

TOP NEWS

BSEC pushes unified back-office system to curb investor fund embezzlement

BSEC Chairman Masud Khan said the regulator is pushing for a unified, highly protected back-office software system for brokerage houses that would give regulators real-time access to brokers' bank balances and funds held in customer clearing accounts, enabling daily reconciliation and early detection of any shortfall. He was speaking at the DSE's launch of Investor Protection Fund (IPF) payouts to investors affected by financial irregularities at five brokerage houses that diverted client money or shares into their own accounts, affecting 17,967 investors and involving Tk492 crore. DSE Chairman Mominul Islam said 17,332 of them, or about 96% of those affected, will receive full compensation of up to Tk5 lakh each from the IPF in this initial phase, with the remaining larger claims to be pursued through legal recovery and future IPF inflows. The IPF is funded mainly by brokers' trading commissions and 25% of the interest earned on customer accounts, and Masud also called for stronger order management systems to modernise the market's digital infrastructure.

[Read the full story ›](#)**Two more banks eye StanChart's retail business**

Pubali Bank and Mutual Trust Bank (MTB) have begun preliminary talks with Standard Chartered Bangladesh (SCB) about taking over its retail banking business, joining BRAC Bank and City Bank, which had earlier confirmed interest and held initial discussions. Pubali Bank CEO Mohammad Ali said the two sides differ over human resources, since SCB's retail division employs about 1,500 people who would need to be retained under any deal, adding that the matter is expected to be finalised by November. A senior MTB official separately confirmed preliminary talks, saying the wind-down of SCB's retail operations is likely to take until 2028. Bangladesh Bank spokesperson Arief Hossain Khan said the central bank is aware of the plan but no decision has been taken, and hoped retail staff would not be laid off without due process. SCB called the reports market speculation and said it remains committed to Bangladesh after more than 120 years of operations here, with 18 branches nationwide; HSBC announced a similar retail wind-down in Bangladesh last year.

[Read the full story ›](#)**Qatar extends force majeure notices on LNG supply to Edison, Asian clients including Bangladesh**

QatarEnergy has extended force majeure notices on LNG cargo deliveries, with Italy's Edison told it will not receive shipments until early December and Asian clients including Bangladesh and Pakistan informed that notices have been extended until November, as the Strait of Hormuz remains closed under the ongoing US-Iran war. Qatar is among the conflict's biggest economic casualties, with LNG exports slashed 96% since fighting began in February; the country shipped just 18 cargoes by end-August versus 509 a year earlier, according to data intelligence firm ICIS. Edison said QatarEnergy has now cancelled 35 cargoes under its long-term 6.4 billion cubic metre annual contract, and has replaced 23 of them mainly with US supply. With Europe's winter heating season approaching, buyers there will compete harder with Asian clients for the limited available global LNG supply, keeping gas prices elevated worldwide and adding further pressure on import-dependent markets like Bangladesh.

[Read the full story ›](#)**Cigarettes get cheaper in real terms despite price hikes: PPRC**

Despite nominal price hikes introduced in the FY2026-27 budget, which lifted the minimum retail price of low-tier cigarettes to Tk65 and set medium-, high- and premium-tier floors at Tk92, Tk160 and Tk210, inflation-adjusted cigarette prices have declined across most tiers by August 2026, according to an analysis presented by the Power and Participation Research Centre (PPRC) at a media workshop on tobacco tax policy. PPRC data also showed a significant market shift, with the low-tier segment's share falling from 77% in FY2021-22 to below 49% by May 2026, while the medium tier rose from 9% to 42%, partly reflecting brand reclassification after a January 2025 price revision. The workshop also highlighted a reported Tk3,000 crore year-on-year fall in cigarette VAT and supplementary duty revenue in July-August, though PPRC cautioned this may partly reflect timing effects from the new quarterly VAT system, and speakers called for introducing a specific excise component so tobacco tax revenue responds more predictably to market changes.

[Read the full story ›](#)**Companies are dodging price shock by cutting costs**

Facing higher production and transport costs after the latest Tk20 fuel price hike but unable to pass them on to consumers whose purchasing power is already stretched, major FMCG makers say they are absorbing the impact through smaller pack sizes, thinner margins and lower-cost inputs rather than raising shelf prices. Pran-RFL chairman Ahsan Khan Chowdhury said the group is avoiding price changes that fall outside familiar denominations like Tk5 or Tk10, opting instead to gradually trim packaging sizes or product weights. Meghna Group chairman Mostafa Kamal said trucking costs from Dhaka to Dinajpur have risen from Tk20,000 to Tk30,000, leaving little margin and possibly forcing cuts to retailer commissions and promotional support, while RFL managing director RN Paul said the company's margin has fallen from 3% to about 1% and it is responding with solar power and productivity gains instead of price rises. ACI Consumer Brands and City Group described similar pressure, with executives across the sector scaling back growth targets as profitability becomes harder to sustain.

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Oil gains over 2%

Brent crude rebounded more than 2% on Monday, rising \$2.60 to \$106.92 a barrel, while US WTI gained \$2.08 to \$94.49, after President Trump rejected an Iranian peace proposal to end the conflict and reopen the Strait of Hormuz, keeping Middle East tensions elevated. Capital Economics' Hamad Hussain said the oil market remains in deficit even as greater flows through Hormuz have eased some upward price pressure, while Middle East crude exports still hit a war-time high of 12.8 million barrels per day in September as Saudi Arabia and the UAE boosted shipments. Brent had edged up only 0.4% the prior week while WTI lost over 7% on concerns the US may ban diesel exports to cool record domestic prices; Goldman Sachs estimated each week of such a ban could raise European wholesale diesel prices by roughly 2%, with effects likely to spread quickly to Asia as Europe and Latin America pull harder on remaining global diesel supply.

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Govt picks 18 countries for export diversification push

The commerce ministry is preparing separate export strategies for 18 key trading destinations - the US, China, the UK, India, France, Russia, Malaysia, South Korea, Switzerland, Iran, Brazil, Turkiye, Japan, Canada, Belgium, Australia, New Zealand and Fiji - as part of a drive to diversify Bangladesh's exports beyond garments, Commerce Secretary Md Ataur Rahman Khan said at a Dhaka workshop. Each country-specific plan will assess Bangladesh's existing import share, main competitors, ways to improve competitiveness, and the policy and institutional steps needed to expand market access, drawing on data collected from the country's trade wings abroad. CPD distinguished fellow Mustafizur Rahman urged equal emphasis on services exports such as IT, skills-based services and freelancing alongside goods, while other participants called for making pharmaceuticals, electronics, agro-processed goods, leather and light engineering more competitive globally, alongside the garment sector that still dominates Bangladesh's export earnings.

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Injection of high-powered money up amid rising inflationary pressure

Growth in reserve, or high-powered, money has swung sharply from a 0.12% contraction in June 2025 to 17.86% by August 2026, a reversal money-market experts attribute to Bangladesh Bank's growing quasi-fiscal activities, including subsidised credit to commercial banks at rates as low as 0.5-5%, alongside regular government borrowing through ways-and-means and overdraft facilities across some 119 accounts. BIBM Director-General Ezazul Islam also pointed to more than \$6 billion in dollar purchases by the central bank since July 2025 to stabilise the exchange rate, which has injected further liquidity into the market even under a nominally tight monetary stance. A central bank official said the trend is a concern since it fuels inflation, which eased only slightly to 8.26% in August from 8.32% in July, and noted Bangladesh Bank has decided to hold its policy rate at 9.5% until at least December given the added pressure from the recent fuel price hike; the money-multiplier effect has so far stayed muted due to weak private credit demand, though economists warned a pickup in borrowing could turn the reserve-money build-up into a bigger inflation risk.

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