

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.

Stock exchanges to form Centre Counterparty Bangladesh Limited (CCBL) in a week

- The country's stock exchanges will form a new company, namely Centre Counterparty Bangladesh Limited (CCBL), within a week to foster payments system against the shares sold through the trading platform. After a negotiation of shareholding portions to be held by the bourses, the long-awaited formation of the CCBL reached a final stage on Wednesday, when the boards of Dhaka and Chittagong stock exchanges held a meeting and finalised formation of the company. The initial paid-up capital will be BDT 3.0 billion. "After taking necessary regulatory approval, the exchanges will complete the formalities with the Registrar of Joint Stock Companies and Firms (RJSC) to form the CCBL," said a CSE official, who attended the meeting.

<http://today.thefinancialexpress.com.bd/stock-corporate/stock-exchanges-to-form-ccbl-in-a-week-1526494932>
<http://www.newagebd.net/article/41368/dse-cse-agree-on-shareholding-ratio-for-clearing-co>

Export earnings from the services sector rise 42.0%

- Export earnings from the services sector grew 42.14% year-on-year to USD396.58 million thanks to increasing income from goods transportation and rising export of skilled human resources. Transportation services by the sea, air, rail, road and others earned USD431.45 million in the July-March period of the current fiscal year, up 36.24% year-on-year, according to official data.

- Year-on-year, personal services export grew 25.64% to USD265.99 million, financial services export 88.73% to USD121.28 million and insurance services export 281.93% to USD3.17 million. However, export in the telecom sector decreased 12.99% to USD246.59 million and computer services 11.88% to USD132.35 million. The overall services export rose 20.53% to USD3.03 billion in the July-March period.

<http://today.thefinancialexpress.com.bd/first-page/taka-weakens-against-dollar-substantially-1526406725>

Long-term bond for retired government officials under study

- The Prime Minister's Office (PMO) has made some proposals including issuance of long-term bond for the investment of the retired government officials and employees, officials said. Recently, Dr Mashiur Rahman, Economic Affairs Adviser to the Prime Minister (PM), has sent the proposals to the finance ministry for consideration, according to official sources. Currently, some 697,212 retired government employees are receiving pension from the state coffer. The economic affairs adviser placed five proposals in this connection. One of the proposals said investment amount to 'pensioner sanchayapatra' should be similar ahead of retirement. Another proposal says interest/profit rate should be considered in line with general provident fund.

<http://today.thefinancialexpress.com.bd/last-page/long-term-bond-for-retired-govt-officials-under-study-1526494014>

Fast-track energy projects go off-track

- The four "fast-track" power and energy projects except one have failed to make any notable progress and these are still at the initial stage of implementation, insiders said Wednesday. The LNG (Liquefied Natural Gas) terminal project is the one that has managed to show better progress, they said.

- Of the power projects, the construction of the 1,320 megawatt (mw) Moitree super thermal power plant at Rampal, the Matarbari 1,200 mw ultra-super critical coal-fired power plant, and the 2,400 mw Rooppur nuclear power plant were initiated a few months back, though those were approved years ago, the insiders and government officials said. The Bangladesh-India Friendship Power Company Limited (BIFPCL) has so far implemented 13.71% of the main segment of the Moitree super thermal power plant. The company could spend BDT 21.93 billion until March of the financial year (FY) 2017-18 out of its estimated cost -- BDT 160 billion. The company gave work order to an Indian contractor NTPC in April last year to complete the first unit, having 600 mw generation capacity, of the Rampal Power Plant by October, 2020.

<http://today.thefinancialexpress.com.bd/first-page/fast-track-energy-projects-go-off-track-1526493083>

Development spending to fall short again

- The government looks set to fall way short of implementing the development budget yet again, despite repeated assurances by Planning Minister AHM Mustafa Kamal that the full amount would be utilised this fiscal year. In the first ten months of fiscal 2017-18, 52.42% of the allocation for the annual development programme has been used, in contrast to 54.56% a year earlier, according to data from the planning ministry's Implementation Monitoring and

Evaluation Division.

<https://www.thedailystar.net/business/development-spending-fall-short-again-1577542>

Reliance on agent banking growing

• People living in rural and remote parts of the country continue showing eagerness in becoming attached to agent banking as the model promises to be a low-cost, simplified option. Commercial bankers say the periphery of agent banking, rolled out just two years ago, has been widening significantly almost every quarter for an initiative of banks to bring in an alternative to branch-based banking. For instance, deposit collection through agent banking rose 239.53% year-on-year to BDT 16.3 billion in the January-March quarter this year. It reached BDT 14.0 billion in the previous quarter, according to Bangladesh Bank data. The number of accounts with the 16 banks now offering agent banking services stood at 1.5 million as of March this year, up from 1.2 million three months earlier.

<https://www.thedailystar.net/business/reliance-agent-banking-growing-1577536>

WB to give USD 110.0 million loans for enterprise development

• The World Bank (WB) will provide loans worth USD 110 million for Bangladesh's enterprise development in a bid to ensure green industrialisation in the country. Economic Relations Division (ERD) Secretary Kazi Shofiqul Azam and WB Country Director in Bangladesh Qimiao Fan signed the loan deal in the capital on Wednesday. The USD110 million credit of the Washington-based lender has a 38-year term, including a six-year grace period, and a service charge of 0.75%. Under the WB-funded Sustainable Enterprise Project, the government will help some 20,000 micro-enterprises in manufacturing and agribusiness sectors to adopt environment-friendly practices. From the USD110 million funds, it will provide loans to the micro-enterprises for using innovative and environmentally sustainable technologies.

<http://today.thefinancialexpress.com.bd/first-page/wb-to-give-110m-loans-for-enterprise-development-1526493421>
<http://www.newagebd.net/article/41372/govt-wb-sign-110m-loan-deal-for-sustainable-enterprises>

Australian partner buys more stake in bdjobs.com

• Local investors of Bangladesh's leading career management site—bdjobs.com—have sold another 10.0% stake for BDT 300.0 million to its Australian partner SEEK International. SEEK has now become the leading shareholder with 35.0% stakes while Fahim Mashroor, one of the founders of the site and CEO, holds 33.0%. Seven others own the remaining shares. SEEK purchased 25.0% of shares of bdjobs in 2015, when the company was valued at BDT 1.5 billion, said Mashroor, who owns another leading e-commerce site, ajkerdeal.com. This time it is valued at BDT 3.0 billion as it generates profits every year, he said. Established in 2000, bdjobs started making profits after three years. Last year, it made a profit of around BDT 150.0 million, which was BDT 135.0 million in 2016.

<https://www.thedailystar.net/business/australian-partner-buys-more-stake-bdjobscom-1577545>

World Stock and Commodities*

Index Name	Close Value	Value Change	% Change
Crude Oil (WTI)*	\$71.75	+0.26	+0.36%
Crude Oil (Brent)*	\$79.41	+0.13	+0.16%
Gold Spot*	\$1,292.33	+1.60	+0.12%
DSEX	5,511.76	-37.13	-0.67%
Dow Jones Industrial Average	24,768.93	+62.52	+0.25%
FTSE 100	7,734.20	+11.22	+0.15%
Nikkei 225	22,817.88	+100.65	+0.44%

Exchange Rates

USD 1 = BDT 84.20*
 GBP 1 = BDT 114.16*
 EUR 1 = BDT 99.57*
 INR 1 = BDT 1.25*

*Currencies and Commodities are taken from Bloomberg.

IMPORTANT DISCLOSURES

Analyst Certification: Each research analyst and research associate who authored this document and whose name appears herein certifies that the recommendations and opinions expressed in the research report accurately reflect their personal views about any and all of the securities or issuers discussed therein that are within the coverage universe.

Disclaimer: Estimates and projections herein are our own and are based on assumptions that we believe to be reasonable. Information presented herein, while obtained from sources we believe to be reliable, is not guaranteed either as to accuracy or completeness. Neither the information nor any opinion expressed herein constitutes a solicitation of the purchase or sale of any security. As it acts for public companies from time to time, BRAC-EPL may have a relationship with the above mentioned company(s). This report is intended for distribution in only those jurisdictions in which BRAC-EPL is registered and any distribution outside those jurisdictions is strictly prohibited.

Compensation of Analysts: The compensation of research analysts is intended to reflect the value of the services they provide to the clients of BRAC-EPL. As with most other employees, the compensation of research analysts is impacted by the overall profitability of the firm, which may include revenues from corporate finance activities of the firm's Corporate Finance department. However, Research analysts' compensation is not directly related to specific corporate finance transaction.

General Risk Factors: BRAC-EPL will conduct a comprehensive risk assessment for each company under coverage at the time of initiating research coverage and also revisit this assessment when subsequent update reports are published or material company events occur. Following are some general risks that can impact future operational and financial performance: (1) Industry fundamentals with respect to customer demand or product / service pricing could change expected revenues and earnings; (2) Issues relating to major competitors or market shares or new product expectations could change investor attitudes; (3) Unforeseen developments with respect to the management, financial condition or accounting policies alter the prospective valuation; or (4) Interest rates, currency or major segments of the economy could alter investor confidence and investment prospects.

BRAC EPL Stock Brokerage Limited

Research

Ayaz Mahmud, CFA	Deputy Head of Research	ayaz.mahmud@bracepl.com	01708 805 221
Md. Sakib Chowdhury	Research Analyst	sakib.chowdhury@bracepl.com	01709 641 247
S. M. Samiuzzaman	Research Analyst	sm.samiuzzaman@bracepl.com	01708 805 224
Sadman Sakib	Research Associate	sadman.sakib@bracepl.com	01730 727 939
Ahmed Zaki Khan	Research Associate	zaki.khan@bracepl.com	01708 805 211
Md. Rafiqul Islam	Research Associate	mrafiquislam@bracepl.com	01708 805 229

International Trade and Sales

Ahsanur Rahman Bappi	Head of International Trade & Sales	bappi@bracepl.com	01730 357 991
----------------------	-------------------------------------	--	---------------