

## China hits record in EV sales

REUTERS

Electric-vehicle sales are seeing continued strength globally with China reporting record monthly sales in October despite the end of subsidies, according to market research firm Rho Motion.

China ended an 11-year subsidy scheme for EV purchases in 2022, but some local authorities have continued to offer aid or tax rebates to attract investments as well as subsidies for consumers.

EV sales in China, the world's largest auto market, increased 29 percent year-to-date in September. The global EV market showed 34 percent growth in the same period.

China is entering the final two months of the year which are seasonally high for vehicle sales, according to Rho Motion.

"What's notable about October's figures is that EV demand in China continues to reach record highs even though the subsidies were cut ... 2023 is set to be another banner year for China in terms of EV sales," the market research firm said.

EV sales grew 26 percent in European markets, where cutting of subsidies has weighed on demand as seen in Germany where business subsidies were done away with in September, according to Rho Motion.

"This (subsidies) is an important factor in the German market as nearly two-thirds of passenger car registrations are commercial," the market research firm said.

Tesla, Mercedes Benz and Volkswagen have warned high interest rates and a subdued market in the region are putting customers off.



**Sugarcane on sale for Tk 1,500 to Tk 3,500 per 100 stalks depending on the quality at a weekly market in Binoykathi area of Jhalakathi. Planting runs from mid-October to mid-December whereas harvests can be made from mid-October to mid-April. Around 30.87 lakh tonnes were produced on 1.78 lakh acres of land around the country in fiscal year 2021-22, according to the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics. The photo was taken recently.**

PHOTO: TITU DAS

# Transactions thru credit cards drop 7.73%

Bangladeshi credit cardholders spent double abroad than foreigners did within Bangladesh in Sep

AKANDA MUHAMMAD JAHID

Bangladeshi credit cardholders spent twice as much abroad as foreign nationals did within Bangladesh in September, according to the central bank.

Bangladeshi nationals transacted Tk 436.8 crore outside the country using credit cards in September, a 4.52 percent increase from the Tk 417.9 crore spent in the preceding month, data from the Bangladesh Bank showed.

On the other hand, foreign nationals spent Tk 190.4 crore in Bangladesh through credit cards in September, a massive drop of 12.84 percent from Tk 218.4 crore in August.

Meanwhile, overall transactions

through credit cards fell 7.73 percent to Tk 2,249.3 crore in September compared to the previous month's outlay of Tk 2,437.6 crore.

Md Mahiul Islam, head of retail banking at BRAC Bank, said most people were trying to make transactions through credit cards since there is still a major foreign exchange crisis.

"People are not able to take dollars from the bank now like they used to before as there is a limitation. So, spending through cards outside the country has increased," he said.

In the BB's analysis of country-wise transactions, it observed that credit cardholders used their cards mostly in neighbouring country India, which accounted for 16.66 percent of total cross-

border transactions.

Other major destinations included the US, accounting for 15.90 percent of cross-border transactions, the UAE for 8.90 percent, and Thailand for 8.56 percent. The UK accounted for 7.70 percent, Singapore for 7.36 percent, and Canada for 6.84 percent.

In terms of expenditure behaviour, 48.54 percent of total transactions were made to purchase commodities from departmental stores and 12.85 percent related to purchasing necessary items from retail outlet services.

Around 9.23 percent of the total was used to pay for utilities, 8.64 percent for cash withdrawals, 5.94 percent for medicine and

4.87 percent for clothing.

Of transactions done by Bangladeshis, 71.66 percent took place through VISA and 17.34 percent through Mastercard. AMEX was used for 10.74 percent of total transactions while the remaining transactions were through other types of cards.

Among foreign nationals in Bangladesh, US citizens spent the most through credit cards, accounting for 22.12 percent of total spending while Indians transacted 12.04 percent and UK nationals spent 11.83 percent.

The central bank observed that credit card transactions within the country went through ups and downs as usual, adding that cross-border transactions follow almost the same pattern.

## Europe's problems are far bigger than a shallow recession

REUTERS, Frankfurt

The euro zone appears to be in the middle of another recession but worries about whether definitive growth figures due early next year will have a plus or minus sign in front are missing the bigger picture.

The good news is that the 20-nation currency union is set to avoid a deep contraction that could scar firms, households and banks for years. The bad news is that growth is hovering around zero with little out there to fuel a meaningful recovery.

Economic headwinds are so strong that next year will also be challenging and fading growth potential suggests the euro zone would struggle to expand much more than 1 percent even with a robust rebound.

Deep structural problems mean Europe is bound to trail most other big economic areas for years to come.

The short-term outlook is not great - but not terrible. Data on Tuesday showed gross domestic product shrank 0.1 percent in July-September from the previous three months, pointing to a shallow recession, if a weak fourth quarter follows as early indicators suggest.

But growth has been broadly flat all year and record-high interest rates - a byproduct of the inflation surge - along with tighter budget spending will limit expansion to just 0.6 percent next year, according to a Reuters poll.

Optimists, including the European Central Bank's chief economist Philip Lane, say that demand should recover as workers are now enjoying a rebound in real wages that will boost confidence.

The labour market remains tight, and the world economy is rebounding, so external demand is also likely to be healthier.

## State banks' Tk 1,600cr stuck

FROM PAGE B1

Last year, 14 out of 35 NBFIs in Bangladesh were in the red zone in a stress test carried out by the central bank, up from 12 in 2021.

In June, the NBFIs sector's defaulted loans rose to Tk 19,951 crore, accounting for a staggering 27.65 percent of the total outstanding credits, central bank figures showed.

A former top official of a state-run bank said the government-owned banks normally do not want to invest or keep funds in any ailing firms. Sometimes, they did so because of the directors' influence or political pressure.

"Sometimes, top officials get involved in the decision of keeping funds with weak funds in exchange for benefits. So, a rigorous investigation is necessary and accountability needs to be ensured."

He said the NBFIs had used the deposits to lend to borrowers. So, the NBFIs could transfer the loans to the banks, paving the way for the latter to recoup the funds on their own.

At the heart of the NBFIs sector's woes are large-scale irregularities. A central bank

inspection in 2020 unearthed huge irregularities and scams at a dozen NBFIs, including People's Leasing, ILFSL, Premier Leasing, Uttara Finance, and First Finance.

Rupali Bank invested Tk 566 crore through the opening of FDRs with some NBFIs and opened FDRs involving Tk 110 crore with Padma Bank and Tk 19.89 crore with ICB Islamic Bank.

"When Rupali Bank kept the fund with the NBFIs, the business of the NBFIs was in good condition, their capital was strong and the classified loan was low. It was tough to predict at the time that they would fall to any difficult situation," said Md Harunur Rashid, chief financial officer of Rupali Bank.

"It was unexpected. Now, we are keeping regular communication with the NBFIs."

He said the NBFIs can talk to the central bank to find a solution.

Sonali Bank invested Tk 240 crore in Padma Bank, Tk 14.5 crore in ICB Islamic Bank and Tk 164 crore with several non-banks.

Janata Bank's investment in the form of

fixed deposits was Tk 190 crore at Padma Bank, Tk 14 crore at ICB Islamic Bank, and Tk 253 crore with several NBFIs.

Md Abdul Jabbar, managing director of Janata Bank, and Md Afzal Karim, managing director of Sonali Bank, could not be contacted for comments despite repeated attempts.

Hasina Jannat, head of treasury at First Finance, said the company can't repay the funds due mainly to a liquidity crisis.

"We are giving priority to individual depositors. We plan to return the funds to the state-run banks if a major loan recovery can be done."

A non-listed firm owes a large amount to First Finance and the NBFIs is trying to recover it, he said.

Md Mashiur Rahman, acting managing director of ILFSL, said it has liabilities of around Tk 2,000 crore with several banks and around Tk 2,000 crore with other NBFIs and corporate firms.

"Due to the liquidity crisis, we are currently not in a position to repay the funds."

He said the company is restructuring the equity base and hopes to reach a solution in the upcoming months.

Md Delowar, a treasury official of ICB Islamic Bank, said most of the FDRs of the state-run banks were opened when it was running its operations under the name of Oriental Bank.

When it was renamed to ICB Islamic Bank in 2008, the bank's liability was more than Tk 2,400 crore. It now stands at Tk 400 crore.

"We are paying back our depositors gradually and the interest is also being provided," Delowar added.

## ACI to form

FROM PAGE B1

During the July-September quarter of financial year 2023-24, the ACI's losses reduced to Tk 14.10 crore from Tk 18.59 crore in the same period a year ago, according to its unaudited financial statements published yesterday.

Losses per share declined to Tk 2.07 in the first quarter of the financial year from Tk 3.75 a year ago, it said.

## Normalcy returning

FROM PAGE B1

Brands, Levi Strauss & Co, Lululemon, Patagonia, Puma SE, PVH Corp, SanMar, Under Armour and ALDI South Group.

The BGMEA is going to hold a meeting today with clothing retailers and brands which source garment items from Bangladesh, said Hassan.

They will be updated about the labour unrest and asked to pay higher rates in line with the wage hike, he said.

The new minimum wages came at a time when the global economy, alongside that of Bangladesh, is passing through an unprecedented situation, said Hassan in the letter.

The garment industry in

Bangladesh is feeling the heat of this crisis, especially from soaring inflation and significant increase in all input costs, including that of fuel, gas, electricity and transportation, he said.

"Now to align with global climate action agenda, our factories are making further investment to reduce GHG emission and be more resource efficient," read the letter.

Not only that, for ensuring workplace safety, comfort for workers and to reduce fatigue, factories are upgrading machine, process and production method, said Hassan in the letter.

This will be challenging for many of the factories to implement the new wage in

the current economic and financial circumstances. However, ensuring decent living of the workers is also a top priority for garment makers, as well as for global brands and retailers, he added.

"Since we have accepted the new minimum wage, we will ensure implementation of it, and we need your support in terms of responsible purchasing practice," read the letter.

"To ensure

uninterrupted and smoother operation in the industry, it is important that prices of all goods which will be shipped from December 1, 2023 are duly adjusted/up-charged covering the increment in wage component," it added.

## Amended labour law

FROM PAGE B1

would be difficult to obtain the EU's Generalised Scheme of Preferences Plus status as the amended law is not worker-friendly.

The two leaders shared their observations while speaking to The Daily Star after the meeting.

Bangladesh hopes to secure the GSP Plus status from 2029 after the expiry of the LDC trade benefit in order to retain the duty benefit in the world's largest trade bloc.

In order to do so, the country will have to implement 32 international conventions in four areas: human rights, labour rights, environmental protection, and good governance.

The labour law has been amended as part of the

government's efforts to secure the GSP Plus status.

The delegation is led by EU External Action Service's Deputy Managing Director for Asia Pacific Paola Pampaloni.

The visiting EU delegation will hold a meeting with the secretaries of commerce, labour and foreign ministries at a state guest house in Dhaka today.

In the meeting, the delegation will mainly want to know about Bangladesh's progress in the labour law reforms and the implementation of the National Action Plan of the government, said Senior Commerce Secretary Tapan Kanti Ghosh.

The plan, adopted in 2021, is a document

where the government has committed to bringing changes to the labour law.

The plan is closely linked to the roadmap submitted by the government to the International Labour Organisation (ILO) following an Article 26 complaint, according to the ILO.

The roadmap aims to improve the country's observance of labour rights, including freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining.

The ILO has been supporting the government to implement the two documents and reform processes, which form part of a body of work that has been ongoing since the collapse of Rana Plaza a decade ago.

## Kohinoor Chemicals' profit up 22%

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Kohinoor Chemicals Company (Bangladesh) Ltd recorded a 22 percent year-on-year increase in profit to Tk 9.98 crore for the first quarter of fiscal year 2023-24.

Similarly, earnings per share increased to Tk 3.26 whereas it was Tk 2.66 last year, according to unaudited financial statements.

The cosmetics manufacturer recorded a 17 percent year-on-year increase in revenue to Tk 150 crore.

Net asset value per share increased to Tk 62.03 from Tk 59.46 last year.

The company's shares rose 0.06 percent to Tk 462.70 till the end of trade at Dhaka Stock Exchange yesterday.

## India's wholesale price index falls

REUTERS, New Delhi

India's wholesale price index in October fell 0.52 percent from a year earlier, staying in negative territory for the seventh straight month on weaker manufacturing and a moderation in food prices, according to government data on Tuesday.

The fall in the index was steeper than a decline of 0.20 percent expected by economists polled by Reuters. It fell 0.26 percent in September.

In October, fuel and power prices fell 2.47 percent from a year earlier, compared with a 3.35 percent drop in September. Prices of primary articles were up 1.82 percent versus a rise of 3.70 percent a month earlier.

Food prices rose 1.07 percent year-on-year compared with a rise of 1.54 percent in September, while manufactured product prices fell 1.13 percent against a 1.34 percent fall the previous month.

Data on Monday showed India's retail inflation eased in October to a four-month low, edging closer to the central bank's target of 4 percent, which it has said needs to be firmly in sight before it can start lowering interest rates.

Last week, RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das highlighted risks from a spike in food prices saying India was vulnerable to "recurring and overlapping" food price shocks despite the recent moderation in inflation.

### Bangladesh Lamps Limited

Head office: House-22, Road-4, Block-F, Banani, Dhaka-1213

#### NOTICE OF THE 62<sup>nd</sup> ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Notice is hereby given that the 62<sup>nd</sup> Annual General Meeting of the Company will be held on **Thursday, 14<sup>th</sup> December 2023, at 11:30 a.m.** through digital platform to transact the following business:

#### AGENDA

1. Consideration and adoption of the Directors' and Auditors' reports and the Audited Financial Statements of the Company for the year ended 30 June 2023.
2. Declaration of dividend for the year 2022-2023.
3. Election of Directors and appointment of Independent Director.
4. Appointment of Auditors for the year 2023-2024 and fixation of their remuneration.
5. Appointment of professional for the certification on Corporate Governance for the year 2023-2024.

By order of the Board

Dhaka  
15-11-2023

**Mohammad Ruhan Miah, FCS**  
Company Secretary

#### NOTES :

1. **12-11-2023 was the Record Date.** The shareholders, whose names will appear in the share register of the Company or in the depository register on that date, will be eligible to attend the Annual General Meeting.
2. Pursuant to the Bangladesh Securities and Exchange Commission's Order No. SEC/SRMIC/94-231/25 dated 08 July, 2020, the AGM will be virtual meeting of the Members, which will be conducted via live webcast by using digital platform.
3. For the sake of convenience, shareholders are requested to submit their queries on the Directors' report / Audited Financial Statements for the year ended on 30 June 2023, if any, at the Share Office of the Company preferably 7 days before the day of the General Meeting.
4. A shareholder entitled to attend and vote at the meeting may appoint a proxy to attend and vote in his/her place. The proxy form, stamped with a revenue stamp of Tk.100, shall be submitted at the Share Office of the Company or through e-mail at [mohammad.mosaddaque@transcombd.com](mailto:mohammad.mosaddaque@transcombd.com) / [abu.yousuf@transcombd.com](mailto:abu.yousuf@transcombd.com) 48 hours before the meeting, i.e. by the close of business on 12<sup>th</sup> December 2023.
5. The Members will be able to submit their questions/comments and vote electronically 24 hours before commencement of the AGM and during the AGM. For logging into the system, the Members need to put their 16-digit Beneficial Owner (BO) ID /Folio Number and other credential as proof of their identity by visiting the link <https://agm.blil.com.bd>
6. We encourage the Members to login to the system prior to the meeting start time of 11.30 a.m. Bangladesh Standard Time (BST) on December 14, 2023. Please allow ample time to login and establish your connectivity. The webcast will start at 11:30 a.m. Bangladesh Standard Time (BST). Please contact at 01712-778840 for any technical difficulties in accessing the virtual meeting and at 01713-082494 for share related issue.