

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.

19 firms to invest BDT 6.50 billion in pharmaceuticals industry

- The pharmaceuticals industry is gearing up to expand as 19 companies have got the go-ahead in the last one year to set up facilities at a combined investment of around BDT 6.55 billion. The entry of these new companies will boost competition as there are already more than 200 manufacturers in operations to grab shares in the local market worth around BDT 250.0 billion.
- Most of the 19 companies have completed setting up their facilities and they will start operations within the next one and a half years, said the director general of the Directorate General of Drug Administration (DGDA). Of around 200 pharmaceuticals companies, the top 10 hold nearly 70% of the market share.
- Presently, the industry meets 98% of the local demand and exports to more than 150 countries. However, some complicated patented drugs, particularly in oncology, need to be imported.

<https://www.thedailystar.net/business/news/19-firms-invest-BDT-650cr-pharma-1721332>

Deposits in school banking accounts exceed BDT 15.00 billion

- Students' deposits in their bank accounts crossed BDT 15.00 billion at the end of December 2018, according to a Bangladesh Bank. The growth rate of deposits in the accounts, opened with just BDT 10 deposit, had slowed down to 10.81% in the year 2018 against 33.52% growth a year ago. With BDT 1.47 billion deposits in last year, the total deposits in such accounts reached BDT 15.10 billion with 1.82 million school banking accounts with 56 scheduled banks as of December 31, 2018.
- In 2017, deposits grew by BDT 3.42 billion to BDT 13.62 billion with 14,53,936 school banking accounts. According to the report, the school banking service has gained more popularity in the cities than in the rural areas as 1.14 million school banking accounts were opened in the cities against 0.67 million accounts in the rural areas. The banking is also more popular among the male students than their female peers as 1.06 million school banking accounts were opened by male students against 0.75 million by female students.
- At the end of December last year, BDT 12.68 billion, representing 83.98% of the total school banking deposits, was deposited in 1.22 million accounts, 67.51% of the total school banking accounts, with the private commercial banks. On the other hand, BDT 1.97 billion was deposited in 0.45 million accounts with state-owned commercial banks.

<http://www.newagebd.net/article/68544/deposits-in-school-banking-accounts-exceed-BDT-1500cr>

India to support Mongla port upgrades

- The government has taken up a massive development programme for the struggling Mongla port with Indian financial support. The move aims at making the port attractive to both domestic and regional users, officials said on Wednesday. The Mongla port upgrades work is scheduled to be completed by fiscal year (FY) 2022-2023.
- The state-owned Mongla Port Authority (MPA) has undertaken the BDT 60.14 billion port upgrading project that will improve facilities in the nation's second seaport. According to the port authority, the Indian government will provide loans worth about BDT 44.59 billion while the rest will be borne by the Bangladesh government from its own coffers.
- A Shipping Ministry official said they have a plan to create the Mongla port as one of the regional sea transportation hubs to boost foreign trade. India, Nepal and Bhutan have already proposed using it, he added. The government is building the Padma Bridge. With the prospect of upgrading train and road transport facilities between Dhaka and Mongla, setting up the Khanjahan Ali Airport and building a special economic zone there, the port's potentials will rise further within a few years, the official noted.

<http://today.thefinancialexpress.com.bd/first-page/india-to-support-mongla-port-upgrades-1553706804>

Energy Transition Index: Bangladesh 90th among 115 nations

- Bangladesh has ranked 90th on the global Energy Transition Index (ETI), which has benchmarked 115 countries on how well they are able to balance energy security and access with environmental sustainability and affordability. Last year, Bangladesh ranked the same position but that time 114 countries were included in the index. According to the report, Sri Lanka has come first among the South Asian countries, ranking 60th, while India secured 76th position. Pakistan has ranked 97th and Nepal 93rd.
- Praising Bangladesh's effort on electrification, the report said, Bangladesh made fast progress towards universal electrification due to strong political commitment, a stable policy regime, use of grid expansion and decentralized generation sources, and a supportive environment for investment in infrastructure. While Bangladesh has scored low

in terms of transition readiness, it ranks considerably higher when it comes to system performance.

- The state minister for power, energy and mineral resources said that the country was still lagging behind reaching the baseload power, the amount of power available to meet fundamental demands by consumers. The government has undertaken different projects like Rooppur Nuclear Power Plant, Matarbari Coal Power Plant and Payra Thermal Power Plant and hopes that Bangladesh will reach a sustainable position by 2024, he said.

<https://www.thedailystar.net/backpage/news/energy-transition-index-bangladesh-90th-among-115-nations-1721380>

Sonali Bank: once bitten, twice shy

- Sonali Bank has emerged as an anomaly in the banking sector, logging in almost half the loan-deposit ratio than other banks last year, at a time when most were gasping to contain their ratio to within the authorised limit. At the end of 2018, Sonali's loan-deposit ratio stood at 42.43%, whereas the ratio was beyond 85% for most other banks.

- When all the banks were fighting for deposits by offering high interest rates, Sonali sat still. The bank offered interest rate of 6 to 7% on deposits throughout last year, when most of the private banks were giving upwards of 10% rate. Subsequently, its deposit growth in 2018 was 2.78%, down from 3.17% a year earlier. Its loan growth was 9.65% last year, down from 10% in the previous year.

<https://www.thedailystar.net/business/news/sonali-bank-once-bitten-twice-shy-1721317>

Wata Chemicals to enhance production capacity

- The board of directors of Wata Chemicals has approved for BMRE (Balancing, Modernization, Rehabilitation and Expansion) of 18,000 MT per annum capacity of sulphuric acid plant unit-1, according a disclosure posted on the Dhaka Stock Exchange (DSE) website on Wednesday. The board has also decided to set-up of new aluminium sulphate (ALUM) Plant Unit-2 for 12,000 MT per annum. The board has also decided to set-up Linear Alkail Benzene Sulphonic Acid/Sodium Lauryl Ether Sulphate (SLES) plant for 7,200 MT per annum at its factory in Narayanganj, said the disclosure.

<http://today.thefinancialexpress.com.bd/stock-corporate/wata-chemicals-to-enhance-production-capacity-1553703127>

Ring Shine Textiles' IPO bid draws flak

- The stockmarket regulator's decision to allow Ring Shine Textiles to raise BDT 1.5 billion has come under fire from analysts, who termed it an ill-thought-out step given the performance of such companies thus far. It would be the highest amount raised by a textile company. The paid-up capital of Ring Shine Textiles after raising the funds from the market would be BDT 4.35 billion, which is the second highest in the sector.

- So far, seven textiles companies with more than BDT 2.0 billion in paid-up capital got listed and all are trading at face value or lower than that. The companies are Alif Manufacturing, C&A Textiles, Familytex, Far East Knitting, Generation Next, Maksons Spinning, and RN Spinning Mills.

<https://www.thedailystar.net/business/news/ring-shine-textiles-ipo-bid-draws-flak-1721314>

World Stock and Commodities*

Index Name	Close Value	Value Change	% Change
Crude Oil (WTI)*	\$58.51	-0.53	-0.90%
Crude Oil (Brent)*	\$66.50	-0.53	-0.79%
Gold Spot*	\$1,315.64	+1.96	+0.15%
DSEX	5512.08	-58.07	-1.04%
Dow Jones Industrial Average	25,502.32	-460.19	-1.77%
FTSE 100	7,207.59	-147.72	-2.01%
Nikkei 225	20,937.23	-690.11	-3.19%

Exchange Rates

USD 1 = BDT 83.94*

GBP 1 = BDT 110.83*

EUR 1 = BDT 95.17*

INR 1 = BDT 1.21*

*Currencies and Commodities are taken from Bloomberg.

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