

*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.*

### **Currency swaps rule forex market, protect foreign exchange reserve**

- Interbank currency swaps under agreements to exchange cash flows at later dates dominate the country's foreign exchange market shielding the forex reserve to a great extent from any pressure. Bangladesh Bank, the central bank of the country, recently prepared a note on it elaborating the nature of the forex market. BB is encouraging banks to operate
- It said currency swaps, a kind of derivatives, accounted for around 86% of the forex market. The spot market derivatives accounted for 11% with the forward derivatives grabbing the remaining 3.0%.
- People at different commercial banks familiar with the matter have told the FE that this dominance helps fend off pressure from the country's foreign exchange reserve to a great extent. Otherwise, the banks in need of dollars could turn to the central bank to meet their requirements putting pressure on the foreign currency reserve.
- The people mostly acting as treasury heads at the commercial banks have said the state-owned banks usually face dollar shortfalls and they meet the demand through such currency swaps.
- The cost of the swap or the interest rate varies depending on the demand and supplies. It usually ranges between 2.0% (annualised) and 3.0% (annualized). But it climbs as high as 8.0% (annualised) at a time when the supply of dollars against any other currency remains low.

<http://today.thefinancialexpress.com.bd/first-page/currency-swaps-rule-forex-mkt-cushion-reserve-155522744>

### **Japan set to give largest-ever loan to Bangladesh for five ongoing projects**

- Japan is set to provide the highest-ever amount of loan to Bangladesh under a new loan package to facilitate implementation of five large ongoing projects in the port, communications, and energy and power sectors. However, no new project has been listed for the funding. The officials, in this regard, said no demand was placed for new projects during the negotiation, as the existing projects have huge work volume.
- Besides, issues like lowering interest rate of concessional loans as well as increasing grace and loan repayment periods are still under negotiation. These issues will be finalised during the next visit of the JICA mission, expected to take place next month (May).
- The JICA provided US\$ 1.83 billion loan under its 39th ODA package, signed in June 2018, for six projects. The government will have to repay the loan in 30 years at 1.0 per cent interest rate with a 10-year grace period.

<http://today.thefinancialexpress.com.bd/last-page/japan-set-to-give-largest-ever-loan-to-bd-for-five-ongoing-projects-155523135>

### **Excelerate sees Bangladesh as growing LNG hub**

- The US energy giant Excelerate sees Bangladesh as an LNG (liquefied natural gas) market poised for exponential growth to meet the needs of its fast-growing economy.
- Excelerate delivered the first floating LNG import facility at Moheshkhali Island in August 2018, some two years after deals were done.
- The Vice-President of the company said that the maiden project came on line and reached its full capacity far quicker than many other countries globally. Since the introduction of LNG into its energy system, the country has gradually ramped up its LNG imports with the FSRU reaching its full capacity. Around 500 million cubic feet per day (mmcf) of gas was delivered in late January 2019 after more than five months into its formal launch, according to Excelerate. Other regional markets, such as Pakistan that began operations in 2015, did not reach full utilisation until over a year into their operations.

<http://today.thefinancialexpress.com.bd/last-page/excelerate-sees-bd-as-growing-lng-hub-155523291>

### **More tax benefits for electrical and electronic goods makers**

- Manufacturers of electrical and electronic goods will get more tax benefits than the assemblers of such products in the next budget for financial year 2019-20, National Board of Revenue (NBR) Chairman said on Wednesday. To promote export diversification, the revenue authority will also offer the potential export-oriented industries similar tax

benefits as enjoyed by the garment sector.

- The NBR would offer different duty benefits and incentives for manufacturers and assemblers of mobile handset, refrigerator and other electrical products to encourage entrepreneurs to invest in the manufacturing sector. Presently, many large brands, who are mainly assemblers, have been obtaining similar tax benefits as manufacturers do, he said, adding that the manufacturers should get more benefits than others.
- Bangladesh Refrigerator Manufacturers Association (BRMA) suggested laying out a clear definition of manufacturers and assemblers and also creating a significant difference between tax benefits for the two groups. The Bangladesh Electrical Merchandised Manufacturers Association urged the NBR to provide duty-free raw material import facility for the LED light industry for five years.

<http://today.thefinancialexpress.com.bd/trade-market/more-tax-benefits-for-electrical-and-electronic-goods-makers-1555526653>

### **Grameenphone users set to pay more**

- It was decided at a telecom regulator meeting, which was attended by Prime Minister's ICT Advisor, that Grameenphone's minimum call rate will be increased as part of the restrictions of being declared a significant market power (SMP) operator. Currently, the minimum call rate for operators is BDT 0.45 for each minute and after adding the value-added tax and other duties the charge goes up to BDT 0.54 for a minute to any operator. However, Grameenphone is already charging higher than the market average at BDT 0.70. The data charges might also be increased for Grameenphone.
- The meeting also decided to demand an improvement in service quality from Grameenphone, or else they will have to face a bar on acquiring new customers.
- The meeting also decided to be tough on Grameenphone's audit issues, just a day after the operator demanded the telecom watchdog withdraws claims of BDT 125.8 billion as they are "unfounded and without any legal basis".
- The ICT advisor also asked the telecom regulator to take preparations to launch 5G by 2021.

<https://www.thedailystar.net/business/news/gp-users-set-pay-more-1731343>

### **ACI Motors introduces Yanmar Combine Harvester**

- ACI Motors has introduced 'Yanmar' Combine Harvester with advanced technology in the country, says a statement.
- ACI Motors has brought the new modern combine harvester from renowned Japanese agriculture machinery manufacturer Yanmar as the company has been working relentlessly since 2007 to mechanise and modernise the agriculture sector of Bangladesh, said the statement.
- To reach the machine and the technology directly the farmers, ACI Motors conducted a field demonstration programme. At the same time, another combine harvester named ACI Combine Harvester 4LBZ-120-Plus was demonstrated alongside 'Yanmar' for the farmers.

[today.thefinancialexpress.com.bd/trade-market/aci-motors-introduces-yanmar-combine-harvester-1555526821](http://today.thefinancialexpress.com.bd/trade-market/aci-motors-introduces-yanmar-combine-harvester-1555526821)

### **New DMD of Al-Arafah Islami Bank**

- Md. Shafiqur Rahman joined Al-Arafah Islami Bank Limited as Deputy Managing Director on Tuesday, said a statement. Prior to his joining he was the Senior Executive Vice President of Islami Bank Bangladesh Limited.

<http://today.thefinancialexpress.com.bd/stock-corporate/new-dmd-of-al-arafah-islami-bank-1555525320>

**World Stock and Commodities\***

<b>Index Name</b>	<b>Close Value</b>	<b>Value Change</b>	<b>% Change</b>
Crude Oil (WTI)*	\$63.66	-0.10	-0.16%
Crude Oil (Brent)*	\$71.44	-0.18	-0.25%
Gold Spot*	\$1,272.46	-1.52	-0.12%
DSEX	5,259.41	+10.49	+0.20%
Dow Jones Industrial Average	26,449.54	-3.12	-0.01%
FTSE 100	7,471.32	+1.40	+0.02%
Nikkei 225	22,172.73	-105.24	-0.47%

**Exchange Rates**

**USD 1 = BDT 84.41\***  
**GBP 1 = BDT 110.07 \***  
**EUR 1 = BDT 95.33 \***  
**INR 1 = BDT 1.21\***

*\*Currencies and Commodities are taken from xe.com.*

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### BRAC EPL Stock Brokerage Limited

#### Research

Ayaz Mahmud, CFA	Deputy Head of Research	<a href="mailto:ayaz.mahmud@bracepl.com">ayaz.mahmud@bracepl.com</a>	01708 805 221
Md. Sakib Chowdhury	Research Analyst	<a href="mailto:sakib.chowdhury@bracepl.com">sakib.chowdhury@bracepl.com</a>	01709 641 247
S. M. Samiuzzaman	Research Analyst	<a href="mailto:sm.samiuzzaman@bracepl.com">sm.samiuzzaman@bracepl.com</a>	01708 805 224
Sadman Sakib	Research Associate	<a href="mailto:sadman.sakib@bracepl.com">sadman.sakib@bracepl.com</a>	01730 727 939
Ahmed Zaki Khan	Research Associate	<a href="mailto:zaki.khan@bracepl.com">zaki.khan@bracepl.com</a>	01708 805 211
Md. Rafiqul Islam	Research Associate	<a href="mailto:mrafiquislam@bracepl.com">mrafiquislam@bracepl.com</a>	01708 805 229
Md. Mahirul Quddus	Research Associate	<a href="mailto:mmahirul.quddus@bracepl.com">mmahirul.quddus@bracepl.com</a>	01709 636 546

#### International Trade and Sales

Ahsanur Rahman Bappi	Head of International Trade & Sales	<a href="mailto:bappi@bracepl.com">bappi@bracepl.com</a>	01730 357 991
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#### BRAC EPL Research [www.bracepl.com](http://www.bracepl.com)

121/B Gulshan Avenue  
Gulshan-2, Dhaka  
Phone: +880 2 881 9421-5  
Fax: +880 2 881 9426  
E-Mail: [research@bracepl.com](mailto:research@bracepl.com)