing homeownership, market renting, state housing and homelessness," New Zealand's Chief Human Rights Commissioner Paul Hunt said in a statement using the country's indigenous Maori name.

"It is having a punishing impact especially on the most marginalised in our communities," he said.

New Zealand's pandemic-inspired policies have translated into cheaper mortgages, allowing affluent "kiwis" to upsize their homes and build up portfolios of rental investment properties, fuelling a further surge in house prices. The nearly 30 per cent year-on-year increase, on top of a 90 per cent rise in the preceding decade, has locked out first home buyers and low income earners.

"The right to a decent home, although binding on New Zealand in

international law, is almost invisible and unknown in Aotearoa," he said.

The median house price in the biggest city Auckland has increased by 25 per cent to NZ\$1,150,000 (\$801,320) in June this year from NZ\$920,000 last year.

The United Nations Special Rapporteur on adequate housing, Leilani Farha, said in her report in June that consecutive governments have failed to ensure that the housing market meets the needs of the people.

Soaring prices and rents have forced families into emergency housing like motels, with about 23,000 individuals and families waiting for public housing. Under pressure Ardern launched a raft of measures this year to tax investors and discourage speculators, but these have had only a marginal impact.

The rising inequality inflamed by the housing crisis is arguably the biggest political challenge facing Ardern's centre-left Labour-led government. The 41-year-old's popularity soared with her response to the pandemic that kept nationwide cases to barely 2,500 and led to an emphatic election win last year.

But her support has been slipping with the latest Newshub-Reid Research Poll on Sunday showing Labour's support fell to 43 per cent, down almost 10 points since the last poll in May, while the main opposition National Party's support inched up to almost 29 per cent.

Ardern defended her government's record on housing saying it was pulling every lever to ensure everyone gets a warm, dry home.

"When I look at the record of what we've done, 8,000 houses to date, 18,000 on the cards. We are scaling up as quickly as we can," Ardern told state broadcaster TVNZ in an interview after the inquiry was announced.



REUTERS/FILE

A view of personal items of a homeless person living on the sides of busy streets in Wellington, New Zealand on April 15.

# Cattle farming a new hope for haor people

FROM PAGE B4

Islam went on to say that amid the ongoing coronavirus pandemic, farmers have also been deprived access to the government's stimulus funds. Many people, including Shamsul Mia and Helal Mia of Rajnagar upazila, said seasonal farms have become a good business in the area over several years.

In this case, this business would have become more popular if it had received financial benefits from the government or banks.

Abdul Hannan, general secretary of Bangladesh Krishak Samity of Kulaura upazila unit under Hakaluki Haor, told this correspondent that local marginal farmers can no longer rely on paddy cultivation due to various

difficulties in the last few years. "So, they do cattle farming as well despite not getting any government benefits," he added.

Chameli Rani Dev, manager of the Janata Bank branch in Rajnagar, said loans were being disbursed as per the rules and that only those without collateral face issues.

Dr Md Abdus Samad, the district livestock officer in Moulvibazar, said he would send a letter to the Prime Minister's Office to cooperate with small farmers.

He assured providing cooperation to the farmers with treatment and advice.

Dr Md Rustam Ali, director (additional duty) of the Department of Livestock Services in Sylhet, said

the livestock department in Sylhet was operating with only 37 per cent of its full manpower.

"This is why those who are interested in farming have to come to the office to discuss their problems. Then at least some of the problems can be solved," he said.

On the other hand, a project called "Integrated Livestock Development Project" has been taken up for haor farmers. "If it starts, some problems will be solved," he added.

Dilip Kumar Adhikary, additional director of the Department of Agricultural Extension in Sylhet, told this correspondent that cattle farming has given new hopes to save paddy farmers in haors areas from different disasters and natural calamities.

**Bangladesh Land Port Authority**  
T.C.B Bhaban (5th Floor)  
Kawran Bazar, Dhaka-1215  
[www.bsbk.gov.bd](http://www.bsbk.gov.bd)

Memo No. 18.15.0000.023.14.051.21-696 Dated: 02 August, 2021

**e-Tender Notice**

This is an online tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted.

To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required. The fees for downloading the e-Tender documents of following Package from the National e-GP System Portal have to be deposited online through and registered bank branches.

Sl. No.	Name of work	Tender ID	Last date & time of submission documents	Tender/proposal opening date & time
1.	Construction of Open Yard including Land Development at Benapole Land Port, Jashore.	595927	06.09.2021 13:30pm	06.09.2021 14:30pm

Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP help desk ([helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd](mailto:helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd)).

**Md. Mostafa Kamal Majumder**  
Member (Admin & Finance)  
&  
Project Director (Joint Secretary)  
'Construction of Cargo Vehicle Terminal at Benapole Land Port Project  
Phone: 02-55013955

GD-1406

**Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh**  
Ministry of Agriculture  
Barind Multipurpose Development Authority  
Office of the Project Director, EIRP & Superintending Engineer  
Rangpur Circle, College Road, Alamnagar, Rangpur-5400  
Email: [se\\_rangpur@bmda.gov.bd](mailto:se_rangpur@bmda.gov.bd)

Memo No. PD/EIRP/BMDA/Rang/2021-2022/65 Date: 02/08/2021

**e-Tender Notice**

1	Ministry	Ministry of Agriculture (MOA).	
2	Agency	Barind Multipurpose Development Authority (BMDA).	
3	Budget and source of funds	Development	
Description of work	Tender Reference No.	Tender ID No.	Tender closing & opening date
Supply of uPVC Pipes & Moulded Fittings	PD/EIRP/BMDA/Rang/uPVC pipe/01/2021-2022 Date- 02/08/2021	595705	26-Aug-2021 12:00
Supply of Centrifugal Pump-Motor Set for LLP	PD/EIRP/BMDA/Rang/Electic LLP/02/2021-2022 Date-02/08/2021	595809	26-Aug-2021 12:15
Supply, Installation, Testing & Commissioning of 15 HP Solar Pumping System with Necessary Accessories Including Related Civil Works	PD/EIRP/BMDA/Rang/Solar LLP/03/2021-2022 Date-02/08/2021	595810	26-Aug-2021 12:30
Supply of 150mm Internal Dia Suction Hose Pipe	PD/EIRP/BMDA/Rang/Hose Pipe/04/2021-2022 Date-02/08/2021	595811	26-Aug-2021 12:45
Supply Installation and Commissioning of 30 Meter Head and 5 liter/second discharge of Solar Irrigation AC Submersible Pump with Solar Panels Including Necessary Accessories & Related Works on Turnkey Basis	PD/EIRP/BMDA/Rang/Solar Dugwell/05/2021-2022 Date-02/08/2021	595820	26-Aug-2021 13:00
5	Name, designation & address of PE	Engr. Md Habibur Rahman Khan, Project Director, EIRP & Superintending Engineer (In Charge), BMDA, Rangpur Circle, Rangpur.	
6	This is online tender, where e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and offline/hard copies will not be accepted. Interested person/farms can see details in the website: <a href="http://www.eprocure.gov.bd">www.eprocure.gov.bd</a>		
7	The fees for downloading the e-Tender documents from the National e-GP System Portal have to be deposited online through any registered bank branches.		
8	Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP help desk ( <a href="mailto:helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd">helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd</a> ).		

**Engr. Md. Habibur Rahman Khan**  
Project Director, EIRP & Superintending Engineer (In Charge)  
BMDA Rangpur Circle, Rangpur

GD-1404

# Summit, Commonwealth sign MoU for LNG offtake

STAR BUSINESS DESK

Summit Oil and Shipping Company has signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Commonwealth LNG to collaborate in the supply of LNG to Asia, including Bangladesh.

The signing ceremony took place at the Bangladesh embassy in Washington, DC in presence of Tawfiq-e-Elahi Chowdhury, adviser to the prime minister on power, energy and mineral resources, said a press release yesterday.

The scope of the MoU includes the Summit potentially contracting for 1 million tonnes per year (MTPA) of LNG offtake, for a term of up to 20 years, from Commonwealth's 8.4 MTPA facility currently under development in Cameron, Louisiana.

The Summit's associated companies within Summit Group have approximately 3 GW of gas-to-power electricity in operation or development within the Indian subcontinent, and operate a 500 mmcf/d floating storage and regasification unit (FSRU) and LNG terminal under Summit LNG Terminal Co (Pvt) in Moheshkhali, Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh.

Chowdhury welcomed the MoU as an important step towards further expanding the existing energy cooperation between Bangladesh and the United States.

The advisor underscored the



Summit and Commonwealth signed a memorandum of understanding to collaborate in the supply of LNG, in the presence of Tawfiq-e-Elahi Chowdhury, an adviser to the prime minister, at the Bangladesh embassy in Washington, DC recently.

importance of ensuring access to energy sources to support the economic development related activities in Bangladesh.

"We're proud of what this step means towards securing this major source of clean energy for the growing economy of Bangladesh," said Farid Khan, vice

chairman of Summit Group.

"We look forward to having Commonwealth LNG as a partner that can deliver US-sourced LNG, providing diversification of supply for Bangladesh and the pricing stability associated with Henry Hub."

Commonwealth LNG

President and CEO Paul Varello said the MoU was evidence of just how aligned the parties were in achieving their shared objectives.

"Commonwealth's focus on producing the lowest-cost liquefaction in the US remains important in a highly competitive global market," said Varello.

"This becomes even more critical for a rapidly emerging economy such as Bangladesh where the need for additional energy is critical for sustaining its economic growth. Summit has recognised that need and Commonwealth LNG looks forward to partnering in these efforts."

# SSE makes \$1.7b Scotia Gas exit in low-carbon push

REUTERS

Britain's SSE on Monday agreed to sell its entire 33.3 per cent stake in Scotia Gas Networks (SGN) for 1.225 billion pounds (\$1.70 billion) as the power producer sharpens its focus on renewables and low-carbon electricity.

A Canadian consortium of Ontario Teachers' Pension Plan Board and Brookfield Super-Core Infrastructure Partners will buy SSE's stake in SGN, which supplies gas in England, Wales, Scotland and the west of Northern Ireland.

SSE has set out plans to invest in low-carbon energy infrastructure over the next five years and treble its renewable electricity output by 2030 as it transitions to net zero. It said in May it was on track to invest 7.5 billion pounds in low-carbon projects up to 2025.

The SGN deal concludes SSE's more than 2 billion pound disposal programme and the sale is expected to complete within the current financial year, the company said.

"The capital we are releasing through our disposals programme will help enable us to maximise the delivery of our low-carbon electricity orientated strategy," said SSE Finance Director Gregor Alexander.

Proceeds from the SGN sale will be used to cut net debt in the short term and support investment plans, the London-listed utility said, adding that it would provide an update with its interim results in November.

SSE shares rose 1.8 per cent in morning trade.

SSE acquired a 50 per cent share in SGN in 2005 for 505 million pounds (\$702.30 million), before selling a 16.7 per cent stake to a unit of the Abu Dhabi Investment Authority (ADIA) in 2016.

SSE said on Monday the Canadian consortium has also agreed to acquire the ADIA stake for an undisclosed amount. Morgan Stanley and Credit Suisse acted as financial advisers to SSE and Nomura acted as financial adviser to ADIA. Evercore acted as financial adviser to Ontario Teachers'.

# M&A rush, earnings power European stocks to new highs

REUTERS

European stocks scaled fresh peaks on Monday, driven by dealmaking activity and strong results from Europe's biggest bank HSBC, with a rebound in Asian stocks also helping set a bright start to August.

The pan-European STOXX 600 index rose 0.6 per cent to hit an all-time high of 464.5 points, with retailers, automakers and miners among the top performers.

British aero-engineer Meggitt soared 58.2 per cent to hit a life high after US industrial firm Parker-Hannifin said it would buy the UK rival in a deal valued at \$8.76 billion.

Among other deals, British asset management services provider Sanne Group jumped 7.9 per cent after it said it could get a takeover bid from fund servicer Apex Group.

UK's midcap index gained 0.6 per cent, while the blue-chip FTSE 100 index added 0.8 per cent.

In earnings, Asia-focussed lender HSBC inched up 0.5 per cent after it beat forecasts for first-half pretax profit and reinstated dividend payments.

French insurer Axa gained 2.5 per cent after it posted a 180 per cent surge in first-half net income, while German rival Allianz

tumbled 6.4 per cent after US regulators started a probe relating to Allianz Global Investors' Structured Alpha Funds.

Of the more than half of the STOXX 600 companies that have reported second-quarter results so far, 67 per cent have topped profit estimates, as per Refinitiv IBES data.

"Having reached all-time highs post 1Q results, the breadth of positive EPS revisions in Europe remains very strong both in absolute terms and versus peers," European equity strategists at Morgan Stanley said in a note. "Europe now sees the best earnings revisions of all global regions."

Meanwhile, a survey showed manufacturing activity across the euro zone continued to expand at a blistering pace in July, but supply bottlenecks sent input costs soaring.

Optimism around European earnings and economic reopening helped the benchmark STOXX 600 end July with a sixth straight month of gains despite concerns about inflation, soaring virus cases in Asia and a major regulatory crackdown in China.

British jet and auto parts supplier Senior Plc jumped 4.3 per cent after it reported a first-half profit compared with a loss a year earlier.

# Panel to decide on Evaly's plea for more time

FROM PAGE B1

In its reply to the notice of the ministry, Evaly said it wanted to have its financial statements audited by a third party and set a valuation of the company.

"We have to work on a lot of data and analytics that requires a significant amount of time and effort," Mahbi Chowdhury, senior vice-president of Evaly, told The Daily Star yesterday.

"Hence, we have replied to some of the queries and sought six months to come up with the replies to the rest of the queries in details."

The commerce ministry's notice also asked Evaly to clarify the whereabouts of around Tk 338 crore that the platform owed to customers and merchants.

According to an investigation report of Bangladesh Bank, Evaly has a liability of Tk 213.94 crore to customers and Tk 189.85 crore to merchants.

It has assets worth Tk 91.69 crore. Of the sum, the current asset amounts to Tk 65.17 crore.

The commerce ministry said it had noticed that Evaly was not delivering products on time despite receiving advance payments from customers.

"The merchants from whom it gets products are also not being paid. As a result, a large number of buyers and sellers are likely to suffer financially," the notice said.

It also wanted to know how much money Evaly received from customers since its inception to July 15 and the amount paid to merchants.

# IPDC profit jumps 30pc

FROM PAGE B1

The IPDC's classified loans stood at 1.12 per cent, which is one of the lowest classified loan ratios in the industry.

In the second quarter (April-June) its earnings per share (EPS) stood at Tk 0.55 while it was Tk 0.45 the previous year.

In the half yearly (January-June) period its EPS stood at Tk 1.11 while it was Tk 0.85 in the same period in 2020.

Yesterday, its shares closed 3.81 per cent higher at Tk 30.

# India's factory growth rebounded in July

REUTERS, Bengaluru

Factory activity in India bounced back in July as demand surged both at home and abroad, prompting companies to create new jobs for the first time since the onset of the pandemic, a private sector survey showed on Monday.

The Manufacturing Purchasing Managers' Index, compiled by IHS Markit, jumped to 55.3 last month from 48.1 in June, well above 50-level separating growth from contraction.

"Output rose at a robust pace, with over one-third of companies noting a monthly expansion in production, amid a rebound in new business and the easing of some local Covid-19 restrictions," said Pollyanna De Lima, economics associate director at IHS Markit.

India grappled with a devastating second wave of coronavirus infections in April and May but falling case numbers have allowed many restrictions to be eased.

The country is still reporting more than 40,000 cases per day, taking the total number of infections to around 31.6 million, but the economic reopening induced higher demand and sales, leading to a sharp expansion in output.

New export orders grew at the fastest rate since April.

Employment rose for the first time since March 2020, breaking a 15-month chain of job shedding. However, the pace of hiring was mild, indicating a job crisis is still evident.

Growth in Asia's third-largest

economy could lose momentum, with new coronavirus variants posing the biggest risk to already weakened forecasts, while inflation was expected to rise, a recent Reuters poll showed.

A lack of raw material availability and higher freight fees drove input costs higher, though the pace was at a seven-month low.

Despite higher input costs, output charges rose only slightly, suggesting companies absorbed the extra cost

burden to boost sales and stay competitive.

"With firms' cost burdens continuing to rise, however, and signs of spare capacity still evident, it's too early to say that such a trend will be sustained in coming months," added De Lima.

The Reserve Bank of India is not expected to raise interest rates until next fiscal year on predictions inflation remains within its target band of 2 per cent-6 per cent this year.



A labourer welds an iron pillar at a building material factory in an industrial area in Dasna, in the central Indian state of Uttar Pradesh, India.

# ADP spending rebounds

FROM PAGE B1

The science and technology ministry came second riding on the faster implementation of the Rooppur Nuclear Power Plant, with an execution rate of 101.29 per cent.

Despite being one of the priority sectors of the government owing to the ongoing pandemic, the health services division emerged as one of the worst performers. It spent 57.91 per cent of the budget for FY21.

Similarly, the food ministry's expenses were 55.71 per cent. The social welfare ministry spent 70.16 per cent of the allocation.

Hussain said it was unfortunate that projects undertaken to address the public health emergency suffered from the same business as usual problems as any other project.

"Their speed and quality of implementation do not reflect any sense of urgency and dedication to addressing the health distress caused by the pandemic."

The agriculture ministry's ADP implementation rate stood at 97.52 per cent, the disaster management and relief ministry 89.04 per cent, the fisheries and livestock ministry 88.77 per cent, and the road transport and highways division 87.98 per cent.

The local government division, which received the highest allocation from the development budget, attained 81.44 per cent of the spending goal.

The ADP implementation rate of the railways ministry stood at 84.97 per cent as it moved fast to complete the Padma Rail Link project.

Khondaker Golam Moazzem, research

director of the Centre for Policy Dialogue, said the lower implementation reflected the weakness of the allocation structure of the budget as it was assumed that the projects that received the higher allocation would face difficulty in their implementation.

In a welcoming move, the government has prioritised projects to free up funds for those that would help the country tackle the impacts of the pandemic.

"The move was right. But I don't think the plan had worked as expected," Moazzem said.

The implementation of the aid-backed large projects slowed as many foreign consultants, experts and workers delayed to return to Bangladesh because of the pandemic. Moazzem called for holding project directors accountable for the lower implementation.

"The accountability of the project directors has to be ensured as projects often face time and cost overruns. Project directors have to be held responsible for the corruption and wastage as well."

The government has set aside Tk 225,324 crore for the ADP in FY22.

Moving forward, the authorities need to focus rigorously on holding the implementation agencies accountable for delivering what they promise to deliver in their annual performance agreements, according to Hussain.

"Intensive, dispassionate and independent monitoring and evaluation of projects is a technical solution that will yield results only if it is backed by the political will to make sure we get the value of money spent on the ADP."

# Remittance slips to 5-month low

FROM PAGE B1

The global hundi cartel, which operates an illegal cross-boundary financial system, has been facing a major disruption since the first quarter of 2020 as international travel came to a halt because of the pandemic, fueling the growth of remittances.

Many nations, including the countries where most expatriate Bangladeshis work, have enforced restrictions on the movement

from time to time to contain the spread of the virus.

This has dealt a blow to the hundi system and encouraged the expatriates to send money through the formal channel.

In addition, both the government and local banks have taken some measures, including the introduction of cash incentives, making remitting money through the banking channel attractive.

# Loose monetary policy ramps up stocks

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

The rising pace of the stock market index gained higher speeds after the announcement of another expansionary monetary policy for the current fiscal year amidst the pandemic.

The DSEX, the benchmark index of the Dhaka Stock Exchange (DSE), rose 56 points, or 0.87 per cent, to 6,481.56 yesterday. This is a continuation of the index going past its highest level.

In the previous two days, the index rose at a slower pace as investors were cautious to see what was coming in the monetary plan. In those days, the index rose 46 points.

As the monetary policy was expansionary, investors are hoping for the money flow to rise in the market, said a stock broker.

So investor participation in the market rose, he said, adding that there was not that many scopes to invest excess liquidity of the banking sector.

Excess liquidity in the banking sector stood at Tk 231,462 crore as of June, up 66 per cent year-on-year and 9 per cent from a month ago, according to BB data.

The stock market may see higher liquidity if people's confidence remains on the market, he added.

Turnover, an important indicator of the

market, rose 43 per cent to Tk 2,187 crore compared to the previous day.

Despite announcing on the DSE's website that there is no reason for a rise, S Alam Cold Rolled Steels topped the gainers' list, rising 10 per cent yesterday.

The demand for the stock reached such a high that there was no seller for most of the day.

However, Prime Insurance Company shed the most in the market, falling 9.89 per cent, though the company yesterday published its profits for the first half of the current year stating that it had returned to profits from losses.

Its earnings per share was Tk 0.75 in the current year's first half while it incurred a per share loss of Tk 0.31 year-on-year.

Stocks of Beximco were traded the most, worth Tk 58 crore, followed by Saif Powertec, Orion Pharmaceuticals, GPH Ispat and Fu-Wang Ceramic Industry.

At the DSE, 232 stocks advanced, 118 fell and 25 remained unchanged.

Chattogram Stock Exchange also rose yesterday. The CASPI, the general index of the port city bourse, increased 223 points, or 1.19 per cent, to 18,858.

Among 323 stocks to undergo trade, 231 advanced, 69 fell and 23 remained unchanged.

# Cattle farming a new hope for haor people

MINTU DESHWARA

A number of seasonal cattle farms have sprung up at villages found in Sylhet's haor areas thanks to the availability of naturally-grown grass in the region, providing a much-needed alternative to paddy cultivation.

"Since the land in haor areas is only suitable for growing paddy, I had previously relied on boro farming," said Masum Mia, a seasonal cattle trader based at the Kazirbazar cattle market in Sylhet.

"But every time April rolled around, I would spend sleepless nights wondering if the rain would spoil my crops," he told The Daily Star.

Although the domestic demand for small-and-medium sized cattle is high, farmers have been unable to institutionalise this initiative due to the lack of easy access to financing.

Mia turned to cattle farming following successive disasters in 2016 and 2017, when all his crops were washed away by floods.

"Now, the risk is relatively low and I benefit as a result. This job gives me new hopes," he said, adding that the demand for cattle is particularly high in the lead up to Eid-ul-Azha.

Other than cows and goats, buffaloes are also in high demand in local markets, especially in the Bangla months of Baishakh and Jaishtha, when wholesalers from all over the country visit Sylhet's haor areas to purchase cattle.

During a recent visit to the Kawadighi, Kanikiari, Subidpur, and Kujbar haor areas in Sylhet's Moulvibazar district, this correspondent found that a considerable number of farmers have turned to cattle rearing on their own initiative.

According to local sources, the haor farmers buy cattle in the December-January period and raise them organically by allowing them to graze freely till about June each year. Many farmers said they could not increase the number of cattle at their farms due to a shortage of capital.



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MINTU DESHWARA

Ananda Das, a retired government official residing in the Bhuksimoil area of Moulvibazar's Kulaura upazila, said the livelihoods of people living in haor areas was once dependent on just

cows and buffaloes if they had got easy bank loans," he added.

Solman Mia, a resident of Kadipur area in Hakaluki Haor of Moulvibazar district, said cattle farms are dependent on the natural

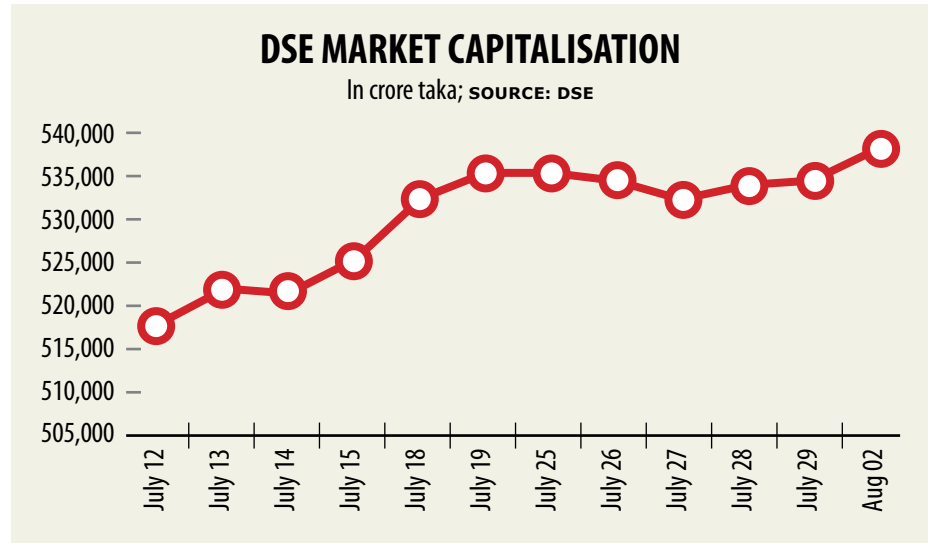
"In that case, 50 per cent of the profit has to be paid. For example, if I took a loan of Tk 1 lakh last year to buy a cow that I will sell for Tk 1.5 lakh the following Eid, then I will have to pay a total of Tk 1.25 lakh to the person owed," he said.

"I got only Tk 25,000 as a salary for raising the cows. But there are risks. Creditors don't want to pay everyone. Those who pay more profit are paid. And if I got this loan from the bank, I would have to pay a total of Tk 1.10 lakh," Haque added.

Khairul Islam, another resident of Kawadighi Haor, said he had gone to Sonali, Krishi and Janata bank branches in Rajnagar upazila for a small loan.

"But the officials concerned of Janata Bank did not pay attention to us. Sonali Bank could not provide the loan either while Krishi Bank welcomed the initiative but only assured cooperation," he added.

READ MORE ON B2



## DISTRICTS IN FOCUS

paddy crops.

And due to heavy rains almost every year, the farmers often had to count losses.

To make up for these losses, many marginal and small farmers and sharecroppers have set up seasonal cattle farms.

But thanks to their capital crisis, the number of cattle being reared has not increased.

"They could have become self-sufficient by now by raising more

grass at haors that makes the cost of raising cattle in these areas comparatively less.

"More profits are being made in less time at lower costs. As a result, many people in the region are becoming interested in seasonal cattle farming," he added.

Shamsul Haque, a resident of Kawadighi Haor, said he takes loans from affluent personalities under special arrangements due to the lack of access to finance.

## GLOBAL BUSINESS

# US senators unveil \$1tr infrastructure bill

REUTERS, Washington

US senators introduced a sweeping \$1-trillion bipartisan plan to invest in roads, bridges, ports, high-speed internet and other infrastructure, with some predicting the chamber could pass this week the largest public works legislation in decades.

The massive infrastructure package, a goal

that has eluded Congress for years, is a top legislative priority for Democratic President Joe Biden, who billed it on Sunday as the largest such investment in a century.

Senators said the 2,702-page bill included \$550 billion in new spending over five years for items such as roads, rail, electric vehicle charging stations and replacing lead water pipes on top of

\$450 billion in previously approved funds.

"I believe we can quickly process relevant amendments and pass this bill in days," Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, a New York Democrat, said of the legislation after it was announced by a bipartisan group of senators.

"This is a really important bill because it takes our big, aging and outdated infrastructure in this country and modernizes it. That's good for everybody," said Senator Rob Portman, the lead Republican negotiator.

However, some Republicans criticized the bill as too costly. "I've got real concerns with this bill," Republican Senator Mike Lee said in a floor speech. "All is not well with the way we spend money."

It was not yet clear whether senators outside the bipartisan group that negotiated the bill will offer amendments that could possibly upset the delicate coalition that was cobbled together.

If the bill passes the Senate, it must be considered in the House of Representatives, where some Democrats have blasted it as too small and the Democratic leadership has paired it with a \$3.5 trillion "human infrastructure" bill to pour money into education, child care, climate change and other priorities.

Democrats want to offset that social spending with tax hikes on corporations and wealthy Americans earning more than \$400,000 a year, measures opposed by Republicans, leaving the fate of both bills up in the air.

Sunday night's developments capped months of negotiating, and infighting, among several groups of senators and the White House.



Vehicles are parked outside the US Capitol building in Washington, DC on July 31.

REUTERS

# Asian factory activity hit by rising costs, Delta variant



An employee works on a production line manufacturing steel structures at a factory in Huzhou, Zhejiang province, China.

REUTERS/FILE

REUTERS, Tokyo

Asia's factories hit a rough patch in July as rising input costs and a new wave of coronavirus infections overshadowed solid global demand, highlighting the fragile nature of the region's recovery.

Manufacturing activity rose in export powerhouses Japan and South Korea, though firms suffered from supply chain disruptions and raw material shortages that pushed up costs. China's factory activity growth slipped sharply in July as demand contracted for the first time in over a year, a private survey showed, broadly aligning with an official survey released on Saturday showing a slowdown in activity.

Indonesia, Vietnam and Malaysia saw factory activity shrink in July due to a resurgence in infections and stricter Covid-19 restrictions, according to private surveys.

The surveys highlight the divergence emerging across the global economy on the pace of recovery from pandemic-induced strains, which led the International Monetary Fund to downgrade this year's growth forecast for emerging Asia.

"Anecdotal evidence suggested a resurgence in Covid-19 cases across Asia and ongoing supply chain disruption had led to demand easing in domestic and external markets," said Usamah Bhatti, an economist at IHS Markit.

China's Caixin/Markit Manufacturing Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) fell to 50.3 in July from 51.3 in June, marking the lowest level in 15 months, as rising costs clouded the outlook for the world's manufacturing hub.

The final au Jibun Bank Japan PMI rose to 53.0 in July from 52.4 in the previous month, though manufacturers saw input prices rise at the fastest pace since 2008.

Japan also faces a surge in Delta variant cases that forced the government to expand state of emergency curbs to wider areas through Aug. 31, casting a shadow over the Olympic Games and dashing hopes for a sharp rebound in July-September growth.

South Korea's PMI stood at 53.0 in July, holding above the 50 mark indicating an expansion in activity for the 10th straight month. But a sub-index on input prices rose at the second highest on record in a sign of the strain firms are feeling from rising raw material costs.

Underscoring the pandemic's strain on emerging Asia, Indonesia's PMI plunged to 40.1 in July from 53.5 in June.

Manufacturing activity also shrank in Vietnam and Malaysia, the PMI July surveys showed. Once seen as a driver of global growth, Asian's emerging economies are lagging advanced economies in recovering from the pandemic's pain as delays in vaccine rollouts hurt domestic demand and countries reliant on tourism.

# HSBC profits double

AFP, Hong Kong

HSBC on Monday said it would resume paying dividends to shareholders after first-half profits more than doubled as an ongoing restructuring and pivot to Asia continues to pay off.

The results beat analyst estimates and are a shot in the arm for the Asia-reliant lender after a tumultuous 2020 saw its fortunes take a hammering from the coronavirus and simmering geopolitical tensions.

Reported profit before tax rose \$6.5 billion to \$10.8 billion while reported profit after tax increased \$5.3 billion to \$8.4 billion. The bank also announced an interim dividend of seven cents per ordinary share for the first half of the year.

British regulators last year ordered banks to suspend payouts as the coronavirus tore through the global economy to shore up liquidity. But last month they relaxed those "temporary guardrail" measures.

HSBC is one of the biggest dividend payers in European banking, and after a year of restrictions is expected to set aside more than any of its rivals this year and next, according to estimates collated by Bloomberg Intelligence. "We definitely feel more confident," chief financial officer Ewen Stevenson told Bloomberg.

"We will keep buybacks under review" together with dividends, he added. HSBC shares were trading up 2.3 per cent in Hong Kong shortly after the results were released.

Like all banking giants HSBC was battered by the coronavirus last year, with a 30 per cent plunge in 2020 profit.

Under CEO Noel Quinn, it has embarked on a dramatic restructuring, rolling out plans to cut its workforce by about 35,000 to drive down costs and to refocus on its most profitable areas - Asia and the Middle East.

HSBC makes 90 per cent of its profit in Asia, with China and Hong Kong the major drivers of growth.

# Twitter's Dorsey leads \$29b buyout of Afterpay

REUTERS, Sydney

Square Inc, the payments firm of Twitter Inc co-founder Jack Dorsey, will purchase buy now, pay later (BNPL) pioneer Afterpay Ltd for \$29 billion, creating a global transactions giant in the biggest buyout of an Australian firm.

The takeover underscores the popularity of a business model that has upended consumer credit by charging merchants a fee to offer small point-of-sale loans which their shoppers repay in interest-free instalments, bypassing credit checks.

It also locks in a remarkable share-price run for Afterpay, whose stock traded below A\$10 in early 2020 and has since soared as the Covid-19 pandemic - and stimulus payments to a workforce stuck at home - saw a rapid shift to shopping online.

The all-stock buyout would value the shares at A\$126.21 (\$92.65), the companies said in a joint statement on Monday.