

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.

Record oil purchase pushes up imports

- Bangladesh's imports grew by more than 6.0 % in the first two months of fiscal year 2018-19, after a record 105.07 % increase in oil. The actual import in terms of settlement of letters of credit (LCs) rose to USD 8.52 billion during the July-August period of FY 19 from USD 8.04 billion in the same period of the previous fiscal, according to the central bank's latest statistics. But opening of LCs, generally known as import orders, decreased by more than 1.0 % to USD 10.02 billion in the first two months of FY 19 from USD 10.13 billion in the same period of the previous fiscal.
- The rising trend in fuel oil prices in the global market has pushed up the overall import payment obligations during the period under review. Besides, oil-based power plants have also boosted the import of petroleum products.

<http://today.thefinancialexpress.com.bd/last-page/record-oil-purchase-pushes-up-imports-1539798029>

Bangladesh to push for connectivity, trade deals with Russia

- Bangladesh will press for establishing direct connectivity and trade arrangements with Russia at an upcoming bilateral meeting in Moscow next week. Dhaka will also request Moscow to allow access of some products, including garment items, to its market with duty-free and quota-free (DFQF) facility.
- Both the countries are likely to sign minutes in the first session of Russia-Bangladesh Inter-Governmental Commission on Trade, Economic, Scientific and Technical Cooperation meeting.
- Currently, Bangladesh does not have direct trade arrangement and connectivity with Russia, which affects bilateral trade, business and investment between the countries. Besides, connectivity is a big problem between the two economies, which is a key obstacle in establishing direct trade and business.
- Bangladeshi goods have immense potentials in Russian market. Export of Bangladeshi products to Russia has increased remarkably to USD 485.22 million in fiscal year 2017-18 against the country's import of USD 628.62 million from there.
- Bangladesh mainly exports apparel items, jute, frozen foods, tea, leather, home textiles and ceramic products to Russia. The country's imports from Russia include cereals, minerals, chemical products, plastic products, metal, machinery and mechanical equipments. Besides, Russia has investments in nuclear and other conventional power and energy sectors in Bangladesh.

<http://today.thefinancialexpress.com.bd/last-page/bd-to-push-for-connectivity-trade-deals-with-russia-1539797981>

Prime Minister asks Saudis to tap Bangladesh investment opportunities

- Bangladesh and Saudi Arabia on Wednesday signed five Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) to enhance cooperation in chemical, steel and solar power sectors between the two countries.
- The deals are an MoU on Concerning Principles of Cooperation between Bangladesh Chemical Industries and Engineering Dimension of Saudi Arabia; an MoU on Construction Cooperation between Bangladesh Chemical Industries Corporation and Hanwah Engineering of Saudi Arabia; an MoU between Bangladesh Steel & Engineering Corporation (BSEC) and Engineering Dimension of Saudi Arabia; an MoU between Industries Ministry of Bangladesh and Alfanar Company of Saudi Arabia on development of solar power project in Bangladesh; and an MoU between Bangladesh Economic Zones Authority (BEPZA) and Al Bawany Co Ltd of Saudi Arabia.
- The Prime Minister said Bangladesh was implementing 10 growth and employment-generating mega projects as it is ready to take up more projects in diversified areas of infrastructure, connectivity and high-tech, tourism, health and education for a sustainable double-digit growth.
- She also invited the Saudi entrepreneurs to invest in Bangladesh's emerging sectors like capital market, power, energy, telecommunications and IT, petrochemicals, pharmaceuticals, shipbuilding, agro-processing, light engineering, blue economy, R&D and technology innovation, water and marine and other infrastructure projects, and services sectors like, banking and finance, logistics, and human resource development.

<http://today.thefinancialexpress.com.bd/first-page/pm-asks-saudis-to-tap-bd-investment-opportunities-1539797610>
<http://www.newagebd.net/article/53476/pm-invites-saudi-businesses-to-invest-in-bdesh>

Competitiveness slips one notch in global index

- Bangladesh's ranking as a competitive economy has suffered a setback, falling by one notch in a global index as the country's competitiveness has weakened in most of the indicators. Out of 140 countries, the country has been ranked the 103rd most competitive economy in the world by Geneva-based World Economic Forum (WEF).

- Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD) showed that Bangladesh's ranking in nine pillars' out of 12 were poorer than 2017's. It noted that Bangladesh's ranking was over 100 in nine pillars out of its 12. It ranked between 80 and 100 in two areas—macroeconomic stability (88th) and health index (96th).

The latest rankings were prepared under a new methodology adopted from this year globally. In the old methodology, Bangladesh's position was 99th out of 135 countries in 2017. This year five new countries have been included totaling 140.

<http://today.thefinancialexpress.com.bd/first-page/competitiveness-slips-one-notch-in-global-index-1539797550>

Micro-merchants transact USD 18.0 billion a year: Study

- About 2.0 million people are involved in micro-merchant retail trade in Bangladesh, transacting more than USD 18.42 billion a year, according to a United Nations study.

- The UN body undertook the first-ever comprehensive study on retail micro-merchants landscape of Bangladesh this year. It found the retail micro-merchant sector offers great opportunities for innovation such as introduction of digital payments to retail micro-merchants and digitalisation of whole supply chains.

- First secretary of the European Union delegation to Bangladesh said that Going forward, special attention is required for women empowerment in the micro-merchants sector because less than 10% of the shops are managed by women.

<https://www.thedailystar.net/business/news/micro-merchants-transact-18b-year-study-1648552>

BRAC Bank, DBBL ink deal

- BRAC Bank Limited and Dutch-Bangla Bank Limited have signed an agreement for interbank account fund transfer facility between BRAC Bank Accounts and DBBL's Mobile Banking "Rocket". Under this agreement, the clients of BRAC Bank will be able to make inter-bank transactions by transferring fund from BRAC Bank's account to Rocket account and vice versa.

- The clients may use Internet Banking system or mobile apps of BRAC Bank and USSD channel or Rocket apps of Dutch-Bangla Bank to make the transaction.

<http://today.thefinancialexpress.com.bd/trade-market/brac-bank-dbb-ink-deal-1539789939>

Indo-Bangla Pharma's trading debut today

- The debut trading of Indo-Bangla Pharmaceuticals will take place on both the stock exchanges under 'N' category today (Thursday), according to the web posting of Dhaka Stock Exchange (DSE).

- The Indo-Bangla Pharma raised a fund worth BDT 200 million by issuing 20 million ordinary shares at an offer price of BDT 10 each under the fixed price method. The company will utilize 29.29% of the IPO proceeds for construction and other civil works, 62.36% for purchasing machinery and 8.35% for bearing the IPO expenses, according to the IPO prospectus.

- As per the financial statement for the year ended on June 30, 2016, the company's net asset value (NAV) per share and earnings per share (EPS) are BDT 11.63 and BDT 2.62 respectively.

<http://today.thefinancialexpress.com.bd/stock-corporate/indo-bangla-pharmas-trading-debut-today-1539799135>

World Stock and Commodities*

Index Name	Close Value	Value Change	% Change
Crude Oil (WTI)*	\$69.82	+0.07	+0.10%
Crude Oil (Brent)*	\$80.09	+0.04	+0.05%
Gold Spot*	\$1,222.56	+0.27	+0.02%
DSEX	5380.79	-19.10	-0.35%
Dow Jones Industrial Average	25,706.68	-91.74	-0.36%
FTSE 100	7,054.60	-4.80	-0.07%
Nikkei 225	22,765.37	-75.75	-0.33%

Exchange Rates

USD 1 = BDT 84.89*

GBP 1 = BDT 111.15*

EUR 1 = BDT 97.61*

INR 1 = BDT 1.15*

**Currencies and Commodities are taken from Bloomberg.*

IMPORTANT DISCLOSURES

Analyst Certification: Each research analyst and research associate who authored this document and whose name appears herein certifies that the recommendations and opinions expressed in the research report accurately reflect their personal views about any and all of the securities or issuers discussed therein that are within the coverage universe.

Disclaimer: Estimates and projections herein are our own and are based on assumptions that we believe to be reasonable. Information presented herein, while obtained from sources we believe to be reliable, is not guaranteed either as to accuracy or completeness. Neither the information nor any opinion expressed herein constitutes a solicitation of the purchase or sale of any security. As it acts for public companies from time to time, BRAC-EPL may have a relationship with the above mentioned company(s). This report is intended for distribution in only those jurisdictions in which BRAC-EPL is registered and any distribution outside those jurisdictions is strictly prohibited.

Compensation of Analysts: The compensation of research analysts is intended to reflect the value of the services they provide to the clients of BRAC-EPL. As with most other employees, the compensation of research analysts is impacted by the overall profitability of the firm, which may include revenues from corporate finance activities of the firm's Corporate Finance department. However, Research analysts' compensation is not directly related to specific corporate finance transaction.

General Risk Factors: BRAC-EPL will conduct a comprehensive risk assessment for each company under coverage at the time of initiating research coverage and also revisit this assessment when subsequent update reports are published or material company events occur. Following are some general risks that can impact future operational and financial performance: (1) Industry fundamentals with respect to customer demand or product / service pricing could change expected revenues and earnings; (2) Issues relating to major competitors or market shares or new product expectations could change investor attitudes; (3) Unforeseen developments with respect to the management, financial condition or accounting policies alter the prospective valuation; or (4) Interest rates, currency or major segments of the economy could alter investor confidence and investment prospects.

BRAC EPL Stock Brokerage Limited

Research

Ayaz Mahmud, CFA	Deputy Head of Research	ayaz.mahmud@bracepl.com	01708 805 221
Md. Sakib Chowdhury	Research Analyst	sakib.chowdhury@bracepl.com	01709 641 247
S. M. Samiuzzaman	Research Analyst	sm.samiuzzaman@bracepl.com	01708 805 224
Sadman Sakib	Research Associate	sadman.sakib@bracepl.com	01730 727 939
Ahmed Zaki Khan	Research Associate	zaki.khan@bracepl.com	01708 805 211
Md. Rafiqul Islam	Research Associate	mrafiqulislam@bracepl.com	01708 805 229

International Trade and Sales

Ahsanur Rahman Bappi	Head of International Trade & Sales	bappi@bracepl.com	01730 357 991
----------------------	-------------------------------------	--	---------------