

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 Bank issues new policy to police offshore banking operations

- The central bank has issued a new policy asking banks to comply with cash reserve requirement (CRR) and statutory liquidity ratio (SLR) rules for their Offshore Banking Operations. Under the new policy, three-fourths of total outstanding offshore operations' funds will have to be invested in Bangladesh.
- All the banks will have to maintain capital requirements under Basel-III framework along with the implementation of Asset Liability Management (ALM) guidelines for their offshore banking operations, according to the new policy issued by the Bangladesh Bank (BB).
- The banks have been asked to renew the approvals of OBUs in line with the new policy by applying to the central bank within three months.
- The banks will have to launch their offshore banking operations within six months or the time period subsequently extended by the central bank from the issuing date of approval, the policy added.

<http://today.thefinancialexpress.com.bd/first-page/bb-issues-new-policy-to-police-offshore-banking-operations-1551117165>

<https://www.thedailystar.net/business/news/policy-framed-offshore-banking-1707439>

<http://www.newagebd.net/article/65819/bb-limits-banks-fund-transfer-to-offshore-units>

Higher default loans to impede investment pickup

- The Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MCCI), Dhaka, cautioned that if left unaddressed, the problem of high-level non-performing loans in the banking sector could impede a pickup in investment in the country.
- The Dhaka-based leading trade body also said in addition to the bulging non-performing loans (NPLs), poor governance and corruption in administration, among others, remain major obstacles to country's sustained trade and economic growth.
- The trade body made the observations in its 'Review of Economic Situation in Bangladesh for October-December 2018 (Q2 of FY19).
- Among others, it pinpointed the domestic risks in relation to the government's poor ability to prevent both current and planned reforms from going off-track and maintain fiscal discipline.

<http://today.thefinancialexpress.com.bd/first-page/higher-default-loans-to-impede-investment-pickup-1551117327>

<http://www.newagebd.net/article/65820/npl-poor-governance-to-hinder-investment>

<https://www.dhakatribune.com/business/2019/02/25/mcci-npls-may-affect-pace-of-investment-growth>

<https://www.thedailystar.net/business/news/10pc-growth-must-middle-income-status-says-mcci-1707418>

Public hearing to justify gas price hike proposals from March 11

- The energy regulator has announced a four-day public hearing from March 11 to justify gas tariff hike proposals for all types of consumers, including households, for nearly doubling the average tariff to BDT 12.19 per cubic metre from BDT 7.35.
- The hearing would start with the presentation from state-run Petrobangla in favour of the tariff hike proposals and conclude with the same of Pashchimanchol Gas Company Ltd (PGCL) proposal on March 14.
- Proposal made to raise tariff for household single and double burners to BDT 1,000 and BDT 1200 per month respectively from existing BDT 750 and BDT 800 per month respectively. The feed gas in the compressed natural gas (CNG) for filling stations has been proposed to be raised by 25% to BDT 40 per cubic metre from the existing BDT 32.
- All the gas companies sought to raise tariff for gas-fired power plants to BDT 7.66 per cubic metre from the existing BDT 3.16, representing a 142% hike. For gas-fired captive power plants, the proposed tariff is BDT 15.70 per cubic metre from existing BDT 9.62, representing a 63% hike.

<http://today.thefinancialexpress.com.bd/last-page/public-hearing-to-justify-gas-price-hike-proposals-from-march-11-1551117973>

IDLC announces partnership with Exotix Capital

- IDLC, the largest multi-product multi-segment non-banking financial institution in Bangladesh, and Exotix Capital, the leading developing markets investment platform announced a new partnership to provide extensive research insights and corporate access into the Bangladeshi market to global investors.
- Exotix will distribute in-depth insights from IDLC via its innovative new research platform to its global subscriber base. This partnership follows additional agreements of Exotix with other industry-leading brokerages in Egypt, Zimbabwe, Saudi Arabia, Vietnam, Sri Lanka and Pakistan.

<http://today.thefinancialexpress.com.bd/stock-corporate/idlc-announces-partnership-with-exotix-capital-1551112503>

Local calling apps hold promise

- Locally developed Brilliant Connect has garnered a lot of attention in the market as the amount of calls made through the communication app rose over 12 times in just six months after its launch.
- The mobile application handled 22.5 million minutes of calls last December while the amount was 1.81 million minutes in the month of its launch in July. Inter Cloud, a leading internet protocol telephony service provider (IPTSP), has developed the product.
- As of December, the app had been downloaded 1.46 million times and till date for about 2.0 million times, while the number of unique users crossed three and a 0.5 million. Having already exceeded the limit, Inter Cloud is currently moving towards expanding the app's capacity.
- The telecom watchdog in December approved four other IPTSPs—Amber IT Ltd, BDCOM Online Ltd, MetroNet Bangladesh and Link3 Technology Ltd—to run the service. The four are expected to hit the market within the next couple of weeks.

<https://www.thedailystar.net/business/news/local-calling-apps-hold-promise-1707442>

World Stock and Commodities*

Index Name	Close Value	Value Change	% Change
Crude Oil (WTI)*	\$55.21	-0.09	-0.49%
Crude Oil (Brent)*	\$66.97	-0.11	-0.17%
Gold Spot*	\$1,329.53	+1.95	+0.15%
DSEX	5755.79	+41.52	+0.73%
Dow Jones Industrial Average	26,091.95	+60.14	+0.23%
FTSE 100	7,183.74	+5.14	+0.07%
Nikkei 225	21,485.29	-42.94	-0.20%

Exchange Rates

USD 1 = BDT 84.05*
 GBP 1 = BDT 110.45*
 EUR 1 = BDT 95.50*
 INR 1 = BDT 1.18*

*Currencies and Commodities are taken from Bloomberg.

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