

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.

Business confidence jumps as pandemic wanes: study

- A recent survey of South Asian Network on Economic Modeling (SANEM) measured business confidence on a scale of 0 to 100 with a score above 50 points. Present business status index (PBSI) jumped to 52.31 in the July-September quarter from 42.57 a quarter ago, indicating business activities are improving.
- SANEM Executive Director Selim Raihan told that all economic activities have resumed. The Covid-19 situation has also improved, powering recovery in business activities, he said, adding that faster recovery was observed in the restaurant, garment, textile, and light engineering sectors, among others.
- Firms in the sectors such as transport, light engineering, tourism, textile, RMG, and ICT expressed greater confidence in the upcoming quarter, reflecting their optimism about the better prospect in the near future, said Prof Raihan.
- The survey said 46.2 per cent of the firms availed loans in the last one year. Of them, 77.5 per cent borrowed from the formal sector such as banks and the rest took loans from informal sector such as friends, relatives, and cooperatives. In the latest survey, 75 per cent of firms complained about the lengthy procedure in securing loans, up from 63 per cent in the previous one.

<https://www.thedailystar.net/business/news/business-confidence-jumps-pandemic-wanes-study-2227106>

PM for doubling Dhaka-Paris bilateral trade

- Laying emphasis on doubling bilateral trade volume by 2025, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday invited French businesspeople to boost their investment in Bangladesh as the country sits at a strategic location among major economic centers in the Indo-Pacific region.
- The Prime Minister stated bilateral trade between Bangladesh and France is growing steadily. The two-way trade stands close to USD 2 billion. She further mentioned France is now Bangladesh's 5th largest export destination.

<https://www.tbsnews.net/bangladesh/hasina-invites-french-entrepreneurs-invest-bangladesh-327934>

Bangladesh now seeks USD 701m to bankroll two priority projects

- The government now seeks to borrow USD 701 million from China to bankroll two priority projects, after a pause of nearly two years in Beijing's bountiful development-financing support for Bangladesh to execute megaprojects. Officials stated that the two proposed projects would be implemented for drinkable water supply in Rajshahi city and expansion of digital connectivity across the country.
- An Economic Relations Division (ERD) official stated Bangladesh has requested Beijing to sit for negotiations for four projects, including two top-priority ones. Bangladesh had sought USD 276 million for the water-treatment plant for Rajshahi Water Supply and Sanitation Authority (RWASA) and USD 450 million for the digital connectivity projects.

<https://today.thefinancialexpress.com.bd/last-page/bangladesh-now-seeks-701m-to-bankroll-two-priority-projects-1636567512>

Denmark offers innovative technologies to help Bangladesh with green transition

- Having decades of experience in green technology, Denmark has offered Bangladesh various ways that can help the climate-vulnerable country with the green transition. A five-day exhibition titled "Green Together" organised by the Danish Embassy was held.
- The programme highlighted commercially viable green solutions that can support sustainable and inclusive economic growth in Bangladesh. The exhibition themes included "Sustainable Green Buildings and Future of Urbanisation", "Future of Sustainable Apparel Production", "Sustainable Future of Food" and "Transition to Sustainable Infrastructure".

<https://www.thedailystar.net/lifestyle/event/news/denmark-offers-innovative-technologies-help-bangladesh-green-transition-2227111>

BB announces cash incentive for four new export sectors

- The Bangladesh Bank has announced a cash incentive at 4% for four new export sectors. Exports against tea, bicycle and its parts, MS steel products and cement sheet, which are produced locally, will get 4% cash incentives in the current financial year.
- In addition, another circular for cash incentive was issued against eligible exports from specialised zones (BEZA, BEPZA, Hi-Tech Park Authority) at 1% percent for the export of all goods. With this declaration, this year the number of products and industries eligible for cash incentive stands at 43.

<https://www.tbsnews.net/economy/bb-announces-cash-incentive-four-new-export-sectors-328045>

BDT slides amid high demand for USD

- Bangladesh Taka (BDT) has depreciated by BDT 1.0 against the US dollar (USD) in nearly three months despite selling of the greenback by the central bank to the banks for keeping the market stable. The US dollar was quoted at BDT 85.80 each in the inter-bank foreign exchange market on Wednesday against BDT 84.80 on August 17 last. It was BDT 85.75 on Tuesday.
- The growing demand for the greenback has been created mainly due to higher import payment obligations following big purchases of textile products along with an upward trend in various commodities including fuel oil in the global market. According to market operators, the BDT's latest depreciation came against the backdrop of higher outflow of foreign exchange than inflow in recent months.

<https://today.thefinancialexpress.com.bd/first-page/bdt-slides-amid-high-demand-for-usd-1636567102>

Bangladesh's real estate sector sees strong rebound

- The real estate sector came to a standstill when the pandemic arrived, it boomed by the end of 2020, with more and more people rushing to buy land and apartments. The increasing demand has caused real estate companies to think of new and better ways to attract potential homeowners.
- The government recently reduced home loan interests to 5.0% for the government employees. It is thought that they are spearheading the rising demand for apartments. In addition, reduction of the registration fees, land transfer tax,

stamp duty and mutation costs, digitisation of land-related paperwork, and the opportunity to whiten black money by investing in real estate are other major reasons for the quick rebound of the housing sector.

<https://thefinancialexpress.com.bd/trade/bangladeshs-real-estate-sector-sees-strong-rebound-1636549694>

Country's first hydrogen fuel plant nears completion

- Bangladesh's first hydrogen fuel production plant, a project initiated by the Bangladesh Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (BCSIR), is all set to begin operations by June next year. The plant will produce hydrogen by converting household waste and water into highly combustible fuel through a process known as biomass gasification and electrolysis of water, respectively, according to BCSIR officials.
- The BCSIR has already set up a unit of the plant, and the works to set up another are going on in full swing. Once both units begin operations, they will collectively produce about 5.8 kilogrammes of hydrogen fuel daily. The volume could go up to 29 kgs if the plants run round the clock.

<https://www.thedailystar.net/environment/natural-resources/energy/news/countrys-first-hydrogen-fuel-plant-nears-completion-2227056>

Fuel price hike: Exporters cannot pass the ball

- With a further rise in input costs as a result of the fuel price hike, exporters are now worried over finding ways to ride out this added pressure on businesses and retain their competitive edge in the global market.
- With cost raising spree of various sectors up to 30% with no apparent regulation to rein them in, apparel exporters fear it will translate into at least a 5% rise in their production cost, which will eventually eat into their profit margins that are already low or zero for many. They will have to take a hit from a 10%-30% increase in container handling charges, transport costs and jet fuel price. Besides, a 10% rise in commodity prices will also deal them quite a blow too, because it will affect workers, forcing them to demand a salary hike, they add.
- Vice-president of Bangladesh Knitwear Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BKMEA) told The Business Standard that apparel manufacturers had received work orders three-six months ago and in some cases, factories have booked orders for the next four to six months. So, at least for the next 10 months, they cannot ask for price readjustments because of our existing commitments, he added.

<https://www.tbsnews.net/economy/fuel-price-hike-exporters-cannot-pass-ball-328084>

Stakeholders divided over new BTRC guidelines for mobile operators

- The Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (BTRC) on Tuesday imposed several new limits and caps on mobile operators under the Mobile Data Package Guidelines, which will come into effect on March 1 next year.
- As per the new guidelines, operators can provide bonuses only if subscribers buy data packs through the operator's app, digital platform or channel, and can even provide data for free or at the floor price rate if it wants. However, the pack price with bonus cannot be less than its overall original price. Additionally, a cap on sending promotional SMS regarding packages has been set with operators allowed to send only three promotional texts per day.

- Robi stated that the proposed modality for data carry-forward is quite unique in nature, as no other country in the world has such regulations. Robi believes the proposed regulation will significantly limit the number of data pack options to choose from, as it would restrict their ability to introduce innovative data packs in the market.

<https://www.dhakatribune.com/business/2021/11/10/stakeholders-divided-over-new-btrc-guidelines-for-mobile-operators>

Flour jumps in price

- Wheat flour prices have increased notably this month, augmenting commoners' woes further as many of them rely on the commodity following higher prices of rice. Most of the flour mills have raised maida (refined flour) and atta (coarse flour) by BDT 4.0-5.0 a kilo in the past 10 days.
- Considering the last six months' rates, flour prices witnessed a 15-27% hike here, according to the Trading Corporation of Bangladesh (TCB). Traders and market experts say the leap in wheat prices globally has forced big bread and biscuit companies to raise prices of their products. Olympic Industries Ltd, the leading local biscuit maker, and its rival have recently raised prices of their popular products. Energy Plus biscuit, considered as the most-sold biscuit item, of Olympic has witnessed a 15.3% hike at retail level in the last two weeks.

<https://today.thefinancialexpress.com.bd/last-page/flour-jumps-in-price-1636567243>

Japan's SoftBank to acquire 20% stake in bKash

- Japanese tech investment giant SoftBank is going to enter Bangladesh by acquiring 20% of stake in the mobile financial service (MFS) giant bKash. Brac Bank Ltd, the majority owner of bKash, in its board meeting approved the relevant share purchase and subscription agreement among bKash, its existing shareholders and the proposed investor SoftBank Vision Fund II BEAM (DE) LLC.
- The SoftBank Fund, which invested in India's e-commerce platform FlipKart, would make both primary and secondary investments in bKash. Brac Bank also announced that the new investment would not change its shareholding in bKash.

<https://www.tbsnews.net/economy/banking/japans-softbank-acquire-20pc-stake-bkash-328096>

Incepta fifth to produce molnupiravir

- Incepta Pharmaceuticals Ltd received authorisation for the emergency production and marketing of molnupiravir, said a senior official of the Directorate General of Drug Administration (DGDA).
- ACI received permission to produce molnupiravir, according to a letter issued by the DGDA on Wednesday. ACI will roll out the drug under the brand name "Melovir".

<https://www.thedailystar.net/business/economy/industries/news/incepta-fifth-produce-molnupiravir-2227046>

Sonali's BDT 5.0b fund injection boosts investors' mood

- Sonali Bank has provided BDT 5.0 billion to Investment Corporation of Bangladesh (ICB) to invest in the stock market. Md. Mazibur Rahman, deputy managing director said, Sonali Bank took the move as it has been playing an important role in the capital market by financing its own subsidiary Sonali Investment as well as the state-owned ICB from time to time.

- Meanwhile, stocks witnessed a big jump on Wednesday, extending the winning streak for the second straight session, as buoyant investors put fresh bets on major sector shares amid high expectations. The market opened sharply higher and the upbeat trend continued till the end of the session, finally ending more than 114 points higher.

<https://today.thefinancialexpress.com.bd/stock-corporate/sonalis-tk-50b-fund-injection-boosts-investors-mood-1636562843>

Alif Industries to issue BDT 3.0 billion convertible bond

- Alif Industries, a yarn producer, has decided to issue convertible bonds worth BDT 3.0 billion for land, machinery and existing factory renovation. The bond issue is subject to the approval of the stock market regulator and the shareholders in the 28th annual general meeting scheduled for December 30.
- Denomination of each convertible bond is BDT 100,000 with an interest rate/yield at 7.0% base profit plus 10% of total dividend (cash and bonus) declared to the ordinary shareholders. The interest amount will be disbursed semi-annually with a maturity of six years tenure.

<https://today.thefinancialexpress.com.bd/stock-corporate/alif-industries-to-issue-tk-30b-convertible-bond-1636562871>

World Stock and Commodities*

Index Name	Close Value	Value Change YTD	% Change YTD
Crude Oil (WTI)*	USD 81.61	USD 33.09	68.20%
Crude Oil (Brent)*	USD 82.64	USD 30.84	59.54%
Gold Spot*	USD 1,852.32	(USD 42.78)	-2.26%
DSEX	6,982.18	1,580.11	29.25%
S&P 500	4,646.71	890.64	23.71%
FTSE 100	7,340.15	879.63	13.62%
BSE SENSEX	60,352.82	12,601.49	26.39%
KSE-100	46,629.88	2,874.50	6.57%
CSEALL	10,522.60	3,748.38	55.33%

Exchange Rates**1 US Dollar = 85.66 BDT****1 GBP = 114.97 BDT****1 Euro = 98.41 BDT****1 INR = 1.15 BDT**

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BRAC EPL Stock Brokerage Limited

Research

Salim Afzal Shaown, CFA	Head of Research	salim@bracepl.com	01708 805 221
Nazmus Saadat, CFA	Research Analyst	nazmus.saadat@bracepl.com	01708 805 229
Anika Mafiz	Research Analyst	anika.mafiz@bracepl.com	01708 805 206
Fahim Hassan	Research Associate	fahim.hassan@bracepl.com	01709 636 546

International Trade and Sales

Ahsanur Rahman Bappi	CEO	bappi@bracepl.com	01730 357 991
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BRAC EPL Stock Brokerage Limited

www.bracepl.com

Symphony, Plot No.: S.E.(F) – 9(3rd Floor), Road No.: 142

Gulshan Avenue, Dhaka – 1212

Phone: + (880)-2-9852446-50

Fax: + (880)-2-9852451-52

E-Mail: research@bracepl.com