

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.

Mass vaccination resumes today

- Full-fledged mass vaccination programme is set to resume across the country today as necessary preparations including distribution of adequate shots in all districts have already been completed. Besides, expatriates will get Moderna vaccines from all city corporations in addition to Dhaka from tomorrow, facilitating the immunisation for them skipping visit to the capital city. People in all districts and upazilas will receive Sinopharm vaccines. Expatriates will be allowed to take Moderna vaccine, which is also accepted in Middle East countries, from city corporation areas in addition to Pfizer jabs that were supplied only to some specific vaccination centres.

<https://today.thefinancialexpress.com.bd/last-page/mass-vaccination-resumes-today-1626025814>

Banks grab 0.84 million new Internet banking users in pandemic year

- The banking sector has experienced 0.84 million new Internet banking customers during the pandemic year as customers are becoming more habituated to digital banking amid movement restrictions. At the end of May this year, the total number of Internet banking users stood at 3.56 million over 2.72 million in the same month last year.
- Although the number of users has been growing rapidly since the virus outbreak, online banking penetration is still very low in proportion to total bank account holders. Only 3% of bank account holders have access to online banking. The total number of bank account holders stood at 115.8 million at the end of December last year, according to the Bangladesh Bank data.
- Banks have been investing in digital banking heavily by introducing new apps and products during the pandemic year, resulting in a rise in the number of online users. Internet transactions have also doubled because of the rise in the number of users during the time. The transaction value reached BDT 113.84 billion in May this year from BDT 55.31 billion in the same month of the previous year.

<https://www.tbsnews.net/economy/banking/banks-grab-838-lakh-new-internet-banking-users-pandemic-year-273478>

Sajeeb Group fire leads to domino effect

- The fire at the Shezan juice factory that killed 52 workers has also caused a domino effect on banks and insurance companies that had betted on a bad horse. Multiple banks and insurance companies are involved with Sajeeb Group and all of them have been found to have disregarded its non-compliance with safety guidelines, which finally dragged them into trouble. The business group has loans amounting to around BDT 20 billion with dozens of banks and non-bank financial institutions and has a risk coverage worth BDT 7 billion with two insurance companies.
- Sajeeb Group had already been under financial stress because of its business slowdown for the last several years. As a result, it rescheduled loans with several private banks. Mutual Trust Bank has recently rescheduled its loans of around BDT 700 million. In this situation, the deadly fire at its juice factory has raised concern among all banks over loan repayments.
- Banks have a responsibility to ensure safety compliance of a factory through an inspection prior to approving a loan, but they cannot do so to stay in a competition of roping in big business groups, said a senior executive of Mutual Trust Bank. If a bank refuses to give a loan to businesses on account of not complying with safety rules, another will come up to lend them. Even foreign banks give them loans despite their non-compliance, he added.
- Sajeeb Group availed a risk coverage from two insurance companies – Desh General Insurance Company Limited and Continental insurance Ltd. Of the total coverage amounting to BDT 7 billion, Desh General has a 55% share and Continental Insurance 45%.

<https://www.tbsnews.net/economy/sajeeb-group-fire-leads-domino-effect-273472>

Burimari land port earns record revenue

- The ongoing coronavirus pandemic has caused a global economic crisis with Bangladesh being no exception. But despite the various adversities, customs revenue at the Burimari land port in Patgram upazila of Lalmonirhat has achieved 95.89% growth year-on-year. Revenue collection at the port has reached about BDT 1.11 billion in the just concluded fiscal year whereas it was around BDT 570 million in the preceding fiscal 2019-20.
- Officials of the Burimari customs as well as clearing and forwarding (C&F) agents say goods on which surcharge was applicable were not passing through the land port. Most of the products being processed were of low duty and are

mostly from Bhutan. The products that face additional tariffs on import include plywood, resin and incense sticks. Most of the revenue came from boulders, stone, limestone and dolomite powder shipments. Other products, such as maize, rice, ginger, and kale also pass through this port.

<https://www.thedailystar.net/business/economy/news/burimari-land-port-earns-record-revenue-2127941>

Bangladesh takes to refining gold

- Bangladesh is advancing towards taking up the trade of refining gold in a bid to cater to the nearly USD 230 billion worth global gold jewellery market, meet domestic requirement and curb smuggling. The ministry has given the initial nod for Bashundhara Group to establish a refinery investing BDT 56 billion. Meanwhile, Diamond World has applied to set up another.

- Regarding local demand, the gold policy puts the annual figure between 20 tonnes to 40 tonnes. Of it, only 10% is met through resale of old jewellery. Based on this, the commerce ministry said annual demand for new gold was 18 tonnes to 36 tonnes. A majority of it is not legally imported.

<https://www.thedailystar.net/business/economy/news/bangladesh-takes-refining-gold-2127976>

Automobile workshops down and out

- The automobile workshop business in the country has been hit hard by the coronavirus pandemic as almost one-third of the total workers have lost their livelihoods since the beginning of the pandemic in the country. Entrepreneurs are struggling to pay workshop rent, salaries of workers and repay bank loans as businesses in the BDT 35 billion sector have dropped by at least 40% during the last 15 months.

- According to the Bangladesh Automobile Workshop Owners Association (BAWOA), there are about 30,000 workshops across the country. Of these, about 22,000 are registered with the association while the remaining 6,000 are scattered all over the country. There are about 3,500 in Dhaka city alone. The amount of investment in this business in the whole country is about BDT 35 billion. Most of the traders are now in dire straits due to the ongoing lockdown and additional taxes. According to the association, at least 0.3 million people are involved in this sector. In the pandemic, 30% of them have lost their jobs.

<https://www.tbsnews.net/economy/automobile-workshops-down-and-out-273046>

edotco wins “Asia Pacific Telecoms Tower Company of The Year” award

- edotco Group ("edotco"), the leading end to end integrated telecommunications infrastructure services company, received "Asia Pacific Telecoms Tower Company of the Year" for 2021 for the fifth consecutive year. Alongside the award the company also announced that it has achieved the most aspired Top 10 Global tower company ranking for the first time with a portfolio of 34,100 towers.

<https://www.tbsnews.net/economy/corporates/edotco-wins-asia-pacific-telecoms-tower-company-year-award-273295>
<https://www.newagebd.net/article/143471/edotco-wins-asia-pacific-telecoms-tower-co-of-the-year-award>

World Stock and Commodities*

Index Name	Close Value	Value Change YTD	% Change YTD
Crude Oil (WTI)*	\$74.52	\$26.00	53.59%
Crude Oil (Brent)*	\$75.48	\$23.68	45.71%
Gold Spot*	\$1,805.27	(\$89.83)	-4.74%
DSEX	6,212.77	810.70	15.01%
S&P 500	4,369.55	613.48	16.33%
FTSE 100	7,121.88	661.36	10.24%
BSE SENSEX	52,386.19	4,634.86	9.71%
KSE-100	47,563.45	3,808.07	8.70%
CSEALL	7,852.19	1,077.97	15.91%

Exchange Rates

USD 1 = BDT 84.71*
 GBP 1 = BDT 117.77*
 EUR 1 = BDT 100.55*
 INR 1 = BDT 1.14*

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

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