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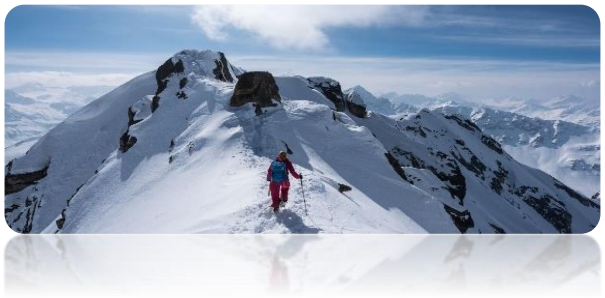
This Issue

Editor's Column P.1
News & Views P.2
Capital Market Insights P.3
Disclaimer P.3

Editor's Columns

Pharmaceuticals and chemicals sector during Covid-19:

While Square Toiletries Limited began producing manual sanitisers for use in hospitals and clinics in 2007, it was only able to sell 20 tons per year in the 13 years until the end of 2019. The company has been manufacturing and marketing 60-70 tons of hand sanitizers every day with demand for hygiene products skyrocketing since the Covid-19 pandemic made inroads into the world. This has had to turn a number of other manufacturing lines into sanitizer systems to satisfy increasing needs. The market for hygienic products, including detergent powder, amounting to Tk5,000 crore, analysts say this year will exceed the Tk10,000 crore mark. Also the demand for hand sanitizers and other liquid products on Tk500 crore will cross Tk5,000 crore, they say. Unilever, which dominates about 60 percent of the country 's industry, experienced strong soap demand rise during the pandemic. The country's top brands such as Dove, Lifebuoy, Lux and Wheel have boosted their sales by 30 per cent. However, before the epidemic, global soap growth was below 2 percent and slightly above 2 percent in Bangladesh.



Trump is driving down drug prices as coronavirus rages

Despite criticism for his treatment of the coronavirus pandemic, President Donald Trump on Friday pivoted to a long-standing campaign pledge — to reduce drug costs. The President resurfaced a kitchen sink of divisive measures aimed at lowering drug prices for Americans, which have made little progress over the course of his presidency. He has signed four executive orders, including one on importing drugs from Canada and basing drug costs in the US on their prices in other countries, all of which have been promoted by progressive Democrats, including Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders. Drug makers, who used to be the target of Trump's pricing ire until the pandemic struck, have supported this measure.

The last thing UK needs is a trade war with China

Britain's decision to ban Huawei from its 5 G telecom network at the worst possible moment for the UK economy risks undermining a multi-billion dollar trade and investment partnership with China. The step is breaking off a 20-year relationship with the Chinese company. This has already triggered Beijing's angry response, which said Wednesday this would do whatever it needed to protect its interests. China also warned its businesses that the move would discourage potential investment. In the last few years Britain had been cozy up to Beijing. In 2015, China's successor to the World Bank, the Asian Infrastructure Investment Fund, became the first big Western economy to join in.

Kim Jong Un claims North Korea's nuclear arsenal would mean 'no more war on this planet'

According to North Korean state media, North Korean leader Kim Jong Un said he hopes his country will no longer need to wage wars because its nuclear arsenal guarantees its safety. Speaking to a group of veterans on the 67th anniversary of the armistice effectively ending the Korean War which fell on July 27, Kim said that nuclear weapons would enable North Korea to protect itself "against any high pressure and military attacks from imperialists and hostile powers." For years, North Korea has portrayed the acquisition of nuclear missiles as solely defensive, and meant to discourage efforts to attack or reform the system. Yet some analysts claim that nuclear weapons would embolden Pyongyang, encouraging the Kim government to pursue more aggressive and bellicose strategies and dissuading enemies from reacting to violence at lower rates. Regardless of whether North Korea is developing nuclear arms and the ballistic missiles used to carry them, Kim 's comments on Monday are an significant reminder about how challenging it would be to find an arrangement that makes Pyongyang dismantle a system that he views as a barrier to his own existence. Kim 's speech arrived on one of the most important holidays in North Korea: the celebration of "The liberation of the Korean people in the Great Fatherland Liberation War," which is how North Korea relates to the Korean War.