

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.

IFC may double investment

- The International Finance Corporation (IFC) is expected to double its investment in Bangladesh in next five years to promote job generation and resilient economic recovery and green growth. The areas of investment hinted at are energy diversification, health, education, climate, economic zones, and green and affordable housing.
- IFC promotes energy diversification and already supports more than 20 % of the private power generation in Bangladesh. The country director said the IFC has invested USD 470 million to help businesses and sustain jobs during the pandemic and intended to invest another further USD 250 million during the current fiscal year ending in June 2022.
- Since 2010, the IFC has invested over USD 3.5 billion to help private sector grow in Bangladesh. Over the next five years, it has a target of a nearly USD 5 billion investment programmed in diversified sectors such as light engineering, economic zones, financial and capital markets, and growth-enabling sustainable infrastructure.

<https://today.thefinancialexpress.com.bd/first-page/ifc-may-double-investment-1648144456>

BEPZA economic zone gets USD 54m investment

- The Hong Kong (China)-owned M/s Campvalley Chittagong Limited will invest USD 54 million to set up a camping equipment and garment manufacturing facility at the BEPZA economic zone of the Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Shilpa Nagar (BSMSN) in Mirsarai, Chattogram.
- Through its investment, Campvalley Chittagong aims to produce around 21.4 million tents, bags, camping chairs, luggage, sleeping bags, different types of knit and woven garments, umbrellas, mattresses, and more each year.
- Till date, BEPZA has signed lease agreements with five other companies to set up industrial units in its economic zone at the BSMSN. The five companies will invest USD 60 million collectively.

<https://www.thedailystar.net/business/economy/news/bepza-economic-zone-gets-54m-investment-2990161>

Uzbekistan keen to invest in oil, gas exploration sector in Bangladesh

- Uzbekistan has expressed its interest to invest in oil and gas exploration sector of Bangladesh. Uzbek energy minister's advisor expressed his country's interest when he met State Minister for Power, Energy and Mineral on Thursday.
- The advisor showed interest to work in construction of gas pipelines and in the renewable energy sector and work with Bangladesh Petroleum Exploration and Production Company (Bapex). He also informed that Uzbekistan has 75 drilling rigs now working across the world of which one is now engaged in Bangladesh as well.

<https://thefinancialexpress.com.bd/economy/uzbekistan-keen-to-invest-in-oil-gas-exploration-sector-in-bangladesh-1648131176>

Sharp rise in CMSME loans on growing economic activities

- Banks and non-bank financial institutions (NBFIs) in the country disbursed BDT 2,157 billion in loans to CMSMEs last year, up from BDT 1,535 billion a year ago. In 2019, the amount was BDT1,679 billion. The financial sector posted over 40% year-on-year growth in loan disbursement to cottage, micro, small and medium enterprises (CMSMEs) in 2021.

- Despite this significant rise in the volume of lending to CMSMEs, the financial sector could achieve a little over 85% of its loan disbursement target of BDT 2.5 trillion set for the sector last year. The central bank asked the financial institutions to disburse 22% of their total loans to the CMSME sector in 2021.
- But during the period, 59 banks and 31 NBFIs disbursed 18.63% of their total loans to the CMSME sector, although the rate was 19.13% in the July-September quarter. However, according to a central bank's circular, the target for banks and financial institutions is to raise the ratio of CMSME loans against the total amount of loans to 25% by 2024.

<https://www.tbsnews.net/economy/sharp-rise-cmsme-loans-growing-economic-activities-390558>

The potential of Bangladeshi leather export along the belt and road initiative

- Bangladesh has a great deal of prospects to increase its leather exports to the countries of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). As of December 2021, the number of countries that have joined the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) by signing a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with China is 145. Bangladesh is a founding member of China's BRI.
- With an estimated total population of 167 million, Bangladesh had a comparative advantage in this industry, compared with similar-sized countries, such as Vietnam.
- Over 200 government verified leather processing plants are present for rawhides wet blue, crust, or finished leather. Moreover, over 2,000 leather footwear and leather production plants manufacture varieties of goods, such as footwear, garments, handbags, luggage, wallets, and other luxury items.
- According to the Bangladesh Commerce Ministry, Bangladesh can earn more than USD5 billion by exporting leather and leather goods annually. Bangladesh produces 350 million square feet of leather annually, which accounted for about 1% of the world's total leather exports.

<https://www.dhakatribune.com/business/2022/03/24/the-potential-of-bangladeshi-leather-export-along-the-belt-and-road-initiative>

Tannery, textile profits were battered by Covid

- Profits of the tannery and textile companies were affected the most amongst that of all listed companies for the Covid-19 pandemic as their main period for sales was hit. Profits of every company of the tannery sector on an average tumbled 330 % in 2020 while those of the textile sector around 88 %. During the pandemic, factories were closed and demand for clothes tumbled at both home and abroad.
- Overall export earnings dropped 16.93 % to USD 33.67 billion in the financial year 2019-20. It was around 26 % lower than that of the target, according to data of Export Promotion Bureau (EPB). Garment export fell by 18 % to USD27.94 billion. However, the business situation has changed, and the market bounced back.
- Profits of the ceramic sector plunged 60.9 %, followed by engineering (60.5 %), food & allied (40.5 %), miscellaneous (19.4 %) and fuel and power (6.9 %). The pharmaceuticals sector was, however, in a better position among all the sectors in 2020 and its profits more than doubled.

<https://www.thedailystar.net/business/economy/news/tannery-textile-profits-were-battered-covid-2990166>

Walton rolls out high energy-efficient AC

- Bangladeshi electronics giant Walton has introduced high energy-efficient air conditioner (AC) of 'Inverna' series in the market, says a press release. This Inverna AC received 5.5-star energy rating certificate from the Bangladesh Standards and Testing Institution (BSTI).

- A test carried out by Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET) found that in Eco Mode, the 1-ton AC consumes electricity worth only BDT 2.19 per hour.

<https://today.thefinancialexpress.com.bd/trade-market/walton-rolls-out-high-energy-efficient-ac-1648140133>

World Stock and Commodities*

Index Name	Close Value	Value Change YTD	% Change YTD
Crude Oil (WTI)*	USD 111.71	USD 36.50	48.53%
Crude Oil (Brent)*	USD 118.74	USD 40.96	52.66%
Gold Spot*	USD 1,961.97	USD 132.77	7.26%
DSEX	6,752.87	-3.78	-0.06%
S&P 500	4,520.16	-246.02	-5.16%
FTSE 100	7,467.38	82.84	1.12%
BSE SENSEX	57,595.68	-658.14	-1.13%
KSE-100	43,522.55	-1,073.52	-2.41%
CSEALL	10,451.71	-1,774.30	-14.51%

Exchange Rates**1 US Dollar = 86.14 BDT****1 GBP = 113.76 BDT****1 Euro = 95.02 BDT****1 INR = 1.13 BDT**

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