

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.

Macro:**Moody's to review 7 Bangladeshi banks for downgrade amid reassessment of Bangladesh rating**

- Credit rating agency Moody's Investors Service has placed the long-term ratings for seven Bangladeshi banks on review for downgrade following its decision to review Bangladesh's long-term rating, bdnews24.com reports. The seven banks are BRAC Bank, The City Bank, Dutch-Bangla Bank, Eastern Bank Limited, NCC Bank, The Premier Bank and Mercantile Bank.
- The decision to place the ratings and assessments of the banks under review is driven by Moody's placement of Bangladesh's Ba3 sovereign rating under reassessment on Dec 9, the agency said in a statement on Tuesday.
- Moody's also downgraded Social Islami Bank's long-term foreign currency deposit ratings from B2 to B3 and the bank's Baseline Credit Assessment to caa1 from b3. The rating outlooks were also changed to stable from negative.

<https://thefinancialexpress.com.bd/economy/moodys-to-review-7-bangladeshi-banks-for-downgrade-amid-reassessment-of-bangladesh-rating-1670921452>

Short-term foreign loans allowed for import

- Businesses will be able to import eight essential items centring upcoming Ramadan by taking short-term loans from foreign sources, said Bangladesh Bank yesterday. This facility for edible oil, chickpea, pulse, pea, onion, spices, sugar and date will remain applicable till March 2023, according to a central bank notice.
- Importers will have to settle the letters of credit (LCs) within 90 days under supplier's and buyer's credit. Buyer's credit refers to finance for payment of imports arranged by the importer or buyer from a bank or financial institution outside of Bangladesh.

<https://www.thedailystar.net/business/economy/news/short-term-foreign-loans-allowed-import-3195421>

Italy takes up USD 3 Mn project for BD workers' migration management

- Italy has adopted a cooperation project to extend supports to strengthen migration management for Bangladeshi migrant workers.
- The contribution amounting to USD 3.0 Mn will focus on ensuring safe migration through information dissemination, reintegration assistance for those who return to Bangladesh under the EU-supported Voluntary Humanitarian Return (VHR) programme, and climate change affected communities by addressing their socio-economic needs, said Enrico Nunziata, Italian Ambassador in Dhaka.

<https://thefinancialexpress.com.bd/economy/italy-takes-up-3m-project-for-bd-workers-migration-management-1670900057>

Long-term finance key to affordable housing

- Availability of long-term finance, collaboration among policymakers and proper databases are key to ensuring affordable housing for all, said experts at a seminar yesterday. Land is very costly in Bangladesh while there are no proper ecosystems to deliver low-cost housing, making providing affordable housing a challenge, they said.

<https://www.thedailystar.net/business/economy/news/long-term-finance-key-affordable-housing-3195351>

4 on schedule, others may miss deadline

- The eight fast track projects being implemented by the government are seeing mixed progress with four having made significant progress as of November this year while the rest may not see timely completion.
- The much talked about Padma Bridge was opened for vehicular movement earlier in June with only 4.5% of the physical work now remaining. The government had approved the Padma Multipurpose Bridge project on August 20, 2007, to connect Bangladesh's southwestern region with Dhaka via road and rail.

<https://www.thedailystar.net/business/economy/news/4-schedule-others-may-miss-deadline-3194586>

NBR specialised unit to boost revenue, curb trade frauds

- The National Board of Revenue (NBR) has drafted a revenue strategy up to 2032, aiming at broadening the tax base and making the tax admin more efficient as revenue collection is under stress. The draft includes setting up a specialised unit to curb trade frauds and mis-invoicing reported to syphon off billions annually, according to officials.
- The action plan, titled "Medium & Long-Term Revenue Strategy", also seeks an improved fiscal management, and more transparency and accountability to improve public perception of the tax system. The draft categorises the to-do list in three slabs – short, medium and long term.
- The NBR puts tasks like addressing the trust gap between the taxmen and the taxpayers, developing voluntary compliance to reduce collection costs and pre-budget talks between the policymakers and top taxpayers in the short-term – which is by 2024, according to the plan.

<https://www.tbsnews.net/nbr/nbr-specialised-unit-boost-revenue-curb-trade-frauds-551086>

Deposits in no-frill accounts up by BDT 8.64 Bn YoY

- The amount of deposits in no-frill bank accounts has gone up by BDT 8.64 Bn in a span of one year despite rising commodity prices. The no-frill account, which is a savings account that does not need any minimum balance month after month, is increasingly becoming popular in the country.
- According to the quarterly data (July-September) from the Bangladesh Bank, these NFA accounts have a total of BDT 34.36 Bn in deposits at the end of September, which stood at BDT 25.72 Bn at the same time of the previous year.

<https://www.tbsnews.net/economy/banking/deposits-no-frill-accounts-tk864-crore-yoy-551062>

More tax amid existing crises deepens cement makers' worry

- The Bangladesh cement industry, already fighting a price war amid overcapacity, soaring dollar, energy disruptions, higher transportation costs and letter of credit issues, now has a new problem to deal with – the newly added 30% supplementary duty on limestone imports and increased advance income tax.
- "Only proper government steps will solve these issues in the cement sector. Otherwise, it may have an adverse effect on the price of cement, which may hamper the infrastructural development of the country," the Bangladesh Cement Manufacturers Association (BCMA) leaders said at a press conference in the capital on Tuesday.

<https://www.tbsnews.net/economy/more-tax-amid-existing-crises-deepens-cement-makers-worry-551050>

Bangladesh seeks Saudi support to meet energy demand

- State Minister for foreign affairs Md Shahriar Alam has said Bangladesh needs "brotherly support" from Saudi Arabia to fulfil its energy demands amid the global oil crisis due to the Russia-Ukraine war. He made the remark while Saudi Arabian Ambassador to Bangladesh Essa Yousef Essa Al Duhailan paid a courtesy call on him at the foreign ministry here on Monday, a foreign ministry press release said.

<https://thefinancialexpress.com.bd/economy/bangladesh-seeks-saudi-support-to-meet-energy-demand-1670928235>

IFC offers USD 32.5 Mn to Agrocorp

- The International Finance Corporation (IFC) is providing a USD 32.5 Mn loan to Agrocorp International Pte Ltd, a Singapore-based company that supplies wheat and pulses to Bangladesh, in order to improve food security in the South Asian country.
- The World Bank Group's arm is giving an eight-year financing package consisting of a senior secured loan of up to USD 18 Mn as well as a concessional loan of USD 14.5 Mn from the International Development Association's Private Sector Window Blended Finance Facility, it said in a press release yesterday.

<https://www.thedailystar.net/business/economy/news/ifc-offers-325m-agrocorp-3195361>

Adani's coal power will add pressure to hike power tariff in Bangladesh: IEEFA

- The Adani Godda coal-fired power plant, set to start commercial generation on 16 December, will supply very expensive power to Bangladesh and add pressure to hike power tariff, finds a new report by the Institute of Energy and Economic Financial Analysis (IEEFA).
- The tariff for power sold from the Godda plant to the Bangladesh Power Development Board (BPDB) will be almost double the initial expectation, reads the report of the Australian think tank released on Tuesday.
- Initially, the cost per kilowatt-hour (or a unit) of electricity from the Godda plant was estimated at BDT 8.71, but was revised up to BDT 15 due to the high cost of coal in the international market and high capacity charges, said a source at the Power Division.

<https://www.tbsnews.net/economy/adanis-coal-power-will-add-pressure-hike-power-tariff-bangladesh-ieefa-551034>

High cost of living takes a toll on bank deposits

- The deposit growth in banks of Bangladesh has slowed as many people saw their capacity to save dwindle amid the higher cost of living. The deposit situation has aggravated further as a section of savers preferred to invest in alternative areas, namely property after they became frustrated by a very low-interest rate offered by banks and the withdrawal of savings by a section of people to cope with elevated inflation.

<https://www.thedailystar.net/business/economy/news/high-cost-living-takes-toll-bank-deposits-3195441>

TCB hikes prices of sugar, pulse

- The Trading Corporation of Bangladesh (TCB) has hiked the price of daily essentials sold at subsidised rates by BDT 5 due to an increase in prices of the commodities, putting more pressure on the country's low-income groups. As such, the price of sugar has gone up to BDT 60 per kilogramme (kg) while pulses will now cost BDT 70 per kg starting today, according to a press release from the TCB.

<https://www.thedailystar.net/business/economy/news/tcb-hikes-prices-sugar-pulse-3195431>

Excess liquidity at Islamic banks halves

- Excess liquidity at Islamic banks in Bangladesh fell nearly 50% year-on-year to BDT 175.25 Bn in July-September quarter this year as deposits growth slowed, central bank data showed. In July-September, overall deposits in Islamic banks, including the conventional banks that have shariah-based windows and branches, grew 11.9% year-on-year to BDT 4,213.75 Bn, the lowest growth in three years.

<https://www.thedailystar.net/business/economy/news/excess-liquidity-islamic-banks-halves-3195426>

Stocks:

BSRMLTD | BSRM firms nosedive to losses in Sept quarter

- In a year of posting record sales and profits, both the listed firms of the steel market leader Bangladesh Steel Re-rolling Mills (BSRM) fell into losses in the July-September quarter. The soaring prices of raw materials and the disrupted power supply did not let BSRM Steels and BSRM Ltd enjoy their continuous sales growth, according to the stock exchange filings of both firms.
- The mother entity — BSRM Ltd — registered a sales growth to over BDT 20.75 Bn in the July-September quarter of FY23, from BDT 15.39 Bn a year ago. Despite impressive sales, the company incurred a loss of BDT 1.64 Bn in the quarter, while in the same quarter last year it posted BDT 1.28 Bn in after-tax profits.

<https://www.tbsnews.net/economy/industry/bsrm-firms-nosedive-losses-sept-quarter-551070>

World Stock and Commodities*

Index Name	Close Value	Value Change YTD	% Change YTD
Crude Oil (WTI)*	USD 74.94	(USD 0.27)	-0.36%
Crude Oil (Brent)*	USD 80.15	USD 2.37	3.05%
Gold Spot*	USD 1,810.40	(USD 18.80)	-1.03%
DSEX	6,271.41	-485.25	-7.18%
S&P 500	4,019.65	-746.53	-15.66%
FTSE 100	7,502.89	118.35	1.60%
BSE SENSEX	62,533.30	4,279.48	7.35%
KSE-100	41,714.30	-2,881.77	-6.46%
CSEALL	8,862.67	-3,363.34	-27.51%

Exchange Rates**1 US Dollar = 102.99 BDT****1 GBP = 127.18 BDT****1 Euro = 109.51 BDT****1 INR = 1.25 BDT**

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