

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.

FTAs top priority in Bangladesh's post-LDC strategy

- Bangladesh, in addition to negotiations at global and regional platforms, needs to gear up for signing free trade agreements (FTAs) with at least seven major trading partners before 2026 as part of an all-out strategy to overcome the immediate shocks after graduation from the least developed country (LDC) category, a government committee suggests.
- It stresses the need for extensive groundwork for negotiating "new generation FTAs" that, in addition to goods, would include issues like trade in services, investment, labour, and government procurement to effectively engage with developing and developed countries with varied interests.

<https://www.tbsnews.net/economy/ftas-top-priority-bangladeshs-post-ldc-strategy-381973>

India seeks free trade agreement with Bangladesh

- India is looking to advance a comprehensive free trade agreement with Bangladesh, said India's Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal on Monday. He also listed an uninterrupted supply chain, a joint production of defense equipment, and pharmaceuticals as four focus areas for strengthening the bilateral relationship between Bangladesh and India, reports the Live Mint.
- The Indian minister also pressed for the need to explore potential areas of investment, which included textiles, jute products, leather, footwear, APIs for pharmaceuticals, medical equipment, digital health, education services, agribusiness, electronics and renewable energy.

<https://www.tbsnews.net/world/south-asia/india-seeks-free-trade-agreement-bangladesh-381439>

IMF for more BB independence

- Strengthening Bangladesh Bank's independence and autonomy is key to enabling it to strictly enforce the current prudential regulations in the banking sector, said International Monetary Fund (IMF). With increased vulnerabilities, financial sector risks pose a drag on medium-term growth prospects, the Washington-based multilateral lender agency said in a report on Monday.
- The report has been prepared based on Article 4 consultations between the IMF and Bangladesh government last December. During an Article IV consultation, an IMF team of economists visits a country to assess economic and financial developments and discuss the country's economic and financial policies with government and central bank officials.

<https://www.thedailystar.net/business/organisation-news/news/imf-more-bb-independence-2978671>

Trade deficit soars to USD18.7b amid import surge

- The country's trade deficit widened by 82.07% USD 18.7 billion in 7MFY22 from USD 10.27 billion in 7MFY21. Economists said that the drastic increase in import payments indicated a revival of the country's economy but it would be difficult for the country to tolerate such high payments as the country's foreign exchange reserve had already come under pressure.
- In July-January of FY22, the country's import spending skyrocketed by 43.23% year-on-year. During the period of FY22, the country's import payments stood at USD 46.67 billion against the payments of USD 31.92 billion in the

corresponding period of FY21.

- The country's export earnings in the same period of FY22 grew by 29.23% to USD 27.98 billion against the earnings of USD 21.62 billion in the corresponding period of FY21.

<https://www.newagebd.net/article/164841/trade-deficit-soars-to-187b-amid-import-surge>

Runaway energy prices raise alarm

- The runaway fuel oil and gas price in the international markets has already hit Bangladesh's foreign exchange reserves and intensified pressures on the exchange rate amid the escalation of imports at higher prices. What is worse, the situation has stoked concerns that the country's energy security may come under threat if the current trend of fuel oil and gas persists, officials and experts have warned.
- Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation (BPC) spent USD 17 million to import a consignment of 30,000 tonnes of diesel in January. As the international market has become volatile due to the Russia-Ukraine war, the same amount of oil is now costing the country USD 39 million.
- The BPC has opened letters of credit (LCs) with state-owned banks to import diesel, but the banks are struggling to make the payments in US dollars. BPC has funds that would allow it to import fuel oil for two months. A similar case is also prevailing at state-owned PetroBangla, where it does not have any money to buy the next consignment.

<https://www.thedailystar.net/business/economy/news/runaway-energy-prices-raise-alarm-2978696>

Five quick rental power plants await two-year extension

- The government finally is set to award a two-year extension to five furnace oil-fired quick-rental power plants (QRPPs) having a total generation capacity of around 457 megawatts (MW) under the 'no-electricity, no-payment' model. Sources said the government has moved to extend the tenure of these plants to enhance electricity generation from oil-fired plants to cope with the mounting electricity demand.

<https://today.thefinancialexpress.com.bd/first-page/five-quick-rental-power-plants-await-two-year-extension-1646758213>

BSEC steps in to stop stocks' free-fall

- The Bangladesh Securities and Exchange Commission (BSEC) has lowered the circuit breaker limit to 2% from 10% in a bid to rein in a massive collapse in share prices and thereby curb further losses of investors. DSEX, the key index of the Dhaka Stock Exchange, has fallen by 589 points over the past two weeks in the wake of the Russia-Ukraine war. The BSEC has set new circuit breakers to protect ordinary investors from this sudden collapse in share prices.

<https://www.tbsnews.net/economy/stocks/bsec-steps-stop-stocks-free-fall-381964>

World Stock and Commodities*

Index Name	Close Value	Value Change YTD	% Change YTD
Crude Oil (WTI)*	USD 125.76	USD 50.55	67.21%
Crude Oil (Brent)*	USD 130.38	USD 52.60	67.63%
Gold Spot*	USD 2,039.00	USD 209.80	11.47%
DSEX	6,474.29	-282.37	-4.18%
S&P 500	4,170.62	-595.56	-12.50%
FTSE 100	6,964.11	-420.43	-5.69%
BSE SENSEX	53,424.09	-4,829.73	-8.29%
KSE-100	42,878.35	-1,717.72	-3.85%
CSEALL	10,523.03	-1,702.98	-13.93%

Exchange Rates**1 US Dollar = 85.80 BDT****1 GBP = 112.48 BDT****1 Euro = 93.63 BDT****1 INR = 1.11 BDT**

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