

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, South Korea have great potential to further economic ties

- Ambassador of South Korea to Bangladesh Lee Jang-keun stressed that the two countries have great potential to further develop mutually beneficial economic ties. The South Korean envoy said this at a roundtable meeting on South Korea-Bangladesh economic relations held at the World Trade Center in Chattogram, organised by the Embassy of the Republic of Korea in cooperation with Chittagong Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCCI) and Korea-Bangladesh Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KBCCI).
- He also reaffirmed his commitment for making efforts to elevate the bilateral relations to a new height and diversify the areas of cooperation through more engagement with the business community in Chattogram.

<https://www.thedailystar.net/diplomacy/news/bangladesh-south-korea-have-great-potential-further-economic-ties-2200596>

8 projects get go-ahead of Cabinet Purchase Committee

- The Cabinet Committee on public purchase (CCPP) approved a total of 8 proposals including setting up 660 MW gas-fired plant in Meghnaghat in Gazaria of Munshiganj by private sector, import fertilizer and purchase of Corona Virus RT-qPCR Diagnostic kits. As per proposals, Consortium of (1) Edra Power Holdings Sdn Bhd, Malaysia and (2) Winnievision Power Ltd, Bangladesh, will set up the 660 MW combined cycle plant on unsolicited basis under the Speedy Supply of Power and Energy Act (special provision) 2010. Another proposal of the Power Division that received the nod of the committee to extend a deal with India for another 5 years to import 160 MW electricity from its Tripura state.
- The committee approved a proposal of the Central Medical Stores Depot (CMSD) under the public health division to procure 2 million CoronaVirus RT-qPCR Diagnostic kits (with VTM and swab) from three suppliers Sterling Multi Technologies Ltd, Dhaka; OMC (Pvt) Ltd. Dhaka; and G.S Biotech, Narayanganj, at a cost of BDT 117.41 crore.
- Three separate proposals of Bangladesh Chemical Industries Corporation under the Industries Ministry received the nod of the committee to import a total of 90,000 metric tons of urea fertilizers.

<https://m.theindependentbd.com/post/269208>

Government bank borrowing up 17%

- Government borrowing from the banking sector has jumped 17% during the first three months of the 2021-22 fiscal year (FY) compared to the same period last fiscal as the Covid-19 situation gradually improves. Government borrowing from the banking sector stood at BDT 176,386 crore at the beginning of September while at month-end the amount rose to BDT 206,513 crore, according to information from the Bangladesh Bank.
- The government borrowed BDT 14,121 crore from banks in the first three months of the current fiscal and it repaid loans amounting to BDT 9,524 crore to the central bank. The net loan for this FY now stands at BDT 4,597 crore, which is around 6% of the government's target.

<https://www.tbsnews.net/economy/banking/govt-bank-borrowing-17-317380>

Govt shelves Dhaka- Ctg expressway plan

- The government has officially abandoned its decade-long plan to build an expressway on the Dhaka-Chattogram corridor, a crucial cog for the Bangladesh economy, under public-private partnership -- after shelling out BDT 100 crore on a feasibility study and getting a detailed design. Dropping of the expressway project is set to cost the government upwards of BDT 100 crore: it has to pay back the Asian Development Bank, which funded the feasibility study.
- The prime minister and the roads transport and bridges minister are in favour of building a high-speed railway along the corridor instead. The 224.64-kilometre-long rail route of Dhaka-Narayanganj-Cumilla-Feni-Chattogram route, expected to cost BDT 93,350.93 crore, has already been approved by the prime minister.

<https://www.thedailystar.net/news/bangladesh/news/govt-shelves-dhaka-ctg-expressway-plan-2200826>

Disbursement may miss December deadline

- Bangladesh's cottage, micro, small and medium enterprises (CMSMEs), a priority sector of the government, cannot avail of the stimulus loan as fast as they had expected due to its slow disbursement process, reports UNB.
- Bangladesh Bank has set a loan disbursement target of BDT 200 billion in its second round to cottage, micro, small and medium enterprises by December next. But the disbursement target may be missed as only 2.82% loan was disbursed during the July-August period among 2390 firms of CMSMEs.

<https://today.thefinancialexpress.com.bd/trade-market/disbursement-may-miss-december-deadline-1634491932>

Sheikh Hasina Tantpalli: A mega plan to revive weaving industry

- Sheikh Hasina Tantpalli (Sheikh Hasina Handloom Village), the first of its sort in the country, is being constructed in Madaripur and Shariatpur under the initiative of the Bangladesh Handloom Board (BHB) to preserve the traditional weaving industry in the country, which is expected to create huge employment.
- In the first phase of the project (July 2018 - June 2022), the district administrations have already acquired 120 acres of land – 60 acres in the Zajira upazila in Shariatpur and 60 acres in the Shibchar upazila in Madaripur. At present, the landfilling is going on for land development which will be followed by infrastructure works in the second phase at BDT 307.45 crore.
- As many as 8,064 loom sheds will be constructed for 8,064 weavers with an annual production target of about 4.31 crore metres of cloth. The project is estimated to cost BDT 1,911 crore.

<https://www.tbsnews.net/economy/sheikh-hasina-tantpalli-mega-plan-revive-weaving-industry-316882>

Bangladesh now has 150 green garment factories -- highest in the globe

- Bangladesh now has the highest number of green garment factories in the globe with the Leadership in Environmental and Energy in Design (LEED) certification given by the United States Green Building Council (USGBC).
- Of the 150 factories, 44 are platinum rated, 93 are gold, 9 are silver standard and four are just certified. Some 500

more garment factories are waiting to be certified LEED by the USGBC.

<https://www.thedailystar.net/business/news/bangladesh-now-has-150-green-garment-factories-highest-the-globe-2200791>

Payments of utility bills through MFS hit record high in August

- Utility bill payments through mobile financial services hit a record high of BDT 1,323.7 crore in August 2021 amid the Covid outbreak as people have got used to the payment mode to avoid infection. As per Bangladesh Bank data, utility bill payments through MFS grew by 45.65% or BDT 414.9 crore in August 2021 from BDT 908.8 crore in the same month of 2020.
- The BB data showed that the number of utility bill payments through MFS also increased to its highest of 1.17 crore in August 2021 from 36.6 lakh in February 2020. Besides the utility bill payments, the overall transactions through MFS operators have grown significantly after the Covid outbreak.

<https://www.newagebd.net/article/152068/payments-of-utility-bills-thru-mfs-hit-record-high-in-aug>

BD Finance, Adorsho Pranisheba to provide digital financial solutions to rural farmers

- Bangladesh Finance Limited (BD Finance) signed a partnership agreement with Adorsho Pranisheba to provide innovative digital financial solutions to rural farmers in the dairy and cow fattening sector.
- Under the agreement, the farmers will get livestock insurance facilities, a face identification system, and more AI-based customer-centric benefits.

<https://thefinancialexpress.com.bd/trade/bd-finance-adorsho-pranisheba-to-provide-digital-financial-solutions-to-rural-farmers-1634482967>

DESCO EPS rises sharply

- Dhaka Electric Supply Company (DESCO) saw a sharp rise in EPS (earnings per share) for the year ended on June 30, 2021 compared to the same period of the previous year. The company's EPS rose 61% or BDT 0.71 to close at BDT 1.86 for the year ended on June 30, 2021 from BDT 1.15 reported for previous year.
- In a disclosure, DESCO stated its EPS rose due to increase of sales revenue. It also stated that operating profit decreased due to increase of salary and allowance, finance cost and depreciation. For the year ended on June 30, 2021 the company has recommended 10% cash dividend.

<https://today.thefinancialexpress.com.bd/stock-corporate/desco-eps-rises-sharply-1634493559>

Tax exemption for Sukuk investment on the cards

- To foster investment, the government has decided to offer income tax exemption on Sukuk bonds at the individual level. Individual taxpayers will be able to enjoy the facility by the next fiscal year.
- Earlier, at a Cash and Dataset Management Committee (CDMC) meeting of the Finance Department of the finance ministry, it was decided that a letter would be sent to the NBR in this regard, mentioning that the "Sukuk bonds would

be considered government security."

<https://www.tbsnews.net/economy/tax-exemption-sukuk-investment-cards-316894>

BDT 7,650 crore bonds in the pipeline

- 16 listed companies including banks and financial institutions and a non-government organisation (NGO) are awaiting regulatory approval to issue bonds worth BDT 7,650 crore.
- Bank Asia will raise BDT 500 crore, Mercantile Bank BDT 700 crore, Standard Bank BDT 500 crore, Dhaka Bank BDT 400 crore, Pubali Bank BDT 500 crore, Premier Bank BDT 400 crore, and AB Bank BDT 600 crore by issuing perpetual bonds.

<https://www.tbsnews.net/economy/stocks/tk7650cr-bonds-pipeline-317371>

Sea Pearl's future uncertain over high debt

- Sea Pearl Beach Resort and Spa Limited, a five-star hotel in Cox's Bazar, is facing an uncertain future due to its high debt-to-equity ratio. The auditor Kazi Zahir Khan & Co stated Sea Pearl's total debt stood at BDT 462.57 crore including bank loans and bonds, which represents 78.72% of its equity and liabilities.
- As per the auditor, the uncertainties regarding the company's future have also resulted from its failure to pay the instalment of bond and decrease in capacity utilization. It has failed to pay the regular instalment of bonds since April 2020. The capacity utilization decreased by 9.21% to 44.28% from 53.49% in the previous year.
- Despite the auditor's concern over the company's future, in FY21, its revenue jumped 40% to BDT 64.39 crore, which was the highest since its inception. Its net profit was BDT 7.36 crore.

<https://www.tbsnews.net/economy/stocks/sea-pearls-future-uncertain-over-high-debt-317359>

IPDC keeps posting higher profits

- IPDC Finance has come through another quarter of profit growth in July-September period. The NBFIL secured BDT 22 crore in quarterly net profit after tax which is 18.2% higher than that over the same quarter a year ago and 7.1% higher than the previous quarter this year.
- In the third quarter, the company has demonstrated its increasing operational efficiency through 22.4% revenue growth from the second quarter, while its operating expenses only grew by 2.9% from the previous quarter. As a result, its operating profits grew by 36.3% quarter-on-quarter.

<https://www.tbsnews.net/economy/stocks/ipdc-keeps-posting-higher-profits-317347>

World Stock and Commodities*

Index Name	Close Value	Value Change YTD	% Change YTD
Crude Oil (WTI)*	USD 82.28	USD 33.76	69.58%
Crude Oil (Brent)*	USD 84.86	USD 33.06	63.82%
Gold Spot*	USD 1,767.62	(USD 127.48)	-6.73%
DSEX	7,186.46	1,784.39	33.03%
S&P 500	4,471.37	715.30	19.04%
FTSE 100	7,234.03	773.51	11.97%
BSE SENSEX	61,305.95	13,554.62	28.39%
KSE-100	44,821.53	1,066.15	2.44%
CSEALL	9,623.81	2,849.59	42.07%

Exchange Rates**1 US Dollar = 85.54 BDT****1 GBP = 117.65 BDT****1 Euro = 99.17 BDT****1 INR = 1.14 BDT**

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