

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.

Remittance to hit USD 15.9 billion this year: World Bank

- Remittance inflow to Bangladesh this year will hit USD 15.9 billion with 17.9% year-on-year growth, according to a World Bank report.
- The country will retain its position as 9th top remittance receivers this year, said the global lender in its report 'Migration and Remittances: Recent Developments and Outlook'.
- The 2018 remittance inflow will be 5.6% of the country's gross domestic product.

<http://www.newagebd.net/article/58352/remittance-to-hit-159b-this-year-wb>

Exports to US soar by 22.0% in five months on US-China trade war

- The country's export earnings from the United States posted 21.85% growth in the first five months of the fiscal year 2018-2019 compared with the same period of FY18 due to shifting US orders of readymade garment products to Bangladesh amid US-China trade war.
- Although export earnings from most of the major markets posted relatively good growth, earnings from United Kingdom remained sluggish due to the ongoing tussle in UK over the possible Brexit deal with the European Union, exporters said.
- Export earnings from the US, the largest export destination for Bangladesh, in July-November of FY19 grew to USD 2.83 billion from USD 2.33 billion in the same period of FY 18, according to the Export Promotion Bureau data.
- Export earnings from the United Kingdom in July-November of the current fiscal year grew by 4.31% to USD 1.73 billion from USD 1.66 billion in the same period of FY18, data showed.

<http://www.newagebd.net/article/58354/exports-to-us-soar-by-22pc-in-five-months-on-us-china-trade-war>

Bangladesh Bank's forex support rises to USD 1.0 billion so far this fiscal

- The central bank has so far sold nearly USD 1.0 billion this fiscal year directly to the commercial banks for settling their import payment obligations.
- Import bills soared on fuel oils, capital machinery for power plants, LNG (liquefied natural gas) and fertilisers.
- As part of the move, the BB sold USD 70.0 million to the commercial banks last week that ended to meet the growing demand for the greenback in the market.
- A total of USD 976 million has been sold to the commercial banks since July 01 during the FY 2018-19, as part of its ongoing support. The central bank sold USD 2.31 billion in the FY 18 on the same ground.

<http://today.thefinancialexpress.com.bd/public/last-page/bbs-forex-support-rises-to-10b-so-far-this-fiscal-1544118880>

Bangladesh Bank drafts law to recognize 'movables' as collateral

- The central bank has drafted a law meant to recognise movable properties as collaterals against loans from the banking system.
- The Bangladesh Bank has already posted the draft on its official website seeking opinion from the stakeholders to finalise it. The law will require passage by the national parliament for execution.
- Many bankers believe that such a change in traditional mortgage system will help expand lending and spur economic activities.

<http://today.thefinancialexpress.com.bd/public/first-page/bb-drafts-law-to-recognise-movables-as-collateral-1544118606>

USD 525.0 million World Bank (WB) loans for rural road, bridge development

- The World Bank (WB) will provide more than half a billion dollar loans for rural road and infrastructure development in Bangladesh.
- The WB will provide USD 425.0 million for the 'Operation for Supporting Rural Bridges Programme' in coastal districts and USD 100.0 million for 'Rural Transport Improvement-II Project'.
- It will help plan, design and manage bridges through rehabilitation of at least 29,000 metres of bridges and build 20,000 metres of new ones in 61 districts.
- The programme will create jobs by generating about 5.5 million person-days of employment.

<http://today.thefinancialexpress.com.bd/public/trade-market/525m-wb-loans-for-rural-road-bridge-development-1544116505>

<https://www.thedailystar.net/business/news/wb-give-525m-connectivity-climate-resilience-1670143>

<https://www.dhakatribune.com/business/2018/12/07/world-bank-to-provide-525m-to-improve-rural-road-connectivity>

Ready Made Garments (RMG) exports to India grow 165% in first five months

- The country's readymade garment exports to India grew by more than 165% to USD 232.39 million during the first five months of the current fiscal year (FY 2018-19) over the corresponding period of the last FY.
- The figure stood at USD 87.43 million during the July-November period of FY 2017-18, according to the official data of Export Promotion Bureau (EPB).
- Of the total export earnings in the current five months, USD 66.16 million came from knitwear and USD 166.22 million from shipments of woven items.
- The overall exports to India stood at USD 567.82 million in July-November of the current FY against USD 288.20 million in the same period of the last FY.
- The exporters and experts, however, attributed it to the demand growth among the Indian rising middle class. Western retailers, having their outlets in India, also found it competitive to source from Bangladesh.
- Indian GST (goods and service tax) also might have a positive impact as the basic customs duty on imports from Bangladesh has been exempted under the GST.

<http://today.thefinancialexpress.com.bd/trade-market/rmg-exports-to-india-grow-165pc-in-first-five-months-1544285720>

Bangladesh remains most optimistic market: Deputy Chief Executive Officer of HSBC Bangladesh

- Bangladeshi firms continue to be the most optimistic out of the 34 countries in which British banking giant HSBC operates, said one of its top officials. As per the Deputy Chief Executive Officer of HSBC Bangladesh, the reason for the optimism is favourable situation and stable political environment
- Bangladeshi firms are overwhelmingly positive on global trade prospects over the next couple of years and see their businesses benefitting from potential relocation of supply chains in the wake of global trade frictions, he added.
- As many as 94 percent of the respondents said they have a positive outlook on global trade and a slightly higher proportion are confident of succeeding in the current international trading environment.

<https://www.thedailystar.net/business/news/bangladesh-remains-most-optimistic-market-1671061>

Another nine firms to invest in hi-tech park

- Nine more local technology companies were allotted plots at the Bangabandhu Hi-Tech City at Kaliakair in Gazipur to manufacture hi-tech products with a view to advancing technological development in Bangladesh.
- The authority last week handed over 24.8 acres of land to the firms under a 40-year lease agreement. The companies have been asked to submit work plans within three months and start construction within six months, she said.
- In September, the BHTPA allocated 20.5 acres of land to nine local and foreign companies, which will invest about USD 150.0 million and create 25,000 jobs in combined.

<https://www.thedailystar.net/business/news/another-nine-firms-invest-hi-tech-park-1670170>

National Board of Revenue (NBR) widens tax waiver for investors in hi-tech parks

National Board of Revenue has widened the tax waiver benefit for investors in hi-tech parks to attract both domestic and foreign direct investment in the parks.

- According to the new provisions, investors in the parks will get 100% tax exemption on their income for the first seven years of their operations.
- The rate of tax waiver will be 70% for the next three years and it will completely phase out in the 11th year.
- In 2015, NBR offered full tax breaks for the first three years of business operations in the parks, 80% tax waiver for fourth year, 70% for fifth year, 60% for sixth year, 50% for seventh year, 40% for eighth year, 30% for ninth year and 20% for 10th year of the operations.
- The government thinks that extended tax offer would be more attractive to both domestic and foreign investors, they said.

<http://www.newagebd.net/article/58145/nbr-widens-tax-waiver-for-investors-in-hi-tech-parks>

Industry sector contributes 33.71% of national income, says Industries Minister

- The industry sector now contributes to 33.71% of the national income of Bangladesh, up from 17.77% ten years prior.
- According to him, the country's export income went up to USD 36.67 billion in the fiscal year 2017-18, from USD 14.11 billion in FY 2007-08.
- Approximately 10% of the plot in the BSCIC (Bangladesh Small and Cottage Industry Corporation) industrial area has been allocated for the skills development of women entrepreneurs. Funding with single digit interest rate has been arranged for SME entrepreneurs, he added.

<https://www.dhakatribune.com/business/2018/12/07/industry-sector-contributes-33-71-of-national-income-says-amu>

Robi gets highest customers through Mobile Number Portability (MNP) service

- The second largest mobile phone operator in Bangladesh, Robi Axiata Limited, won over the highest 48,067 subscribers from three other mobile phone operators in the first two months of mobile number portability service launch.
- The leading mobile phone operator Grameenphone faced highest number of customer departure from the operator to other operators during October and November.
- The government on October 1 introduced the much-awaited MNP service with a view to facilitating customers changing their operators without changing their existing mobile numbers.
- The number of customers received by Robi through MNP service was 62% of total 77,085 customers who switched network.
- Robi received 25,997 customers in October and 22,070 customers in November.
- The third largest mobile phone operator, Banglalink, received the second highest 10,263 customers or 24.40% of the total successful porting completed by during the period including 10,263 in October and 8,259 in November.
- GP received 9,371 customers through MNP, representing 12.11% out of the total 77,085 customers who successfully ported to other operator under the service.
- State-owned Teletalk received 1,156 customers or 1.49% of total successful porting including 554 customers in October and 601 customers in November.

<http://www.newagebd.net/article/58355/robi-gets-highest-customers-thru-mnp-service>

Foreign funds in Dhaka Stock Exchange (DSE) keep falling

- Foreign investors' selling spree continued in November in anticipation of political tension ahead of the upcoming national election.
- Last month, they purchased shares worth BDT 3.24 billion and sold shares worth BDT 3.46 billion, meaning the net investment was BDT 225.1 million in the negative.
- Their net investment was BDT 2.01 billion in the negative in the previous month, according to data from the premier bourse.

<https://www.thedailystar.net/business/news/foreign-funds-dse-keep-falling-1671172>

World Stock and Commodities*

Index Name	Close Value	Value Change	% Change
Crude Oil (WTI)*	\$52.61	+1.12	+2.18%
Crude Oil (Brent)*	\$61.67	+1.61	+2.68%
Gold Spot*	\$1,249.31	+11.53	+0.93%
DSEX	5332.81	-28.31	-0.53%
Dow Jones Industrial Average	24,388.95	-558.72	-2.24%
FTSE 100	6,778.11	+74.06	+1.10%
Nikkei 225	21,678.68	+177.06	+0.82%

Exchange Rates

USD 1 = BDT 83.61*
GBP 1 = BDT 106.40*
EUR 1 = BDT 95.14*
INR 1 = BDT 1.18*

**Currencies and Commodities are taken from Bloomberg.*

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