

IBBL clinches remittance award

STAR BUSINESS DESK

Islami Bank Bangladesh Ltd (IBBL) has received the Gold Award in the Remittance Award-2021 and 2022 by the Centre for NRB, a non-profit research organisation for non-resident Bangladeshis.

AK Abdul Momen, minister for foreign affairs, handed over the award to Mohammed Monirul Moula, managing director of IBBL, at Pan Pacific Sonargaon Dhaka on Saturday, a press release said.

Mashiur Rahman, economic adviser to the prime minister, Shamsul Alam, state minister for planning, Gen SM Shafiuddin Ahmed, chief of army staff, Prof Emeritus ABM Abdullah, Shahidul Alam, additional secretary of the Ministry of Expatriate Welfare, and MS Shekil Chowdhury, chairperson of the Centre for NRB, were present.



Sattar IPDC's new chairman

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IPDC Finance Ltd recently witnessed the appointment of a new chairman.

The appointee, Kazi Mahmood Sattar was an independent director and chairman of the board executive committee of Brac Bank, a press release said.

Sattar started his career with ANZ Grindlays Bank in 1981.

During his 40-year-long career, he also worked in Eastern Bank and City Bank as a managing director and chief executive officer.

He is currently chairman of RSA Advisory Ltd and Blue Wealth Assets Ltd and a member of the board of directors of bKash.



Ildris Ali primarily makes a living working as a farmhand in the northern district of Nilphamari. During the lean season, the period between planting and harvesting when job opportunities are scarce and incomes plummet, he packs his bags and migrates to Dhaka. Purchasing pots, pans and plastic toys at wholesale from Chawkbazar, he then goes round neighbourhoods earning his daily bread as a hawker. The photo was taken at Jurain yesterday.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

China's auto exports double in 2021

ANN/CHINA DAILY

China's automobile exports doubled year on year to nearly 2.02 million units in 2021, latest data from the China Association of Automobile Manufacturers showed.

Last year the country's total exports for the year exceeded 2 million units for the first time, according to the association.

New energy vehicle exports reported a threefold increase year on year by reaching 310,000 units, the data showed.

Of the total, exports of passenger cars stood at 1.61 million units, up 1.1 times from the previous year, and exports of commercial vehicles surged 70.7 per cent to 402,000 units.

In December alone, the country's auto manufacturers exported 223,000 cars, up 11.4 per cent from the previous month and up 54 per cent year on year, the data showed.

China's exports of new energy vehicles will grow fast in coming years as they are on track to gain popularity in major car

markets, said the Ministry of Commerce.

"Their exports stand a good chance of continuing the momentum and will become a new force that contributes to the steady growth of China's auto trade," said the ministry in a report on high-quality automotive trade released last week.

Statistics from the China Association of Automobile Manufacturers show that exports of China's new energy vehicles in the first half of 2019 grew 99.3 per cent year-on-year.

The report said electric buses from BYD accounted for 20 per cent of the market in Europe and more than 60 per cent in the United Kingdom in 2018. Those from Chinese brands were the most popular in South Korea.

The situation will further improve as major markets are championing new energy vehicles and China is a leading player in the segment, reads the report.

China started to finance the new energy vehicle segment since 2009. It overtook the United States as the largest market for such vehicles in 2015.

It has sharpened its competitive edge over the past decade, with its models being close to or passing internationally advanced levels of battery performance and driving ranges.

Developed economies including the United States and the European Union have announced incentives to spur the growth of the segment. Many Asian countries, especially those in the ASEAN, are encouraging carmakers to roll out more new energy vehicles.

Thailand does not charge tariffs on electric vehicles from China. Meanwhile, Malaysia plans for new energy vehicles to account for 85 per cent of vehicles produced in the country in 2020.

"All these have created favorable conditions for Chinese carmakers including SAIC, Geely and Changan to make better forays into the ASEAN markets," reads the report.

A total of 197 electric SUVs from GAC Motor are on route to Israel and are expected to hit the market in February, said the Guangzhou-based carmaker.

Stocks keep rising for buying spree

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Stocks listed on the Dhaka Stock Exchange (DSE) yesterday stretched their gaining streak to four days straight as general investors continue to engage in a buying spree.

The market opened this week on an upbeat note as investors are placing fresh bets on sector-specific stocks, International Leasing Securities said in its daily market review.

Major market indices have been growing since the start of February as optimistic investors are pouring their money into stocks based on the respective company's latest earnings declaration, it added.

The DSEX, the benchmark index of the Dhaka bourse, surged 40 points, or 0.58 per cent, to close at 7,064 by the end of yesterday's trading session.

Among all the sectors, general insurance rose 3.4 per cent while food and allied edged up 2.5 per cent, and ceramics dropped 2.1 per cent.

Investor activity was mostly concentrated on the miscellaneous (16 per cent), engineering (13 per cent) and pharmaceutical (12.4 per cent) sectors. At the DSE, 155 stocks advanced, 177 declined and 48 remained the same.

Reliance Insurance topped the gainers' list, rising 9.95 per cent, followed by Bangladesh Shipping Corporation, Acme Laboratories, BF Thai Food, and Tosrifa Industries.

Turnover at the DSE rose 5 per cent to Tk 1,335 crore at the same time. Stocks of Beximco Ltd traded the most, worth Tk 104 crore, followed by Bangladesh Shipping Corporation, British American Tobacco Bangladesh, Acme Laboratories, and Bangladesh Building System.

BD Thai Aluminium eroded the most, dropping 6.45 per cent, followed by National Polymer, Libra Infusion, Queen South Textile and NRB Commercial Bank.

The Chittagong Stock Exchange (CSE) also rose yesterday as the CASPI, the main index of the port city bourse, rose 145 points, or 0.70 per cent, to close at 20,721.

Pubali Bank wins remittance award

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Pubali Bank has been presented a "Top Ten Remittance Award 2022" by the Centre for NRB, a non-profit research organisation for non-resident Bangladeshis, for its contribution in collecting remittance.

Safiu Alam Khan Chowdhury, managing director of Pubali Bank, received the award from Foreign Affairs Minister AK Abdul Momen at Pan Pacific Sonargaon Dhaka on Saturday, said a press release.

Mashiur Rahman, economic affairs adviser to the prime minister, Shamsul Alam, state minister for planning, Gen SM Shafiuddin Ahmed, chief of army staff, and Sherwan Chowdhury, mayor of Croydon in London, were present.

MS Shekil Chowdhury, chairperson of the Centre for NRB, presided over the ceremony.

Identifying policy gaps

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Bangladesh became a signatory to the declaration in 2012 and later in 2014 committed to developing a national financial inclusion strategy. Having a national financial inclusion policy serves the purpose of affirming the national commitment towards ensuring affordable, safe and available financial services for everyone, bringing public and private stakeholders to a consensus regarding common definition and vision for financial inclusion, measurable targets and milestones, as well as coordination and cooperation for implementation.

The demand for financial services in Bangladesh has grown in parallel with our development trajectory. As Bangladesh sets its sights on "double transition"- LDC graduation and becoming an upper-middle-income country within the next decade, the demand for financial infrastructures, different and innovative products and services, and a regulatory framework matching the pace of technological advancement will continue to grow larger with time.

National commitment and policy attention to the existing and emerging challenges is very much necessary to cater to this mounting need. Improving the financial and digital literacy of the adult population lacking primary education is a key challenge we need to address to accelerate financial inclusion.

The National Financial Inclusion Strategy (NFIS) has set 12 strategic goals and 69 targets. However, the targets need to be translated into measurable indicators for implementation and monitoring purposes. Specific and measurable targets and timelines to reach these targets also need to be determined against the baseline indicator statistics to ensure accountability and assessment of progress and achievements.

Ensuring reliable, disaggregated, and periodic data of the financial inclusion indicators is one of the major challenges obstructing accountability and adjustment of policy and regulatory frameworks.

A gap analysis of Bangladesh's current position in financial inclusion status and that of comparator countries is necessary to determine justifiable annual targets to achieve under the strategic objectives of the NFIS. Moreover, an analysis of global and East Asian best practices can help provide a clear guideline for the implementation roadmap. It will also enable cross-country learning and knowledge exchange and help us identify interventions and approaches that worked in similar country contexts.

Given the very dynamic and innovative fields of global financial services and fintech, a gap analysis of existing policy and regulatory framework and financial infrastructure development needs is also necessary to achieve the

goals set in the strategy.

The relevant SDG targets on which greater financial inclusion will have a positive impact have been identified in the NFIS. To facilitate SDG progress monitoring and reporting, the 69 targets of NFIS and respective indicators can be aligned with the identified SDG targets and their indicators. This will also help foster coordination and cooperation among the relevant government agencies working on the implementation of SDGs and NFIS, and promote transparency in governing actions.

While the NFIS is a testament of political will and national commitment to greater financial inclusion, its proper implementation depends on the establishment, operationalisation, and efficiency of the three-tier coordination structure involving an NFIS National Council (The finance minister will be the chair), an NFIS Steering Committee (The governor of Bangladesh Bank will be chair), and an NFIS administrative unit (will be established as a separate department in Bangladesh Bank). The structures of these three tiers bring all relevant key government and private stakeholders. The challenge is to ensure the fast establishment of these units and ensure their effective operation. The lack of a well-defined timeline for this purpose remains a concerning issue.

The central authority to lead the national financial inclusion policy

implementation has been determined in different countries. The central bank assumed the leadership role in implementing financial inclusion policies in the majority of the countries, especially in Asia and the Pacific. However, successful examples of ministries of finance taking the lead also exist in East Asian countries such as Indonesia and Thailand.

For Bangladesh's financial inclusion strategy, the Financial Institutions Division of the finance ministry will be the line ministry and Bangladesh Bank will be the key implementing agency. The precarious state of the financial sector begs immediate policy attention to strengthen the economic and financial sector governance by promoting transparency and efficiency in enforcing laws and regulations.

The global financial sector is fast growing and dynamic in changes and innovations. Bangladesh needs to match the global pace in terms of commitment, fast actions, infrastructure and human capital development and policy adjustments, or risks leaving behind the marginalised and disadvantaged population from benefiting from growth and development.

The authors are, respectively, a project manager at the Policy Research Institute of Bangladesh and a professor at the Department of Economics, University of Dhaka.



Bank Asia hosted its "Annual Business Meet 2022" via a virtual platform on Saturday. A Rouf Chowdhury, chairman of Bank Asia, was the chief guest of the programme, presided over by Rumea A Hossain, chairman of the lender's board executive committee.

PHOTO: BANK ASIA

State Bank of India's profits jump 62pc

REUTERS, New Delhi

State Bank of India, the country's largest lender by assets, reported a 62.3 per cent rise in third quarter profit on Saturday, the Mumbai-based lender said in a regulatory filing, helped by lower provisions.

Net profit rose to 84.32 billion rupees (\$1.13 billion) for the three months ended December 31, from 51.96 billion rupees a year earlier, beating analysts' expectations for a profit of 80.94 billion rupees, according to Refinitiv IBES data. Most Indian banks have reported stronger profits for the December quarter on improved lending in the final months of the year as coronavirus restrictions were lifted.

Bank Asia holds Annual Business Meet 2022

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Bank Asia virtually held a daylong "Annual Business Meet 2022" at Bank Asia Tower in Kawran Bazar, Dhaka on Saturday.

A Rouf Chowdhury, chairman of the bank, was chief guest of the programme, a press release said. Rumea A Hossain, chairman of the board executive committee of the bank, presided over the virtual event.

Mohammad Safwan Chowdhury, vice-chairman, Dilwar H Chowdhury, chairman of the board audit committee, Prof MA Baqui Khalily, chairman of the board risk management committee, Enam Chowdhury, Ashrafal Haq Chowdhury, Helal Ahmed Chowdhury and Tania Nusrat Zaman, directors of the bank, and Md Arfan Ali, president and managing director, attended the programme.

Deputy managing directors, departmental heads, branch leaders and employees totalling around 2,000 people also attended the event.

The meeting reviewed the bank's business opportunities and challenges for 2022 and put forward suggestions to meet the target and bring forth desired strategic changes.

Brac Bank employs 80 'YLP' participants

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Brac Bank has employed 80 graduate candidates under its recruitment initiative "Young Leaders' Programme" (YLP) as a part of its business expansion plans to recruit 2,000 more people from public and private universities in 2022.

The lender plans to double its business within the next four years riding on its investment on people and technology, said a press release.

The bank believes a recent salary hike by up to 50 per cent of its officer to senior principal grade officials has also generated huge enthusiasm among jobseekers.