

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.

Important News Snippets

241 more die, 13,817 get Covid

- The health directorate reported 241 deaths from Covid-19 and 13,817 new cases in the 24 hours preceding 8:00am yesterday. This takes the official number of deaths to 21,638 and the total confirmed cases to 13,09,910. The death rate was 1.65% as of yesterday.
- The overall positivity rate continued declining for the second consecutive day yesterday with 27.91% of the cases turning out to be positive, according to a press release from the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS). Of those reported dead yesterday, 125 were male and 116 female.
- As of yesterday noon, over 6,500 Covid-19 patients were being treated in different hospitals across the country. Of them, 1,157 were in intensive care units (ICUs). At hospitals treating Covid-19, 61% of the general beds and 88% of the ICU and High Dependency Unit beds were occupied.

<https://www.thedailystar.net/health/disease/coronavirus/news/241-more-die-13817-get-covid-2145006>

Women entrepreneurs to get loans at 5.0% interest: Bangladesh Bank

- Bangladesh Bank has reduced the interest rate from 7% to 5% to encourage women entrepreneurs to engage in business with low-interest loans. At the same time, the central bank has reduced the interest rate from 3% to 0.5% at the institutional level as an incentive to banks and financial institutions for providing loans to women entrepreneurs.
- The country's central bank issued a new circular on Wednesday regarding this matter. This lowered interest rate facility has been introduced under Bangladesh Bank's "Small Enterprise Refinancing Scheme." The size of the Small Enterprise Refinancing Scheme has also been increased from BDT 8.5 billion to BDT15.0 billion, giving priority to loans for women.
- Under Bangladesh Bank's refinancing scheme, banks and financial institutions may provide loans of up to BDT 2.5 million on the personal guarantee of women entrepreneurs as collateral check.
- Earlier, the central bank had set a target of giving at least 15.0% of all small and medium-sized enterprise (SME) loans, to women entrepreneurs, by 2024. In the new circular, Bangladesh Bank has directed those loans be disbursed to women entrepreneurs on a priority basis at new interest rates.

<https://www.tbsnews.net/economy/banking/female-entrepreneurs-get-loans-5-interest-283549>
<https://www.newagebd.net/article/145443/sme-sector-women-entrepreneurs-to-get-loans-at-5pc-interest>

Bangladesh Bank sets new target on banks' green, sustainable financing

- With the financial sector being weighed down by huge excess liquidity, banks have cut the interest rates on deposits at a faster pace than on loans, penalising savers and, to some extent, small borrowers. But the average spread, the difference between the lending rates and the deposit rates, widened over the last several months, meaning banks are punishing clients to ensure handsome profits and dividends for shareholders.
- The weighted average rate on deposits stood at 4.13% in June, down from 5.06% a year ago, according to data from Bangladesh Bank. As a result, depositors are facing a negative return on savings given the inflation rate of 5.64% in June. The lending rate declined to 7.33% in the month from 7.95% a year ago.
- Against the backdrop, the spread stood at 3.20%age points in June in contrast to 2.89%age points in the same month a year ago.

<https://www.thedailystar.net/business/economy/banks/news/savers-small-borrowers-pay-price-banks-run-after-high-profit-2145151>

Bangladesh yet to tap USD 22.0 billion export potentials: Economic Relations Division (ERD) study

- At a time when Bangladesh's single-product export base is struggling to cope with the global market vulnerability amid the pandemic, studies show a ray of hope that the country could earn USD 22.0 billion more annually if liberal market access could be utilized with diversified items.
- The Economic Relations Division (ERD), in a study, finds that USD 18.3 billion worth of export potentials remain unexplored in

the top ten export destinations, while another study of the Research and Policy Integration for Development (RAPID) says there is a scope of at least USD 4.0 billion in export earnings from China alone.

- According to the ERD report, only six export sectors - RMG, leather, pharmaceuticals, plastics, footwear and shrimp have the potential to bag USD 18.34 billion more, while their current export earnings stand at USD 31.2 billion.

<https://www.tbsnews.net/dropped/trade/bangladesh-yet-tap-22bn-export-potentials-283639>

Bangladesh loses Chinese investment momentum; Vietnam makes the most of the windfall

- Vietnam, Bangladesh's inveterate competitor on the global apparel market, makes the most of the windfall with better hospitality for the rearward-floating capital investors. China's gross investment in Bangladesh amounted to only USD 122.5 million in the last calendar year, 2020, tenth among the top overseas investors in the country, official statistics showed.

- Although the Chinese investment was recorded at a higher amount of USD 695.7 million in the previous calendar year, 2019, Bangladesh failed to maintain the momentum in the subsequent year (2020). China's investment in Vietnam in January-November period in 2020 was recorded at USD 2.4 billion, Ministry of Planning and Investment of Vietnam data showed.

- According to Bangladesh Bank (BB), Chinese textile and apparels businessmen were the top in position with their USD 44.2 million worth of investment in Bangladesh, followed by power-sector businessmen who invested USD 41.6 million in 2020.

<https://today.thefinancialexpress.com.bd/first-page/bangladesh-loses-chinese-investment-momentum-1628100015>

Edible oil price rises

- Consumers are paying more for edible oil as prices have risen in the international market due to increased shipping fare and reduced supply. Retailers say soybean oil prices in Bangladesh have gone up by up to 6.0%, or BDT 5 to BDT 10.0, per litre last month. Branded soybean oil is selling for BDT 150 per litre and non-branded oil at BDT 140 to BDT 142 a kg.

- Retailers were found selling a one-litre container at BDT 150, up from BDT 145 a month ago. The prices range from BDT 690 to BDT 700 for the five-litre container, up from BDT 675 to BDT 680 previously.

- Bangladesh requires 2.0 million tonnes of edible oil annually. The price of crude soybean oil stood at USD 1,345 per tonne at the end of July, an increase of USD 214 per tonne from June, data from the Trading Corporation of Bangladesh showed. The price of crude palm oil rose by USD 152 to USD 1,137 per tonne.

<https://www.thedailystar.net/business/economy/news/edible-oil-price-rises-2145146>

Number of internet connections soars by 17.5 million in FY21

- The number of broadband and mobile phone-based internet connections in the past fiscal year of 2020-2021 increased by 17.5 million, more than twice the increase seen in the previous fiscal year, amid people's growing dependence on online services after the Covid outbreak.

- According to Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission data, the number of internet connections in the country reached 121.0 million at the end of June 2021 from 103.5 million at the end of June 2020.

- In the FY 2019-20, the number of internet connections in the country increased by 7.3 million. Of the 120 million internet connections, 110.9 million were mobile phone-based and the rest 10.1 million broadband internet connections.

<https://www.newagebd.net/article/145444/number-of-internet-connections-soars-by-175cr-in-fy21>

Government to buy 30 medical oxygen generation plants for Covid-19 patients

- The government is going to buy 30 medical oxygen generation plants to meet the oxygen demand for Covid-19 patients who have been suffering from respiratory problems.

- Meanwhile, the cabinet committee on government purchase has approved a proposal of importing 50,000 metric tonnes of rice from India. The price per metric tonne will be USD 377.88.

<https://www.thedailystar.net/health/disease/coronavirus/fallouts-fightback/news/govt-buy-30-medical-oxygen-generation-plants-covid-19-patients-2144676>

Government to import 50,000 tonnes of rice from India

- The government is going to import 50,000 tonnes of rice from India at BDT 32.0 per kilogramme, which is 32.0% below the wholesale prices of coarse grain in the local markets of Dhaka. The cabinet committee on purchase yesterday approved a

proposal of the food department to purchase 50,000 tonnes of non-basmati boiled rice from Bagadia Brothers Pvt at a cost of BDT 1.6 billion.

<https://www.thedailystar.net/business/economy/news/govt-import-50000-tonnes-rice-india-2145111>

World Stock and Commodities*

Index Name	Close Value	Value Change YTD	% Change YTD
Crude Oil (WTI)*	USD 68.39	USD 19.87	40.95%
Crude Oil (Brent)*	USD 70.56	USD 18.76	36.22%
Gold Spot*	USD 1,811.10	(USD 84.00)	-4.43%
DSEX	6,535.87	1,133.80	20.99%
S&P 500	4,402.68	646.61	17.22%
FTSE 100	7,123.86	663.34	10.27%
BSE SENSEX	54,369.77	6,618.44	13.86%
KSE-100	47,789.88	4,034.50	9.22%
CSEALL	8,210.31	1,436.09	21.20%

Exchange Rates

USD 1 = BDT 84.86*

GBP 1 = BDT 117.94*

EUR 1 = BDT 100.77*

INR 1 = BDT 1.14*

*Currencies are taken from XE Currency Converter and Commodities are taken from Bloomberg.

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