

Following is a summary of important business news published in the leading daily newspapers of Bangladesh. For the complete news, please follow the online link given below each news. Please note that the news summary doesn't reflect the opinion of BRAC EPL Stock Brokerage Limited.

BB feeds USD 2.0b to ease forex-market crunch

- The central bank continues to pump the US dollar into Bangladesh's overheating foreign-exchange market, releasing over USD 2.0 billion in nearly four months now, as the greenback enjoys great demand amid economic rebound. As part of the money-market-managing move, the Bangladesh Bank sold USD 30 million direct to three commercial banks on Thursday, adding up to the four-month tally. A total of USD 143 million has been sold to different commercial banks during the first nine days of the current month, BB data showed, so that the rising price of the dollar couldn't buck up steeply in its exchange with the local currency.
- A total of USD 2.17 billion has been sold from the country's foreign-exchange reserves since August 18 of the current fiscal year (FY), 2021-22, to the commercial banks as part of the central bank's ongoing support, according to latest official figures. Meanwhile, the Bangladesh taka (BDT) had depreciated by BDT 1.0 against the US dollar during the period under review despite the selling of the greenback by the central bank to the banks for keeping the market stable. The US dollar was quoted at BDT 85.80 on the inter-bank foreign-exchange market on the day--unchanged from the previous level. It was BDT 84.80 on August 17 last.

<https://today.thefinancialexpress.com.bd/first-page/bb-feeds-20b-to-ease-forex-market-crunch-1639074287>

Country achieves massive dev in public, pvt sectors

- Salman F Rahman, PM's adviser for industry and investment, on Thursday said under the dynamic leadership of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina the country has achieved massive development in public and private sectors, reports BSS. Stressing the need for 4th industrial revolution, the adviser said, "We have to face the challenges of shortage of skilled youth work forces as a large number of youths have no technical training." He also said the government has taken various programmes including employment generating ventures. The government is giving training to youths to create opportunities for employment.
- He was addressing a views sharing meeting with the members of the Mymensingh Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MCCI) and local businessmen titled 'Prospect of industrialisation in Mymensingh region, its barriers and remedies' held at Shahid Shahab Uddin auditorium. The meeting was addressed, among others, by State Minister for Public Works and Housing Sharif Ahammad MP, Mayor of Mymensingh City Corporation Ekramul Haque Teto, Anwarul Abedin Tuhin MP, Alhaj Kazim Uddin Ahamad MP, Fahme Golandaz Babel MP, Monira Sultana MP, President of district AL Advocate Zahirul Haque and President of City AL Ehtashemul Alam.

<https://today.thefinancialexpress.com.bd/stock-corporate/country-achieves-massive-dev-in-public-pvt-sectors-1639072453>

Tax receipts keep upward trend

- Revenue collection in Bangladesh grew at a decent pace of 15% in the first five months of the current fiscal year as business activities turned around from the slowdown caused by the coronavirus pandemic. The National Board of Revenue (NBR) generated BDT 100,267 crore between July and November, against BDT 87,194 crore during the same period last year.
- Customs duties surged 22.56% to BDT 33,964 crore in July to November, driven by tax incomes from the rising imports of capital machinery, accessories, and cars during the period, provisional data from the NBR showed. The receipts from value-added tax (VAT) were BDT 36,604 crore, up 9.44% year-on-year. Income and travel taxes fetched BDT 29,697 crore, an increase of 14.07%, driven by higher tax payment last month as November 30 was the deadline for the submission of individual tax returns. The government has set a BDT 330,000 crore revenue target for the NBR

for FY22, up 9.63% on FY21. Customs duties will have to generate BDT 96,000 crore to help the NBR hit the target, while BDT 128,000 crore will have to come from the VAT portion and BDT 100,006 crore from income and travel tax portion.

<https://www.thedailystar.net/business/economy/industries/tax-customes/news/tax-receipts-keep-upward-trend-2913971>

Local makes now hold 40pc domestic TV market share

- Local television manufacturers and assemblers, now focusing on research and development, have made inroads into the burgeoning domestic market. They expected Bangladesh to grow to a billion-dollar market by 2025, and prepare their business plans accordingly for both home and overseas markets. The home-grown electronics companies say they have attained abilities to have a foothold on the global television market with policy support from the government, tax exemption, and cash incentives on export. Currently, 'Made in Bangladesh' televisions account for about 40% of the local market while imported or assembled foreign brands hold over 60%, according to a recent study by Marketing Watch Bangladesh (MWB).
- Companies like Walton, Vision, Singer, MyOne, Minister, Jamuna, Marcel, and Rangs have been shaping the locally-made TV market while available foreign brands include Sony, Samsung, Panasonic, Toshiba, Phillips, LG, Sharp, Hisense, and Xiaomi. In last five years, the TV market in the country has grown at a 10.33-per cent compound annual growth rate (CAGR) to become a USD 636-million market in 2020 from USD 389 million in 2016. Television now holds about 30.03% of the USD 3.14 billion worth of market of consumer electronics in the country. The MWB forecasts that the market size may reach nearly USD 687 million in 2021, and if the growth is sustained, it will touch USD 940 million or even a billion-dollar mark by 2025.

<https://today.thefinancialexpress.com.bd/first-page/local-makes-now-hold-40pc-domestic-tv-market-share-1639074495>

BSEC asks 17 state-owned firms to get enlisted to market

- The Bangladesh Securities and Exchange Commission (BSEC) on Thursday issued a letter to 17 state-owned profit-making companies asking them to be listed on the capital market. Of these, there are nine companies in the power and energy sector, two in the engineering sector, two in the travel sector and the remaining two are Bangladesh Biman and state-owned Essential Drugs.
- The BSEC has issued letters to Bakhrabad Gas Distribution Company Ltd, LP Gas Ltd, Gas Transmission Company Limited, Jalalabad Gas Transmission and Distribution System Limited, Sylhet Gas Fields Limited, Bangladesh Gas Fields Company Limited, Rupantarita Prakritik Gas Company Limited, North-West Power Generation Company Ltd, Electricity Generation Company of Bangladesh. The other companies are Pragoti Industries, Karnaphuli Paper Mills, Bangladesh Insulator and Sanitaryware Factory, Hotels International Limited, Biman Bangladesh Airlines, Bangladesh Telecommunications Company Limited, Bangladesh Cable Shilpa, and Essential Drugs Company Limited. In the fiscal year 2020-21, Bakhrabad Gas Distribution Company posted revenue of BDT289 crore against a net profit of BDT149 crore. Gas Transmission Company Limited declared BDT1120 crore revenue in 2020-21 while its net profit was BDT74 crore.

<https://www.tbsnews.net/economy/bsec-asks-17-state-owned-firms-get-enlisted-market-341356>

Stocks rebound after single-day break

- Stocks rebounded on the gaining streak on Thursday, after a single-day break, as the bargain hunters put fresh bets on major sector shares. The market opened on an upbeat trend and the key index rose about 70 points within the first 30 minutes of trading. But half of the early gains were wiped out in late hours selling binge.
- The DSEX went up by 32.60 points or 0.46% to settle at 6,984, after losing more than 96 points in the previous day. Turnover stood at BDT 10.43 billion, which was 9.46% higher than the previous day's tally of BDT 11.52 billion.

Gainers took a strong lead over the losers, as out of 377 issues traded, 214 advanced, 106 declined and 57 remained unchanged on the DSE trading floor.

<https://thefinancialexpress.com.bd/stock/stocks-rebound-after-single-day-break-1639048286>

EBL launches Japan Business Desk

- Eastern Bank Limited (EBL) on Thursday launched Japan Business Desk at the bank's head office in Gulshan. ITO Naoki, Ambassador of Japan to Bangladesh, was the chief guest at the inauguration of EBL Japan Business Desk, said a statement. He said that this was a timely initiative as Bangladesh-Japan marks 50 years of bilateral relations in February 2022. Managing Director and CEO of Eastern Bank Limited (EBL) Ali Reza Iftekhar said that Japan believes in improving regional connectivity through infrastructure development. Japan has brought in the same philosophy to help transform Bangladesh infrastructure landscape and contribute to our growth journey.
- EBL CEO also said that the mega projects now being implemented with the financial and technical assistance of Japan when completed will surely change the image of Bangladesh in the world. EBL Japan Desk will be a one-stop banking services designed for Japanese companies and individual customers.

<https://today.thefinancialexpress.com.bd/stock-corporate/ebel-launches-japan-business-desk-1639072380>

Robi Axiata to revise IPO fund utilisation plan

- Robi Axiata, the country's second largest telecom operator, will revise its initial public offering (IPO) proceeds utilisation plan and extension of project completion time frame. In this regard, the board of directors of the telecom operator has decided to hold an extraordinary general meeting (EGM) for approval from general shareholders, the company said in a filing with the Dhaka Stock Exchange (DSE) on Thursday. The EGM will be held on January 24, 2022 at 3:00pm through a hybrid system. The record date is set on December 30, 2021.
- Robi Axiata, which issued roughly 523 million ordinary shares with par value of BDT 10 each and raised a fund worth more than BDT 5.23 billion from a wide range of investors including own employees, commenced its share trading on December 24, 2020. Out of more than BDT 5.23 billion of IPO proceeds, the Robi has utilised over BDT 4.38 billion in network expansion and BDT 75.73 million in IPO expenses, which is 85.23% of total IPO proceeds as of September 30, 2021, according to Chittagong Stock Exchange (CSE) data. As per the IPO prospectus, the company intended to utilise over BDT 5.15 billion in network expansion and BDT 80.2 million in IPO related expenses.

<https://today.thefinancialexpress.com.bd/stock-corporate/robi-axiata-to-revise-ipo-fund-utilisation-plan-1639072362>

Index Agro to use 71% of IPO funds for loan repayment

- Index Agro Industries Ltd — a manufacturer of poultry feed, fish feed, and a producer of day-old chicks, has decided to use 71% of its initial public offering (IPO) funds raised, to repay short-term loans it took from various banks for business expansion. When the money was much needed for its expansion project, the company applied for an IPO to the stock market regulator to raise funds. But due to a delay of more than four years in getting IPO approval from the Bangladesh Securities and Exchange Commission (BSEC), the company took out short-term bank loans in order to complete its expansion project.
- As per the rules, usually a company can use only one-third of IPO funds raised to repay loans. But now, Index Agro plans to use more than two-thirds of the IPO funds, amounting to BDT35.49 crore, to repay short-term loans although this was not initially part of its IPO plan. To revise the proceedings, on Thursday, the Index Agro board of directors approved the new fund usage plan for repaying loans. Now the company will apply to the BSEC for approval in this regard.

<https://www.tbsnews.net/economy/stocks/index-agro-use-71-ipo-funds-loan-repayment-341335>

Delta Life Insurance sued for evading BDT25 crore in VAT

- The VAT Audit, Intelligence and Investigation Directorate of the National Board of Revenue (NBR) recently filed a case against Delta Life Insurance, a company in the capital's Gulshan area, finding evidence of them evading value added tax or VAT, resulting in a due sum total of BDT25.34 crore, including principal and interest penalties. Tipped off about the company's history of evading VAT, the VAT intelligence directorate began investigating Delta Life Insurance and summoned the company's VAT documents from January 2013 to December 2017.
- In health insurance, the company reported paying VAT of BDT1 crore while the actual payable amount was purportedly BDT9.78 crore. For VAT on sales, the audit found an unpaid VAT amount of BDT8.68 crore. According to regulations, a 2% monthly interest will be added to the payable amount, creating a total of more than BDT10 crore in interest alone. As VAT at source, the organisation paid BDT6.34 crore in VAT against a payable amount of BDT9.22 crore. Here the discrepancy is BDT2.95 crore with an additional BDT3.44 crore in interest, calculated at 2% interest per month. In summation, the probe report discovered that the company has evaded a total of BDT11.76 crore in taxes, which has accrued interest of BDT13.58 crore.

<https://www.tbsnews.net/bangladesh/corruption/delta-life-insurance-sued-evading-BDT25-crore-vat-341329>

World Stock and Commodities*

Index Name	Close Value	Value Change YTD	% Change YTD
Crude Oil (WTI)*	USD 70.69	USD 22.17	45.69%
Crude Oil (Brent)*	USD 74.17	USD 22.37	43.19%
Gold Spot*	USD 1,775.92	(USD 119.18)	-6.29%
DSEX	6,984.74	1,582.67	29.30%
S&P 500	4,681.44	925.37	24.64%
FTSE 100	7,321.26	860.74	13.32%
BSE SENSEX	58,807.13	11,055.80	23.15%
KSE-100	43,518.84	-236.54	-0.54%
CSEALL	11,178.43	4,404.21	65.01%

Exchange Rates**1 US Dollar = 85.82 BDT****1 GBP = 113.45 BDT****1 Euro = 96.92 BDT****1 INR = 1.14 BDT**

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