

Chinese retail traders embrace DeepSeek

REUTERS, Shanghai/Singapore

If you cannot fight them, join them, is the mantra among Chinese mom-and-pop investors who are embracing DeepSeek and other artificial intelligence tools, in sharp contrast with last year's government crackdown on computer-driven quantitative traders.

Online crash courses have mushroomed and training rooms are packed with retail traders eager to beat the market using computer models, as the popularity of DeepSeek - itself backed by a quant fund - changed not only the market trajectory, but the perception of China's \$700 billion hedge fund industry.

The rapid adoption of DeepSeek in China's retail-dominated stock market is also prompting changes at brokerages and wealth managers, while creating new risks for investors in a market dominated and driven by small-time traders' cash flow.

"The future is the digital age, and AI will be vital," Hong Yangjun told a packed room of individual investors learning to trade with AI on a weekend in February.

Just as future warfare will be fought with drones and robots, the stock market will be a battleground between computers, the lecturers told the class in an office in downtown Shanghai.

Such piety is in stark contrast to the public outcry a year ago against computer-driven quant funds, viewed as "bloodsuckers" by retail investors, and blamed by regulators for contributing to market unfairness and volatility.



Ahsan Zaman Chowdhury, managing director of Trust Bank, poses for group photographs with participants of the "Annual Risk Conference 2025" at the Baywatch Hotel, Inani in Cox's Bazar recently.

PHOTO: TRUST BANK

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GD-641



GD-634

Prime Bank launches blockchain-powered LC on local platform



Officials from both Prime Bank and Dhaka Bank, alongside Spectrum Software and Consulting Limited, attend the inauguration ceremony of the Green LC system in Dhaka recently.

PHOTO: PRIME BANK

STAR BUSINESS DESK

Prime Bank PLC recently launched the proof of concept (PoC) for Green LC, Bangladesh's first-ever letter of credit (LC) executed on a locally developed blockchain platform.

This significant milestone represents a major advancement in the country's trade digitisation, paving the way for a secure, transparent, and efficient digital trade ecosystem, according to a press release.

Dhaka Bank PLC participated in this groundbreaking transaction as the

beneficiary bank.

The initiative aligns with Bangladesh Bank's directive (FE Circular 06, issued on 14 January 2025), which urges financial institutions to adopt electronic solutions for all LC transactions, encompassing transmission, advising, presentation, acceptance, and subsequent processes.

Prior to this successful execution, Prime Bank PLC, in collaboration with technology partner Spectrum Software & Consulting (Pvt) Limited, took the initiative, subsequently receiving support from three additional leading banks that

joined and made significant contributions to this transformative project.

Their combined efforts have established a secure, transparent, and efficient digital trade ecosystem.

On this momentous occasion, we extend our heartfelt appreciation to all partner banks for their unwavering dedication and steadfast commitment to innovation.

This achievement underscores Prime Bank PLC's commitment to digital innovation, laying the groundwork for a future in which trade operations are fully digital, paperless, and seamless.

Trust Bank organises annual risk conference

STAR BUSINESS DESK

Trust Bank PLC recently organised an "Annual Risk Conference 2025" at the Baywatch Hotel, Inani in Cox's Bazar.

Ahsan Zaman Chowdhury, managing director of the bank, inaugurated the conference as the chief guest, the bank said in a press release.

Other senior officials from the bank's head office, along with all the branch managers of the bank, were also present.

US car buyers rush to dealer lots to avoid tariff-related price hikes

REUTERS, Detroit

After Matthew Mitchell heard US President Donald Trump was serious about implementing 25 percent tariffs on Mexico and Canada, he told his wife it was time to snatch up a car, and fast.

"I was like 'Ok, we're going this weekend,'" Mitchell said. He raced to a dealership in Walnut Creek, California to land a deal on a 2019 Toyota Camry in early March to avoid any tariff-related price hikes.

Mitchell is part of a group of buyers who say they expedited their car shopping out of concern that Trump's tariff threats would result in showroom sticker shock.

Volkswagen has offered a wary outlook for the year.

Right now, the levies are not affecting dealer lots, which on average have a three-month supply of vehicles. Many US automakers have already gotten two reprieves on tariffs since Trump said they would take effect in early February.

But the uncertainty spurred people to react.

Between February 16 and 22, searches on car-shopping website Cars.com jumped 9 percent from the previous week, said David Greene, a Cars.com analyst.

"When the announcement of the tariffs first occurred in early February, it didn't register with car shoppers right away.

But when the conversation turned to tariffs on all imports and the new auto tariffs were pushed to April, searches on Cars.com really started to climb," Greene said.

Last week, a Reuters poll of 74 economists showed risks to the Mexican, Canadian and American economies are piling up due to the unpredictability of US tariffs, with rising expectations for both a recession and more inflation. Those concerns have caused consumers to grow more cautious.

Across the border in Calgary, Canada, Darby Madalena dashed off to a nearby dealer to buy a 2025 Subaru Forester about a year ahead of her original plan. "It didn't make sense to wait anymore," said Madalena.

PRICES OF KEY ESSENTIALS IN DHAKA CITY			
	PRICE (MAR 11, 2025)	% CHANGES FROM A MONTH AGO	% CHANGE FROM A YEAR AGO
Fine rice (kg)	Tk 60-Tk 80	3.29 ↑	14.60 ↑
Coarse rice (kg)	Tk 52-Tk 55	0	5.00 ↑
Loose flour (kg)	Tk 40-Tk 45	0	-10.53 ↓
Lentil (kg)	Tk 105-Tk 110	0	3.15 ↑
Soybean (litre)	Tk 145-Tk 152	-3.01 ↓	16.83 ↑
Potato (kg)	Tk 50-Tk 55	0	-23.08 ↓
Onion (kg)	Tk 110-Tk 120	-8.89 ↓	-56.84 ↓
Egg (4 pcs)	Tk 48-Tk 50	0	-2.30 ↓

SOURCE: TCB

Bangladesh eyes

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An FTA between Pakistan and Bangladesh was first proposed in 2002 and discussed again at the 2004 Saarc summit. However, it was not finalised as Pakistan did not accept Bangladesh's request for unilateral and unconditional market access, according to The Atlantic Council, an American think tank in the field of international affairs.

The Pakistan Business Council (PBC), a pan-industry advocacy forum based in Karachi, conducted a study titled "Trade and Investment Opportunities in a Pakistan-Bangladesh Free Trade Agreement (FTA)" in 2022.

The report highlights the longstanding trade imbalance in favour of Pakistan.

Pakistani exports to Bangladesh declined from \$947.23 million in 2011 to \$583.44 million in 2020, while imports from Bangladesh fell from \$82.73 million in 2011 to \$61.94 million in 2020.

In 2020, Pakistan recorded a trade surplus of \$521.5 million with Bangladesh, the biggest in the past decade.

According to the PBC's analysis, Pakistan has an export potential of at least \$2.95 billion in Bangladesh, mainly in textiles, agriculture, foodstuffs, chemicals, base metals, plastics and cement products.

The top 25 commodities alone had an estimated export potential of \$1.24 billion in 2020, yet Pakistan's actual exports for these items amounted to just \$435.78 million, according to the analysis.

To strengthen bilateral trade, the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of

Commerce and Industry and the FBCCI signed a memorandum of understanding on 13 January this year to form the Pakistan-Bangladesh Joint Business Council (PBBC).

PBCC Administrator Md Hafizur Rahman, who led the Bangladesh delegation at the joint meeting, acknowledged the potential for increased trade.

However, he pointed out that trade volumes remained low, possibly due to political factors.

He also cited weak connectivity as a challenge, saying that the lack of a direct shipping line and visa complications had hampered trade in the past.

However, now Pakistan has eased its visa process for Bangladeshis, offering approval within 24 hours of application.

A direct shipping line is also now in place, so trade with Pakistan is expected to grow significantly, increasing connectivity and engagement between businesses in both countries, he added.

Regarding Pakistan as a sourcing destination for cotton, yarn, and fabrics, Rahman said local textile and garment manufacturers diversified their sourcing strategies a few years ago, with Pakistan becoming one of several key suppliers.

He said Bangladeshi spinners and traders now import cotton from Argentina, Australia, Brazil, the US, several African nations and Pakistan, reducing their dependency on India.

Showkat Aziz Russell, president of the Bangladesh Textile Mills Association, said Bangladeshi cotton traders and spinners were importing more cotton from Pakistan due to its competitive pricing.

STORY

নিয়োগ বিজ্ঞপ্তি- বেসামরিক মহিলা ফিজিওথেরাপিস্ট

সিএমএইচ রামু, রামু সেনানিবাস

১। বালাদেশে সেনাবাহিনীর রামু সেনানিবাসের সিএমএইচ রামু, জিমনেশিয়াম/ডিভিশন সুইমিংপুল এর জন্য বেসামরিক হিসেবে মহিলা ফিজিওথেরাপিস্ট নিয়োগের জন্য জন্মান্তরে বালাদেশের ছায়া নাগরিকের নিকট হতে আবেদনপত্র আহ্বান করা যাচ্ছে।

২। মিয়েগোক্রম মহিলা ফিজিওথেরাপিস্ট রামু সেনানিবাসের সিএমএইচ রামু, জিমনেশিয়াম/ডিভিশন সুইমিংপুল এর নির্দলিত প্রদর্শন হিসেবে মহিলা ফিজিওথেরাপিস্ট নাম্বার করা যাচ্ছে।

৩। আব্দুল প্রাথী প্রাথীক নাম্বার নাম, পতা ও মাতার নাম, পর্যবেক্ষণ ও ছায়া নাম্বার করা যাচ্ছে।

৪। আবেদনপত্রের সাথে ০৩ (তিনি) কলি পাসপোর্ট সার্টিফিকেশন সহ, জন্মনিবন্ধন/ভেটোর আইডি কার্ড, জাতীয়তা সমন্পত্তি, স্বাক্ষর ক্ষেত্রের সন্দর্ভে সার্টিফিকেশন সহ আবেদনপত্রের সাথে প্রদর্শন করা হবে।

৫। প্রাথী কার্ড নাম্বার মহিলা ফিজিওথেরাপিস্ট রামু সেনানিবাসের সিএমএইচ রামু, জিমনেশিয়াম/ডিভিশন সুইমিংপুল এর নির্দলিত প্রদর্শন হিসেবে মহিলা ফিজিওথেরাপিস্ট নাম্বার করা হবে।

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