

## GP to give 250pc cash dividend

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Shareholders of Grameenphone have approved 250 per cent cash dividend for 2021. The approval came in an annual general meeting held virtually yesterday.

Despite the challenges of new Covid-19 variants, Grameenphone stood by the country with its increased investment, innovations in products and services, and its support to communities in need, said Chairman Jorgen C Arentz Rostrop.

"We look forward to the expected growth momentum as we have significantly invested in network, spectrum, and onboarded network operating partners with advanced and future-fit capabilities," he added.

**CEO Yasir Azman said 2021 has set a foundation for expediting future growth, building future-fit capabilities and operational models**

CEO Yasir Azman said 2021 has set a foundation for expediting future growth, building future-fit capabilities and operational models, and catalysing meaningful social impacts to support Bangladesh's ambition to become a self-sustained digital economy.

It delivered a good set of financial results with improved growth momentum in 2021, driven by increased users and usage due to network and experience enhancements, he said.

The board of directors announced a final cash dividend for 2021 of 125 per cent of the paid-up capital.

Including a previous 125 per cent interim cash dividend, the total cash dividend stands at 250 per cent of the paid-up capital.

In addition, Grameenphone made eSIMs available from April 25, 2022.



People are seen walking in and out of a Bata Shoe showroom in Farmgate, Dhaka yesterday. Bata Shoe had incurred losses for the first time in its 58-year history in Bangladesh during the April-June period of 2020 as it missed the country's main shopping season, namely Eid, due to government restrictions aimed at curbing the spread of Covid-19.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

# Bata Shoe returns to profit in Jan-Mar

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Bata Shoe, one of the most popular footwear brands in the country, returned to profits in the first quarter (January-March) of the ongoing calendar year after drowning in losses amid the coronavirus pandemic.

The shoemaker's profits rose to Tk 6.84 crore in the January-March period of 2022 while it was at a loss of Tk 4.90 crore during the same period the previous year, according to the company's financial statements.

Bata Shoe had incurred losses for the first time in its 58-year history in Bangladesh during the April-June period of 2020 as it missed the country's main shopping season, namely Eid, due to government restrictions aimed at curbing the spread of Covid-19.

The company returned to profits in the second quarter (April-June) of 2021 but a second wave infections again drowned the company in losses.

However, shoe sales recovered with the easing of the pandemic situation and so, Bata Shoe was able to return to profits this year.

In its quarterly report, the company

said that its earnings per share improved significantly driven by a growth in sales, especially in the post-coronavirus era.

As such, its earnings per share stood at Tk 5.01 by the end of the first quarter this year while it was Tk 3.58 in the negative at the same time in 2021.

After lifting the nationwide lockdown in August last year, the government removed all remaining restrictions on public movement by this February.

As such, schools were allowed to reopen and normalcy gradually returned to the country's economy.

"So, the first quarter started with good demand for school shoes, which contributed to improving revenue by almost 16 per cent in that period," Bata Shoe said in its report.

Aligned with revenue, cost of sales also increased by almost 9 per cent in that quarter.

Besides, operating expenses increased by almost 10 per cent due to business growth at the same time, it added.

The company's sales rose 16 per cent year-on-year to Tk 214 crore in the first quarter of 2022.

Bata Shoe is one of the operating companies of the Bata Shoe Organization

(BSO) and a subsidiary of Bafin (Nederland) BV in the Netherlands, which holds 70 per cent of the company's shares.

Bata Shoe is mainly engaged in the manufacturing and marketing of leather, rubber, plastic and canvas footwear, hosiery and accessory items.

The company's manufacturing plants are situated in Tongi and Dhamrai.

The listed multinational shoemaker yesterday disclosed its yearly performance for 2021. Its earnings per share stood at Tk 5.01 in the negative in 2021 and Tk 96.83 in the negative the year before that.

Although it remained in loss, Bata Shoe declared 25 per cent final cash dividend for the year, so total cash dividend of the year, including interim dividend, stood at 100 per cent.

Stocks of Bata Shoe, which was listed in 1985, rose 1.60 per cent to Tk 925 at the Dhaka Stock Exchange (DSE) yesterday.

The company's paid-up capital was Tk 13.6 crore while it has a reserve and surplus of Tk 352 crore, according to DSE data.

Sponsors holds 70 per cent of the shoemaker's stocks while 20.44 per cent are held by institutions, 1.58 per cent by foreign investors and 7.98 per cent by general investors.

## Sunamganj-Meghalaya border haat reopens

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

The border haat between Bangladesh and India along the Sunamganj-Meghalaya frontier reopened yesterday after remaining closed for two years.

The haat was resumed on the Lauwaghar border in Sunamganj. On the Indian side, the area falls under Balat area of East Khasi Hills district of Meghalaya, said a press release of the Deputy High Commission of Bangladesh in Kolkata.

Following the reopening of the haat, local communities from both the countries get an opportunity to sell their agricultural and horticultural products, small agriculture and household goods, minor forest products, fresh and dry fish, cottage industry items, wooden furniture, handloom and handicraft items.

The joint border haat management committee took the decision of reopening the haat in a meeting on April 19.

At present, there are seven border haats between Bangladesh and India. Besides, nine more new border haats are in the pipeline, the deputy high commission said.

Besides, two more haats -- "Ryngku-Bagan Bari", and "Nalikata-Saydabad" -- along the border of India's Meghalaya and Bangladesh's Sunamganj will be opened on May 12 and May 16 respectively, it said.

Meanwhile, Commerce Minister Tipu Munshi on Monday said a new border haat would be set up on Sajek-Silsuri border along Bangladesh's Rangamati and India's Mizoram frontier to boost local business and trade between the two countries.

The decision of opening the new border haat was taken following a proposal of the Mizoram government during the minister's visit to India between April 22 and April 25, he added.

## City Bank gets nod to issue Tk 700cr bond

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

The Bangladesh Securities and Exchange Commission (BSEC) yesterday gave a go-ahead to The City Bank Ltd to raise Tk 700 crore through issuance of bond in order to enable the bank to strengthen its capital base, according to a statement.

With an 8-year maturity period, the subordinated bond is non-convertible, unsecured and fully redeemable floating rate debt instrument.

The City Bank will raise the fund through private placement among institutional investors and high net-worth individuals. The bank will issue the bond to strengthen its Tier-II capital base, said the BSEC in a press release.

The Tier-II capital is the second layer of capital that a bank must keep as part of its required reserves. It is comprised of revaluation reserves, general provisions, subordinated term debt, and hybrid capital instruments, according to Investopedia.

The face value of each unit of the bond is Tk 1 crore. IDLC Investments Ltd and City Bank Capital Resources Ltd are acting as trustee and arranger respectively for the bond.

## Germany boosts borrowing to tackle war costs

AFP, Frankfurt

Germany will take on an additional 39.2 billion euros (\$42.1 billion) of debt in 2022 to counter the economic impact of the war in Ukraine, sources in the finance ministry said Monday.

The supplementary budget, set to be put to the cabinet on Wednesday, will raise the total of new borrowing for the year to 138.9 billion euros.

The additional debt package was a "timely and targeted" response to the outbreak of war in Ukraine, the sources said, with the money intended to help businesses and households deal with rising energy costs as a result of the war, as well as financing humanitarian aid to Ukraine.

After years of chasing balanced budgets, traditionally frugal Germany took on huge amounts of debt in 2020 and 2021 to help Europe's biggest economy cope with the coronavirus pandemic, lifting its constitutionally enshrined debt limits to do so.

The government had planned to take on 99.7 billion euros in 2022 as part of its "core" budget, but the war in Ukraine has forced Germany to adjust its calculations.

## Oil prices sink more than 5pc

AFP, London

World oil prices sank more than five percent Monday on fears that China's worsening Covid outbreak could slam demand from the major energy consumer.

Europe's benchmark contract Brent North Sea crude fell as low as \$101.20 per barrel and US WTI oil dropped to \$96.85.

China is struggling to get a grip on a renewed Covid outbreak that has forced Shanghai -- the country's biggest city -- into lockdown and dealt a blow to energy demand.

Global markets have also been stung by the prospect of a sharp increase in US interest rates.

"Market moods have deteriorated as the Covid situation in China is not improving and the media is hinting that Beijing could be next in line for a lockdown after Shanghai and several other major cities," said XTB analyst Walid Koudmani.

## Most factories yet to clear

FROM PAGE B1  
failing to implement the government instruction.

Nazma Akter, president of the Bangladesh Garment Sramik Federation, said they had demanded the bonus payment by April 22, but a good number of factories are yet to pay the allowances.

Nearly 65 per cent of garment factories are yet to clear the festival bonus as of yesterday, she told The Daily Star.

According to the labour rights activist, nearly 300 garment factories are in trouble and might face difficulties in paying wages and bonuses to

their workers ahead of Eid, which will be celebrated next week.

"Every day, we are working to solve various complaints of workers regarding the payment of Eid bonus."

She suggested the government monitor the payment situation so that all the workers can go their village homes with Eid bonuses and salaries and celebrate the festival in a joyous mood.

Md Shahidullah Azim, senior vice-president of the BGMEA, said nearly 100 per cent of BGMEA members have paid their salaries and 80.87 per cent of factories cleared the bonuses.

He admits that seven members are facing difficulties in paying their workers. "Still, they will be able to pay their workers ahead of Eid holidays."

Earlier, Monnujan Sufian, state minister for labour and employment, instructed the owners of the industries and manufacturing units to complete the payments of bonuses and salaries for March and April before the Eid holiday, scheduled to begin on April 29.

She urged the owners to pay the workers at least 15 days' salary for April if it is not possible to pay it in full.

## Internet data caps

FROM PAGE B1  
expressed their displeasure as they argued that such a package could dent their profit.

"Providing unlimited data is neither commercially sustainable for operators nor technologically viable since people will use large volumes of data, which will increase pressure on the wireless network," said an official of an operator, seeking anonymity.

Taimur Rahman, chief corporate and regulatory affairs officer at Banglalink, said offering a package depends on the strategy of an operator. So, there should be flexibility whether the operator wants to launch it or not.

Both experts and users welcomed the move.

"This will benefit customers," said Abu Saeed

Khan, senior policy fellow at Colombo-based think-tank LIRNEasia.

Sabbir Ahmed, a subscriber, has access to unlimited packages at his office and home thanks to Wi-Fi connections. However, when he goes out, he can't use the mobile internet much since he could run out of data.

"If the operators launch such packages, it will help me use as much data as I need without any worry."

Mazhar Uddin, a customer of a telecom operator, said if the operators launch data with a one-year validity at a reasonable price, it will be very good for him.

"But if they charge a high price, it will not bring any good."

initiative as many people lead a busy life and find the requirement to recharge mobile data every few days cumbersome.

"Besides, it will eliminate the pressure to keep in mind when to recharge the data."

Khan also says the BTRC should let the operators develop their own network to eliminate their reliance on other service providers.

"Regulatory restrictions on developing optical fibre networks and using dense wavelength division multiplexing (DWDM) technology must be removed for meaningful internet connection," he said.

The DWDM is a process of multiplexing various wavelength signals onto a single fibre.

## Post-import financing

FROM PAGE B1

products such as fertiliser, seed and pesticide will be allowed to repay their loans within six months.

Importers of trading items like electrical products will be permitted to refund their loans within four months.

However, Bangladesh Bank kept the repayment rules for essential commodities unchanged, meaning that importers still have to pay back their loans within three

months.

Under the PIF, banks extend loans to importers to help them pay the cost of imported items within the stipulated time. This gives importers the opportunity to repay it after selling products.

Conventional banks earlier used to treat such financing as loans against trust receipts while Shariah-based banks called it Murabaha trust receipts.

The central bank also

instructed banks not to facilitate PIF to borrowers who face overdue debt.

Lenders, however, will provide PIF to importers who are unable to repay their loans due to any unexpected adversity.

But no defaulter can receive any loan under as PIF.

In addition, such PIF facilities will not be applicable for inland letters of credit, which are opened and settled for local transactions.

### PRICE SENSITIVE INFORMATION



This is for information of all concerned that the Board of Directors of Bank Asia Limited in its 472<sup>nd</sup> meeting which was held virtually through digital platform on April 26, 2022 at 2.30 p.m. has approved the un-audited financial statements of the Bank for the first quarter ended on March 31, 2022 and disclosed the following financial indicators of the Bank:

Particulars	March 31, 2022		March 31, 2021	
	Taka (Solo)	Taka (Consolidated)	Taka (Solo)	Taka (Consolidated)
Profit before Tax & Provision	2,610,480,423	2,648,761,426	2,355,432,156	2,422,474,724
Profit after Tax	1,260,480,423	1,233,235,088	1,218,228,236	1,219,333,344
Net Asset Value (NAV)	26,889,582,337	26,710,718,054	26,931,568,073	26,759,112,140
Net Asset Value (NAV) per Share	23.06	22.91	23.10	22.95
Earnings per Share (EPS)	1.08	1.06	1.04	1.05
Net Operating Cash Flow per Share (NOCFPS)*	6.34	6.34	(11.78)	(11.57)

\* NOCFPS for current period increased compare to the same quarter of the previous year mainly due to decrease of loans and advances, increase of deposits and trading liabilities.

The details of un-audited financial statements of the Bank for the first quarter ended on March 31, 2022 will also be available on the website of the Bank at [www.bankasia-bd.com](http://www.bankasia-bd.com)

Dated: Dhaka  
April 26, 2022

**Bank Asia**

Corporate Office  
Bank Asia Tower  
32 & 34, Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue  
Kawran Bazar, Dhaka-1215