

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.

Govt plans to allocate BDT 344b for social safety net in FY23

- The government is planning to widen the coverage of the social safety net for the marginalised and vulnerable people as the Covid-induced loss of income and livelihood might push more people into poverty. To tackle the situation, the government is planning to allocate BDT 372.35 billion in FY 2023-24 in the social safety net and welfare sector and BDT 344.07 billion in FY 2022-23. The allocation in this sector in the running FY2021-22 is BDT 343.19, reports UNB citing an official document.
- During the COVID-19 pandemic, the ministry has implemented a direct cash transfer programme to targeted households of 35 lakh families with BDT 2500 for each family. Considering the loss of income during the second wave of the pandemic last year, the second round of the direct cash transfer programme to the same beneficiaries has already been rolled out. It will complete by end of this fiscal 2021-22, the document said.

<https://thefinancialexpress.com.bd/economy/bangladesh/govt-plans-to-allocate-tk-344b-for-social-safety-net-in-fy23-1642762535>

Returns on foreign loans may squeeze as Bangladesh's debt servicing liabilities surge

- Bangladesh's net foreign loans fell as repayments under debt-servicing liabilities surged year on year in the last fiscal, officials say as economists caution about its blowback impact. Economic Relations Division (ERD) data show that the net external loan inflow decreased by 7.80% year-on-year in FY21.
- Senior ERD officials apprehended that the net aid inflow could come under contraction pressure in the coming days as repayment for most of the large loans, especially of the megaprojects, started in recent years. According to the ERD, the government paid a total amount of USD 1.91 billion against foreign debts to the development partners in the FY21.
- Bangladesh is in conformable zone with its debt burden, as foreign loan to GDP ratio is currently 15.5%, and 88.5% for export and remittance-to-GDP ratio, the FY2020 data of ERD show.
- Research Director of the Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD) Dr Khandker G Moazzem told the FE that since Bangladesh has graduated as the Lower Middle Income Country (LMIC), its foreign loan is getting costlier gradually. He added that delay in project implementation reduces our rate of return from the foreign loan, and in the long run, Bangladesh's debt sustainability will be affected.

<https://thefinancialexpress.com.bd/economy/bangladesh/returns-on-foreign-loans-may-squeeze-as-bangladeshs-debt-servicing-liabilities-surge-1642821136>

Relaxed loan repayment facility extended for shipbuilders

- Bangladesh Bank in April 2018 relaxed the loan repayment facility for the shipbuilding industry, allowing them to pay the loans in 10 years with a grace period of three years, in a bid to help the industry tackle adversities derived from the ongoing coronavirus pandemic. As per the central bank decision, shipbuilders will get another two-year moratorium to pay back bank loans.
- A central bank official said the shipbuilding industry fell into crisis once again since 2020, soon after the business slowdown was brought on by the coronavirus pandemic. For this reason, the relaxed facility given to shipbuilders has not created any effectiveness in the wake of the pandemic. Against this backdrop, the finance ministry further extended the relaxed loan facility to the moribund shipbuilding industry.

<https://www.thedailystar.net/business/economy/news/relaxed-loan-repayment-facility-extended-shipbuilders-2943916>

BTRC set to auction 5G spectrum in March

- As the Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (BTRC) is set to auction 5G spectrum in March, it has issued some conditions for the mobile operators for rolling out 5G network. The country's mobile operators are required to provide fifth generation (5G) services to at least 50% of the country's total population within five years from the date of issuance of the licence, according to the regulator's recently-set conditions.
- The government has fixed 2.3 GHz, 2.6 GHz and 3.5 GHz spectrum bands to launch 5G services in the country. The BTRC has already assigned 60 MHz of spectrum from the 3.5 GHz band to state-owned Teletalk for launching 5G services in pilot basis on December 12. At present, the regulator has around 585 MHz of spectrum from these three bands. The spectrum in these bands will be technology-neutral.

<https://thefinancialexpress.com.bd/national/btrc-set-to-auction-5g-spectrum-in-march-1642821274>

DSE adds 27 cos to DSEX, reshuffles DS30

- The Dhaka Stock Exchange has added 27 companies to its prime index, DSEX, and replaced five companies in blue-chip DS30 index which is comprised of 30 large capitalised companies. In accordance with the DSE Bangladesh Index Methodology, designed by S&P Dow Jones Indices, the DSEX has been reconstituted with three hundred and thirty-eight companies after January 2022 annual re-balancing, a DSE press release said.
- After semi-annual re-balancing of DSE30 index as per criteria set by S&P Dow Jones Indices, five new companies — Islami Bank (BD) Limited, IFIC Bank Limited, Orion Pharma Limited, Power Grid Company of Bangladesh Limited and Fortune Shoes Limited are included in the DS30 index, it said. Conversely, five constituents of DS30 — Confidence Cement Limited, Pubali Bank Limited, National Bank Limited, The ACME Laboratories Limited and IFAD Autos Limited — were dropped from the list of the DS30, the DSE statement said. The re-balancing will be effective from tomorrow, it said.

<https://www.newagebd.net/article/160616/dse-adds-27-cos-to-dsex-reshuffles-ds30>

Walton setting up lab at Buet

- Walton has announced signing a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (Buet) to set up a laboratory at the latter for research and development of its electronics and technology products. Prof Satya Prasad Majumder, vice-chancellor of Buet, and SM Rezaul Alam, chairman of Walton Digi-Tech Industries, signed the agreement at Buet Council Building on Tuesday, according to a Buet statement.
- Under the agreement, Walton will provide everything required for the laboratory while wherein Buet teachers and students will conduct the research and develop Walton products. The company believes it would bring about a revolutionary change in the economic development and technological advancement of the country.

<https://www.thedailystar.net/business/organisation-news/news/walton-setting-lab-buet-2943806>

World Stock and Commodities*

Index Name	Close Value	Value Change YTD	% Change YTD
Crude Oil (WTI)*	USD 85.14	USD 9.93	13.20%
Crude Oil (Brent)*	USD 87.89	USD 10.11	13.00%
Gold Spot*	USD 1,835.38	USD 6.18	0.34%
DSEX	7,105.69	349.03	5.17%
S&P 500	4,397.93	-368.25	-7.73%
FTSE 100	7,494.13	109.59	1.48%
BSE SENSEX	59,037.18	783.36	1.34%
KSE-100	45,018.28	422.21	0.95%
CSEALL	13,371.61	1,145.60	9.37%

Exchange Rates**1 US Dollar = 86.01 BDT****1 GBP = 116.55 BDT****1 Euro = 97.60 BDT****1 INR = 1.16 BDT**

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