BUSINESS

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Suffering lingers for duped e-commerce customers

For inquiries, call us at

16704

MAHMUDUL HASAN, SUKANTA HALDER and SHAHID BAPPY

Md Nabid Rahman, employed at a private company in Dhaka, made a payment of Tk 12.5 lakh to e-commerce platform Dhamaka in March for two motorcycles and other products which were on offer at hefty discounts.

He was told that the deliveries would be made within three weeks.

Nearly six months on, he is still in

"I have gone to Dhamaka's office several times in the last three months but it was

closed. They hang up when I call over the phone," Rahman told The Daily Star.

"Finally, two months ago they told me that I will get my products very soon. But still I didn't get the products...I don't want the products anymore, I just want my money back," he said.

Fazle Rabby, who just recently graduated from a private university, went to the Directorate of National Consumer Rights Protection in late August to file a complaint against Evaly for not delivering products he had ordered and paid for.

"I ordered a motorcycle on January 17 from Evaly. Its market price was Tk 1.75

lakh. I was offered Tk 1.07 lakh after discounts. At that time I ordered groceries worth around Tk 20,000, he said.

"Evaly told me that they would give me the product within 45 working days, excluding government closures. And now it is August, I haven't received READ MORE ON B3



Banks, non-banks can't comply: BB

Premium Quality Tiles Brand

BSEC ORDER ON STABILISATION FUND

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Listed banks and non-bank financial institutions cannot comply with the stock market regulator's orders on the capital market stabilisation fund and cash dividend payment as they are inconsistent with the Bank Company Act.

The Bangladesh Bank informed the Bangladesh Securities and Exchange Commission (BSEC) about this in a meeting between the two sides at its headquarters

A top official of the central bank said the BB apprised the BSEC about the complexity of the capital market stabilisation fund as it contradicts with the Bank Company

The BSEC passed a rule on the stabilisation fund in June that would be formed using the undistributed and unclaimed dividends of the listed companies. The aim is to use the funds to safeguard the interest of the stock market and general investors.

The fund size would be around Tk 21,000 crore, according to the commission.

But banks and NBFIs would not be able to follow the orders, the central banker said.

The central bank also said banks would also not be able to follow the commission order on the cash dividend announced by the listed banks and NBFIs.

The commission recently allowed the listed companies to declare cash dividends from the profits made in the just-concluded financial year despite having accumulated

This is not consistent with the Bank Company Act, the Financial Institutions Act, and international norms, the

central banker said. So, the BB has informed the BSEC that it couldn't be applicable for banks and NBFIs.

BSTI too will issue halal certificates

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Bangladesh Standards & Testing Institution (BSTI) is going to issue halal certification for processed products, particularly processed foods, to facilitate exports.

The standards agency will be the second organisation in Bangladesh to award halal certification for locally made products, mainly The Islamic Foundation Bangladesh is already issuing such certificates.

In a notice last week, the BSTI, an agency of the industries ministry, added the provision of halal certification to the BSTI Regulations, 1989.

It said it would issue halal certification marks for processed goods, cosmetics, medicines and other processes or services in line with Islamic laws.

Reazul Haque, deputy Md director for certification marks of the BSTI, said the state-run agency decided to provide the halal certification marks to facilitate exports of processed foods.

"We will issue the halal certifications for processed foods and cosmetics initially. The BSTI is known internationally because of its relations with international standards organisations, so we believe that our halal certificates will receive acceptance globally."

The BSTI aims to give a boost to exports to the Middle East and READ MORE ON B3 | Muslim-majority countries.



CERTIFICATE

AT BSTI

RENEWAL FEE

Small firm: Tk **1,000**

Medium: Tk **3,000**

Large: Tk **5,000**

Islamic Foundation has been issuing halal certificates since 2007

Halal certificates issued to **130** firms for over

700 products, mainly foods Some **40** companies export with halal certificates from the foundation

HALAL CERTIFICATION:

KEY POINTS

BSTI to issue halal certificates for processed items, including foods

Initially it will issue certificates for processed foods

certification for firms that cater to the domestic market," Haque said. The Islamic Foundation says it

has been issuing halal certificates and logos to local manufacturers since 2007 to support the shipment of processed foods to international markets, mainly the Middle East.

Globally, there is over a trilliondollar market for halal items, and the Islamic Foundation has so far issued halal certificates to 130 companies for more than 700 products, said Abu Saleh Patwary, deputy director at the Department of Halal Certificate.

More than 40 companies are exporting products to at least 35

"We will also issue halal countries after securing the halal certificates, he said.

"The BSTI does not have the mandate to issue halal certificates." BSTI's Haque declined to comment on the issue. Khurshid Ahmad Farhad, general

manager of the international marketing department of Bombay Sweets & Co Ltd, said it was better to deal with the issue by one organisation.

Kamruzzaman Kamal, director for marketing of Pran-RFL Group, said halal certification was usually required in some cases in exporting products, especially in Muslimmajority countries.

"Moreover, in some non-Muslim

countries, there is a segment for halal products, and halal certification is also required in that case.'

He said Pran-RFL Group usually uses the halal certificate from the Department of Islamic Development Malaysia as there had been no certifying body in Bangladesh before.

When the Islamic Foundation introduced the certification, it also took certificates from it for some sectors, Kamal said.

"Now, the BSTI has started. I think this is a good initiative. If the authorities extend these supports locally, it will definitely be better. If accepted globally, the certification will be useful in case of exports," he

Bangladesh shipped around \$1 billion worth of halal products in 2020-21 financial year, out of which about 70 per cent went to Muslimmajority countries, according to Md Iqtadul Hoque, general secretary of the Bangladesh Agro-Processors' Association.

If the BSTI gives halal certificates, it will get some advantage in Muslim-majority countries, he said.

According to the notification of the BSTI, the certificate or renewal fee for small industries is Tk 1,000, Tk 3,000 for medium-sized industries, and Tk 5,000 for large industries

The certificate will be given for three years. After the expiry of the period, companies can apply for

Jatri raises \$1.2m to expand operations



STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Tech-based transportation platform Jatri has raised \$1.2 million, or nearly Tk 10.03 crore, in its latest round of fund-raising to expand its operations across the country.

termed Pre-Series A, was participated in by Reflect Ventures, Brain-Too-Free Ventures, SBK tech ventures, and prominent global strategic mobility investors. addition, existing investors took part in the oversubscribed round.

In about two years since its journey began, the company has digitised its operations with thousands of bus partners, transacting over 3.5 million transport tickets over its proprietary platform, it said in a

READ MORE ON B3

Sri Lanka's Capital Alliance enters Bangladesh

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Sri Lanka's Capital Alliance (CAL) has recently made a foray into Bangladesh's brokerage business.

CAL is Sri Lanka's leading investment bank, offering integrated investment and capital market solutions, and this becomes its first overseas foray.

CAL will hold a majority stake of CAL Securities, the company said in a press release yesterday.

The company's local shareholders include Raihan Shamsi, former CEO of Accenture Bangladesh, and Salahuddin Ahmed, managing director of M&J

"We are delighted to receive formal trading rights and are thankful to the Bangladesh Securities and Exchange Commission and Dhaka Stock Exchange for their support," said Ajith Fernando, chairman of CAL Securities, Bangladesh and group CEO of CAL, Sri

Sri Lanka and Bangladesh -- both classified as frontier markets -- have similarities in operating capital markets.

"With our deep experience in Sri Lanka and insatiable appetite for learning and growth, we are confident that we can extend our unique approach towards markets to investors READ MORE ON B3

Bangladesh is one of the top five resilient economies in the world during the coronavirus pandemic, said Finance Minister AHM Mustafa Kamal yesterday.

According to the report of the International Monetary Fund in October 2020, the global economy contracted 4.4 per cent.

"At that time, Bangladesh was one of the few economies that saw positive growth. According to the

PANDEMIC SHOCK

Bangladesh among top five resilient economies: Kamal



AHM Mustafa Kamal

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

organisations, Bangladesh has been one of the top five resilient economies in the world during the pandemic," Kamal said. He made the remarks while

addressing the Commonwealth Trade and Investment Summit 2021, according to a press release of the finance ministry. He called for exploring ways

to accelerate the recovery of the economies hit hard by the pandemic by raising inter-Commonwealth trade and investment. Despite being home to a third of

the world's population, the countries under the Commonwealth have a combined share of 13 per cent of the global economy, 20 per cent share of the global foreign direct investment, and 14 per cent of global trade, the press release said. Inter-Commonwealth trade

accounted for 18 per cent, he said. In addition, all Commonwealth nations contribute only 9.1 per cent to the total trade with the United

READ MORE ON B3

Pubali Bank Limited successfully closes \$52 million Syndicated Loan facility with Bank Muscat, Oman.

Pubali Bank has concluded a US\$ 52 million Syndicated Loan Facility, which was arranged by Bank Muscat (Sultanate of Oman) as the sole Mandated Lead Arranger and Book-runner. The transaction received strong participation from international financial institutions, with lenders from Asia, Europe and Middle East actively supporting it.

The landmark transaction, initially launched for a Facility size of US\$ 35 achieved significant oversubscription of about 48%, and was then scaled up to finally conclude at US\$ 52 million. Pubali Bank is delighted with the seamless execution of the Facility, especially in the face of challenges presented by the ongoing pandemic.

The loan facility will provide holistic liquidity services, being instrumental in continued import and export activities and help strengthen the country's economic growth. This will enable Pubali Bank to extend foreign currency trade credit to local banks as well as importing and exporting businesses, and is expected to generate up to \$200 million of additional trade every year especially in the post-pandemic phase.

In addition, the loan will strengthen the Bank's ability to meet the needs of its over 28 million clients across retail and small and medium enterprises (SMEs), supporting key sectors of Bangladesh's economy such as the ready-made garment, manufacturing and food processing, production industries and agro-based industries. Bank Muscat, which was the sole

Mandated Lead Arranger and Book-runner for the Facility, is the leading financial services institution in the Sultanate of Oman. The bank has the largest banking network in Oman and enjoys a 35 per cent market share in Oman, with assets over US\$ 32 billion. Bank Muscat has an extensive network of correspondent banking relationships across the world, which is instrumental in channelising trade business and raising funds on favorable financing terms from lenders in the GCC, Europe, USA, Asia and Africa. The Bank completed a number of financial advisory and fundraising transactions in the first half of 2021 with an aggregate value of US\$ 4.5 billion, including a sovereign syndicated term loan facility and a sovereign Sukuk."

Pubali Bank also has the strong relationship with Development Finance Institutions such as Asian Development Bank (ADB), International Finance Corporation (IFC) & other development organizations of several counties including UK & USA.



Arranger and Book-runner



Safiul Alam Khan Chowdhury, managing director of Pubali Bank Limited, inaugurated a sub-branch at Box Culvert Road, Nayapaltan in Dhaka. Mohammad Ali, additional managing director, Zahid Ahsan, deputy managing director, and Sultana Sarifun Nahar and Mohammad Liton Miah, general managers, were present.



Mohammad Shamim Murshed, senior executive vice-president of Premier Bank, and Khurrum Siddique, managing director of Simco Holdings, exchanged signed documents of an agreement at the bank's head office over the promotion of home loans. M Reazul Karim, managing director of the bank, and Mozaffor Uddin Siddique, chairman of Simco Holdings, were present.

China targets Alipay in tech crackdown

Told to spinoff its profitable micro loan business

AFP, Beijing

Chinese regulators have ordered sweeping changes to the country's biggest payment app Alipay, as the ruling Communist Party attempts to rein in "the unruly growth" of the tech giants.

Alipay -- with more than one billion users in China and other Asian nations including India -- was told to spinoff its profitable micro loan business, the Financial Times reported Monday, citing a person with knowledge of the matter.

Currently the app allows users to pay with a traditional credit card linked to their bank or offers small unsecured loans to buy anything from toilet paper to laptops.

The government believes big tech's monopoly power comes from their control of data," the source close to financial regulators told the newspaper.

"It wants to end that.

"Alipay's parent company Ant Group is China's biggest payments services provider.



Alibaba Group founder Jack Ma

the fintech conglomerate's record \$37 billion stock market launch in November, after founder Jack Ma criticised officials for stifling

Ma's business empire has been targeted in a wider crackdown

Regulators pulled the plug on on tech firms aimed at breaking monopolies and strengthening data security, that has wiped billions off companies' valuations. The outspoken billionaire has largely remained out of the limelight since the crackdown began.

After separating its payment and

loan businesses Alipay will have to hand over customer data used to make its lending decisions to a new credit scoring joint-venture that is partly state-owned, two sources familiar with the arrangement told the Financial Times.

Alipay did not immediately respond to AFP's questions on how the order would affect its business.

Regulators have also asked Ma's e-commerce platform Alibaba and other internet firms to stop blocking links to rival services, Zhao Zhiguo, a spokesman for Ministry of Industry and Information Technology, said at a briefing on

China's market regulator last month announced rules to bring down so-called "walled gardens" built by tech companies that aim to lock users into their services.

"It is unreasonable to restrict.. access of website links, which not only affects the user experience, but also damages rights and interests of users and disrupts the market order," Zhao said.



Biden has a chance to make Fed's

board look more like America

Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell poses for photos with Fed Governor Lael Brainard (L) at the Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago, in Chicago, Illinois, US.

As US President Joe Biden assesses whether to reappoint Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell and nominate as many as three others to the central bank's powerful board, he has the opportunity to revamp a leadership team long criticized for being too white and too male.

The stakes are high for an institution that has failed to reflect the racial, ethnic and gender makeup of the United States, recently promised to do better. The Fed sets monetary policy, a primary lever in controlling the cost of money and the availability of credit, in a nation where the wealth held by the median white household is nearly eight times that of the typical Black household.

There are seven seats on the Fed Board of Governors, six of which are currently filled. Just two of the six governors are women, and all of them are white. There have been just three Black board members in the Fed's nearly 108-year history. Powell's predecessor, Janet Yellen, now Treasury Secretary, was the first-ever woman leader

In addition to deciding about Powell, whose term ends in February, Biden will have the chance to appoint a new vice chair for supervision, which is a top regulatory role overseeing banks, a separate vice chair who works closely with the Fed chair, and the open spot on the board.

He could, theoretically, create a Fed board that has more women than men for the first time in history, a nod to the

country's 51 per cent female population. Or he could create one that mirrors the United States' 40 per cent minority population.

"It's a huge opportunity that Biden has to shape the personnel and the policy of the Fed both at the top and all the way down," said Claudia Sahm, a former Fed economist and a senior fellow at the Jain Family Institute.

Before President Donald Trump, Fed chairs were generally reappointed to another four-year term if they wished to broke tradition by dismissing Janet Yellen.

Biden has been under pressure by some Democrats not to renominate Powell, a Republican they see as insufficiently tough on regulating banks and in addressing climate change.

However, Powell has been broadly praised for the Fed's swift and sweeping response to the Covid-19 pandemic, enjoys bipartisan support in Congress and is reportedly backed by Yellen. During his first term he has called attention to racial inequities and the outsized effects of the pandemic on women and minorities.

Democrats' narrow control of the Senate makes any switch at the top uncertain, particularly to a more progressive chair who Republicans are likely to oppose stridently.

If he keeps Powell, Biden is expected to nominate women and non-white appointees to other roles at the Board, assuming Vice Chair Randal Quarles and Vice Chair Richard Clarida, both Trump appointees, are replaced when their terms expire in October and January, respectively.



UNITED COMMERCIAL BANK LIMITED

Tanzim Alamgir, managing director of United Commercial Bank Investment Limited, and Mohiuddin Mollah, managing director of Shahjalal Equity Management Limited, signed an agreement at NRB Bank Limited's head office in Dhaka to appoint issue managers for an upcoming initial public offering. Mohammed Mahtabur Rahman, chairman of NRB Bank, Mamoon Mahmood Shah, managing director, Tateyama Kabir and Mohammed Jamil Igbal, vice chairmen, and Mohammed Younus, chairman of the Risk Management Committee of the Board of Shahjalal Bank Limited, were present.

Oil rises to one-week high as US supply concerns dominate

REUTERS, London

Oil rose more than 1 per cent on Monday, supported by concerns over shut output in the United States because of damage from Hurricane Ida, with analysts expecting prices to remain rangebound in a stable market over the coming months.

Brent crude rose 90 cents, or 1.2 per cent, to \$73.82 a barrel by 1049 GMT and US West Texas Intermediate (WTI) crude was up 99 cents, or 1.4 per cent, at \$70.71. Brent has held between \$70 and \$74 a

barrel over the past three weeks. "Oil prices may not have much room to rise in the near term, but at the same

time are not expected to crash soon," said Stephen Brennock of broker PVM A US Energy Information Administration (EIA) last week said it expected Brent prices to remain near current levels for the

remainder of 2021, averaging \$71 a barrel during the fourth quarter. "Markets still need clarity on the virus impacts beyond the very near term; and until we get that, it seems like most

assets, including oil, may continue to drift

sideways," said Howie Lee, an economist at Singapore's OCBC bank.

Prices still found some support from Hurricane Ida's impact on US output. About three-quarters of the offshore oil production in the Gulf of Mexico, or about 1.4 million barrels per day, has remained halted since late August.

"Hurricane Ida was unique in having a net bullish impact on US and global oil balances - with the impact on demand smaller than on production," Goldman Sachs analysts said in a note dated September 9.

However, the number of rigs in operation in the United States grew in the latest week, energy service provider Baker Hughes said, indicating production could rise in coming

Supply risks remain from China's planned release of oil from strategic reserves while the hope of fresh talks on a wider nuclear deal between Iran and the West was raised after the UN atomic watchdog reached an agreement with Iran on Sunday about the overdue servicing of monitoring equipment to keep it running.

Sydney Airport sale a step closer after improved \$17.4b offer

A sale of Australia's greatest airport moved nearer on Monday as an infrastructure investor group gained permission to conduct due diligence on Sydney Airport Holdings Pty Ltd, after sweetening its takeover provide to A\$23.6 billion (\$17.four billion).

The transfer despatched the airport's shares up 5 per cent, with analysts saying a rival bid appeared unlikely given the dimensions of the funding wanted and overseas possession guidelines that imply the airport should stay 51 per cent Australian owned.

"We assign an excessive likelihood of a deal succeeding given the board's dedication to unanimously advocate the (present) provide if there isn't any various larger provide," Credit score Suisse analysts mentioned in an observe.

Sydney Airport is Australia's solely listed airport operator and a purchase order can be a long-term wager on the journey sector which has been battered by the pandemic.

A profitable takeover can be among the many largest buyouts ever of an Australian agency and underline a year of stellar deal exercise, that has already seen a mega \$29 billion buyout of Afterpay by Suisse analysts.

The improved provide of A\$8.75 a share - a rise of three.6 per cent - follows prior proposals from the consortium pitched at A\$8.45 and A\$8.25, each of which had been rejected by the airport operator's board as insufficient.

selling at A\$8.40 on Monday morning, beneath the provide worth, as a result of size of the time the transaction will take to finish in addition to the restricted prospects for a rival bid.

"Another bidder seems extremely unlikely," Jefferies analyst Anthony Moulder mentioned in an observe to purchasers.

The bidding consortium, Sydney Aviation

Alliance (SAA), is comprised of Australian buyers IFM Traders, QSuper and AustralianSuper and US-based International Infrastructure Companions. Report-low rates of interest have prompted pension funds and their funding managers to chase larger yields. Australia's different main airports are unlisted and owned by pension funds and infrastructure buyers.



REUTERS/FILE

Sydney Airport shares had been buying and People walk through the domestic terminal at Sydney Airport in Sydney, Australia.

S Korean firm to invest \$4.15m in Mongla EPZ

South Korean company JD Creation Ltd will invest \$4.15 million in Mongla Export Processing Zone to establish an industrial unit to manufacture camping items, garments, tents and garment accessories.

Once complete, the fully foreign-owned company will annually produce 4.85 million pieces of camping equipment, such as sleeping bags, backpacks, and hats alongside woven garment items like shirts, jackets, and about 2 million yards of printing, embroidery, string and elastic bands.

Mohammad Faruque Alam, member for engineering and investment promotion (additional charge) at Bangladesh Export Processing Zones Authority (Bepza), and Seung Chul Kim, managing director of JD Creation, signed an agreement in this regard at a programme at Bepza Complex in Dhaka yesterday.

The project is JD Creation's second venture in the country, where it has operated an electronics and electrical goods production unit called U-jin Led Co (BD) at the Chattogram Export Processing Zone since 1989.

The project will create employment opportunities for around 2,000 people in the country, Bepza said in a

The South Korean company opted for the new venture at Mongla EPZ after being pleased with the services and overall investment climate of Bepza so far, the statement

Major General Md Nazrul Islam, executive chairman of Bepza, was also present at the deal signing ceremony.

Sri Lanka's Capital Alliance enters Bangladesh

in Bangladesh as well," Fernando said.

"Our focus on creating market-leading insights has been our key differentiator in Sri Lanka," said Deshan Pushparajah, managing director of CAL Securities, Bangladesh and managing director for global markets and investment banking at CAL, Sri Lanka.

"We are excited to bring these unique perspectives and approach to research to Bangladesh as well.

Fleeing Afghans sell their wares at Kabul's busy bazaars

Kabul's flea markets are packed with the belongings that desperate Afghans have sold at rock-bottom prices to fund their escape from Taliban rule, or just to pay for

Plates, glasses, and kitchen appliances are piled high on makeshift tables at the outdoor bazaars, alongside 1990s television sets and old Singer sewing machines, while rolled-up carpets are propped up on second-hand sofas and beds.

Since the Taliban stormed to power in mid-August, Afghans say job opportunities have dried up and they are only allowed to withdraw \$200 per week from their bank accounts, meaning cash is in short supply.

"We don't have anything to eat, we are poor and we are forced to sell these things," said Mohammad Ehsan, who lives in one of Kabul's hillside settlements and came to the bazaar lugging two blankets to sell.

Ehsan said he used to work as a labourer, but building projects have been cancelled or put on hold. "Rich people were in Kabul, but now everybody has escaped," he told AFP. He is one of many Afghans who come

to the flea markets to sell what they can spare directly to buyers, carrying their possessions on their backs or rolling them along on rickety street carts. He has lived through "change after

change" in Afghanistan, and says he is wary of the Taliban's claims of peace and prosperity, as basic food prices skyrocket -- like they did when the Taliban were last in power from 1996 to 2001. "You can't believe any of them," Ehsan said.

Impoverished Afghanistan was already facing a drought, food shortages, and enormous pressure on its health service caused by the Covid-19 outbreak before the Taliban took control, sparking western nations to clamp down on aid that props up the Afghan economy.



Buyers browse second-hand household items for sale at a market in the northwest neighbourhood of Khair Khana in Kabul.

BSEC to carry out special audit into Safko Spinning

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Bangladesh Securities and Exchange Commission has decided to carry out a special audit into Safko Spinning Mills as some irregularities have been unearthed.

The regulator also appointed four independent directors to solve the problems of the company.

In a letter to the company's managing director on Sunday, the BSEC said it did not provide any dividend for the last two financial years.

On the other hand, it increased its paid-up capital by more than 80 per cent by issuing bonus shares in the stock The spinner has also shown higher cost of goods than

its sales. Apart from these, it has many other irregularities, which ultimately impede the development of the company, according to the commission's letter.

In this regard, the BSEC decided to run the special audit and appoint independent directors.

However, the company's stock price soared to Tk 33 on September 9, which was Tk 9 on April 29. Yesterday, it closed at Tk 28.8.

Businesses will now get six months to bring in imported goods

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

payments made by banks.

Businesses will now get six months time to bring in imported goods after payments are made, up from four

Bangladesh Bank yesterday extended the time following demand from importers, particularly from Bangladesh Reconditioned Vehicles Importers and Dealers Association. The members of the association said they were facing

troubles in releasing imported vehicles from ports. Importers will get the extended time until December 31,

2021, said the banking regulator. Rules say that importers in general have to bring imported products into the country and submit bill of entry as proof of imports within 120 days after import

Until March 31, the central bank granted the additional time for bringing imported goods considering the fallout

No data charge on upay app use by Robi, Airtel customers

STAR BUSINESS DESK

Mobile financial service upay recently signed agreement an with Robi Axiata Limited allowing Robi and Airtel customers to conduct transactions through the upay app without incurring any internet data cost.

Customers of both mobile operators can win up to Tk 450 and 1 GB data registering with upay, says a

This will be useful for users suddenly finding out that they have no data pack or that it has expired, said Sydul H Khandaker, managing director and chief executive officer of upay.

Khandaker and Shihab Ahmad, chief commercial officer of Robi Axiata Limited, signed agreement at The Westin

Banks, non-banks can't comply: BB

The order for other listed companies should also be scrapped for the sake of general shareholders, the central banker said.

The BB urged all the regulators institutions, including the BSEC, to consult with the central bank before taking any step about banks and NBFIs.

Suffering lingers for duped e-commerce customers intervene so that their hardship ends.

my products," said Rabby.

He said he lost his job in the Covid-19 fallouts last year and was now desperately looking for one.

"I placed the order for the motorcycle with money from my mother. I wanted the motorcycle as I thought I will start working in ride sharing. Getting back the hard earned money of my mother, who is in a low-paid job at a private hospital, is now uncertain. I feel helpless," he added.

"I have repeatedly called Evaly for the products. Every time they tell me to wait a little," said Rabby.

dated July and when I went to get the money, it bounced. Then I got a few calls from Evaly asking not to submit the cheque any more. The nature of their request is like coercion," he added

"What should I do now? So I have now come to file a complaint against Evaly at the DNCRP seeking my product or a refund,"

Five victims met Hafizur Rahman, additional secretary to the commerce ministry, at Bangladesh Secretariat on Sunday to share stories of their sufferings caused by Eorange by not delivering products for months.

Among them, Afzal Hossain, a final year student of a university in Dhaka, had plans of purchasing a motorcycle to make a living out of ride sharing. He said he had placed an order for a

motorcycle which had a market price of Tk 2,55,400 but was on offer at a 50 per cent Alongside, he had placed orders for

some other products, borrowing Tk 65,000 from his elder sister, for which Eorange was said to owe him Tk 3,60,000 in total. The five told The Daily Star that they

want to get either products or refunds,

Not only customers, hundreds of merchants have not received payments against products they delivered on behalf of such e-commerce platforms.

Despair looms over thousands of such victims as uncertainties have intensified over whether they would ever get back their money, estimated to be over Tk 1,000 crore in total. Out of over a dozen companies being investigated by the government, three, namely Evaly, Dhamaka and Eorange, account for most of the victims. None from the three could be reached for comment.

Dhamaka's merchants have sought the "They gave me a cheque of City Bank commerce ministry's support in retrieving Tk 200 crore.

In a letter to Commerce Minister Tipu Munshi on August 16, the suppliers said Dhamaka was supposed to pay dues within 10 working days of supplying products to

But 150 working days have already elapsed with 650 merchants still waiting to be paid, they said.

Dhamaka Managing Jashimuddin Chisty, who is now abroad, gave his word on July 13 to pay the dues but no payment has been made, said the letter. The merchants urged for necessary steps on humanitarian grounds, prioritising the fact that they were small and medium

"We have lost everything and we owe banks and our relatives a large amount of money. We have now been turned to street beggars for doing business with Dhamaka,"

How much Dhamaka owed to customers is not clear as it has not yet responded to a commerce ministry notice seeking records of its assets and liabilities, said a ministry

However, Dhamaka received over Tk 803 crore in payments made in advance and they also demand the government by nearly five lakh customers wooed

by different offers of hefty discounts, buying products from the e-commerce according to the Criminal Investigation Department (CID).

are still working on tracing out other transactions," Md Humayon Kabir, superintendent of police for financial crimes at the CID, told The Daily Star. Last week, the CID filed a case at Banani

Police Station accusing Dhamaka's Chisty and others of laundering Tk 116.06 crore. According to industry insiders, all of the e-commerce platforms being accused of

fraudulence followed the same script. Initially they do deliver products at hefty discounts against advance payments. they would share the profit from the resale Months later, once a substantial number of the motorcycles. of customers are hooked, they start, what can be apparently termed, ghosting them,

making neither deliveries nor refunds. The pandemic proved a boon for e-commerce and on the flip side, such controversial business models.

It all started out with Evaly, which, much like the pied piper of Hamelin, drew in droves of customers with astounding cash backs and hefty discounts since its inception near the end of 2018.

A Bangladesh Bank report indicates that Evaly might not be able to pay up for liabilities accrued with customers and

Different government agencies have launched investigations against e-commerce companies over allegations of embezzlement, breach of competition rules and money laundering.

Last month, in a reply to a commerce ministry show-cause notice, Evaly said its liabilities with customers and merchants stood at Tk 543 crore as of mid-July, which is 35 per cent higher than the amount found by an initial probe of the central

Encouraged by the discount offers, many customers had turned into investors,

platforms and then reselling it at profits. But not all were able to make it. Adit

The amount is possibly more...we Hossain, a final year private university student, placed an order for seven motorcycles and some gift vouchers at Eorange making an advance payment of Tk 13.98 lakh in May.

"They promised to deliver the products within 45 days. Over three months have passed but I did not get my products," he said. He had gathered the money selling off his own motorcycle, taking a loan of Tk 3 lakh from his father and convincing his cousin to provide the rest on condition

"Now they are not receiving phone calls. don't know what's in my fortune." said Hossain.

A customer filed a case with Gulshan Police Station on August 16 accusing Eorange of embezzling nearly Tk 1,100 crore by not delivering any product since April 28 despite advance payments being

In the case statement, complainant Md Taherul Islam said the products were supposed to be delivered within an agreed period but that did not happen. The next day, two former owners of the

e-commerce platform surrendered before a Dhaka court which sent them to jail rejecting bail pleas.

According to Aminul Islam, officer-incharge (investigation), the investigation was still underway and they were trying to secure evidence.

According to an official of e-commerce platform Aladinerprodip, it has so far provided refunds against 17,000 orders and still had over 8,000 to go.

Sirajganj Shop has so far provided refunds against over 95,000 orders and had over 7,000 more to go, said an official of the e-commerce platform.

Dollar drifts higher as US inflation data looms

REUTERS, Singapore

The dollar began a busy data week on a firm footing, with immediate focus turning to US inflation figures but investors are also wary of the Federal Reserve priming to exit from its super-supportive policy stance even as Covid-19 cases surge.

The greenback inched higher in Asia after logging its best week in three on Friday, benefiting both from safety flows and the policy outlook lifting US Treasury yields. Moves were modest but the euro fell back under \$1.18

to \$1.1792. The dollar also made small gains on the Australian and New Zealand dollars and marginal rises against the yen and sterling -- last buying 109.96 yen. "A couple of dynamics favour the dollar," said Rodrigo

Catril, senior currency strategist at National Australia Bank in Sydney, noting growing risk aversion as even nighty vaccinated countries such as Singapore and Britain log surges in Covid-19 cases.

Re-opening still faces challenges from the consumer, who is cautious and from bottlenecks which restrict ability for the economy to rebound with some gusto," he said.

"At the same time rising infections suggest we may still need to reintroduce restrictions of some sort. The other thing is that the Fed continues to signal that tapering is

By 0520 GMT the Australian dollar was 0.2 per cent weaker at \$0.7337 -- and it has struggled to hold over \$0.74 -- while the kiwi was down 0.4 per cent at \$0.71 as a lockdown of Auckland was extended until midnight on September 21.

The dollar index rose 0.1 per cent to 92.739.

US consumer price data on Tuesday is the next major focus for FX traders, along with US retail sales and production figures later in the week as they frame the economy's progress in the lead-up to the Federal Reserve's September. 21-22 meeting.

Core consumer price inflation is expected to slow a tad

However, with Philadelphia Fed President Patrick Harker, in a Nikkei interview on Monday, joining a chorus of policymakers keen to begin scaling back asset purchases, bond traders seem to think a slowdown won't be enough to delay tapering much.

Jatri raises \$1.2m to expand operations

"We are now in Dhaka, Chattogram and Sylhet. With the latest funding, we want to expand our footprint to every district in the country," Aziz Arman, co-founder and CEO of Jatri, told The Daily Star.

Jatri is rapidly expanding its operations

throughout Bangladesh with double-

digit month-to-month growth through strategic government and private-sector partnerships. Jatri was founded by Arman, Khandokar Taswar Zahin and Zia Uddin in early 2019 with the vision to provide comfortable

public transportation in one of the most densely populated countries in the world. In its early days, Jatri started to automate traditional ticketing, which was almost ubiquitous in the Bangladeshi public

transport sector While Bangladesh is rapidly evolving in terms of technology, technology has so far been underutilised in public transport ticketing. The platform said this current pre-series

A-round will fuel Jatri to rapidly expand its nationwide coverage and services that go beyond ticketing and rentals. Jatri has already partnered with the

Bangladesh Road Transport Corporation to

offer a wide selection of routes which may result in a mass adoption of its services within the nation. Earlier this year, Jatri also attained the

ride-sharing licence from Bangladesh Road Transport Authority

"The progress of Jatri is a testament to the dire need for digital reforms in the Bangladeshi transportation sector. We are determined to ride that momentum with this fresh round of funding along with our diverse set of industry specialists and investors with connections to continue to expand our services." Arman added.

Last year, the public transportation tracking and ticketing startup raised an undisclosed amount of seed funding from Dubai-based Falcon Network, Tahseen Consulting, and leading transport apps like Bolt Uber, Bird, Angkas, and Buseet.

Sonia Bashir Kabir, managing director of SBK Tech Ventures, said: "While technology has touched every aspect of our lives, solving intricate and complicated problems, many of us have forgotten to solve problems that are right in front of us."

"I congratulate the founders of Jatri for embracing problems of the masses and impacting public transport in Bangladesh in a transformative manner," he added.

Jute prices fall by Tk 500 a maund within a week FROM PAGE B4

"The price of jute thread at the international level has decreased as well and so, millers and exporters have less demand. For this reason the price of raw jute has come down," said Gomal Sarwar, chief inspector of the Department of Jute in Faridpur.

If the price of thread increases, the jute price will

automatically rise, he added. Jahangir Hossain Mia, chairman of Karim Group, said, it is true that they do not buy as much jute as they had in previous years as they do not need to supply the thread

"Besides, export costs have sharply increased and so has the price of thread, leading to decreased supply," Mia

Bangladesh among top five resilient economies: Kamal

"These statistics indicate that the existing trade-related policies and strategies of the Commonwealth are not conducive for the member countries," Kamal said.

"I firmly believe that through concerted efforts, we can find out the ways to speed up the economic recovery of the affected countries by raising inter-Commonwealth trade and investment and bring back the glorious past of the Commonwealth."

Aluminium breaks \$3,000 on supply concerns

Aluminium broke \$3,000 a tonne for the first time in 13 years Monday on supply concerns while equity markets were mixed as record high US inflation ramped up concerns the Federal Reserve will have to tighten monetary policy sooner than

Reports that President Joe Biden was considering a fresh trade probe into China added to the downbeat mood and nullified the optimism sparked by news that he had held talks on Friday with Xi Jinping in a bid to smooth relations between the superpowers.

After driving a healthy run-up in Asia so far this month, investor sentiment was once again roiled by data on Friday showing US factory gate inflation had soared in August to an all-time high of 8.3 percent owing to a jump in demand as well as supply and labour shortages.

The reading was fuelled partly by a sharp rise in commodity prices, a concern highlighted by news that aluminium had rocketed past \$3,000 a tonne for the first time in 13 years, owing to concerns about supplies in light of a coup in major bauxite producer Guinea as well as low Chinese

The data ramped up speculation about the Fed's plans for monetary policy. Its boss Jerome Powell has already indicated that the central bank will likely start tapering its vast bond-buying programme -- which has been a key driver of the economic and equity markets recovery -- by the end of the

But the latest figures could cause officials to bring forward their timeline. The release Tuesday of consumer inflation has now

taken on more significance. "With the US Federal Reserve due to meet next week, and the narrative clearly moving towards a tapering of asset purchases sooner rather than later, there appears to be a build up in anxiety that the continued rise in inflationary pressure may well be much more persistent than central bankers would have us believe," said CMC Markets analyst

Michael Hewson. All three US indexes ended in the red on Friday, with reports of Biden's probe adding to the selling pressure.

The president was said to be looking at Beijing's subsidies and their effect on the US economy, the reports said, with discussions also being held on last year's trade deal agreed by Donald Trump.

BUSINESS

ICB, Berger, Walton bleed on share offload order

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Stock prices of the Investment Corporation of Bangladesh (ICB), Walton Hi-tech Industries Limited, and Berger Paints Bangladesh Limited shed the most in the market yesterday after news broke that all three were asked to offload at least 10 per cent of their shares.

The ICB plunged 8.6 per cent, Walton 6.2 per cent and Berger 6.1 per cent, shows data from the Dhaka Stock Exchange (DSE).

Their combined fall cost the DSEX, the benchmark index of the DSE, 20 points, according to amarstock.com.

After offloading the shares, all three would have a higher supply of stocks in the market, leading to lower prices.

TOP LOSERS IN DSE

Fall in %	
ICB	-8.62
Walton	-6.24
Berger	-6.13
Savar Refractories	-4.3
Bangladesh National Ins	-4.2
Bata	-4
Singer	-3.6
National Life Ins	-3.27
Delta Life Ins	-3.24
Islami Ins	-3.09

"So, the share price of these stocks fell," said a top official of a merchant bank.

However, the decision by the Bangladesh Securities and Exchange Commission (BSEC) to have these companies offload shares was a great one as it will allow more people to buy a stake, he added.

The BSEC ordered the three listed companies to offload more shares in order to comply with public issue rules.

According to public issue rules, a company needs to offload at least 10 per cent of its total shares to general investors. However, the Walton issued 0.97 per cent of shares, the ICB 3.19 per cent and

the Berger 5 per cent to investors, as per yesterday just a day after investors went unchanged.

for profit booking in hopes that the rising trend would continue.

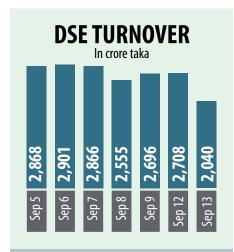
The DSEX surged 15 points, or 0.22 per cent, to 7,218.

Although investors booked profits in the previous session, people are still optimistic about the market, said a stock broker.

However, institutional investors are in a wait-and-see approach so their participation fell, he added.

Turnover, an important indicator of the market, fell 24 per cent to Tk 2,040 crore while it was Tk 2,708 crore a day earlier.

Metro Spinning Limited topped the gainers' list, rising 9.92 per cent, followed by Monno Fabrics Limited, Meghna Condensed Milk Industries Limited, SBAC Bank Limited and Beach



Hatchery Limited. The ICB shed the most followed by the Walton, Berger, Savar Refractories Limited

Bangladesh National Insurance Company Limited. Stocks of Beximco Limited were traded the most, worth Tk 149 crore, followed Beximco Pharmaceuticals Limited,

National Housing Finance and Investments

Limited, NRB Commercial Bank Limited, and British American Tobacco Bangladesh Company Limited. Chittagong Stock Exchange (CSE) also rose yesterday as the CASPI, the general

index of the port city bourse, rose by 44

points, or 0.21 per cent, to 21,029. Among 323 stocks to undergo trade, Meanwhile, the stock market climbed 164 advanced, 132 fell and 27 remained

Jute prices fall by Tk 500 a maund within a week

SUZIT KUMAR DAS, Faridpur

The price of raw jute has fallen by about Tk 500 per maund (37 kilogrammes) at local markets in Faridpur district, thereby depriving farmers and traders of higher profits, local sources said.

Raw jute sold for between Tk 3,000 and Tk 3,500 per maund just last week but now, the price ranges from Tk 2,500 to Tk 3,000 per maund, according to data from the Department of Jute.

Jute farmers and traders allege that prices fell as a result of decreased demand from millers and exporters, many of whom just recently resumed operations following prolonged closures due to the ongoing coronavirus pandemic.

Earlier this month, raw jute prices had reached as much as Tk 6,500 per maund in the country's northwestern region, namely Rangpur division, where 70 of the 200 jute mills listed under the Bangladesh Jute Mills Association (BJMA) are based in.

These mills cater to both local and foreign demand for hessian, jute bags and cloth but sales were practically nil in the face of declining work orders amid the Covid-induced economic downturn.

Besides, jute production was inadequate last year due to unfavourable weather conditions, pushing prices up to their highest point in history.

Jute was cultivated on 6.80 lakh hectares of land to produce 77.25 lakh bales of the produce in fiscal 2020-21, down from 6.79 lakh hectares and 80.45 lakh bales respectively the previous year, showed data from the Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE) and Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics.

This year though, yields and acreage had increased as jute production rose by about 5 per cent year-on-year to 169,989 bales from 16,088 hectares of land in



Jute farmers and traders said prices fell as a result of decreased demand from millers and exporters. The photo was taken from Thanthania jute market in Saltha upazila of Faridpur recently.



Tangail district.

As a result, farmers who spent about Tk 5,000 to produce around five maunds of raw jute per bigha (33 decimals) expressed satisfaction over the yield.

But during a recent visit to the Thanthania jute market in Saltha upazila of Faridpur, this correspondent found farmers of different villages were selling jute

for about Tk 2,500 per maund. Abdul Halim Matubbar, a farmer farmer of Boutipara village under

of Chowlia village in Saltha upazila, said he got 42 maunds of jute from his three bighas of land this year.

"I sold five maunds of jute at Tk 3,400 per maund in a local market last week but I sold another 10 maunds at Tk 2,900 per maund today [Sunday]," he said.

"I have to sell all my jute no matter what as I borrowed money to cultivate it," Matubbar added. Rup Kumar Mandal, a jute

Thantania jute market. READ MORE ON B3

Nagarkanda upazila said, he got 48

maunds of jute from 2.8 bighas of

Nagarkanda jute market last week

at Tk 3,400 per maund but I sold

about 10 maunds on Saturday at Tk

a farmer of the same area, said he

sold 10 maunds of jute at Tk 3,500

per maund 15 days ago but the

selling price has since gradually

as millers and exporters do not buy

as much as they used to, according

to Soleman Mia, a jute trader of

The price of raw jute has declined

Similarly, Karuna Kanta Mandal,

2,900 per maund," he added.

"I sold five maunds of jute in

land this year.

GLOBAL BUSINESS

China's latest tech crackdown weighs on stocks

A slide in Hong Kong-based technology and internet heavyweights following Beijing's latest regulatory crackdown pushed an index of emerging markets shares on Monday to their lowest this month, while Russia's Rusal jumped on debt repayment.

Shares of tech giants Meituan, Alibaba Group and Tencent Holdings slumped between 2.5 per cent and 4.5 per cent.

In the latest in a series of increasing oversight on businesses, Beijing sought to break-up Ant Group's hugely popular payments app, Alipay, and create a separate app for the company's highly profitable loans business, the Financial Times reported on Sunday.

"Buying the dip in China equities in this environment remains akin to catching a very sharp falling knife," said Jeffrey Halley, senior market analyst, Asia Pacific at OANDA.

MSCI's Asia-heavy EM equities index fell almost 1 per cent, with gains in bourses elsewhere being muted. Investor focus was also on US August inflation data due on Tuesday for more clues on what the Federal Reserve may decide on its stimulus



A man looks at stock market monitors in Taipei. Shares of tech giants Meituan, Alibaba Group and Tencent slumped between 2.5 per cent and 4.5 per cent yesterday.

Shares of Russia's aluminium giant Rusal jumped 9 per cent on the Hong Kong exchange, while the Moscow listing hit an all-time high after the company repaid 27 billion roubles (\$371 million) of debt to lender Sberbank ahead of schedule.

South Africa rand recovered lost ground to trade 0.3 per cent higher. President Cyril Ramaphosa said Covid-19 curbs would be eased from Monday, with a nationwide curfew to be shortened, as infections decline. Turkey's lira managed to hold on to gains, up 0.2 per cent at 8.46 per dollar, even as data showed factory activity disappointed and current account deficit narrowed less than expected.

President Tayyip Erdogan over the weekend said economic growth, exports and employment are all strong in Turkey.

Societe Generale on Monday warned investors to prepare for the lira to weaken to 8.85 versus the dollar by the year-end as political pressure increases the risk of premature policy easing. The Belarusian rouble extended gains to

a fifth straight session against the euro.

The International Monetary Fund said it will launch a virtual mission to Belarus to gather data on economy amid Western calls to restrict government access to funds.

Britain announces biggest auction round in renewable energy

REUTERS, London

The British government announced on Monday the biggest auction round of its renewable energy scheme, hoping to build up enough extra offshore wind capacity to power about 8 million homes. Under its Contracts-for-Difference (CfD) scheme,

qualifying projects are guaranteed a minimum price at which they can sell electricity. CfD contracts are offered to power generation companies at auction.

The scheme, launched in 2014, is the government's primary method of encouraging investment in low-carbon generation in Britain. The latest round, its fourth, aims to double renewable electricity capacity secured compared to the third round, when Britain allocated 5.8 gigawatts (GW), and to secure more new capacity than the previous three rounds combined, the government said.

The latest round will provide 200 million pounds (\$277 million) to support offshore wind projects and ensure Britain hits a target of 40 GW of installed capacity by 2030, up from 10.4 GW at present, the government added. It will also offer 55 million pounds to support emerging renewable technologies, with 24 million pounds reserved for floating offshore wind projects. Offshore wind turbines are now usually fixed to the seabed.

UK employers call for overhaul of tax system

REUTERS, London

British businesses demanded that finance minister Rishi Sunak stop raising their taxes and instead offer more help to meet the challenges of Brexit, Covid-19 and climate change when he makes major budget statements next month.

The Confederation of British Industry urged Sunak to "turn business taxation on its head" when it prepares new tax proposals and a three-year spending plan on 27 October.

CBI Director General Tony Danker said in excerpts of a speech to be delivered later on Monday, "The biggest concern we have as a country is the lack of expansion and momentum on the part of the government on some of the major economic options for

Danker tells Sunak to stop killing companies that invest in making their premises less carbon-intensive with lower carbon-intensive property tax payments, a quirk of the business rate system.

He also said more needs to be done to promote skills training, accelerate the development of new infrastructure projects, such as Britain's delayed high-speed railway and market regulations to attract more private investment to rewrite.

The CBI and other employer groups protested last week that jobs would be lost after the government increased Social Security contributions to social and health

This was followed in March by announcing a major increase in corporation tax from 2023 to help fix the hole in Britain's public finances left by Sunak's £350bn (\$485bn).

"I am very concerned that the government thinks that the tax business - perhaps more politically palatable - is without growth consequences," Danker said.

As well as next month's budget announcements, Sunak and Prime Minister Boris Johnson are due to discuss investment plans with business leaders and institutional investors in October.

India cuts import taxes on vegetable oils to calm prices

REUTERS, Mumbai

India has cut base import taxes on palm oil, soyoil and sunflower oil, according to a government notification, as the world's biggest vegetable oil buyer tries to cool near-record price rises.

The reduction in taxes could bring down prices of the edible oils in India and boost consumption, effectively increasing overseas buying by the south Asian country.

The base import tax on crude palm oil has been slashed to 2.5 per cent from 10 per cent, while the tax on crude soyoil and crude sunflower oil has been reduced to 2.5 per cent from 7.5 per cent, the government said in a notification late on Friday.

The base import tax on refined Kolkata, India.



A labourer carries vegetable oil packets on a tricycle as a man stands in front of his shop selling food grains, at a wholesale market in

grades of palm oil, soyoil and sunflower oil cut to 32.5 per cent from 37.5 per cent. After the cuts, crude palm oil,

soyoil and sunflower oil imports will be subject to a 24.75 per cent tax in total, including a 2.5 per cent base import duty and other taxes, while refined grades of palm oil, soyoil and sunflower oil would carry a 35.75 per cent tax in total.

India fulfils more than twothirds of its edible oil demand through imports and has been struggling to contain a rally in local oil prices for the last few months.

The country imports palm oil mainly from top producers Indonesia and Malaysia, while other oils, such as soy and sunflower, come from Argentina, Brazil, Ukraine and Russia.