

## HIGHLIGHTS OF THE DAY

Bangladesh: Economy

March 29, 2022

### Germany Urged to Invest in Bangladesh with Technological Cooperation

Bangladesh has urged Germany to increase its investment in different promising sectors of Bangladesh with technological cooperation.

"Although Germany has been a major donor for us since our independence, its investment is still not significantly high in the country. So, Germany can come to invest in Bangladesh with technological cooperation," Md Touhid Hossain, former foreign secretary of Bangladesh, said while addressing an event at a capital hotel on Monday.

The Centre for Governance Studies (CGS) organised the programme to celebrate 50 years of German-Bangladesh relations, in which Achim Tröster, the German ambassador and Charles Whiteley, EU ambassador to Bangladesh, and Abdul Muktadir, chair of the Bangladesh-German Chamber of Commerce and Industry Committees, among others, took part.

"Germany, as the second-largest importer of Bangladeshi products, is a close economic partner of the country. There is still immense potential to deepen the cooperation, especially in trade, investment, education, culture and strategic defence partnership," Touhid continued as he presented the keynote speech.

Source: <https://www.tbsnews.net/economy/germany-urged-invest-bangladesh-technological-cooperation-392958>



### EBL, Visa Team up to Help Banks Cut Card Operations Cost

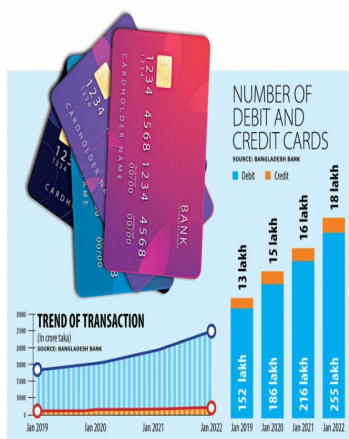
Visa Worldwide Pte Ltd has partnered with Eastern Bank Ltd to roll out a solution to offer trustee services to its member banks, the first of its kind in Bangladesh.

The arrangement will help banks operate card transactions by maintaining cash collateral.

A virtual signing ceremony was held yesterday between EBL and Visa to introduce the solution.

"This is the first time a local commercial bank in the Asia-Pacific region is going to provide such a service," said M Khorshed Anowar, deputy managing director of the private commercial bank, at the programme.

Source: <https://www.thedailystar.net/business/organisation-news/news/eb-visa-team-help-banks-cut-card-operations-cost-2992791>



## Prime Bank Profits Soar 78% in 2021

Prime Bank Limited – a second-generation commercial bank – has reported a 78% year-on-year growth in profit for 2021.

Buoyed by the high net profit, the private sector lender has recommended a 17.50% cash dividend for its shareholders, a 2.5% increase from the previous year.

The company officials were not available to make comments on its "outstanding" profit growth, but industry insiders said amid the Covid-19 pandemic, banks' profits soared on non-funded income, and stock market investment returns.

One year ago, its consolidated net profit was Tk183 crore, and EPS Tk1.61.

On a solo basis, the lender's net profit soared by 73% to Tk311 crore from Tk180 crore in 2020.

Its consolidated statements include the financial statements of the bank and its wholly-owned five subsidiaries.

Source: <https://www.tbsnews.net/economy/stocks/prime-bank-profits-soar-78-2021-392874>



## LafargeHolcim Gets Nod to Resume Aggregate Business

After six months of legal battle, the industries ministry has allowed LafargeHolcim Bangladesh to resume its business of crushing and selling aggregates derived from limestones coming from its mines in the north-eastern Indian state of Meghalaya.

On Sunday, the ministry issued a letter to the multinational cement manufacturer, allowing it to produce and sell aggregates in the open market.

According to the letter, the permission will remain valid until the government finalises a policy on producing aggregates by crushing limestone.

On this news, LafargeHolcim share prices surged 7.12% and grabbed the fifth position on the gainer table and secured the second position on the daily turnover chart as investors regained hopes for the company's sustainable growth.

Source: <https://www.tbsnews.net/economy/industry/lafargeholcim-gets-nod-resume-aggregate-business-392886>





## GP to Invest more in Digital Expansion

Leading telecom operator Grameenphone wants to contribute more beyond connectivity operations in Bangladesh to become a partner in the latter's journey towards digital transformation.

GP top brass said the telecom service provider will increase its investment to expand digital telco services to the rural areas more intensively.

They also reaffirmed commitment to reduce digital divide by including left-outs in Digital Bangladesh.

Yasir Azman, chief executive officer of GP, along with other top officials spoke at a press conference in a city hotel on Sunday to celebrate 25th founding anniversary of the telecom operator.

The officials said dream of GP started with a vision to minimise digital divide and unleash the nation's potential with the power of digitalisation.

Standing at its Silver Jubilee, Grameenphone feels honoured for its contributions to Bangladesh and aims to make a difference in the coming years, as the company believes the time is now to march forward with digital connectivity.

Source: <https://thefinancialexpress.com.bd/stock/gp-to-invest-more-in-digital-expansion-1648442509>



## Stocks Post Modest Gain after Single-day Break

Stocks posted a marginal gain on Monday, after a single-day break, as the bargain hunters put fresh funds on sector-specific issues following the news of the upcoming coordination meeting.

DSEX, the key index of the Dhaka Stock Exchange, went up by 16.61 points or 0.24 per cent to settle at 6,758, after losing over 11 points in the previous day.

Two other indices also edged higher. The DSE 30 Index, comprising blue chips, advanced 5.15 points to finish at 2,468 and the DSE Shariah Index (DSES) gained 7.39 points to close at 1,465.

Turnover, the crucial indicator of the market, stood at Tk 9.24 billion, which was 7.70 per cent higher than the previous day's tally of Tk 8.58 billion.

Market insiders said the securities regulator's decision to hold a coordination meeting with the market intermediaries to discuss how to increase liquidity supply in the equity market, prompted investors to put in fresh funds.

Source: <https://thefinancialexpress.com.bd/stock/stocks-post-modest-gain-after-single-day-break-1648462650>



## Sinopec Plans its Biggest Capital Expenditure in History

China Petroleum & Chemical Corp, better known as Sinopec, is planning its highest capital investment in history for 2022 after recording its best profit in a decade, echoing Beijing's call for energy companies to raise production.

Sinopec expects to spend 198 billion yuan (\$31.10 billion) in 2022, up 18 per cent from a year ago, beating the previous record of 181.7 billion yuan set in 2013, according to a company statement filed to the Shanghai Stocks Exchange on Sunday.

It plans to invest 81.5 billion yuan in upstream exploitation, especially the crude oil bases in Shunbei and Tahe fields, and natural gas fields in Sichuan province and the Inner Mongolia region.

"Looking ahead in 2022, the market demand for refined oil will continue to recover, and demand for natural gas and petrochemical products will keep growing," Sinopec said in the statement.

Source: <https://www.thedailystar.net/business/global-economy/news/sinopec-plans-its-biggest-capital-expenditure-history-2992761>



## Sri Lanka Aims to Earn \$1b from Gem Exports in 2022

The Sri Lankan government aims to earn 1.0 billion US dollars from gem exports this year with steps being taken to increase the exports to more markets, local media reported Thursday.

Minister of Industries S.B. Dissanayake was quoted as saying that the National Gem and Jewelry Authority was working to launch a system online in collaboration with the Department of Posts and Sri Lanka Customs to sell gems and jewelry worth less than \$3,000 to international buyers.

The minister said that with the launch of the online portal, more opportunities will be available for local gem exporters to get access to the international market. The move is part of the government's efforts to increase the country's foreign exchange, reports Xinhua.

"The current export earnings of gems and jewelry are around \$265 million per year. But through the use of this online method, we have the potential to increase our gem and jewelry export earnings to 1.0 billion," the minister said.

Source: <https://thefinancialexpress.com.bd/economy/sri-lanka-aims-to-earn-1b-from-gem-exports-in-2022-1648209955>



## Thailand's Economy Rebounds in Q4

Thailand's economy rebounded in the fourth quarter of last year on the back of rising exports and the easing of coronavirus restrictions that allowed tourists to return, senior officials said Monday.

The 1.9 per cent on-year expansion was more than double what was forecast and marked a strong bounce after a 0.2 per cent contraction in the previous three months.

For the whole year the economy grew 1.6 per cent, according to the National Economic and Social Development Council, and also beat expectations.

South East Asia's second largest economy was hit with a 6.1 per cent contraction in 2020 -- its worst economic performance since the 1997 Asian Economic Crisis.

The NESDC said it saw growth of 3.5-4.5 per cent this year as tourism picks up and government spending kicks in.

Source: <https://www.thedailystar.net/business/global-economy/news/thailands-economy-rebounds-q4-2967516>



## Gold Bid, Stocks Dumped further

Russia's invasion of Ukraine saw investors scrambling for the safety of gold and the protection of inflation hedges as weeks of brinkmanship came to a head on Thursday.

While market participants had been bracing for some form of aggression on Russia's part, Thursday's attack that brought explosions even in the Ukrainian capital of Kyiv, and across the country, made the war real for market participants.

Trader playbooks seemed to change from one that was built around the possibility of a diplomatic resolution to the crisis, to what had at one point been a tail-risk, or extreme, scenario.

"It looks pretty clear that they are moving toward Kyiv, which was always one of the worst case scenarios, because we now have a long night ahead of us trying to understand how bad this gets, and what sanctions get put up," said Chris Weston, head of research at brokerage Pepperstone in Melbourne.

Source: <https://www.thedailystar.net/business/global-economy/news/gold-bid-stocks-dumped-further-2970031>



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