

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.

Annual Development Programme (ADP) spending rises in December

- Development spending picked up in December amid the fervour surrounding parliamentary polls on December 30 after being on the slow lane in the first four months of fiscal 2018-19. As per a planning ministry official, actually the finance and the planning ministries took some measures from the start of the current fiscal year to boost ADP implementation, which started to come into effect from November.
- The official said that the political leadership was busy with electioneering but the government machinery involved with development administration did their job properly for increasing development spending. In December BDT 13,207 crore was spent from the annual development programme (ADP), which was BDT 12,623 crore in November.
- This is in contrast to the BDT 6,216 crore spent on average by the ministries and divisions in the previous four months of fiscal 2018-19. ADP implementation in the preceding four months was lower than that of each month last year. Development spending in December of last fiscal year was BDT 11,334 crore and in November it was BDT 9,182 crore, according to data from the Implementation, Monitoring and Evaluation Division.

<https://www.thedailystar.net/business/news/adp-spending-rises-dec-1688029>

Internet growth hits 3-year low

- The growth of new internet connections fell 21.58% year-on-year to 10.9 million in 2018, a three-year low.
- The sector lost 1.12 million active mobile connections in the last two months of 2018. The number of active mobile connections also fell by 0.03% to 156.9 million in December from the previous month.
- Only Grameenphone posted positive growth in the last month of 2018, while the market share of the three other operators shrunk.
- As of December, there were 91.30 million active internet connections, of which 85.50 million was mobile internet, 5.74 million broadband and the rest WiMax, according to data from the Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission.
- Since its launch in February 2018, the country now has 11.70 million fourth generation (4G) mobile internet users.

<https://www.thedailystar.net/business/telecom/news/internet-growth-hits-3-year-low-1688026>

<https://www.dhakatribune.com/business/2019/01/16/1-16-crore-mobile-phone-users-subscribe-to-4g-last-year>

Real estate betting big on 2019

- Home sales are likely to pick up this year after a underwhelming 2018, spurred by hopes of political stability and positive economic growth outlook, according to realtors and lenders. The president of the Real Estate & Housing Association of Bangladesh (REHAB) said that as the election is over there is political stability. So, they expect the market to be better this year than the last one.
- This year, the market may expand by up to 9% in terms of sales of the number of units, he said, adding that the loan opportunity extended by the government for public sector employees would have a positive impact on the demand for homes. The managing director of Sheltech added that people feel encouraged to invest if there is stability. And it can be assumed there will be political and social stability and investment this year.
- He went on to predict that the real estate sector this year will be far better than the last couple of years. Growth slowed down in the last three months of 2018. Many prospective buyers kept their investment on hold in 2018, said sales in-charge of Structural Engineers.

<https://www.thedailystar.net/business/news/real-estate-betting-big-2019-1688041>

Japan reassures support to Bangladesh, wants to invest in IT sector

- Visiting Minister in charge of Economic Revitalisation of Japan on Tuesday said his country will continue to support Bangladesh in key development arenas, showing interest to invest in the IT sector of Bangladesh, reports UNB. The Japanese minister said Japan has been a great partner since the independence of Bangladesh and the relations between Japan and Bangladesh are complementary to each other.

- The representative of Japanese government expressed his conviction that the relations between Bangladesh and Japan will be stronger during the tenure of current Prime Minister. PM proposed Japan to provide support to the training programmes in IT parks and deep-sea fishing.

<http://today.thefinancialexpress.com.bd/last-page/japan-reassures-support-to-bd-wants-to-invest-in-it-sector-1547574657>

Government to allow LNG import in private sector

- The government would soon open the import of liquefied natural gas (LNG) to the private sector, enabling them to sell the fuel to clients of their choice.
- The price of LNG or regasified LNG would be determined by the private importers themselves.
- Bangladesh started importing LNG since April 24, 2018, with the arrival of US giant Exceletrate Energy's "Excellence" with 136,000 cubic metres of lean LNG from Qatar at Moheshkhali Island terminal.
- Currently, some 300 million cubic feet per day (mmcf) of regasified LNG is being supplied to the national grid to feed consumers based in Chattogram city.
- Bangladesh will need to import around 30 million tonnes of LNG per year to meet the growing local demand by 2041 as domestic gas reserves are depleting fast.
- By 2041, the demand for natural gas would be around 8,000 mmcf, according to the state-run corporation.

<http://today.thefinancialexpress.com.bd/first-page/govt-to-allow-lng-import-in-pvt-sector-1547573578>

Core index hits fresh nine-month high

- The core index of the prime bourse on Tuesday hit fresh nine months high, as investors showed their buying appetite on financial issues.
- The market turnover was above BDT 11 billion-mark for the second day in a row.
- DSEX, the prime index of the Dhaka Stock Exchange (DSE), went up by 27.04 points or 0.46% to settle at 5,863. It was the highest level of DSEX since April 09, last year.
- The financial institutions posted the highest gain of 1.70 per cent, followed by power with 0.60 per cent, engineering 0.59 per cent, pharmaceuticals 0.45% and banking 0.39%
- The market-cap of the DSE increased to BDT 4,141 billion which was BDT 4,132 billion in the previous day.

<http://today.thefinancialexpress.com.bd/stock-corporate/core-index-hits-fresh-nine-month-high-1547570038>

GP losing out to Robi

- Telecom giant Grameenphone is losing the highest number of customers through the roll-out of mobile number portability (MNP) service.
- As many as 49,658 former GP subscribers have switched to other operators in last three months. Meanwhile, a total of 10,491 subscribers have moved to GP during the same period.
- 72,005 GP subscribers have moved to Robi from other operators while 20,406 subscribers have switched from Robi.
- GP now serves around 72.3 million customers with 37 MHz spectrum, Robi around 47 million with 36.4 MHz and Banglalink around 33.5 million with 30.6 MHz.

<http://today.thefinancialexpress.com.bd/trade-market/gp-losing-out-to-robi-1547576005>

<https://www.thedailystar.net/business/telecom/news/robi-gains-most-mnp-1688038>

<http://www.newagebd.net/article/61885/number-of-mnp-subscriptions-drops-for-2nd-month-in-dec>

Singer launches Blueair Air Purifiers

- Blueair is one of the world's leading producers of air purification solutions for home and professional use.

- Blueair's latest range is based on the Blueair HEPASilent™ technology which removes 99.7% of all airborne particles such as smoke, dust, pollen, bacteria, mould and pet allergens.
- Households, particularly with new-borns whose lungs are still under development and homes with elderly and members suffering from asthma, allergies and respiratory illnesses would benefit from this technology.

<http://today.thefinancialexpress.com.bd/stock-corporate/singer-launches-blueair-air-purifiers-1547570320>
<https://www.thedailystar.net/business/global-business/news/singer-brings-blueair-1688020>

The Islamic Finance and Investment Limited (IFIL) launches new products to give better service

- The Islamic Finance and Investment Limited (IFIL) has formally launched three new products in order to provide better financial service to its customers. The new products are Mudaraba Asan Deposit Scheme, Raha (Comfort) and Sila UI Istihlaq (Commodity).
- The clients can deposit any amount at any time under the new deposit scheme and the profit will be counted on a daily basis, said Saleh.
- Raha (Comfort), an investment facility, will support the opening and retirement of Letter of Credit (LC) to purchase raw materials, capital machinery, commercial vehicles, heavy equipment, etc.
- Under the Sila UI Istihlaq-Bai Murabaha (Commodity) scheme, the clients can purchase and make acquisition of commodity items for trade.

<http://today.thefinancialexpress.com.bd/trade-market/ifil-launches-new-products-to-give-better-service-1547576124>
<http://www.newagebd.net/article/61887/ifil-launches-3-investment-and-deposit-products>

Bangladesh Securities & Exchange Commission (BSEC) approves proposal of determining cut-off price of Popular Pharma

- The securities regulator has approved the proposal of determining cut-off price of Popular Pharmaceuticals as part of its plan of offloading shares through book building method.
- As per the public issue rules, the cut-off price of the Popular Pharmaceuticals will be determined through electronic bidding.
- The company will go public under book building method to raise a capital worth BDT 700 million.
- The drug manufacturer will raise a fund worth BDT 700 million to purchase machinery, repay bank loans and meet IPO expenses.
- As per financial statement for the year ended on June 30, 2018, the net asset value (NAV) per share was BDT 42.98 (with revaluation reserve). And the NAV stood at BDT 31.28 (without revaluation reserve) for same period. The weighted average of earnings per share (EPS) based on net profits of last five years stood at BDT 2.18.

<http://today.thefinancialexpress.com.bd/stock-corporate/bsec-approves-proposal-of-determining-cut-off-price-of-popular-pharma-1547570068>
<http://www.newagebd.net/article/61886/bsec-allows-popular-pharma-to-discover-cut-off-price-for-ipo>

S. S. Steel makes trading debut tomorrow

- S. S. Steel Ltd will make its share trading debut on the stock exchanges tomorrow (Thursday) under the "N" category. The Dhaka Stock Exchange (DSE) trading code for the company is "SSSTEEL" and the company code is 13245 while the Chittagong Stock Exchange (CSE) scrip ID is 16038 and scrip code is "SSSTEEL".
- The S. S. Steel will be the 37th listed company under the "Engineering" sector on the Dhaka bourse. The sector accounted for around 6.0% of the DSE's total market capitalisation. The engineering sector company raised a capital worth BDT 250 million from the capital market by offloading 25 million ordinary shares using the fixed price method.
- The securities regulator -- Bangladesh Securities and Exchange Commission (BSEC) approved the company's IPO proposal on July 17 last year to raise the said amount. IPO subscription of the company's shares was held between October 28 and November 07, 2018.

<http://today.thefinancialexpress.com.bd/stock-corporate/s-s-steel-makes-trading-debut-tomorrow-1547570095>

World Stock and Commodities*

Index Name	Close Value	Value Change	% Change
Crude Oil (WTI)*	\$51.96	-0.15	-0.29%
Crude Oil (Brent)*	\$60.56	-0.08	-0.13%
Gold Spot*	\$1,288.53	-0.98	-0.08%
DSEX	5863.28	+27.04	+0.46%
Dow Jones Industrial Average	24,065.59	+155.75	+0.65%
FTSE 100	6,895.02	+40.00	+0.58%
Nikkei 225	20,414.32	-140.97	-0.69%

Exchange Rates

USD 1 = BDT 83.77*
GBP 1 = BDT 107.61*
EUR 1 = BDT 95.49*
INR 1 = BDT 1.18*

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