

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.

Govt to allow soya meal export

- The total demand for soybean meal in Bangladesh is an estimated 2.5 to 2.6-million tonnes per year. Of the needs, 75-80% is procured from domestic soybean oil producers. The country imports an estimated 0.35-0.04 million tonnes of soybean meal per annum. Apart from local production, Bangladesh is currently importing soybean meal from countries like India, the US, Brazil and Argentina.
- There is demand for Bangladeshi soybean cake, meal and soybean in different countries, including Nepal, Cambodia, India and Thailand. Annual soybean meal production capacity of industrial groups like Meghna, City, Globe, KBC and Jamuna is close to 5.0-million tonnes. The industrial groups claimed the soybean seed-crushing factories have been facing massive losses due to the export ban.

<https://today.thefinancialexpress.com.bd/trade-market/govt-to-allow-soya-meal-export-1644254097>

Metro network to expand around Dhaka

- In the first phase, Narayanganj and Gazipur are prioritised for the extension of metro rail lines. The construction of a 129.90-kilometre metro rail route by 2030 has been finalised, which includes the Mass Rapid Transit Line-4, stretching from Dhaka's Kamalapur to Narayanganj.
- The total length of the metro lines will be 250 kilometres and the metro rail will carry about 75 lakh passengers every day. "After the completion of the first phase, the metro rail network will be expanded to Gazipur Chowrasta, Baipail in Savar, Rupganj and Barapa in Narayanganj, and Jhilmil in Keraniganj,".

<https://www.tbsnews.net/bangladesh/infrastructure/metro-network-expand-around-dhaka-367813>

Bangladesh sets target to vaccinate 100pc people by December

- All the people of the country will get the two doses of vaccines and the booster one against Covid-19 by December as per the target, said Health Minister Zahid Maleque on Monday. The minister said the government has so far spent more than BDT 200 billion on vaccinating the people of the country
- He said that 67.50 million people have received the second doses and 2.60 million people got the booster shots. The minister reported that there are 100 million vaccines in stock, adding Bangladesh received a total of 270 million vaccine doses.

<https://thefinancialexpress.com.bd/national/bangladesh-sets-target-to-vaccinate-100pc-people-by-december-1644227823>

Turning haor areas into economic hub: Kishoreganj EZ kicks off next month

- The first-ever economic zone in the country's haor areas is set for a launch in Kishoreganj, 90km from the capital Dhaka, with the Indian Tata Group going into production of pickups in March. It is expected to create 2,000 jobs initially, and then in five years.
- The figure will gradually increase to 20,000, says Nitol Niloy Group, which is developing the Kishoreganj Economic Zone. "Aside from Tata, Nitol Niloy Group is investing BDT600-900 crore in the tyre industry with an annual production capacity of 3.5 lakh units,".

<https://www.tbsnews.net/economy/turning-haor-areas-economic-hub-kishoreganj-ez-kicks-next-month-367399>

Govt may cut dev budget by 8.0%

- The government may trim the development budget down by 8.0% to BDT 2.07 trillion as project execution loses steam, as of the first half (H1) of this fiscal. The size of the ADP for the current fiscal is BDT 2.25 trillion. It is likely to keep aside similar amount of BDT 1.37-trillion outlay from the government's internal resources while BDT 702.50 billion from foreign funds.
- Government ministries and agencies had sought 20-%lower funds than their current BDT 880.24 billion allocations from project aid (PA) financed by the overseas development partners. The Economic Relations Division (ERD) has already revised downward the PA outlay to BDT 702.50 billion from BDT 880.24 billion.
- Public agencies spent 22% from their BDT 880.24 billion PA outlay in the current ADP during the July-December period. The local-government sector has sought higher BDT 436.75 billion out of the total BDT 1.62-trillion requirements in the upcoming RADP. The transport sector has sought second-highest BDT 323.69 billion and the power and energy sector the third-highest BDT 247.08 billion for the next RADP.

<https://today.thefinancialexpress.com.bd/first-page/govt-may-cut-dev-budget-by-80pc-1644256421>

Business confidence takes a hit from Omicron

- Firms in Bangladesh feel that the economic recovery will be weaker than they had perceived earlier due to the adverse impacts of Omicron and the fuel price hike that raised the cost of doing business, according to a survey carried out by the South Asian Network for Economic Model (Sanem).
- The survey found that 17% firms believe there will be a stronger recovery and 44% expect a moderate turnaround, down from 21% and 52% in October last year, respectively. The survey also found that Business Confidence Index (BCI) declined to 54.99 in January-March this year from 60.67 in October-December last year, indicating lower business confidence overall.
- According to the survey, firms recovered 60.6% of their business during October-December last year, up from 56.8% in the previous quarter. As a result, the Present Business Status Index (PBSI) was 59.20 per cent in October to December from 56.79 per cent in the preceding quarter.

<https://www.thedailystar.net/business/economy/news/business-confidence-takes-hit-omicron-2956996>

BD gets offer at USD 32 per MMBTU for late Feb delivery

- Bangladesh has received a price quote at around USD 32 per million British thermal unit (MMBTU) as the best offer to import LNG (liquefied natural gas) from the spot market for late February delivery. The price is around 7.50 %higher than the price Petrobangla purchased from French Total for early February delivery. Currently, state-run Petrobangla imports LNG from long-term suppliers at around USD 11.5 per MMBTU.
- LNG regasification now dropped to around 400 million cubic feet per day (mmcf), from usual supply of over 800 mmcf, as the country's LNG re-gasification is now dependent on US's Exceleerate Energy's FSRU only. Country's overall natural gas output also dropped to around 2,800 mmcf from the previous supply of around 3,200 mmcf.

<https://today.thefinancialexpress.com.bd/last-page/bd-gets-offer-at-32-per-mmbtu-for-late-feb-delivery-1644256919>

Govt aims for 10% electricity from renewables by 2025

- The budgetary allocations for the power and energy sector as projected in the document for the 2023-24 fiscal is BDT 305.26 billion, while the projection for 2022-23 fiscal is BDT 289.62 billion and it is BDT 274.84 billion in the running 2021-22 fiscal. The government is working to achieve the target of generating 40,000 MW by 2030 and 60,000 MW

by 2041.

- The government is implementing new plans to generate electricity based on coal, diesel-furnace oil, nuclear power and renewable energy by solving the existing problem of power generation through gas-fired power plants. At present, the country has a power generation capacity of 22,023 MW (including captive and renewable), and is in the process of setting up another 38 power plants with a combined capacity of a further 14,115 MW. At present only about 722 MW of electricity is being generated from renewable sources.

<https://today.thefinancialexpress.com.bd/stock-corporate/govt-aims-for-10pc-electricity-from-renewables-by-2025-1644254605>

First container ship leaves for Italy with RMG goods

- Bangladesh's first-ever direct export of readymade garments by sea started on Monday with MV Songa Cheeta leaving the Chattogram port for Italy. The ship left the port at around 3:00pm for Ravenna port in Italy carrying 950 TEUs (Twenty Equipment Unit) in 493 boxes. If direct container ship operation on Chattogram-Italy route remains uninterrupted, Bangladesh will be ahead of Vietnam in RMG export as it will save lead time and fare.

<https://today.thefinancialexpress.com.bd/trade-market/first-container-ship-leaves-for-italy-with-rmg-goods-1644254052>

Bangladesh risks losing 14.28% export earnings

- Bangladesh may lose out significantly for facing greater adversities and stricter rules-of-origin (RoO) requirements in export destinations. The country is likely to lose 14.28% or USD5.73 billion worth of export earnings annually after its graduation to a developing nation from the least-developed country (LDC) status. It is because of the country's overwhelming dependence on textiles and clothing (T&C) exports bound for markets with high preferential tariff margins.

<https://today.thefinancialexpress.com.bd/first-page/bangladesh-risks-losing-1428pc-export-earnings-1644256320>

Wait for riding high-capacity bikes to linger as 165cc limit stays

- The import policy retains the bar on the import of all types of motorcycles beyond 165cc engine capacity. Companies registered as motorcycle manufacturers are, however, allowed to import machinery and other parts to manufacture two-wheelers up to 500cc, but only for the purpose of export. The policy order will remain in force for a period of three years till 2025 or until a new import policy comes into force.
- Operations Head of Asian Motorbikes Ltd have told TBS that foreign investment came into Bangladesh with expectation that the local high-powered motorcycle market would grow in future. Chairman of Runner Group told that foreign buyers of these motorbikes have found some problems with them as we exported them without any road trial.
- Nitol-Niloy Group, which manufactures motorcycles of the Hero brand, applied to the commerce ministry seeking ban on the use of motorcycles beyond 165cc in the country. The company argued that they set up plants for manufacturing motorcycles up to a maximum of 165cc according to the Import Policy Order 2015-2018, and, therefore, raising the cc limit would make it difficult to recover investment in these plants and reduce the ability to repay bank loans.

<https://www.tbsnews.net/economy/wait-riding-high-capacity-bikes-linger-165cc-limit-stays-367807>

NCCBL Mutual Fund to pay 12% cash dividend

- NCCBL Mutual Fund-1 has declared a 12% annual cash dividend for its unitholders. To receive the dividend for the 2021 financial year ending on 31 December, investors should hold the fund's units till 1 March. It has proposed the double-digit dividend after three years. It's net profit was BDT15 crore and earnings per unit of BDT1.40, which was 25% higher than the previous year.

- To secure the investors' fund, it invested 36% of its total asset in fundamental stocks such as British American Tobacco, Renata, Square Pharma, Bata Shoe and Grameenphone. It also invested around 11% of the total fund in non-listed companies namely Thyrocare Bangladesh Limited, Bangladesh News 24 Hours and Rangpur Distilleries and Chemicals Ltd.

<https://www.tbsnews.net/economy/stocks/nccbl-mutual-fund-pay-12-cash-dividend-367786>

Yeakin Polymer's price almost doubles in a month sans PSI

- Yeakin Polymer Ltd, a 'B' category listed company, is witnessing an unprecedented price hike and increase in volume of shares despite no undisclosed price sensitive information (PSI). Within a month, the composite PP woven bag manufacturer's share price jumped 91 %or BDT 11 each to close at BDT 23.10 on Monday. It was also more than two years' highest price on the Dhaka bourse.
- The company's share price was BDT 12.10 a month earlier on January 9. Its shares traded between BDT 8.40 and BDT 23.20 in the last one year. The factory continued production in limited scale during March to July 2021 as one director and two workers have expired, other directors and officials were also affected of Covid-19, but not closed the factory. The company is facing a working capital shortage in the last four years.

<https://today.thefinancialexpress.com.bd/stock-corporate/yeakin-polymers-price-almost-doubles-in-a-month-sans-psi-1644254530>

BSEC orders Tamha Securities to sell off assets for settling clients' claims

- In a move to settle the claims of the defrauded clients of Tamha Securities, the Bangladesh Securities and Exchange Commission (BSEC) has instructed the firm's management to sell off assets. The sale will be implemented according to the deed agreement among the directors of the company. Tamha's Managing Director Dr Md Harunur Rashid will sell his houses in Gulshan, Dhanmondi, and Savar.
- Also, the company will sell its Trading Rights Entitlement Certificate (Trec), Rashid informed the BSEC. After completion of the sale, Tamha's management will give the fund to the Dhaka Stock Exchange (DSE) within 31 May. The DSE will then settle the clients' claims through examination.

<https://www.tbsnews.net/economy/stocks/bsec-orders-tamha-securities-sell-assets-settling-clients-claims-367780>

World Stock and Commodities*

| Index Name | Close Value | Value Change YTD | % Change YTD |
|--------------------|--------------------|-------------------------|---------------------|
| Crude Oil (WTI)* | USD 91.25 | USD 16.04 | 21.33% |
| Crude Oil (Brent)* | USD 92.51 | USD 14.73 | 18.94% |
| Gold Spot* | USD 1,821.29 | (USD 7.91) | -0.43% |
| DSEX | 7,051.80 | 295.15 | 4.37% |
| S&P 500 | 4,483.87 | -282.31 | -5.92% |
| FTSE 100 | 7,573.47 | 188.93 | 2.56% |
| BSE SENSEX | 57,621.19 | -632.63 | -1.09% |
| KSE-100 | 45,841.25 | 1,245.18 | 2.79% |
| CSEALL | 12,631.69 | 405.68 | 3.32% |

Exchange Rates**1 US Dollar = 85.79 BDT****1 GBP = 116.12 BDT****1 Euro = 98.19 BDT****1 INR = 1.15 BDT**

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