

Capital Market Overview

The market closed in red this week. The benchmark index DSEX (-0.30%) lost -15.76 points and closed the week at 5,254.78 points. The blue-chip index DS30 (+0.36%) gained 7.09 points and stood at 1,990.39 points. The Shariah-based index DSES (-0.41%) lost -4.88 points and stood at 1,197.66 points. The large cap index CDSET (-0.01%) lost -0.06 points and closed at 1,122.44 points. DSEX, DS30, DSES and CDSET showed YTD returns of -2.73%, +1.35%, -3.58%, -0.05%, respectively.

Total Turnover During The Week (DSE): BDT 23.2 billion (USD 274 million)
Average Daily Turnover Value (ADTV): BDT 4.6 billion (Δ Week: -8.3%)

Market P/E: 18.3x

Daily Index Movement during the Week:

Market performed five sessions during this week. In the first session, market performed negatively by -3.44% and returned to positive in the second session by +1.74%. Market continued to be positive in the third and fourth sessions by +2.01% and +1.06% respectively. The market ended with a negative momentum of -1.55%.

Sectoral Performance:

- Financial sectors posted mixed performance this week. General Insurance booked the highest gain of 10.30% followed by NBF1 (+1.60%). Mutual Fund experienced the highest loss of 1.47% followed by Bank (-0.66%), and Life Insurance (-0.02%).
- Non-financial sectors posted mixed performance this week. Telecommunication booked the highest gain of 2.59% followed by Pharmaceutical (+0.58%), and Food & Allied (+0.15%). Engineering experienced the highest loss of 1.98% followed by Fuel & Power (-1.09%).

Macroeconomic arena:

- The International Monetary Fund has raised its projection for the economic growth of Bangladesh to 5% for 2021, up from 4.4% it forecast in October. The country will return to its high growth trajectory next year, when the gross domestic product (GDP) is projected to expand by 7.5%. The GDP will grow by 7.2% in 2026. Experts, however, say higher GDP growth is still uncertain since the country is currently experiencing a fresh surge of coronavirus infections, which have forced the government to impose strict containment measures from Monday, restricting mass mobility and shutting down businesses.
- Remittances sent by migrant workers and non-resident Bangladeshis rose 35% year-on-year in the first nine months of the current fiscal year, hitting USD 18.60 billion in total. Remittance inflow, one of the main barometers of the economy, dipped from March to May of 2020 in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic. Inflow rebounded in June and its upward trend continued as hundi, an illegal medium of fund transfer, declined amid lockdowns slapped by states and restrictions on movement. The 2% cash incentive introduced by the government in 2019 has also encouraged the expatriate Bangladeshis to send more money through formal channels
- The current account surplus has started to shrink on the back of a rise in import payments. In February, the current account surplus dropped by USD 652 million. In July-January of the current fiscal year, Bangladesh posted a current account surplus of USD 2.21 billion, which declined to USD 1.56 billion in the July-February period. The balance of payment was in deficit of USD 2.11 billion in the first eight months in the last fiscal year as the payment for imports, which was going at a normal pace, was much higher during that time with no Covid-19 impacts. But, towards the end of the last fiscal year, the pandemic blow to imports, subsequently economic activities coming to a grinding halt and a fall in domestic demand led to a decline in the import payments. That is why the current account balance registered a surplus, rather than a deficit.

Stock Market arena:

- The Bangladesh Securities and Exchange Commission (BSEC) yesterday lifted the floor price for 66 listed companies as it moved to put an end to its efforts to stop shares from any freefall. Analysts, merchant bankers and asset managers welcomed the decision. But retail investors questioned the timing of the removal of the floor price as coronavirus infections are surging across the country. After analysing the impact, the regulator will decide on whether to do the same for other companies.
- Bangladesh Securities and Exchange Commission (BSEC) has approved the country's first green zero-coupon bond with the help of which Sajida Foundation will raise a fund of BDT 1.00 billion. Face-value of the country's first bond is BDT 1.0 million. With the bond proceeds, Sajida Foundation would finance its micro credit activities, through which environmental development would be ensured.

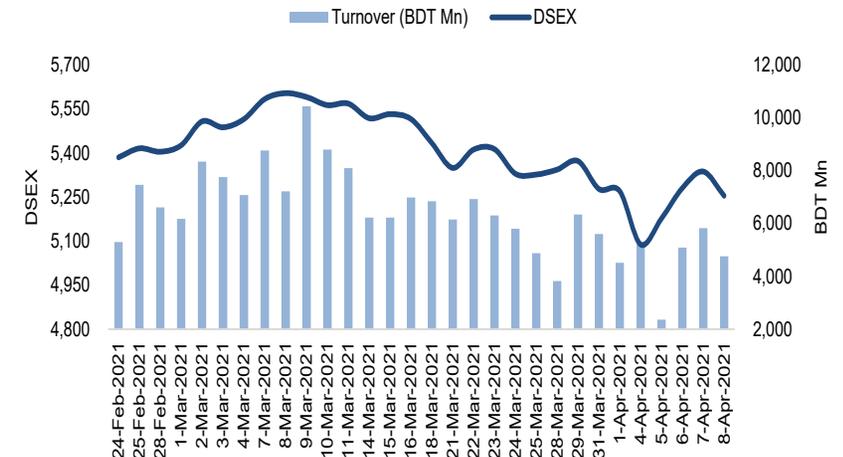
Table 1: Index

Index	Closing	Opening	Δ (Pts)	30-Dec-2019	Δ % Week	Δ %YTD
DSEX	5,254.78	5,270.53	-15.76	5,402.07	-0.30%	-2.73%
DS30	1,990.39	1,983.30	+7.09	1,963.96	+0.36%	+1.35%
DSES	1,197.66	1,202.54	-4.88	1,242.11	-0.41%	-3.58%
CDSET	1,122.44	1,122.50	-0.06	1,123.03	-0.01%	-0.05%

Table 2: Market Statistics

		This Week	Last Week	%Change
Mcap	Mn BDT	4,592,400	4,586,805	+0.1%
	Mn USD	54,054	53,988	
Turnover	Mn BDT	23,246	20,288	+14.6%
	Mn USD	274	239	
Average Daily Turnover	Mn BDT	4,649	5,072	-8.3%
	Mn USD	55	60	
Volume	Mn Shares	691	596	+16.0%

Figure 1: DSEX & Turnover in last four weeks



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Table 3: Top Ten Gainers

Company Name	Close	Open	Δ%	Mcap (BDT Mn)	Turnover (BDT Mn)	PE	PB
INDEXAGRO	72.4	50.0	+44.8%	3,421	88.0	12.1x	1.3x
DGIC	34.5	24.7	+39.7%	1,380	404.8	42.6x	3.0x
BNICL	99.3	74.0	+34.2%	4,394	272.4	31.5x	5.0x
PROVATIINS	118.0	89.2	+32.3%	3,505	671.2	38.1x	5.6x
PURABIGEN	31.3	25.8	+21.3%	1,731	258.5	27.2x	2.4x
NORTHRNINS	39.3	32.5	+20.9%	1,677	133.0	23.5x	1.9x
RUPALIINS	35.9	29.7	+20.9%	2,752	222.2	20.4x	1.7x
RAKCERAMIC	31.4	26.4	+18.9%	13,438	201.3	41.8x	2.0x
SONARBAINS	55.8	47.0	+18.7%	2,234	219.9	26.1x	2.8x
FEDERALINS	22.3	18.9	+18.0%	1,509	91.0	31.4x	1.8x

Table 4: Top Ten Losers

Company Name	Close	Open	Δ%	Mcap (BDT Mn)	Turnover (BDT Mn)	PE	PB
MERCANBANK	11.4	13.6	-12.0%	11,779	113.2	5.3x	0.5x
RAHIMAFOD	226.9	252.4	-10.1%	4,538	295.6	NM	23.6x
CENTRALPHL	10.8	12.0	-10.0%	1,294	1.5	NM	1.6x
AFCAGRO	15.3	17.0	-10.0%	1,763	0.7	NM	0.9x
QUEENSOUTH	21.6	24.0	-10.0%	2,827	2.2	41.8x	1.4x
MLDYEING	45.0	50.0	-10.0%	10,460	0.2	82.9x	2.9x
NAHEEACP	42.4	47.1	-10.0%	2,898	0.4	24.4x	2.6x
MTB	21.7	24.1	-10.0%	14,501	1.0	11.9x	0.9x
SINOBANGLA	43.4	48.2	-10.0%	868	5.9	32.6x	1.6x
IBP	17.2	19.1	-9.9%	1,956	0.1	13.1x	1.3x

Table 5: Top Ten Most Traded Shares

Company Name	Close	Open	Δ%	Mcap (BDT Mn)	Turnover (BDT Mn)	PE	PB
BEXIMCO	72.7	75.1	-3.2%	63,708	2,367	NM	1.0x
ROBI	46.1	44.7	+3.1%	241,469	1,535	NM	3.7x
ASIAPACINS	63.3	60.2	+5.1%	2,681	1,020	34.9x	3.1x
BXPBARMA	178.1	184.8	-3.6%	79,453	725	19.9x	2.2x
PROVATIINS	118.0	89.2	+32.3%	3,505	671	38.1x	5.6x
LANKABAFIN	27.0	27.6	-2.2%	14,549	662	20.4x	1.5x
LHBL	48.6	48.6	-	56,443	528	23.9x	3.3x
SUMITPOWER	41.8	43.5	-3.9%	44,637	465	8.1x	1.3x
BATBC	529.4	526.8	+0.5%	285,876	420	26.3x	2.8x
DGIC	34.5	24.7	+39.7%	1,380	405	42.6x	3.0x

Table 8: Most Appreciated YTD in BRAC EPL Universe

Top 10 Most Appreciated Stocks	Close	Δ% YTD	Mcap (BDT Mn)	P/E	P/B
ROBI	46.1	+54.7%	241,469	NM	3.7x
BATBC	529.4	+34.5%	285,876	26.3x	2.8x
BERGERPBL	1,750.6	+22.5%	81,189	32.9x	8.3x
RECKITTBN	4,586.4	+13.3%	21,671	29.7x	42.0x
HEIDELCEM	168.8	+12.8%	9,538	NM	2.4x
RENATA	1,223.1	+10.5%	119,189	26.9x	5.2x
SUMITPOWER	41.8	+7.5%	44,637	8.1x	1.3x
WALTONHIL	1,182.4	+6.2%	358,182	46.9x	6.7x
ISLAMIBANK	28.0	+4.5%	45,080	8.0x	0.7x
CITYBANK	25.9	+4.4%	26,324	6.0x	0.9x

Table 6: Sector Indices

Sector Name	Week Close	Week Open	Year Open	%Δ Week	%Δ YTD
Banks	1,281.27	1,289.78	1,372.63	-0.66%	-6.66%
NBFIs	1,725.82	1,698.67	2,033.53	+1.60%	-15.13%
Mutual Funds	791.22	803.01	959.61	-1.47%	-17.55%
General Insurance	3,633.84	3,294.37	4,103.56	+10.30%	-11.45%
Life Insurance	1,965.94	1,966.35	2,162.58	-0.02%	-9.09%
Telecommunication	6,113.64	5,959.11	5,463.26	+2.59%	+11.90%
Pharmaceuticals	3,235.22	3,216.47	3,306.03	+0.58%	-2.14%
Fuel & Power	1,600.23	1,617.89	1,618.11	-1.09%	-1.10%
Cement	1,536.41	1,540.76	1,416.18	-0.28%	+8.49%
Services & Real Estate	1,023.36	1,055.27	1,083.79	-3.02%	-5.58%
Engineering	4,234.20	4,319.70	3,959.20	-1.98%	+6.95%
Food & Allied	20,716.60	20,685.03	14,705.76	+0.15%	+40.87%
IT	2,034.91	2,051.95	2,350.28	-0.83%	-13.42%
Textiles	937.11	995.49	1,087.41	-5.86%	-13.82%
Paper & Printing	5,147.16	5,252.94	5,487.56	-2.01%	-6.20%
Tannery	1,654.83	1,660.51	1,771.77	-0.34%	-6.60%
Jute	8,580.12	8,556.46	12,154.61	+0.28%	-29.41%
Ceramics	479.82	442.51	472.38	+8.43%	+1.58%
Miscellaneous	3,385.27	3,443.06	2,539.70	-1.68%	+33.29%

Table 7: Sector Trading Matrix

Sector Name	Daily average this Week	Daily average last week	% Change	% of Total Turnover	P/E	P/B
Bank	404.2	565.5	-28.5%	9.5%	7.3x	0.7x
NBFI	232.4	319.0	-27.1%	5.5%	50.9x	2.8x
Mutual Fund	64.4	97.1	-33.6%	1.5%	NM	0.7x
General Insurance	1,220.4	672.6	+81.4%	28.8%	19.1x	1.8x
Life Insurance	16.0	15.2	+4.9%	0.4%	NM	NM
Telecommunication	381.6	339.2	+12.5%	9.0%	19.4x	6.3x
Pharmaceutical	375.1	678.3	-44.7%	8.9%	20.8x	2.5x
Fuel & Power	296.7	360.9	-17.8%	7.0%	12.5x	1.3x
Cement	124.6	167.8	-25.7%	2.9%	24.1x	2.1x
Services & Real Estate	40.5	45.5	-11.0%	1.0%	NM	0.8x
Engineering	170.6	242.4	-29.6%	4.0%	32.1x	2.5x
Food & Allied	192.6	298.1	-35.4%	4.5%	34.0x	3.3x
IT	35.2	40.0	-12.0%	0.8%	24.1x	1.8x
Textile	60.4	91.7	-34.1%	1.4%	NM	0.7x
Paper & Printing	3.0	8.4	-65.0%	0.1%	57.5x	1.0x
Tannery	7.7	19.2	-60.1%	0.2%	NM	1.7x
Jute	3.7	5.8	-36.4%	0.1%	NM	13.6x
Ceramics	56.1	27.1	+106.7%	1.3%	61.8x	1.6x
Miscellaneous	549.1	806.0	-31.9%	13.0%	47.9x	1.8x

Table 9: Least Appreciated YTD in BRAC EPL Universe

Top 10 Least Appreciated Stocks	Close	Δ% YTD	Mcap (BDT Mn)	P/E	P/B
ACTIVEFINE	13.6	-19.5%	3,263	NM	0.6x
IPDC	22.5	-18.5%	8,350	12.1x	1.4x
ECABLES	140.1	-17.3%	3,362	NM	11.9x
IDLC	52.9	-16.6%	19,946	9.9x	1.4x
OLYMPIC	163.0	-14.7%	32,590	15.9x	3.9x
MPETROLEUM	169.9	-14.2%	18,386	6.3x	1.1x
LANKABAFIN	27.0	-14.0%	14,549	20.4x	1.5x
DUTCHBANGL	56.9	-12.5%	31,295	5.7x	1.0x
CONFIDCEM	102.9	-10.9%	8,050	9.5x	1.4x
IFADAUTOS	42.1	-10.8%	10,649	46.2x	1.0x

Important News: Business & Economy

IMF lifts GDP growth forecast to 5%

- The International Monetary Fund has raised its projection for the economic growth of Bangladesh to 5% for 2021, up from 4.4% it forecast in October. According to the IMF, the country will return to its high growth trajectory next year, when the gross domestic product (GDP) is projected to expand by 7.5%. The GDP will grow by 7.2% in 2026. Experts, however, say higher GDP growth is still uncertain since the country is currently experiencing a fresh surge of coronavirus infections, which have forced the government to impose strict containment measures from Monday, restricting mass mobility and shutting down businesses.

- A former lead economist of the World Bank's Dhaka office said that the IMF had upgraded its global projections mainly due to the progress in vaccination programmes across the world. But they could not anticipate the latest surge in coronavirus infections because all the figures are finalised a month before the report is published, he added. The IMF's projection had been very plausible if there were no pickup in coronavirus caseloads and disruptions as external demand was expected to pick up in the second half of 2021, the economist said. The problem is Bangladesh is now in lockdown, and there is a surge in infections. So, uncertainty has deepened, he said.

- On March 31, the World Bank projected Bangladesh's GDP to grow as high as 5.6% in the fiscal year 2020-21, subject to three factors. The projected expansion will depend on how the ongoing vaccination campaign proceeds, whether new restrictions to mobility are required, and how quickly the world economy recovers, the WB said in its "South Asia Economic Focus Spring 2021 South Asia Vaccinates" report.

<https://www.thedailystar.net/business/news/imf-lifts-gdp-growth-forecast-5pc-2073401>
<https://www.tbsnews.net/economy/imf-projects-50-growth-rate-bangladesh-2021-227797>
<https://www.newagebd.net/article/134640/imf-ups-2021-gdp-growth-forecast-to-5pc-for-bangladesh>

Remittance rises 35% in 9 months

- Remittances sent by migrant workers and non-resident Bangladeshis rose 35% year-on-year in the first nine months of the current fiscal year, hitting USD 18.60 billion in total. Remittance inflow, one of the main barometers of the economy, dipped from March to May of 2020 in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic. Inflow rebounded in June and its upward trend continued as hundi, an illegal medium of fund transfer, declined amid lockdowns slapped by states and restrictions on movement. The 2% cash incentive introduced by the government in 2019 has also encouraged the expatriate Bangladeshis to send more money through formal channels.

- The surge in remittance inflows, one of the main sources of foreign exchange reserves, continues at a time when the outflow of migrant workers for jobs abroad slumped 69% year-on-year to 217,669 in 2020. The head of the Brac Migration Programme said that migrant workers, who, as a group, were one of the major suppliers of foreign exchange, sent more money to support family members during the pandemic. Some also lost their jobs when the host countries imposed lockdowns to contain the deadly virus, which might have compelled migrants to send all their assets back home, he said. A good number of countries, including Bangladesh, has started facing a second wave, which may further push remittance, he added.

<https://www.thedailystar.net/business/news/remittance-rises-35pc-9-months-2070649>
<https://today.thefinancialexpress.com.bd/first-page/remittance-up-by-35pc-in-july-march-1617300814>
<https://www.tbsnews.net/economy/remittance-jumps-yet-again-grows-50-year-year-march-225460>

Current account surplus drops by USD 652 million in February

- The current account surplus has started to shrink on the back of a rise in import payments. In February, the current account surplus dropped by USD 652 million. In July-January of the current fiscal year, Bangladesh posted a current account surplus of USD 2.21 billion, which declined to USD 1.56 billion in the July-February period, according to the latest balance of payment data released by the Bangladesh Bank on Thursday. The balance of payment was in deficit of USD 2.11 billion in the first eight months in the last fiscal year as the payment for imports, which was going at a normal pace, was much higher during that time with no Covid-19 impacts. But, towards the end of the last fiscal year, the pandemic blow to imports, subsequently economic activities coming to a grinding halt and a fall in domestic demand led to a decline in the import payments. That is why the current account balance registered a surplus, rather than a deficit.

- From last January, imports started to increase with the pandemic slowing down. The import growth continued in February too. Thus, in the first eight months of FY21, the country's import payments increased by 2% to USD 37.07 billion over the same period a fiscal year ago. On the other hand, during the same period, export earnings fell by 1.28% to USD 25.27 billion year-on-year. The foreign investment is also going through a lean period. The net foreign investment plummeted by 31% to USD 606 million year-on-year during the time. On the other hand, the investment in the capital market is declining too. In July-February, foreign investors sold shares worth USD 204 million. But, the good news is remittance inflow has kept up its rising trend alongside a rise in imports. In July-February, the remittance receipts stood at USD 17.05 billion with a 33% year-on-year jump.

<https://www.tbsnews.net/economy/current-account-surplus-drops-652m-february-225505>

Mar exports rise 12.59%

- The country's export earnings in March 2021 posted a 12.59% growth to USD 3.07 billion over that of the corresponding month of 2020, when Bangladesh fetched USD 2.73 billion in March last year. The single month earnings in this March, however, fell short of the target by 10.79%, according to the Export Promotion Bureau (EPB) data, released on Tuesday. Meanwhile, exporters, especially those of ready-made garment (RMG) sector, opined that the comparison of export growth for the month of March with that of the matching month of 2020 is 'misleading'.

- Exports started getting affected when the first wave of Covid-19 pandemic had hit the country in March last year. The export growths for the months of 2021 should be calculated with the corresponding months of 2019, not 2020, they suggested. The overall export earnings during the first nine months of the current fiscal year (FY), 2020-21, stood at USD 28.93 billion, marking a meagre negative growth of 0.12% compared to that of the corresponding period of last fiscal, the EPB data showed. Export earnings were USD 28.97 billion during July-March period of FY 2019-20.

- The July-March export earnings of FY 21, however, fell short of the target set for the period by 4.43%. After a continuous fall in export since the beginning of 2020, mainly due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the earnings started recovering from June, and entered into

positive territory from July, according to the EPB data. Export earnings, however, witnessed a negative growth during the first half (July-December) of the current FY, and continued throughout its first nine months.

<https://today.thefinancialexpress.com.bd/first-page/mar-exports-rise-1259pc-1617730790>
<https://www.tbsnews.net/economy/export-earnings-grow-over-12-march-227548>
<https://www.dhakatribune.com/business/2021/04/06/export-earnings-see-12-6-growth-in-march>
<https://www.newagebd.net/article/134643/export-declines-by-012pc-to-2893b-in-july-march>
<https://www.thedailystar.net/business/news/exports-rebound-march-2073413>
<https://www.newagebd.net/article/134642/trade-deficit-widens-by-949pc-in-july-feb>

Bank deposits grow by 13.5% in 2020, Islamic banks fare better

- Deposit growth in the country's banking sector was 13.5% in 2020, while the growth rate was 16.67% in Shariah-based banks, according to a Bangladesh Bank report. The growth in deposit and lending growth in Islamic Shariah-based banks was better than the overall growth in the country's banking sector in the year 2020. Deposits in Islamic banks increased by BDT 466.94 billion to BDT 3.26 trillion at the end of December, 2020 from BDT 2.80 trillion a year ago. The BB report also showed that the lending growth in Islamic banks was 11.93% in 2020 compared with 8.14% growth in the overall banking sector in the same period.

- With increasing public interest in the Islamic or Shariah-based banking system, the market share of the Islamic banks against the overall deposits in the banking industry rose to 25.69% at the end of December 2020 from 24.82% a year ago. BB officials, however, said that a strict compliance with rules and regulations had become very much essential for sustainable growth of the Islamic banking sector. As a Muslim-majority country, demand for Shariah-based banking products is on the rise, they said. To reap the benefits of the growing popularity of the Islamic banking segment, two of the country's conventional scheduled banks — NRB Global Bank and Standard Bank — were converted into Islamic banks in February 2020.

- The government has launched Shariah-compliant bond, the Bangladesh Government Islamic Investment Sukuk, and raised BDT 4,000 by issuing the bond in December, 2020. With the growth in market influence of the Islamic banks, the traditional banks are losing market share. Excess liquidity in the Shariah-based banks tripled to BDT 293.17 billion at the December-end quarter of 2020 from BDT 97.32 billion a year ago.

<https://www.newagebd.net/article/134737/bank-deposits-grow-by-135pc-in-2020-islamic-banks-fare-better>

Default loans at NBFIs just keep souring despite loan moratorium

- Default loans at non-bank financial institutions (NBFIs) rose 57.10% last year despite the loan moratorium facility offered by Bangladesh Bank. As of December last year, non-performing loans (NPLs) in the 33 NBFIs in the country stood at BDT 100.53 billion, which are 15.02% of the total outstanding loans, according to the provisional data from the central bank. The NBFIs' defaulted loans stood at BDT 63.99 billion at the end of December 2019.

- Earlier on March 24 last year, as the coronavirus pandemic was putting down its roots in Bangladesh, the central bank asked the NBFIs to keep classification unchanged until June to help borrowers tide over the economic shock. The loan moratorium facility was extended until the end of 2020. It was a bad year for the financial sector and we were not able to

increase the lending portfolio during the last year, said the managing director of National Housing Finance and Investment Ltd. Loan recovery from borrowers is also unsatisfactory in the overall NBFIs sector, except two or three NBFIs, as a large number of borrowers have lost their ability to repay the loans owing to the pandemic, said he added.

- They hope that the rising number of NPLs would reduce in the current year, said National Housing Finance MD. The sector is facing an image crisis owing to the four or five NBFIs, said another managing director of a NBFI, seeking anonymity. He said that the government and the central bank should take initiative to reconstruct those ailing NBFI for the betterment of the entire NBFI sector.

<https://www.dhakatribune.com/business/2021/04/07/default-loans-at-nbfis-just-keep-souring-despite-loan-moratorium>

Internet use surges during lockdown

- Internet has gone up drastically in the past two days as most of the people remained home after the country went into a weeklong lockdown to curb the rise of Covid-19 infections. The figure comprises of 60% internet used by the internet service providers (ISPs), and the remaining 40% by mobile internet. The return of remote work and home office led to the surge, as people had to conduct official work, meet through video calls, communicate using digital messaging apps and more, which needed more internet, said ISP and international internet gateway (IIG) service providers.

- But this has not affected internet use in the corporate segment, as many officials are working from home now, hence diverting the internet use volume from corporate to residential segment. The average bandwidth use of ISPs has increased by 10%-15%, they also said. All the ISPs mostly have unused bandwidth, they can avail amid this rise in internet use and provide uninterrupted internet. But the real picture can be seen soon once that stock runs out, they feared. If the demand increases, they all have to buy more internet bandwidth, hence internet costs at user end may also increase, operators said.

- Last year the use of internet bandwidth was 1400gbps around this period, said the Internet Service Providers Association of Bangladesh (ISPAB.) It may increase more in the coming days, they also said. Among the 200gbps, about 50% of the bandwidth is used in Dhaka, they added. IIG company Earth Telecommunications' managing director said that use of internet residentially, both broadband and mobile internet, has increased by 90% as online classes, and video conferences increased. However, the sudden surge was notable. Although banks and financial institutions are using the internet, it is not significant compared to residential usage, he added.

<https://www.dhakatribune.com/business/2021/04/06/internet-use-surges-during-lockdown>

Low gas pressure hurts over 300 large factories

- More than 300 factories, especially textile, spinning and garment industries in Kanchpur, Narayanganj and Narsingdi have been facing a massive production loss every day because of a disruption in gas supply since March 13. The sufferers also include steel mills and glassware factories. Industry owners feared that they might face the cancellation of work orders from international retailers and brands or expensive air shipment because of the sudden disruption in the gas supply. The managing director of NZ Textiles Ltd, a spinning mill at Bhulta in Narayanganj said that the production at his mills had fallen to 50% since March 13 because of the low pressure of gas.

• But air shipment is very expensive for any exporter, and it is an additional burden for the manufacturers whose businesses plummeted because of the lower demand in western markets owing to the pandemic. The secretary of the Bangladesh Textile Mills Association said that production in at least 40 big textile mills had been affected in the largest industrial belt since March 13. Usually, textile and spinning mills need a lot of gas pressure to produce quality products. He also said that most of the mills were busy producing goods for international buyers as well as the spending season ahead of the upcoming Eid-ul-Fitr.

<https://www.thedailystar.net/business/news/low-gas-pressure-hurts-over-300-large-factories-2073417>
<https://today.thefinancialexpress.com.bd/last-page/gas-crunch-halts-textile-mills-1617728633>

NSC sales exceeds FY21 target by BDT 93.11bn in 8 months

• Net sales of National Savings Certificate remained significantly high in the July-February period of the current fiscal year as the government's borrowing using the tools exceeded BDT 93.11 billion from its target of BDT 200.00 billion for the fiscal year 2020-2021. Officials of the Bangladesh Bank and other commercial banks said that the plunge in the interest rate in banks against savings products was the main reason behind the surge in the NSC sales which had far better interest rates than bank deposits. In July-January, the National Savings Directorate sold NSC worth BDT 752.27 billion against its principal payments of BDT 459.16 billion.

• As a result, the government's net borrowing against the NSC sales increased to BDT 293.11 billion in the first eight months of FY21 against its BDT 96.65 billion borrowing in the same period of the previous year. In February, the NSD sold NSC worth BDT 96.09 billion against its principal payment of BDT 60.00 billion. With the sales and principal payment, net NSC sales rose to BDT 36.09 billion in February 2021 against BDT 19.92 billion in the same period of the previous year. Although there was scope to borrow funds at a lower interest rate from the banking sector, the government continued to borrow against the NSC and refrained from lowering the interest rate keeping in mind the needs of pensioners and other fixed income groups, an official of the central bank said.

https://www.newagebd.net/article/134556/nsc-sales-exceeds-fy21-target-by-BDT_-9311cr-in-8-months
https://www.tbsnews.net/economy/saving-certificate-sale-exceeds-fiscal-target-BDT_10000-227341

Revenue collection gains slight momentum

• Revenue collection gained slight momentum in the last two months after witnessing a slow upward trend at the beginning of the fiscal year. Officials of National Board of Revenue (NBR), however, assumed that the collection growth may become slow again due to the fresh countrywide lockdown announced by the government from yesterday restricting business activities. Total revenue collection rose by 5.17% year-on-year to BDT 1.53 trillion in the first eight months till February of the current fiscal year.

• Out of this, revenue collection in import and export stage rose by 7.86% to BDT 462.37 billion, local value-added tax (VAT) by 3.27% to BDT 599.86 billion and income tax 5.05% to BDT 468.79 billion. Overall receipts reached 78.06% of the NBR's total tax collection target of BDT 1.96 trillion for the first eight months of fiscal 2020-21. This means the tax authority was BDT 430.43 billion short of the goal for the period. The total revenue collection rose by 4.55% year-on-year in the first seven months. All authorities concerned,

including NBR, are making tireless efforts to boost revenue collection, Finance Minister said while presenting a report on budget implementation in the parliament on Sunday.

<https://www.thedailystar.net/business/news/revenue-collection-gains-slight-momentum-2072845>

Covid clouds Q4 revenue collection

• The government's tax revenue collection efforts, economists have feared, might face a setback in the final quarter (April-June) of the current fiscal year (FY) because of the latest lockdown. The government has only recently downsized the tax receipt target for the FY'21. The National Board of Revenue (NBR) could collect tax revenues equivalent to 50% of the original target, set for the July-February period of the FY. However, the amount collected was 4.55 higher than that of the corresponding period of the previous year. Taxmen are optimistic about better revenue collection in the last quarter of the current FY.

• The Q4 is the most productive period for the National Board of Revenue (NBR). During the period, it collects almost half of its total annual earnings. If the current phase of the lockdown goes beyond one week, tax officials said, the VAT collection at the local level might suffer. Achieving the revised revenue might become difficult. During the first eight months of the current FY, the tax collection had been picking up, taxmen said. Due to a significant shortfall, the finance division had revised down the FY's collection target to BDT 3.01 trillion from the original target of BDT 3.30 trillion.

<https://today.thefinancialexpress.com.bd/first-page/covid-clouds-q4-revenue-collection-1617645647>

Budget spending falls 10.58% in first half

• Total budgetary spending in the first six months of the current fiscal shrank 10.58% year-on-year to BDT 1.41 trillion due to the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, according to a report from the finance ministry. While presenting the report's findings in the parliament yesterday, Finance Minister AHM Mustafa Kamal said government expenditure for the period did not reach expected levels because of the prolonged coronavirus fallout. However, steps have been taken to increase expenditure in the days to come, he added. The expenditure target for the current fiscal year was set at BDT 5.67 trillion or 17.91% of the country's gross domestic product (GDP).

• Of this amount, just 29.75% has been spent in the first half of the ongoing fiscal year. During the same period in fiscal 2019-20, total budgetary expenditure stood at BDT 1.58 trillion, a 16.51% increase from the previous year. Non-development expenditure in the six months till December was BDT 1.07 trillion, or 29.75% of the total allocation. This is 5.37% lower than spending in the corresponding period in fiscal 2019-20, when it was BDT 1.14 trillion.

<https://www.thedailystar.net/business/news/budget-spending-falls-1058pc-first-half-2072293>

Foreign aid inflow rises by 6.62% in Jul-Feb

• The country received 6.62% higher foreign assistance in the first eight months of the current fiscal year (FY2020-21) as compared to the corresponding period of the previous FY, officials said on Thursday. The development partners have also made 22% higher aid commitments through signing different loan and grant deals during the July-February period

of this FY, Economic Relations Division (ERD) officials said. According to the ERD's provisional data, the foreign development partners disbursed USD 3.72 billion - USD 3.60 billion in loans and USD 108.92 million in grants -during the period under review.

- The figure was USD 231 million more than USD 3.48 billion - USD 3.32 billion in loans and USD 168.43 million in grants - received in the same period of last FY from the development partners including Japan, the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank (ADB). Besides, the development partners confirmed USD 3.96 billion worth of medium-and long-term (MLT) loans and grants during the July-February period of this FY through signing several deals with the government, according to the ERD. In the same period of FY20, they made a fund commitment worth USD 3.25 billion.

- A senior ERD official said that as some big loans like the ADB's USD 500 million and Japan's USD 320 million budgetary supports were disbursed during that period, the overall receipts reached a comfortable zone. Of the total USD 3.96 billion commitment for MLTs and grants by the donors during the first eight months of the current fiscal, USD 3.38 billion was in loans and remaining USD 580.91 million was in grants.

<https://today.thefinancialexpress.com.bd/last-page/foreign-aid-inflow-rises-by-662pc-in-jul-feb-1617560580>

Rush for cash withdrawals

- Banks yesterday faced a huge number of cash withdrawals as the government declared a restriction on movement for seven days from today as part of effort to tackle the second wave of the coronavirus pandemic. In some cases, automated teller machines (ATM) of different banks ran out of cash as clients tried to keep physical money at hand given the uncertainties during the period of the restrictions on movement. The seven-day restriction on movement was declared on Saturday, a weekend in the country when banking activities are usually closed.

- So people rushed to bank branches yesterday, the first workday of a week, to withdraw money in order to fulfill their cash requirements during the period of restrictions on movement, said the managing director of Mutual Trust Bank. The number of clients has doubled at the bank's branches as general people feel comfortable keeping adequate cash at hand in times of crisis, he said. The executive director of the South Bangla Agriculture and Commerce Bank (SBAC), said the presence of clients has increased twofold to threefold in their different branches.

<https://www.thedailystar.net/business/news/rush-cash-withdrawals-2072361>
<https://www.newagebd.net/article/134494/banks-face-addl-cash-withdrawal-pressure>
<https://www.dhakatribune.com/business/banks/2021/04/04/mad-rush-at-banks-for-cash-withdrawal-ahead-of-lockdown>

Take prior approval to reappoint directors

- Banks will have to take prior approval from Bangladesh Bank to reappoint their directors in line with the Banking Companies Act 1991. The central bank yesterday issued a notice saying that some banks have recently reappointed directors in violation of the act. Every appointment and reappointment of directors will require approval from the central bank as per the act, read the notice. Some banks have also given false explanations to this end, sidestepping the rules and regulations, it said. The banks have not taken approval from the central bank while reappointing their directors and they thought that there is no requirement to do so, said a central bank official. Against this backdrop, the central bank has issued

show cause notices on the banks concerned.

<https://www.thedailystar.net/business/news/take-prior-approval-reappoint-directors-2072273>

BB sets new ceiling for mobile financial services

- People will not count any charge to send a maximum of BDT 40,000 per month through mobile financial services (MFS), a development that will help clients settle financial transactions during the countrywide lockdown. The central bank yesterday issued a notice to this end saying that clients will also be allowed to send BDT 10,000 per transaction without any charge through MFS providers. The new instructions will be applicable for the type of person-to-person related transaction. This means an individual will enjoy the new facility while sending money to another person, said a Bangladesh Bank official. Earlier, an individual was charged highest BDT 5 to send money to another person.

- However, the new instruction will not help client to a large extent as the central bank has not changed the charge for the cash-out from the MFS accounts of clients. People usually have to pay between BDT 10 and BDT 20 per withdrawal of BDT 1,000. The central bank has also enhanced the transaction ceiling for MFS as the central bank has reduced the banking hours during the strict restrictions on movement. A client will be able to send BDT 200,000 per month instead of the previous ceiling of BDT 75,000. The enhanced transaction limit will also be applicable for the person-to-person related transaction.

<https://www.thedailystar.net/business/news/bb-sets-new-ceiling-mobile-financial-services-2072289>

<https://www.tbsnews.net/economy/banking/mfs-transaction-limit-credit-card-billing-time-extended-226822>

<https://www.dhakatribune.com/business/2021/04/04/bb-extends-mfs-transaction-limit>

E-commerce eyes another boom

- E-commerce and digital shopping platforms expect another boom in their business with the country entering a fresh weeklong lockdown on Monday when shopping malls will remain closed. Meanwhile, the Cabinet Division has called upon the countrymen to avoid eating out and refrain from going to shopping malls except for daily essentials till 11 April in the wake of a sharp rise in the Covid-19 cases. Following the government move, online shopping platforms and the e-commerce association have taken several initiatives to take the role and keep their business on. Some online shopping companies have already hired new delivery heroes or staff while others offer free home delivery of products.

- Currently, the country has 1,500 e-commerce companies and more than 100,000 Facebook-based shopping platforms dealing around 120,000 orders daily. The sector has seen a 150-200% growth since the coronavirus broke out in the country in March last year, when the country went into a 66-day shutdown to curb the spread of the deadly virus.

<https://www.tbsnews.net/economy/industry/e-commerce-eyes-another-boom-226810>

Lockdown from tomorrow

- The government has decided to impose a week-long lockdown from tomorrow (Monday) as Covid-19 casualties have kept mounting alarmingly in recent days. During lockdown days, people will not be allowed to go outside home without emergency needs. Public and private offices, courts, shopping malls will remain shut while passenger trains, vessels and

domestic flights will not operate during the period. Like utility and emergency services, factories and industries will remain open and workers can work on a rota basis complying with health protocols.

- After analysing the outcome, he said, the government will decide whether to extend the shutdown. The number of daily infections and deaths from the deadly pathogen has suddenly taken a dangerous turn over the past several days. Saturday saw the third-highest single-day spike of infections and fatalities as some 5,683 new cases were recorded in the last 24 hours while 58 people succumbed to the respiratory disease.

<https://today.thefinancialexpress.com.bd/first-page/lockdown-from-tomorrow-1617471404>

RMG owners decide to run factories at full capacity

- Readymade garment (RMG) exporters said that they will run factories at full capacity, maintaining health guidelines, despite the government's recent directive to reduce the workforce in all organisations by half amid the surge in Covid-19 infections and deaths. Expressing concern over the government directive, they say full-fledged factory operations are needed to ship goods on time in order to avoid possible order cancellations or deferred payments. In a letter to the secretary to the labour ministry, on Thursday, exporters said factories would continue production at full capacity following health safety protocols.

- BGMEA Director who is responsible for monitoring workers' issues, said they had already instructed all the member factories to maintain health guidelines. The BGMEA letter said the factories were able to keep the Covid-19 infection rate below 0.03% among RMG workers during the first wave as health guidelines had been maintained. It said work orders had fallen by 30-40% due to the second wave of the pandemic in the West and buyers were creating pressure to promptly deliver the existing orders.

<https://www.tbsnews.net/economy/rmg/rmg-owners-decide-run-factories-full-capacity-225955>

Remittance jumps yet again, grows 50% year-on-year in March

- Bangladesh's remittance inflow leaped 50% in March when compared to the same period last year. The trend of high inflow started at the beginning of the current fiscal year (FY2020-21), but had gradually slowed down until the jump last month. Bangladesh received USD 1.92 billion in remittance this March, central bank sources said, adding that the country received more remittance in the first nine months of the current fiscal year (USD 18.6 billion) than the entire inflow (USD 15.43 billion) of previous FY. Commenting on the jump in remittance inflow, Finance Minister said that the continued trend of high remittance inflow is the result of a number of measures, such as an easier process of remitting money and the 2% incentive facility.

- Meanwhile, Centre for Policy Dialogue's (CPD) Distinguished Fellow said that in March last year, the remittance inflow dropped by 12% compared to March 2019. The jump may seem like a big one when compared to March 2020, but it is not much compared to March 2019. Bangladesh received USD 1.46 billion in remittance in March 2019, and USD 1.27 billion in March 2020. Besides, in the July-March period of current fiscal year, the country received USD 18.6 billion in remittance, which is 35% higher than the same period in previous FY – standing at USD 13.77 billion.

<https://www.tbsnews.net/economy/remittance-jumps-yet-again-grows-50-year-year-march-225460>

Japanese firms in BD up 4 times in 10 years

- The number of Japanese companies operating in Bangladesh has increased around four times in 10 years as the government ensured better business climate for the foreign investors in the country, reports BSS. A total of 321 Japanese firms are currently running their businesses in the country which was 83 in 2010, as per the Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO). Due to the upward trend of Bangladesh's per-capita income and increasing the domestic demand, JETRO Country Representative said many Japanese entrepreneurs are expanding their businesses in different fields, including electric and consumer products, of the country.

- Japanese entrepreneurs were also showing their keenness to invest in the country's manufacturing, fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG), infrastructure development and tech and digital based startup companies, he added. He said Japanese firms were also investing in different projects under the Public Private Partnership (PPP) method.

<https://today.thefinancialexpress.com.bd/trade-market/japanese-firms-in-bd-up-4-times-in-10-yrs-1617464023>

<https://www.tbsnews.net/economy/number-japanese-firms-bangladesh-4-times-10-years-226234>

Japan confirms largest-ever loan package for BD

- Bangladesh became the largest recipient country of Japanese Overseas Development Assistance (ODA) or Yen Loan commitment in Japan's fiscal year 2020 (April 2020 – March 2021). The Japan government committed 373,247 million Japanese Yen (USD 3,393 million) loan to the Bangladesh government in their FY2020. The total loan includes project loans and financial assistance for Covid-19 recovery measures. The ERD also recently requested the Japan government to include six projects to their 42nd Yen Loan Package for the Japanese financial year 2021.

<https://today.thefinancialexpress.com.bd/trade-market/japan-confirms-largest-ever-loan-package-for-bd-1617464098>

<https://www.tbsnews.net/economy/foreign-aid/bangladesh-largest-japanese-oda-loan-recipient-country-japans-fy2020-225850>

Astrazeneca Vaccine: Bangladesh wants to produce it locally

- The government has requested AstraZeneca to authorise production of its Covid-19 vaccine in Bangladesh. A proposal was sent to the British-Swedish multinational pharmaceutical company seeking its technology to produce vaccine from seed (manufacturing the vaccine) or vaccine in bulk (importing and repackaging it). Virus seed and host cell banks are raw materials to initiate vaccine production.

- Asked whether Bangladesh has the capacity to produce the vaccine, the health minister said there are a few pharmaceutical companies capable of it. Contacted yesterday, the health minister said they were yet to get any reply from AstraZeneca. Unlike the BioNTech-Pfizer and Moderna vaccines, the Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine does not have to be stored at ultra-low temperatures. The vaccine can be stored, transported and handled at normal refrigeration temperatures of 2-8 degrees Celsius for at least six months. AstraZeneca and BioNTech-Pfizer both have agreements with COVAX, a global initiative that aims to distribute low-cost vaccines to low- and middle-income countries.

- Bangladesh received 7 million Oxford-AstraZeneca doses from Serum Institute of India as

part of an agreement. The country has purchased 30 million vaccine doses from Serum. Apart from this, the country on January 21 received 2 million doses as a token of friendship from India and another 1.2 million from the same country that Indian Prime Minister brought with him during his visit to Dhaka last month.

<https://www.thedailystar.net/frontpage/news/astrazeneca-vaccine-bangladesh-wants-produce-it-locally-2071093>

Bangladesh Bank to increase stimulus for SMEs to BDT 600 billion

• The Bangladesh Bank will extend the timeline of the current stimulus package and increase the stimulus for small and medium enterprises to a total of BDT 600 billion by 2023 to ensure economic resilience, said BB deputy governor at a virtual dialogue. He said that BDT 200 billion would be added to the stimulus for the SMEs by 2022 and another BDT 200 billion would be added by 2023, he explained. At the dialogue, experts and bankers proposed that the definition of SMEs should be modified to target cottage, micro and smaller enterprises more effectively. BRAC Bank SME head said that the definition of the SMEs should be modified to target the cottage, micro and smaller enterprises more effectively.

<https://www.newagebd.net/article/134277/bb-to-increase-stimulus-for-smes-to-BDT-60000cr>
<https://today.thefinancialexpress.com.bd/stock-corporate/financial-support-to-cottage-micro-and-small-enterprises-will-be-expanded-1617380003>

Bangladesh joins eight RMG making countries for better prices

• Nine major apparel manufacturing countries, including Bangladesh, have joined hands to improve prices paid by international retailers and brands, prompted into action by bad experiences since the pandemic's emergence. The platform has brought together the demand from countries in Asia, Middle East and North Africa. The nine countries account for 70% of the global garment trade. So, it is a strong global platform for improvements, the global spokesperson of STAR Network said.

• The global spokesperson of STAR Network said many garment suppliers, particularly Bangladeshi ones, have experienced the worst when it comes to receiving payments amidst the Covid-19's fallouts. International retailers and brands have either cancelled or put on hold orders for USD 3.18 billion worth of garment items, citing the excuse that Covid-19 had led to a significant drop in sales of clothing items worldwide. The retailers and brands have reinstated 90% of work orders so far, according to the BGMEA.

• News agency Reuters said while some, including Primark, H&M, Inditex and Gap, later committed to paying the cancelled orders in full, campaigning coalition PayUp estimates USD 18 billion out of USD 40 billion worth of payments were still outstanding globally. Global retailers lost USD 1.2 trillion in sales in 2020, a 3.9% drop, according to research firm Forrester, as global lockdowns decimated demand and shut stores for months on end, the Reuters also said.

<https://www.thedailystar.net/business/news/bangladesh-joins-eight-rmg-making-countries-better-prices-2070689>

Important News: Capital Market

Floor price removed for 66 listed firms

• The Bangladesh Securities and Exchange Commission (BSEC) yesterday lifted the floor price for 66 listed companies as it moved to put an end to its efforts to stop shares from any freefall. Analysts, merchant bankers and asset managers welcomed the decision. But retail investors questioned the timing of the removal of the floor price as coronavirus infections are surging across the country. In the first phase, we have decided to withdraw the floor price for 66 listed companies, said the spokesperson of the BSEC. After analysing the impact, the regulator will decide on whether to do the same for other companies, he added.

• The order to scrap the floor price was issued yesterday. In it, the BSEC said that it took the decision in the interest of investors and the development of the capital market. The companies were selected from all the sectors. A merchant banker said a floor price could not remain in place all the time. It was criticised by foreign investors too. On the other hand, examples of floor prices are rare in the world, so this cannot be expected anymore, he said. As our investors are sensitive, lifting the floor price will be done in several phases. This is a good decision, the merchant banker said.

<https://www.thedailystar.net/business/news/floor-price-removed-66-listed-firms-2073981>
<https://today.thefinancialexpress.com.bd/stock-corporate/floor-prices-of-66-issues-lifted-after-one-year-1617808071>
<https://www.dhakatribune.com/business/stock/2021/04/07/decision-taken-to-raise-floor-prices-of-66-companies>
<https://www.newagebd.net/article/134734/bsec-lifts-floor-prices-of-66-cos>
<https://www.tbsnews.net/economy/stock/bsec-exempts-66-firms-floor-price-barrier-228421>

Index Agro to debut on bourses Wednesday

• Share trading of Index Agro Industries Limited will commence on both the Dhaka and Chittagong stock exchanges on Wednesday (7 April) under the 'N' category. The poultry and fish feed maker raised BDT 500 million on the capital markets with its initial public offering (IPO) under the book building method. The company will use these funds to construct buildings, execute other civil works, acquire new machinery and equipment, and meet the cost of the IPO process.

<https://www.tbsnews.net/economy/stock/index-agro-debut-bourses-wednesday-227275>
<https://today.thefinancialexpress.com.bd/stock-corporate/index-agro-makes-debut-trading-tomorrow-1617639332>

BSEC approves country's first green zero coupon bond

• Bangladesh Securities and Exchange Commission (BSEC) has approved the country's first green zero-coupon bond with the help of which Sajida Foundation will raise a fund of BDT 1.00 billion. Face-value of the country's first bond is BDT 1.0 million. With the bond proceeds, Sajida Foundation would finance its micro credit activities, through which environmental development would be ensured. The tenure of the unsecured, non-convertible, and fully redeemable bond is two years, the BSEC said in a press release. The bond would be issued to financial institutions, insurance companies, corporations, and individuals with a high net worth through private placement.

<https://www.thedailystar.net/business/news/bsec-approves-countrys-first-green-zero>

[coupon-bond-2073969](https://www.dhakatribune.com/business/2021/04/07/country-to-get-1st-green-bond-via-sajida-foundation)

<https://www.dhakatribune.com/business/2021/04/07/country-to-get-1st-green-bond-via-sajida-foundation>

<https://www.tbsnews.net/economy/stock/first-ever-green-bond-bangladesh-approved-sajida-foundation-228406>

BSEC plans to allow large firms on small cap board

• The Bangladesh Securities and Exchange Commission (BSEC) plans on relaxing rules on qualified investors offer (QIO) to enlist firms with more than BDT 300-million paid-up capital on the small capital board of the bourses. The securities regulator made this decision considering that the small capital platform was formed in 2019 to attract businesses with a small capital base to the stock market. This objective has virtually failed and become invalid, as no company has yet got approval to be listed with the board on either the Dhaka Stock Exchange or the Chittagong Stock Exchange.

• With a view to making the small cap board active, the commission now wants to enlist some companies in the board within this financial year. If companies whose paid-up capital is above BDT 300 million but are not able to go for an IPO to be listed with the small cap board for the QIO, they can get a waiver of rules, says the commission. This would make it easy for such companies to comply with the rules when they go for an IPO. As per existing rules, companies with paid-up capital of BDT 300 million or less can apply to get listed with the small capital platform on the bourses.

• The executive director of the BSEC, said no small-cap company got approval to be enlisted with the small cap board in the past two years due to a number of reasons. But now the commission wants to activate this board. It will amend the rules to allow companies with more than BDT 300-million paid-up capital to come to this board, he added. Issue managers are not interested in bringing small capital companies to the market as they pay low fees, sources said.

<https://www.tbsnews.net/economy/stock/bsec-plans-allow-large-firms-small-cap-board-227278>

National Bank under BB scanner

• Bangladesh Bank has asked National Bank not to disburse any loan without its prior approval. The banking watchdog recently received allegations that the lender had disbursed a good amount of funds sidestepping approval from its board. This prompted the central bank to issue the instruction on April 5 asking the bank to send by yesterday detailed information of loans approved and disbursed since December 26. But the bank yesterday sought five working days to send the information, saying it was not possible to provide data within only one day, said the acting managing director (MD) of the lender.

• He claimed that they had not disbursed any large loan, which requires approval from the board, in recent months. If no board meeting is held, the bank has to take the permission from the central bank. The central bank has also asked National Bank to inform whether the acting MD was working under a valid contract. He acknowledged that his employment tenure ended on March 31 but that the bank's authority had earlier extended it by one month. But the board of directors is yet to approve the extension, he said.

<https://www.thedailystar.net/business/news/national-bank-under-bb-scanner-2073409>

BSEC enhances margin loan limit to curb free-fall of share prices

• The stock market regulator on Sunday increased the marginal loan limit for the investors to curb free-fall of share prices. From now on, investors will be able to borrow more than before. The investors will get margin loan ratio of 1:0.80, if the key index of the Dhaka Stock Exchange (DSE) stays below 7,000 points, as per the latest decision of the Bangladesh Securities and Exchange Commission (BSEC). That means, the investors will get a maximum loan of BDT 80, if he/she purchases shares of BDT 100. Earlier, the investors got margin loan of BDT 50 against buying of shares worth BDT 100.

• The BSEC took the decision amid investors' panic on rising coronavirus cases in the country, said BSEC executive director and spokesperson. The new margin loan limit will be effective from today (Monday), he said. However, if the main index of DSE exceeds 7,000-mark, the loan limit will come down to 1:0.50%.

<https://today.thefinancialexpress.com.bd/last-page/bsec-enhances-margin-loan-limit-to-curb-free-fall-of-share-prices-1617560685>

DSE, CSE reduce trading time to two hours

• The Dhaka Stock Exchange (DSE) and the Chittagong Stock Exchange (CSE) have reduced trading time to two hours effective from today (Monday) in line with the banking hours. Trading on the bourses will begin at 10:00am and continue until 12:00 noon instead of normal schedule of 10:00am to 2:30pm. The new schedule will be continued until further notice, DSE said in a statement on Sunday. The CSE will also follow the DSE decision, officials said. Normally, the capital market sees a four-and-a half hours trading from 10:00am to 2:30pm. Banks will remain open from 10am to 12:30pm during the government-imposed seven-day lockdown, said Bangladesh Bank on Sunday.

<https://today.thefinancialexpress.com.bd/stock-corporate/dse-cse-reduce-trading-time-to-two-hours-1617556337>

<https://www.newagebd.net/article/134495/banks-bourses-to-operate-with-shortened-working-hours>

<https://www.dhakatribune.com/business/banks/2021/04/04/banking-transaction-time-reduced-to-2-5hrs-amid-lockdown>

Stock markets to remain open during lockdown

• The country's stock markets –Dhaka Stock Exchange (DSE) and Chittagong Stock Exchange (CSE)- will remain open during the 7-day nationwide lockdown, announced by the government in the wake of surging coronavirus cases. For the sake of the investors, the stock market will remain in operations if banks stay open during the lockdown, DSE Deputy General Manager said. Earlier in the day, Bangladesh government imposed a 7-day countrywide lockdown, starting from Monday, primarily as Covid-19 situation has taken a very dangerous turn here.

<https://www.tbsnews.net/economy/stock/dse-remain-open-during-lockdown-226189>

BSEC plans to delist 8 more OTC cos under exit scheme

• The Bangladesh Securities and Exchange Commission has moved to delist eight more companies trading on the over-the-counter market after repaying general investors' claims as per the commission's exit plan directive. It would also send 15 OTC companies to the small medium enterprise platform and 25 others to the alternative trading board of the stock exchanges. The eight companies which would be delisted under exit plan are Arbee

Textiles, Chic Tex, Eagle Star Textile Mills, German Bangla JV Food, M Hossain Garments Washing & Dying, Maq Enterprises, The Engineers and Tulip Dairy & Food Products.

- The BSEC has planned to transfer Bangladesh Hotels, Bengal Biscuits, Gachi Hata Aquaculture Farms, Himadri Limited, Mona Food Products, Padma Printers & Color, Rangamati Food Products, Wonderland Toys, Yousuf Flour Mills, Hill Plantation, Dhaka Fisheries, Azadi Printers, Gulf Foods, Meghna Shrimp Culture, and Phoenix Leather Complex to the SME board. BSEC officials said that the 15 companies would be allowed to raise capital through repeat public offerings (RPO) to address their capital need.

<https://www.newagebd.net/article/134362/bsec-plans-to-delist-8-more-otc-cos-under-exit-scheme>