

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.

Special loan rescheduling: Bangladesh Bank allows banks to decide on pleas received

- The Bangladesh Bank on Wednesday allowed banks to take measures regarding the applications for special loan rescheduling and one-time exit facility they have already received from loan defaulters. However, the banks would not be allowed to receive fresh applications for such facility.
- A BB circular issued following a court order said that the banks, however, would be allowed to take measures until the disposal of a writ petition on November 19 this year, whichever comes first. The banks would not be allowed to accept any fresh application for loan rescheduling or one-time exist under the special Bangladesh Bank circular issued on May 16 this year. The BB also clarified that none would be allowed to take fresh loan after accepting the facility.
- The government has taken the loan rescheduling initiative with a view to reducing defaulted loans that accounted for 11.69% or BDT 1.12 trillion of the banks' BDT 6.92 trillion outstanding loans, but the policy drew huge criticisms from different quarters.

<http://www.newagebd.net/article/88565/bangladesh-bank-allows-banks-to-decide-on-pleas-received>
<https://www.dhakatribune.com/business/banks/2019/10/23/special-loan-rescheduling-banks-asked-not-to-allow-fresh-applications>

Brokers seek BDT 100 billion lifeline

- Stock brokers are seeking a BDT 100 billion fund from the government to inject new life into the moribund capital market. The intermediaries said they are set to submit their proposal to the finance minister today (Thursday) seeking the fund as loans. Stock brokers said they want the fund for a period of six years at a flat interest rate of 3.0%. They said all market intermediaries such as stock brokers, merchant banks, and asset management companies will be allowed to avail the loan facility.
- Meanwhile, the state-run Investment Corporation of Bangladesh (ICB) has also sought a fund of BDT 50 billion from the government to support the market. The state-run corporation has recently submitted its proposal to the finance minister.

<https://today.thefinancialexpress.com.bd/first-page/brokers-seek-BDT-100b-lifeline-1571853280>

Tobacco Industry Interference Index: Bangladesh ranks third among 33 countries, study finds

- Bangladesh has ranked third among 33 countries in terms of interference of tobacco companies in government action regarding tobacco control, finds a study. The country scored 77 points in the parameters of interference intensity behind Japan with 88 points in the first place and Jordan with 79 points in the second position, according to the study. The study, titled "Global Tobacco Industry Interference Index 2019", is an initiative of South-East Asia Tobacco Control Alliance -- a coalition of anti-tobacco organizations -- which has been conducted with support of Bloomberg Philanthropies and Global Centre for Good Governance in Tobacco Control (GGTC).
- The tobacco companies mostly interfere in taxation, tobacco pricing and policymaking activities of the government by influencing its top officials and ministries, said the Head of Tobacco Control of PROGGA.
- The study said the interference in Bangladesh gets a new dimension as the government owns some shares of British American Tobacco Bangladesh, the country's largest tobacco company.
- The study was conducted focusing on the implementation progress of the Article 5.3 of World Health Organization (WHO) Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) in 2004. In the article, WHO asks all governments -- including Bangladesh which ratified the FCTC -- to stay free of interference of the tobacco industry while taking measures for tobacco control. To overcome the interference, the study suggested that the government immediately part ways with tobacco companies by withdrawing the shares from British American Tobacco Bangladesh.

<https://www.thedailystar.net/city/news/bangladesh-ranks-third-among-33-countries-study-finds-1818058>

Bangladesh lowest in bank soundness in South Asia

- Bangladesh's ranking in soundness of banks is the lowest among the South Asian countries -- a fact which experts blame on irregularities and lack of good governance in financial sector. According to the "Global Competitiveness Report 2019", Bangladesh scored 38.3 out of 100 and ranked 130th out 141 countries in soundness of banks. In defining banks' soundness, weak monitoring, growing default loans, lack of good governance, balance sheets and

availability of funds, and capacity to repay have taken into consideration.

- As per the report, India scored 60.4 and ranked 89th followed by Pakistan ranking 93rd, Sri Lanka 94th and Nepal 106th. Finland topped the bank soundness chart scoring 95.5, while Singapore ranked second scoring 91.2 score and Hong Kong got the third position scoring 90.8.

<https://www.dhakatribune.com/business/banks/2019/10/23/bangladesh-lowest-in-bank-soundness-in-s-asia>

US cotton traders eye growing market share in Bangladesh

- Bangladesh's cotton consumption will continue to grow in the near future because of higher shipment of garment items stemming from the US-China trade war and for higher demand for natural fibre by Western consumers, said a top official of Cotton USA, an association of American cotton growers and traders.

- Between 2015 and 2017 Bangladesh imported 226,000 bales of cotton each year, but the quantity tripled last year to 785,000 bales (one bale equals to 282 kilogram). Last year, Bangladesh imported 8.28 million bales of cotton worth USD 3 billion. Currently, Bangladesh imports 11% of its annual total requirement of cotton from the US, which was nearly 4% even three years ago. Globally, the production of cotton will remain more or less 120 million bales in the next year, executive director of Cotton Council International (CCI), a platform of Cotton USA, said.

- The Executive director of CCI mentioned three specific challenges to cotton trade in Bangladesh: double fumigation of US cotton in Bangladesh, logistic problems like longer shipment time from the US and marketing for higher cotton trade in Bangladesh.

<https://www.thedailystar.net/backpage/news/gp-robi-administrator-ficci-worried-govt-move-1817389>

<https://today.thefinancialexpress.com.bd/trade-market/us-cotton-traders-eye-growing-market-share-in-bangladesh-1571852229>

Foreign funds sought for Delta Plan

- The government sought financial support from the development partners to implement the ambitious Delta Plan that would need USD 37 billion by 2030 for ensuring food and water security and fighting disasters. The Planning Commission shared the plan with the development partners at the National Economic Council (NEC) conference room at Sher-e-Bangla Nagar in the city yesterday.

- Of them, 65 would be infrastructure projects and 15 aimed at enhancing institutional capacity, efficiency and research. The required fund for the projects would come from the government, Green Climate Fund, development partners, foreign direct investment and the private sector.

- At present, the government spends 0.8% of the GDP for Delta management projects and programmes. To implement the plan, 2% of the GDP would be required. Bangladesh is likely to get USD 2 billion assistance from the Green Climate Fund every year. Besides, about 0.5% from the private sector's annual income could be added to the Delta Plan fund. Coastal, Varendra (Barind) and drought-prone, haor and flood-prone, Chittagong Hill Tracts, riverine and urban are the six areas to be given priority by the Delta Plan.

<https://www.thedailystar.net/business/news/foreign-funds-sought-delta-plan-1817917>

'We want to continue investing in Bangladesh': Says US envoy

- The US Ambassador to Bangladesh has said that the United States wants companies like Chevron and others to continue to invest in Bangladesh. We want to introduce new technologies into the economy, bringing shared prosperity to more and more people -- benefiting both countries, the ambassador said while talking to journalists in Sylhet yesterday morning.

<https://www.thedailystar.net/city/news/we-want-continue-investing-bangladesh-1818085>

World Stock and Commodities*

Index Name	Close Value	Value Change	% Change
Crude Oil (WTI)*	\$55.50	-0.47	-0.84%
Crude Oil (Brent)*	\$60.79	-0.38	-0.62%
Gold Spot*	\$1,493.30	+1.18	+0.08%
DSEX	4,726.62	+17.94	+0.38%
Dow Jones Industrial Average	26,833.95	+45.85	+0.17%
FTSE 100	7,260.74	+48.25	+0.67%
Nikkei 225	22,769.58	+144.20	+0.64%
BSE SENSEX	39,169.35	+110.52	+0.28%

Exchange Rates**USD 1 = BDT 84.64*****GBP 1 = BDT 109.35*****EUR 1 = BDT 94.27*****INR 1 = BDT 1.20***

**Currencies are taken from XE Currency Converter and Commodities are taken from Bloomberg.*

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