



Red amaranth being cultivated on a piece of land from where an early variety of carrot has just been harvested. Around 65,355 tonnes of red amaranth were grown on 31,684 acres of land around the country in fiscal year 2020-21 while 27,567 tonnes of carrots on 5,736 acres of land, according to the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics. The photo was taken at Varoimari village in Pabna's Ishwardi upazila recently.

PHOTO: AHMED HUMAYUN KABIR TOPU

Regaining clients' trust a must for insurance: FBCCI

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

The insurance sector should focus more on increasing awareness and regaining customers' trust for the sake of the industry's development, FBCCI President Md Jashim Uddin said yesterday.

The chief of the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industries (FBCCI) made the call at the first meeting of the FBCCI's standing committee on insurance held at its headquarters in Dhaka.

"Insurance is one of the important sectors of the country's economy. However, a big challenge for this sector is a lack of confidence," Jashim Uddin said.

"We have to find a solution to get out of this situation. All concerned in this sector should play an active role to change customers' negative perceptions of the insurance industry."

Bangladesh is yet to fully utilise the possibilities of its insurance sector and there is no alternative to developing skilled manpower for future growth of the sector, he said.

MA Momen, vice-president of the FBCCI, said the time has changed, so it is very important now to go for the modernisation of the insurance sector.

He also advised attracting new customers by introducing striking ideas, products and services.



Mashrur Arefin, managing director of City Bank, and Md Abul Kalam Azad, director of the agriculture credit department of Bangladesh Bank, exchanged signed documents of a participatory agreement on disbursement of loans at a maximum rate of 4 per cent under a refinancing scheme of Tk 5,000 crore for food security of the country at the central bank's headquarters in Dhaka recently. Abdur Rouf Talukder, governor of Bangladesh Bank, and AKM Sajedur Rahman Khan, deputy governor, were present.

PHOTO: CITY BANK



Syed Habib Hasnat, managing director of Global Islami Bank, and Md Abul Kalam Azad, director of the agriculture credit department of Bangladesh Bank, exchanged signed documents of an agreement on disbursement of agriculture loans under a refinancing scheme for food security of the country at the latter's headquarters in Dhaka recently. Abdur Rouf Talukder, governor of Bangladesh Bank, and AKM Sajedur Rahman Khan, deputy governor, were present.

PHOTO: GLOBAL ISLAMI BANK

Stocks rise for third day

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

The stock index continued rising for the third consecutive day although most of the stocks either dropped or remained unchanged yesterday.

The DSEX, the benchmark index of the Dhaka Stock Exchange (DSE), rose 5 points, or 0.08 per cent, to 6,215.

The DS30, the blue-chip index, advanced 0.01 per cent to 2,199 while the DSES, the index that represents shariah-based companies, fell 0.01 per cent to 1,357.

Turnover, an important indicator of the market, fell 4 per cent to Tk 507 crore, which was Tk 532 crore a day earlier.

Among the traded companies, 52 advanced, 111 declined and 171 remained unchanged.

JMI Hospital Requisite Manufacturing posted the highest appreciation, rising 9.63 per cent while Sunlife Insurance surged 6.5 per cent, Malek Spinning advanced 5.9 per cent and Bengal Windsor

Turnover of the Dhaka bourse fell 4 per cent to Tk 507 crore, which was Tk 532 crore a day earlier

Thermoplastics and Meghna Life Insurance gained more than 5 per cent each.

Orion Infusion suffered the sharpest fall, sliding 8.5 per cent while BD Thai Food & Beverage dropped 6.13 per cent.

Bangladesh Monospool Paper

Manufacturing and Intraco CNG Refueling Station also fell more than 2 per cent each.

Bangladesh Shipping Corporation was the most-traded stock with shares worth Tk 39 crore changing hands.

Bashundhara Paper Mills, JMI Hospital Requisite Manufacturing and Genex Infosys also saw significant transactions.

The Caspi, the all-share price index of the Chittagong Stock Exchange, however, rose 25 points, or 0.13 per cent, to end the day at 18,353.

Of the securities, 37 advanced, 44 declined, and 68 did not show any price movement.

The port city bourse's turnover dropped 60 per cent to Tk 5.26 crore from the previous day's Tk 13.33 crore.

Shahjalal Islami Bank re-elects chairman

STAR BUSINESS DESK

Mohammed Yunus was unanimously re-elected as the chairman of Shahjalal Islami Bank at the bank's 354th board meeting on Wednesday.

Mohiuddin Ahmed and Abdul Karim (Nazim) were elected as vice-chairmen, said a press release.

Yunus is the managing director of Sobhan Ice & Cold Storage, Yunus Cold Storage, Ananta Paper Mills, Yunus Paper Mills, Yunus Fine Paper Mills, Yunus Spinning Mills, Sharif Cold Storage, Yunus Newsprint Mills and Yunus Offset Paper Mills.

Mohiuddin is the proprietor of Rupsha Trading Corporation and Mohiuddin Auto House, chairman of Pacific Automobiles, vice-chairman of Shahjalal Islami Bank Securities and sponsor shareholder of Islami Insurance Bangladesh.

Karim is the chairman of London Tea Exchange BD, managing director of Karim Enterprise and proprietor of Maharani Restaurant, Camden in the UK.

Oil rises over 1%

REUTERS, London

Oil rose more than 1 per cent on Thursday supported by optimism over China's demand outlook and hopes that upcoming inflation data from the United States will point to a slower increase in interest rates.

Top oil importer China is reopening its economy after the end of strict Covid-19 curbs, boosting optimism that demand for fuel will grow in 2023. Brent crude rose \$1.18, or 1.4 per cent, to \$83.85 a barrel by 1250 GMT, while US West Texas Intermediate crude gained \$1.15, or 1.5 per cent, to \$78.56.

Both benchmarks jumped 3 per cent on Wednesday driven by hopes that the outlook for the global economy may not be quite as pessimistic as has been feared.

| PRICES OF KEY ESSENTIALS IN DHAKA CITY | | | |
|--|----------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|
| | PRICE (JAN 12, 2023) | % CHANGES FROM A MONTH AGO | % CHANGE FROM A YEAR AGO |
| Fine rice (kg) | Tk 58-Tk 75 | -2.92 ↓ | 2.31 ↑ |
| Coarse rice (kg) | Tk 46-Tk 52 | -1.01 ↓ | 3.16 ↑ |
| Loose flour (kg) | Tk 58-Tk 62 | -4 ↓ | 66.67 ↑ |
| Lentil (kg) | Tk 95-Tk 105 | -4.76 ↓ | -2.44 ↓ |
| Soybean (litre) | Tk 170-Tk 175 | -2.82 ↓ | 21.05 ↑ |
| Potato (kg) | Tk 22-Tk 25 | -17.54 ↓ | 23.68 ↑ |
| Onion (kg) | Tk 35-Tk 45 | -20 ↓ | 0 |
| Egg (4 pcs) | Tk 40-Tk 45 | 14.86 ↑ | 18.06 ↑ |

SOURCE: TCB

Plight of small businesses

FROM PAGE B4

Khan has sought an interest-free loan from the government.

Mostofa Azad Chowdhury Babu, senior vice-president of the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry, said due to higher inflation, the purchasing power of the common people has decreased, so sales of small traders have fallen.

He said the cost of production had increased due to the higher cost of imported raw materials for the jump in the US dollar price by at least 20 per cent against the taka and the spike in transportation costs driven by energy price increases.

According to the business leader, due to the liquidity crunch in the financial sector, no new loans are being sanctioned.

"It has also affected the small businesses," Babu added.

Kazi Iqbal, a senior research fellow of the Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies, says there is a lot of uncertainty in the election year.

"Maybe because of that uncertainty, people have reduced their consumption."

District correspondents Dwaha Chowdhury, Jahid Hasan, Dipankar Roy, Kongkon Karmakar and Shahidul Islam Nirob contributed to the report.

US inflation

FROM PAGE B4

But Rubeela Farooqi of High Frequency Economics warned that "rates of change remain well above levels Fed officials are comfortable with."

US consumer inflation climbed rapidly to a blistering 9.1 per cent last June, a 40-year high, as the war in Ukraine sent global food and energy costs rocketing.

While annual CPI growth eased to 7.1 per cent in November, it remains a far cry from the Fed's two-percent target.

"A steep drop in gas prices" is behind the easing trend in December, said Ian Shepherdson of Pantheon Macroeconomics.

Prices at the pump – a key symbol for US consumers – dropped last month on lower global demand and falling oil prices, in welcome news to policymakers.

Airline fares and health insurance prices are set to fall too, said Shepherdson.

But stripping out the volatile food and energy segments, the "core" CPI index likely rose 0.3 per cent thanks to elevated rents, he said.

This would be a slight pick-

up from November's 0.2 per cent reading, signaling that more work needs to be done.

Colyar of Moody's Analytics added that although motor fuel prices have fallen, policymakers cannot rely on its momentary downward trend to bring down overall inflation.

For now, the Fed is keeping a close eye on the labor market and the pace of wage growth, as rapidly rising earnings could provoke a continued increase in the costs of services.

Fed Chair Jerome Powell cautioned Tuesday that "restoring price stability when inflation is high can require measures that are not popular in the short term as we raise interest rates to slow the economy."

The Fed's moves aim to raise the costs of borrowing, lowering demand by making it more expensive to get funds for big-ticket purchases or to expand businesses.

Fed governor Michelle Bowman added in a separate address Tuesday that despite a decline in some measures of inflation, "we have a lot more work to do."



Syed Mahbubur Rahman, managing director of Mutual Trust Bank, and Md Abul Kalam Azad, director of the agriculture credit department of Bangladesh Bank, exchanged signed documents of a participatory agreement on disbursement of loans at 4 per cent rate under a refinancing scheme worth Tk 5,000 crore for food security of the country at the latter's headquarters in Dhaka recently.

PHOTO: MUTUAL TRUST BANK



Ahsan Zaman Chowdhury, deputy managing director of Trust Bank, and TM Hannan, executive director for sales and marketing of Epic Health Care, exchanged signed documents of a memorandum of understanding on medical services at the latter's head office in Dhaka recently. The bank's cardholders and employees will be able to avail up to 30 per cent discount on medical services round the year. Humaira Azam, managing director of the bank, was present.

PHOTO: TRUST BANK