

Reckitt Benckiser posts 21% profit rise

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Reckitt Benckiser (Bangladesh) PLC posted a 21 percent year-on-year profit growth to Tk 25 crore in the July-September quarter, buoyed by higher revenue and a sharp decline in finance costs. According to its financial statements, earnings per share rose to Tk 52.22 from Tk 43.13 a year earlier. The company's revenue climbed 10 percent to Tk 148.71 crore, while finance costs fell by 84 percent to Tk 73.51 lakh. Its net operating cash flow per share also surged during the third quarter. The British multinational consumer

goods company recorded Tk 54 crore in the first nine months of the financial year, 8 percent higher year-on-year. Sponsor-directors held 82.96 percent of the shares as of 30 September 2025. The remainder is owned by the government, institutions and foreign investors. General investors hold 6.81 percent of the company. Reckitt Benckiser (Bangladesh) is headquartered in Dhaka's Gulshan Avenue. The consumer health and hygiene company manages leading global brands locally, focusing on household, personal care, and healthcare products, such as Harpic and Dettol, for Bangladeshi consumers.

MJL recommends 52% dividend

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MJL Bangladesh PLC has recommended a 52 percent cash dividend for the year ended June 30, 2025, unchanged from last year, even as profits rose. According to a price-sensitive disclosure, the lubricant and energy company reported consolidated earnings per share of Tk 11.36, up from Tk 8.71 a year earlier. Its consolidated net operating cash flow per share fell compared with the previous year. As of September 30, 2025, sponsor-directors held 71.52 percent of shares, institutions 20.99 percent, foreign investors 0.99 percent, and the public 6.50 percent, according to Dhaka Stock Exchange data. MJL Bangladesh, a joint venture between East Coast Group and state-owned Jamuna Oil, blends and markets ExxonMobil lubricants locally. Established in 1998, it operates the country's first lube oil blending plant and has expanded into LPG through its Omera subsidiaries.

Olympic Industries triples dividend payout

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Olympic Industries reported its strongest profit in four years and recommended a 30 percent cash dividend for fiscal 2024-25, tripling last year's payout as revenue and earnings continued to climb. According to its financial statements, the biscuit and confectionery maker reported a profit of Tk 201 crore, up 10 percent year-

on-year, while revenue increased 7 percent to Tk 2,772 crore. Earnings per share stood at Tk 10.06, compared with Tk 9.17 a year earlier. However, its net operating cash flow per share fell. As of September 30, 2025, sponsor-directors held 32.38 percent of shares, public 13.07 percent, and the rest is owned by institutions, foreign investors, and the public, according to Dhaka Stock Exchange data.

Stocks drop for 3rd session

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Dhaka stocks closed lower for the third consecutive session yesterday, weighed down by poor performance of non-bank financial institutions (NBFIs) and the engineering sector. The DSEX, the benchmark index of the premier bourse, lost 2.72 points, or 0.05 percent, to close at 5,084.12, according to Dhaka Stock Exchange data.

Other indices witnessed mixed performances: the Shariah-based DSES fell, while the blue-chip DS30 edged higher. "The market closed in the red. Most of the large-cap sectors posted negative performances," BRAC EPL Stock Brokerage Ltd said in its daily market update. Turnover, a key gauge of investor activity, rose 14 percent to Tk 451 crore, reflecting stronger investor sentiment despite the market downturn.

OpenAI's hype machine faces a corporate challenge

REUTERS, London

If there's one thing Sam Altman knows, it's how to grab attention. The boss of ChatGPT developer OpenAI can be seen on viral clips in which his likeness, generated by the company's buzzy new Sora video model, steals computer chips. He regularly makes waves with announcements on X, which is owned by his arch-rival Elon Musk. He's even unveiled grand investment plans at the White House. He's good at keeping attention, too, with the company boasting 800 million weekly active users and a billion on the horizon. The real test for Altman and his competitors, though, is how well they can win over a more skeptical audience: big corporations. Right now, OpenAI makes most of its money from regular people. The company's annualized rate of revenue has reached \$13 billion, and may hit \$20 billion by the end of this year. About 70 percent of that comes from consumers paying for ChatGPT subscriptions. Over 5 percent of the chatbot's users pay, though that's just enough to cover the immediate cost of the computing power generating responses for everyone, if not OpenAI's other enormous expenses.

The remaining 30 percent of revenue comes from enterprise offerings. Some of that is via usage-based pricing for accessing OpenAI's large language models directly through what is known as an application programming interface (API). Customers are billed per unit of input or output, known as a token. Prices for these tokens start high when a cutting-edge model is new, but quickly go into free-fall: between GPT-4's initial release and the refined GPT-4o Mini model released 18 months later, costs fell by 99 percent. It's therefore a constant war of attrition to keep big companies hooked on the latest and greatest — and most expensive — models. One way to get a little more stability, though, is to sign enterprise clients like Morgan Stanley and T-Mobile, to bigger, more comprehensive contracts. After all, they can be willing to do so when OpenAI can demonstrate a clear return on investment, say by helping a call center resolve tickets more quickly, or by speeding up programmers' code reviews. If they can be convinced, corporations are a gigantic prize to play for. Gartner forecasts that enterprise software spending will

reach \$2 trillion globally by 2029, of which a mere \$76 billion will go to generative AI. If chatbots really are as disruptive as their boosters suggest, they could snare far more of that budget. To boot, consumers are fickle, switching constantly between new and shiny products. Look, for instance, at Alphabet-developed Gemini, which has doubled market share to 14 percent over the last year as ChatGPT's share has slipped, according to Similarweb data. Corporate buyers can be much stickier. Once a system is integrated and covered by a multimillion-dollar contract, switching becomes a hassle, making every enterprise deal more lucrative over time. Consumer ubiquity can help pry open enterprise wallets. Engineers discovering ChatGPT through personal use may push for adoption of the familiar tool inside their organizations. When companies eventually sign up, they pay for added security, compliance features, and administrative functions, often at much higher price points. That cost — and the dependence on OpenAI's computing resources, which Altman frequently points out are overstretched — can become a sticking point, though.

Gold prices drop again

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Gold prices have fallen for the fourth consecutive time, with the local market rate for pure gold now standing at Tk 1.93 lakh per bhoori (11.664 grammes). The Bangladesh Jewellers Association (Bajus) took the decision in a meeting yesterday, the association said in a press release. On October 22, the price of gold per bhoori was Tk 2.08 lakh. It dropped to Tk 2.07 lakh on October 26, and further declined to Tk 2.04 lakh on October 27. Finally, on October 28, it fell again to Tk 1.93 lakh. The new price will take effect from October 29.

AKS now country's largest steel maker

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in the Chattogram region. The company did not disclose the amount of its investment in the new facility. Sheikh Shabab Ahmed, group head of corporate affairs and legal at Abul Khair Group, said the commissioning of the mill marks a significant step forward in supporting Bangladesh's infrastructure vision. "This milestone reflects our unwavering commitment to sustainable growth and national development," he said. Abul Khair Group said the new facility has already created over 3,000 new jobs and will produce globally benchmarked, high-strength steel.

Over half of private employees say financial stress hurts

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It further revealed that 56 percent of employees identified productivity and 49 percent cited engagement as their biggest workplace challenges. In response, 51 percent of employers have increased investment in employee benefits over the past year to retain talent and boost morale. Although 78 percent of respondents agreed that benefits play a vital role in shaping workplace culture, many admitted that current offerings fall short in easing financial stress. "Financial wellness is no longer a luxury; it is essential for better performance," the report said. "Our research reveals a stark reality: financial stress and inadequate benefits are quietly undermining productivity and morale," said Ala Ahmad, chief executive officer of MetLife Bangladesh. "Employers have a unique opportunity to lead by offering comprehensive benefits, fostering a caring culture, and improving communication," he added. "Doing so will not only strengthen trust but also unlock sustainable business performance."

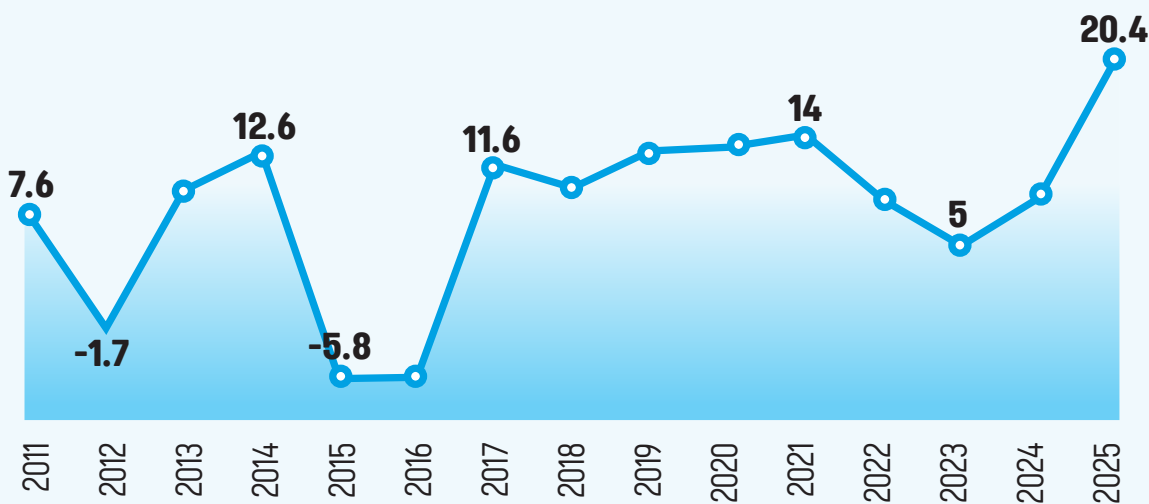
BGMEA seeks review

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The move comes amid renewed pressure from trade unions and international partners, including the European Union (EU) and the US, to improve labour conditions in Bangladesh. The business leaders also urged the government to negotiate with the United Nations (UN) for a three-year deferral of the country's graduation from the least developed countries (LDC) group, to allow more time for preparation until 2032.

The BGMEA president said the private sector is not ready yet for a smooth transition due to high bank interest rates, an ongoing energy crisis and rising wages. Business leaders at the programme further criticised the government's decision to raise tariffs at Chattogram port, saying the higher charges are eroding competitiveness. They demanded a reduction in the new rates, noting that tariffs have increased by 41 percent for using the port.

Sales growth of Marico Bangladesh (in %)



SOURCE: CALCULATION BASED ON FINANCIAL REPORTS

Marico's sales growth

FROM PAGE B1 continued product diversification. However, rising input costs due to inflation have affected our profitability." Marico's cost of goods sold, a key determinant of profitability, rose to 47 percent of turnover in the first half from 39 percent in the same period last year. This indicates that raw material costs increased during the current period and impacted profits.

Net finance costs also rose, further affecting profitability. Its earnings per share reached Tk 110.5, up from Tk 101.3 a year earlier. The seller of the popular hair care oil brand Parachute announced a 500 percent interim cash dividend for its shareholders for the six-month period. Shares of MBL, however, declined around 1 percent to Tk 2.771 at the Dhaka Stock Exchange (DSE) yesterday.

The stock is currently the second-highest-valued share in the DSE after Reckitt Benckiser (Bangladesh). MBL, which started commercial operations in January 2000, began production at its filling, crushing, and refinery units in 2002 and expanded capacity in 2012 and 2017 at its Gazipur manufacturing facility. It has recently invested in a new plant in the National Special Economic Zone at Mirsharai.

BTRC wants 5.5% of revenue

FROM PAGE B1 local entrepreneurship and support small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), would limit operations to a single district. These licensees could provide internet and data services, along with related value-added services, but not voice calls. Both licenses would be issued for ten years and could be renewed later. FEES AND ROLLOUT CONDITIONS The guideline sets out a new fee structure. The FTSP licence would require a Tk 25 lakh acquisition fee and an annual fee of Tk 10 lakh. The District FTSP licence would cost Tk 2 lakh to obtain and Tk 1 lakh annually. Licensees would also need to provide bank guarantees and meet

strict rollout targets, including expanding coverage and increasing subscriber numbers over five years. To prevent monopolies and ensure fair competition, the BTRC has proposed restrictions on cross-ownership. A single legal entity may hold only one FTSP or District FTSP licence, but not both. Firms that already hold licences for cellular mobile services, national infrastructure, or international connectivity would be ineligible for fixed telecom licences. This separation is intended to maintain competition and prevent dominance across multiple sectors. The draft also allows up to 85 percent foreign ownership in FTSP and District FTSP entities, with at least 15 percent reserved for domestic

investors. Companies with existing foreign investment beyond this limit would have three years to comply. The FTSP licence offers broad and technology-neutral coverage, allowing providers to offer emerging services such as IoT, video on demand, and triple-play packages combining data, voice, and video, subject to BTRC approval. The narrower District FTSP licence would still enable local operators to deliver essential internet and data services. Through the new framework, the BTRC says it hopes to bridge the digital divide, improve service quality, and strengthen the position of the country in the regional digital economy.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Office of the Superintending Engineer

MIS & Estates Circle

Roads and Highways Department

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Memo No. 35.01.0000.160.14.24.407

Date: 23/10/2025

Corrigendum -1

Package Title: Supply, Installation, Operation and Maintenance of Plants & Equipment for Axle Load Control System under Roads and Highways Department.

Package No: 01/RHD/SE/MIS & ESTATES CIRCLE /2025-2026

Project: Installation of Axle Load Control Stations at the Source of Freight Transport on Important Highways of Roads and Highways Department.

Name of Agency: Roads & Highways Department

Name of country: Bangladesh

With reference to the above mentioned bid package, the following corrigendum is hereby issued.

Reference	Existing Provision	Amended Provision
IFT Notice and ITT Clause 10.1	Pre-Tender Meeting Date: 30 October 2025 Time: 15.00 hours (BST)	Pre-Tender Meeting Date: 13 November 2025 Time: 15.00 hours (BST)
IFT Notice	Tender Last Selling Date: 25 November 2025 Time: 17.00 hours (BST)	Tender Last Selling Date: 17 December 2025 Time: 17.00 hours (BST)
IFT Notice and ITT Clause 39.1, 39.3 & 39.4	Tender Submission and Closing Date: 26 November 2025 Time: 12.30 hours (BST)	Tender Submission and Closing Date: 18 December 2025 Time: 12.30 hours (BST)
IFT Notice and ITT Clause 45.1	Tender Opening Date: 26 November 2025 Time: 15.00 hours (BST)	Tender Opening Date: 18 December 2025 Time: 15.00 hours (BST)

The Project Director, ALCSP, has issued an addendum to the bidding document, which has been sent to all bidders who have already purchased the bidding document. Bidders may also collect a copy from the Project Office.

Other texts, terms and conditions of the bidding document and Invitation for Tender (International) Notice will remain unchanged.

K.M. Noor-E-Alam

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