

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.

Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (BTRC) 'forcing us to pay': Grameenphone

- Grameenphone yesterday alleged that the telecom regulator was trying to extort the company for BDT 125.8 billion, which according to the regulator was public money. We do not want to be extorted, we do not want to be under pressure, we do not want to be in the frontpage in the newspaper globally, Grameenphone CEO said. The Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission is trying to collect the money by intimidating the company, he added. The money doesn't belong to the regulator, he said.
- In an audit conducted by the BTRC in 2016, it was claimed that the company owes the government BDT 125.8 billion in revenue shares, late fees and taxes. GP's CEO yesterday said that the audit process was incorrect, but did not explain how. Grameenphone is still seeking a clear, transparent and fair assessment of the audit claim, he added. The company in August filed an appeal with a lower court in Dhaka seeking an injunction on the realization of the money by the BTRC, but the court turned down the petition. Grameenphone then moved the appeal to the High Court in October this year. The HC issued a two months' injunction. The BTRC then moved to the Appellate Division seeking a stay on the injunction order. Hearing of the appeal is scheduled for Thursday. GP's CEO hinted that the company might move to an international arbitration body to settle the government's audit claim.
- Grameenphone's Deputy CEO and Chief Marketing Officer said they intended to invest BDT 15.5 billion in 2019, but could only spend about two thirds of the amount as the regulator has not allowed it to expand its network or maintain its existing infrastructure since July 22. The top executives said they were interested in settling the matter out of court and were showing respect to the decisions made at a meeting on October 21 with Prime Minister's ICT Affairs Adviser. But the telecom regulator is not complying with the advisor's directive, said GP's CEO. He said that at that meeting, it was decided that that Grameenphone would deposit BDT 2 billion in BTRC's bank account while the audit claim would be reviewed by a committee, which would consist of seven members from the regulatory body, national board of revenue and the carriers. And no case proceeding would move forward, he added.

<https://www.thedailystar.net/backpage/news/btrc-forcing-us-pay-1825909>

<https://today.thefinancialexpress.com.bd/first-page/regulator-bullying-to-extort-money-gp-1573494333>

<http://www.newagebd.net/article/90372/gp-alleges-btrc-disobeying-court-order>

Ready-made garment (RMG) exports to US grow by 9.96% in 9 months

- The growth in Bangladesh's readymade garment exports to the United States continued decreasing in nine months (January-September) of 2019 as global consumption of RMG products dropped amid economic woes and some of the competing countries grabbed more market share, experts and exporters said. Bangladesh's RMG exports to the US in January-September of this year grew by 9.96% while the export growth to the market was 14.49% in the first half (January-June) and 16.12% in the first quarter (January-March), according to the data released by the Office of Textiles and Apparel (OTEXA) under the US Department of Commerce on Saturday.
- Bangladesh's earnings from RMG exports to the US in January-September of this year grew to USD 4.56 billion from USD 4.15 billion in the same period of last year. Earlier, Bangladesh achieved 14.49% growth in RMG export to the US in January-June and it was the highest growth among the competing countries.

<http://www.newagebd.net/article/90374/rmg-exports-to-us-grow-by-996pc-in-9-months>

Bangladeshi businesses more bullish than global peers: Hong Kong and Shanghai Banking Corporation (HSBC)

- Business confidence in Bangladesh is significantly higher than the global and Asian average, according to a new global report of HSBC. The Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corporation's 'Navigator: Now, next and how' captured business sentiment from 9,131 companies globally, including 193 Bangladeshi companies, shedding light on their investment priorities, decision-making drivers, and plans to implement change and growth expectations.
- The report mentioned that 74% of Bangladeshi businesses are more optimistic about their business prospect than a year ago while the Asian average is only 43%. The HSBC report showed that 97% of Bangladesh businesses, surveyed for the report, are bullish on growth over the next year while the global and Asian average is 79% and 77%. Moreover, 50% of Bangladeshi businesses are expecting growth of 15%, which would be about twice the rate of expected GDP growth rate in Bangladesh, the bank said on Monday in a statement accompanied with the report.
- The survey report found nine in 10 Bangladeshi businesses believe international trade to be a force for good, which will drive innovation and improve efficiency. Asia remains the main arena where Bangladeshi firms trade, with more

than four in five (83%) companies citing its importance, the press statement said. In Asia, the largest trading partners of Bangladeshi firms are mainland China (43%), Japan (36%) and India (27%).

- Only 42% of Bangladeshi firms feel protectionism is on the rise in 2019, compared to 93% in 2018, it added.

<https://today.thefinancialexpress.com.bd/first-page/bd-businesses-more-bullish-than-global-peers-hsbc-1573494385>
<http://www.newagebd.net/article/90373/business-confidence-in-bangladesh-higher-than-global-average>
<https://www.thedailystar.net/business/news/businesses-expect-robust-growth-next-year-1825984>

Bangla Bond Launched: Acid test for Bangladesh growth story

- The International Finance Corporation (IFC) has floated taka bonds—Bangla Bond—in the London Stock Exchange (LSE). Bangla Bonds are taka-denominated bond on the LSE leveraging IFC's own AAA credit rating. Issued by the International Finance Corporation, the Bangla Bond will give global investors the chance to make a profit from Bangladesh's growth process, from which they have been shut out thus far for the rudimentary state of the local bond market, cumbersome registration processes, foreign exchange administrative procedures and capital controls. IFC eventually plans to float USD 1 billion in Bangla bonds, but the private sector arm of the World Bank Group is testing the waters by issuing just USD 9.5 million for now. Based on the response of this tranche, more amounts would be raised.

- The success of the Bangla Bond is important for another reason too: it opens up a handy financing avenue for Bangladeshi companies. Interested parties will be snapping up the bond in dollars. The bond proceeds would be converted to taka and lent out to Bangladeshi companies by the IFC. After the end of the three-year tenor of this tranche the investors would be paid back the taka amount they signed up for at the going rate of the dollar. So, the currency risk lies with the investor and not the issuer, unlike offshore borrowing.

- IFC would be lending out the proceeds of the first tranche of Bangla Bond -- about BDT 800 million-- to Pran Group to boost their processing capacities and deepen the rural distribution reach. The interest rate for the local agro processor would be 11 to 11.5%, which, according to a director of Pran-RFL Group, is lower than what they would have to count were the borrowing made from local banks.

<https://www.thedailystar.net/backpage/news/bangla-bond-launched-acid-test-bangladesh-growth-story-1825930>
<https://www.thedailystar.net/business/news/bon-voyage-bangla-bond-1825975>
<https://today.thefinancialexpress.com.bd/first-page/first-taka-bond-listed-on-london-stock-exchange-1573494140>
<https://www.dhakatribune.com/business/stock/2019/11/11/bangla-bond-listed-on-london-stock-exchange-2>

World Stock and Commodities*

Index Name	Close Value	Value Change	% Change
Crude Oil (WTI)*	\$56.87	+0.01	+0.02%
Crude Oil (Brent)*	\$62.24	+0.06	+0.10%
Gold Spot*	\$1,456.53	+0.57	+0.04%
DSEX	4,781.48	+9.56	+0.20%
Dow Jones Industrial Average	27,691.49	+10.25	+0.04%
FTSE 100	7,328.54	-30.84	-0.42%
Nikkei 225	23,370.19	+38.35	+0.16%
BSE SENSEX	40,345.08	+21.47	+0.05%

Exchange Rates

USD 1 = BDT 84.74*
GBP 1 = BDT 108.97*
EUR 1 = BDT 93.48*
INR 1 = BDT 1.18*

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

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