

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.

Taka remains up in third quarter (Q3)

- Taka remained upwards until September (Q3) since last June against other global currencies, as indicated by its real effective exchange rate (REER).
- Usually, such appreciation of the local currency is not good news for exporters as it worsens its competitiveness.
- The REER, prepared by the central bank, is trade-based weight at 107.3, nearly up by 7.0 per cent from June.
- On the other hand, nominal exchange rate depreciated by 0.06 per cent to BDT 83.72 in September over its previous quarter that ended on June 30.
- However, the rate as of December 12 was recorded at BDT 83.90 (inter-bank rate), according to Bangladesh Bank.
- Economists view that this is due to faster depreciation of the currencies belonging to Bangladesh's rival countries.

<http://today.thefinancialexpress.com.bd/public/first-page/taka-remains-up-in-q3-1545328028>

Election fuels bank borrowing

- The government's borrowing from the banking system shot up in the last two months to meet its expenditure ahead of the national election scheduled next week.
- The sudden rise in the bank borrowing has thrown some banks into further cash crisis, a trend they have been facing throughout 2018.
- Bangladesh Bank data showed the government borrowed BDT 30.42 billion in November using treasury bills and bonds, and has set a target to take another BDT 50.50 billion in December, of which three-fourth have already been drawn.
- The government borrowed BDT 13.73 billion in the July-October period in the current fiscal year.
- Though the borrowing has been less than one-fourth of the full-fiscal year's target of BDT 420.29 billion, it is more than double from the total borrowing in 2017-18, when the government took loans amounting to BDT 56.66 billion from the banking sector against the planned BDT 282.03 billion.

<https://www.thedailystar.net/business/news/election-fuels-bank-borrowing-1677541>

Banks turn to Bangladesh Bank amid sudden demand for cash

- Commercial banks have suddenly started borrowing from the central bank to manage the growing cash withdrawal pressure ahead of the national election scheduled for December 30.
- Ten banks borrowed BDT 36.87 billion from Monday to Wednesday last week by way of repurchase agreement (repo) and the assured liquidity support facility (ALSF) to meet their instant liquidity demands.
- The repo and the ALSF are short-term loans disbursed by the banking regulator to commercial banks in case of any shortfall of fund. A bank has to count 6 percent interest if it takes loans through the repo and the ALSF from the Bangladesh Bank.

<https://www.thedailystar.net/business/news/banks-turn-bb-amid-sudden-demand-cash-1676680>

Vietnam wants to boost trade with Bangladesh

- Vietnam called for strengthening business ties with Bangladesh and encouraged businesses to invest in the Southeast Asian country.
- A Vietnam delegation emphasized increasing bilateral trade by up to USD 2.0 billion during a meeting with members of the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI).
- FBCCI Senior Vice President called for a "joint working group" to strengthen the business ties.

- Bangladesh exported goods worth USD 55.67 million to Vietnam in the fiscal year 2017-18 and imported items worth USD 687.70 million.

<http://today.thefinancialexpress.com.bd/public/trade-market/vietnam-wants-to-boost-trade-with-bangladesh-1545322374>

Saudi firm to set up cement factory in Chhatak

- Saudi business firm 'Engineering Dimensions' is going to set up a modern cement factory, Bangladesh Friendship Cement Company Limited (SBFCCL), at Chhatak upazila in Sunamganj district.
- Bangladesh Chemical Industries Corporation (BCIC) on Thursday signed a partnership agreement with the Engineering Dimensions at a function at the industries ministry in the city.
- Secretary-in-Charge of the Ministry of Industries said Saudi Arabia is one of the best partners of the country's development since the expatriate Bangladeshis in Saudi Arabia are playing a vital role in the socio-economic development of Bangladesh. He said Bangladesh wants to expedite the trade and investment relations with Saudi Arabia and urged the Saudi investors to come forward for investing in the country's potential sectors.

<http://today.thefinancialexpress.com.bd/public/trade-market/saudi-firm-to-set-up-cement-factory-in-chhatak-1545322444>

Regulator invites bid to monitor telecom services

- The telecom regulator has called an international tender to establish a separate centre to monitor the country's overall telecom services round the clock, especially the quality of mobile networks and voice and data traffic.
- Officials of the Bangladesh Tele-communication Regulatory Commission (BTRC) said the centre would help improve digital services in the country.
- The monitoring includes call detail records, something only an intelligence agency of the country can currently carry out.
- It will also help the regulator check whether operators' integration of revenue reporting process and automated audit system were in line with BTRC regulations.

<https://www.thedailystar.net/business/news/regulator-invites-bid-monitor-telecom-services-1676677>
<http://www.newagebd.net/article/59388/btrc-invites-bid-to-install-telecom-monitoring-system>

National Board of Revenue (NBR) may ask Google, Facebook, other companies to set up offices in Bangladesh

- National Board of Revenue may ask global digital platforms like YouTube, Google and Facebook having earnings from Bangladesh to set up their offices in the country.
- NBR is planning to take such a decision to ensure collection of taxes on income of the global technology giants derived from advertisements given by Bangladeshi individuals and companies.
- Currently, the government hardly gets any taxes, mainly value-added tax and income tax, on the income of the organisations as they don't have offices in Bangladesh.

<http://www.newagebd.net/article/59585/nbr-may-ask-google-fb-other-cos-to-set-up-offices-in-bdesh>

BSRM to invest BDT 390.0 million in Joint Venture Company

- The board of directors of Bangladesh Steel Re-Rolling Mills Ltd. (BSRM) has decided to make an equity investment of about BDT 390 million in a new joint venture company.
- The new joint venture company, BMS Steel Ltd., was formed in Kenya along with investment partners from Mauritius and the United Arab Emirates.
- The equity investment of BSRM is equivalent to USD 4.67 million, representing 18 per cent of total equity in BMS Steel.
- The investment partners have operations in Kenya and other countries in Africa.

- The BMS Steel will set up a manufacturing facility with a total investment of about USD 65 million to produce 0.40 million tonnes of MS bars and sections a year.

<http://today.thefinancialexpress.com.bd/public/stock-corporate/bsrm-to-invest-BDT-390m-in-joint-venture-company-1545321336>

Titas Gas earns BDT 3.39 billion as net profit

- Titas Gas has earned BDT 141.89 billion by selling 16,961.75 million cubic metres of gas in the FY 2017-18, which is 13.06 per cent higher than the previous fiscal year.
- The state-run company has also reported a profit before tax of BDT 4.53 billion and a profit after tax of BDT 3.39 billion for FY 2017-18.
- The company has deposited more than BDT 5.58 billion to the government exchequer in the FY 2017-18.
- The company has also reported earnings per share (EPS) of BDT 3.43, net asset value (NAV) per share of BDT 67.28 and net operating cash flow per share (NOCFPS) of BDT 0.50 in the negative for the year ending on June 30, 2018 as against BDT 5.12, BDT 65.64 and BDT 4.07 respectively for the same period of the previous year.
- The shareholders of the state-run company approved 25 per cent cash dividend for the year 2017-18.

<http://today.thefinancialexpress.com.bd/public/stock-corporate/titas-gas-earns-BDT-339b-as-net-profit-1545407386>

World Stock and Commodities*

Index Name	Close Value	Value Change	% Change
Crude Oil (WTI)*	\$47.20	+0.96	+2.08%
Crude Oil (Brent)*	\$56.44	-0.80	-1.40%
Gold Spot*	\$1,244.46	+1.38	+0.11%
DSEX	5242.56	+8.97	+0.17%
Dow Jones Industrial Average	23,323.66	-351.98	-1.49%
FTSE 100	6,765.94	+64.35	+0.96%
Nikkei 225	20,470.82	-517.10	-2.46%

Exchange Rates

USD 1 = BDT 83.78*
GBP 1 = BDT 105.75*
EUR 1 = BDT 95.36*
INR 1 = BDT 1.19*

**Currencies and Commodities are taken from Bloomberg.*

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