

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.

Economy showing signs of recovery

- Bangladesh's economy has been showing signs of recovery ever since the fourth quarter of fiscal 2020-21 despite facing various challenges amidst the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, according to a quarterly analysis by the Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MCCI). The government's stimulus packages eased the suffering of numerous industries, from large firms to micro-enterprises, which eventually gave a boost to the economy, it said. Besides, Bangladesh has done well in terms of export and inward remittance, two important drivers of the country's economy, amid the Covid-19 crisis.

<https://www.thedailystar.net/business/economy/news/economy-showing-signs-recovery-2161936>

Single day Covid toll falls to 102

- Both Covid-19 daily caseload and death toll showed downward trends in Bangladesh on Thursday. The Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS) reported 4,698 new cases and 102 deaths during the past 24 hours until 8:00 am on the day. The figures were 4,966 and 114 respectively on Wednesday, according to the DGHS data.

- With the latest counts, total fatalities from Covid-19 reached 25,729 while total caseload exceeded 1.48 million since the virus was detected first in Bangladesh on March 08 last year. During the 24-hour reporting time, 34,111 samples, including antigen-based rapid ones, were tested while 34,167 were collected across the country.

- However, the test positivity rate inched down further to 13.77 % on Thursday from the previous day's 14.76 %.

<https://today.thefinancialexpress.com.bd/first-page/single-day-covid-toll-falls-to-102-1630001875>

Bangladesh Bank lifts dollar sale to halt taka slide

- After buying a record amount of US dollars last year, Bangladesh Bank has begun selling the American greenback following a decline in remittance and an increase in imports.

- The central bank purchased the dollar amounting to USD 205 million in July. But it has started selling the greenback from this month as the taka is experiencing a depreciating trend after more than a year. The central bank has sold USD 223 million so far this month, data from the BB showed.

- The inter-bank exchange rate stood at BDT 85.20 per dollar on August 25. On August 2, the rate was BDT 84.80, the same level it had hovered around since July last year.

<https://www.thedailystar.net/business/economy/banks/news/bb-lifts-dollar-sale-halt-taka-slide-2161996>

BD ditches spot LNG buy, reverts to term deals

- The government decides not to import costlier LNG from spot market anymore in a change of heart after importing over a dozen cargoes until August, as open-market gas pricing is getting volatile.

- Switzerland's AOT Trading AG bagged the last cargo deal on spot LNG supply to Bangladesh for August consignment at USD13.069 per million British thermal unit (MMBTU), which is around 50 % higher than the LNG prices under term deal. Worth of a term deal is currently hovering around USD 8.5-USD 9.0 per MMBTU.

<https://today.thefinancialexpress.com.bd/first-page/bd-ditches-spot-lng-buy-reverts-to-term-deals-1630001788>

Small RMG units to face tough battle to survive

- The big apparel brands have consolidated their sourcing strategy due to the Covid-19 pandemic, concentrating more on the large suppliers, according to two latest reports. The reports as well as local industry insiders fear that it would make small and less-competitive factories of Bangladesh more vulnerable than before mainly due to unhealthy price-cut competition.

- The number of garment factories Nike reduced is from 631 in 2019 to 334 in 2020 (a 47% decline), it said, adding that the industry observers expected these trends to continue beyond the Covid-19 crisis. Gap that sourced products from 1020 factories in 2010-11 reduced to 800 only in 2020. This market concentration has been complemented by consolidation of supplier bases by apparel buyers, it said.

<https://today.thefinancialexpress.com.bd/first-page/small-rmg-units-to-face-tough-battle-to-survive-1630001709>

Action plan agreed upon to speed up execution of Asian Development Bank (ADB)-funded projects

- The government and the Asian Development Bank (ADB), in a tripartite portfolio review meeting (TPRM) on Thursday, agreed on an action plan to further accelerate implementation of the ADB-assisted projects in 2021-2022 to promote faster socio-economic recovery.
- The TPRM discussed 43 projects with 118 different issues and agreed 132 time-bound actions with specific responsibilities for the respective agencies, it added. The ADB's current sovereign portfolio has 52 projects, involving USD 12.03 billion. Its cumulative lending to Bangladesh stands at over USD 40 billion in loans and grants, including co-financing.

<https://today.thefinancialexpress.com.bd/last-page/govt-adb-tprm-agrees-on-action-plan-1630002193>

Nagad ownership row ends

- The government and private firm Third Wave Technologies have agreed to share the ownership of Nagad – the fastest growing mobile financial services (MFS) provider in the country – with a view to fulfilling the licensing conditions set by the Bangladesh Bank. The Directorate of Posts will own 51% of the company, while the remaining 49% share will be held by Third Wave Technologies Limited, said sources at the Posts and Telecommunications Division.
- According to the minutes of the meeting, the board of directors of Nagad will comprise nine members – five including the chairman will be appointed by the government and the other four including the managing director will be chosen by Third Wave Technologies. The company will be registered with the Registrar of Joint Stock Companies and Firms as Nagad Bangladesh Public Limited Company.
- Nagad was granted time extension three times in two and a half years for the Bangladesh Bank's no objection certificate to continue operations, but it is still operating without a licence because of differences between the postal department and Third Wave Technologies over ownership of the MFS platform and the composition of the board of directors.
- Nagad currently has 54.0 million registered customers. Its average daily transaction is BDT 7 billion.

<https://www.tbsnews.net/economy/nagad-ownership-row-ends-293689>

Emerald Oil to take more time to resume production

- The resumption of production of Emerald Oil Industries, one of the early entrants in the domestic rice bran oil market, is not going to begin from September 1 this year. The company is going to take more time to restart operation of its factory, which went out of production in 2017, meaning that investors will have to wait to get dividends from stocks.
- The company on July 12 announced the decision of its regulator-appointed board that it would go into full-fledged commercial operation from September 1 to produce 48 tonnes of rice bran oil and 282 tonnes of de-oiled rice bran. Yesterday, the company said it could not renew or obtain most of the required licenses till date as all offices were closed from July 23, 2021 to August 10, 2021 due to a strict lockdown imposed by the government to curb the spread of the coronavirus disease.

<https://www.thedailystar.net/business/economy/stock/news/emerald-oil-take-more-time-resume-production-2161921>

BSEC's 'no' to waiver plea

- The securities regulator turned down the listed companies' association plea for waiving payments of accrued interest gained from undistributed dividends or un-refunded public-subscription funds. Also rejecting their time-extension appeal, the Bangladesh Securities and Exchange Commission (BSEC) Wednesday asked the listed companies to transfer such funds along with accumulated interest within the given timeframe (August 30).
- On June 27, the securities regulator issued the rules on the formation of the market-stabilization fund worth BDT 210 billion to be formed with unclaimed or undistributed dividends, non-refunded public subscription and accrued interest on such funds. As per the information of the securities regulator, 335 listed companies have unclaimed cash dividends worth BDT 9.56 billion and unclaimed or unsettled stock dividends worth BDT 199.86 billion.

<https://today.thefinancialexpress.com.bd/first-page/bsecs-no-to-waiver-plea-1630001930>

World Stock and Commodities*

Index Name	Close Value	Value Change YTD	% Change YTD
Crude Oil (WTI)*	\$68.05	\$19.53	40.25%
Crude Oil (Brent)*	\$71.77	\$19.97	38.55%
Gold Spot*	\$1,799.05	(\$96.05)	-5.07%
DSEX	6,851.32	1,449.25	26.83%
S&P 500	4,469.91	713.84	19.00%
FTSE 100	7,124.98	664.46	10.28%
BSE SENSEX	55,895.46	8,144.13	17.06%
KSE-100	47,276.48	3,521.10	8.05%
CSEALL	8,920.71	2,146.49	31.69%

Exchange Rates

USD 1 = BDT 85.20*
 GBP 1 = BDT 116.71*
 EUR 1 = BDT 100.23*
 INR 1 = BDT 1.14*

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

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