

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.

Low interest moves focus to stock market

- Low-interest rate has turned to be a blessing for the stock market as both individual and institutional investors are choosing to park their money in stocks, making Bangladesh market the best globally with the highest gains in indices in August. The AFC Asia Frontier Fund found that most of its larger markets made good gains in August and Bangladesh market was the best performer globally with a gain of 15.8%. A research conducted by AFC Asia Frontier Fund released on August 8 showed that lower interest rate, increasing exports and remittances and the reopening of the economy have led to this rally in the Dhaka Stock Exchange (DSE).
- Lowest foreign sales in the Bangladesh market among South Asian countries also confirmed investor's confidence in the resilient economy. During the January-August period, net foreign sales amounted to USD 90 million in the Bangladesh market when it was USD 174 million in Sri Lanka, USD 314 in Vietnam and USD 350 in Pakistan, according to the research. The rally is being jointly supported by monetary easing, economic recovery, capital market regulator's moves for good governance alongside increased expectation for a continuation, said Asif Khan, CFA, a partner at Edge Research and Consulting Ltd.
- The implementation of lending rate cap from April shifted both institutional and individual investors to the stock market, the market trend shows. The real lending rate of Bangladesh came down to 1.9% while it is 3.6% in India and 1.3% in Vietnam, according to data from the Bangladesh Bank. In this situation, banks seemed to prefer the stock market as their alternate investment platform.

<https://tbsnews.net/economy/stock/low-interest-moves-focus-stock-market-130789>

Revenue generation shows little sign of recovery

- The government's effort to revive the economy by lifting the countrywide Covid-19 shutdown has failed on the revenue front as the first two fiscal months have fared dismally. Revenue collection by the National Board of Revenue (NBR) fell short of its target for the two months by 30.06%. According to sources at the National Board of Revenue (NBR), BDT 286.35 billion was collected in revenue in these two months. Analysts are of the opinion that even though external trade has normalised, domestic economic activities are still far behind normal. As people's income and consumption have decreased, revenue collection is declining instead of increasing.
- An economist and distinguished fellow at the Centre for Policy Dialogue said the country's economy has not yet returned to normalcy. The fear of the new coronavirus is still working in people's minds, he noted, adding that both income and consumption of the people have decreased.

<https://tbsnews.net/bangladesh/revenue-generation-shows-little-sign-recovery-130780>

StanChart rolls out first blockchain remittance service

- Standard Chartered Bangladesh yesterday rolled out a blockchain-powered remittance service for Bangladeshis working in Malaysia to allow them to send money home on a real-time basis, without any hassle and at lower costs. The bank has teamed up with Ant Group, one of the world's leading digital financial services providers based in Hangzhou, China; bKash, the top mobile financial service in Bangladesh, and Valyou, a financial technology company in Malaysia, to provide the service. The service is in the final stages of commercial testing and will be available to customers in Bangladesh and Malaysia soon, said the multinational lender in a press release.
- The bank is the fund settlement bank and regulatory approval-holder for the service. Ant Group's applied blockchain technology helps streamline the remittance process, radically improving the speed of delivery and information security and enhancing the transparency of the process. With our partners bKash, Valyou and Ant Group, we are delighted to be able to introduce a new-generation technological solution that will make the remittance experience simple and faster, by presenting the service available 24/7, including from the convenience of the remitters' mobile phones, said the chief executive officer of Standard Chartered Bangladesh.
- Bangladesh is the seventh highest source of remittance for Bangladesh. Migrant workers sent USD 235.57 million in July and USD 196.31 million in August.

<https://www.thedailystar.net/business/news/stanchart-rolls-out-first-blockchain-remittance-service-1958749>

<https://www.newagebd.net/article/115822/stanchart-bkash-valyou-launch-blockchain-based-cross-border-remittance-service>

<https://tbsnews.net/economy/standard-chartered-bank-bkash-and-valyou-launch-bangladeshs-first-blockchain-based-cross>

Grameenphone partners with Prime Bank to empower SMEs

- Prime Bank Limited and Grameenphone recently partnered to enable small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) with financial and connectivity solutions with an ambition to empower and provide support to accelerate its growth. Addressing the programme, the state minister for youth and sports said that the government had set up a virtual training centre for generating employment in the rural areas for returnee migrant workers to stand beside the youth amid the pandemic.
- Under the arrangement, the Grameenphone SME customers would get working capital (CC, OD and demand loan), term loans for fixed asset purchase and capital expenditures, international trade solutions, bank guarantee and work order. They can also avail a wide range of deposit products and free internet banking – ALTITUDE - for conducting broad range of e-transaction. The SME customers of Grameenphone can apply for loan from their office or home as Prime Bank has assigned dedicated relationship manager. The MSME customers of Prime Bank will also enjoy exclusive benefits for Grameenphone connection and value-added services.

<https://www.newagebd.net/article/115824/grameenphone-partners-with-prime-bank-to-empower-smes>

Broadband internet services surge in Covid-19 pandemic

- People being confined to their homes due to the Covid-19 pandemic, has been a boon for broadband internet service providers. Their business is booming with rising internet use. However, the number of mobile internet users is not growing as fast as the number of broadband internet users on WiFi. The regulatory authority official said that people were choosing broadband for its faster speed and relatively low cost. Although, the number of mobile internet users still continues to be more than broadband users, the senior assistant director at the Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (BTRC) added.
- The total number of subscribers was 99.98 million in February, which jumped to 103.47 million in June, up by 3.49 million, according to the BTRC. The regulator said that the growth of broadband internet was higher than mobile internet, in terms of user numbers, over the months. Broadband users increased from 2.82 million in February to 8.57 million in June, while mobile internet subscribers increased by only 0.66 million to 94.905 million, the BTRC said. Meanwhile, mobile operators have been facing a decline in their number of subscribers (SIM users).
- According to the BTRC, operators lost 4.819 million SIM users from February to June this year. In the four-month period, Grameenphone's customer base declined by 1.33 million to 74.53 million in June, while Robi's subscribers fell by 1.63 million to 47.98 million, Banglalink by 1.74 million to 34.03 million, and Teletalk fell 4.873 million, to 4.757 million.

<https://www.dhakatribune.com/business/commerce/2020/09/09/broadband-internet-services-surge-in-covid-19-pandemic>

Associated Oxygen IPO subscription begins Thursday

- The initial public offering (IPO) subscription of Associated Oxygen Limited will begin on Thursday. It will run until September 16. Earlier, the regulator approved the proposal of the IPO to raise BDT 150 million by issuing 15 million shares, with a face value of BDT 10. The company will spend the funds to: build a warehouse and shed, buy new machinery, repay bank loans, and meet the IPO costs, etc. The company currently has the capacity to produce 0.83 million cubic metre per month of oxygen/nitrogen gases and 9.93 million cubic metre per annum capacity of dissolved acetylene gas.

<https://tbsnews.net/economy/stock/associated-oxygen-ipo-subscription-begins-thursday-130738>

Mir Akhter's share bidding begins September 27

- Price-bidding for eligible investors (EIs) to fix the cut-off price of shares of Mir Akhter Hossain Ltd, a construction company, will commence from September 27. The construction and engineering company's price bidding through electronic subscription system (ESS) of the exchanges will be continued until 5:00pm on September 30, according to an official disclosure on Wednesday. The valuation report submission period for eligible investors through electronic subscription system will start at 10:30am on October 1 and continue until 10:30am on October 5, said the disclosure.
- Only the eligible investors can participate to explore the cut-off price of the company's shares under the electronic bidding process. Each eligible investor who intends to participate in the electronic bidding for the company's shares shall maintain a minimum investment of BDT 10 million in listed securities as on the end of September 17 as per the Bangladesh Securities and Exchange Commission (Public Issue) Rules, 2015. Meanwhile, the initial public offering (IPO) subscription of Associated Oxygen Ltd begins today (Thursday), aiming to raise BDT 150 million from the capital market.

<https://today.thefinancialexpress.com.bd/stock-corporate/mir-akhters-share-bidding-begins-september-27-1599663829>
<https://tbsnews.net/economy/stock/mir-akhters-ipo-bidding-begins-september-27-130747>

World Stock and Commodities*

Index Name	Close Value	Value Change YTD	% Change YTD
Crude Oil (WTI)*	\$37.85	(\$23.78)	-38.59%
Crude Oil (Brent)*	\$40.64	(\$27.80)	-40.62%
Gold Spot*	\$1,946.30	\$424.83	27.92%
DSEX	4,971.69	518.76	11.65%
S&P 500	3,398.96	168.18	5.21%
FTSE 100	6,012.84	(1,574.21)	-20.75%
BSE SENSEX	38,193.92	(3,448.22)	-8.28%
KSE-100	42,022.25	1,287.17	3.16%
CSEALL	5,370.39	(758.82)	-12.38%

Exchange Rates

USD 1 = BDT 84.83*

GBP 1 = BDT 110.23*

EUR 1 = BDT 99.90*

INR 1 = BDT 1.15*

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

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