

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:**Bangladesh RMG adds more value to products**

- Bangladesh's garments sector is on the rise as low imports have led to an increase in value addition. Value addition in the readymade garment (RMG) industry reached 62.78% during the second quarter (October-December) of the current fiscal 2022-23, improving 11.39% points over the previous quarter, according to central bank data.
- During the October-December quarter, the import value of raw materials was USD 4.11 Bn, accounting for 32.31% of total RMG export earnings. As a result, the net exports from this sector stood at over USD 8.61 Bn, which is 62.79% higher than the previous quarter and 37.43% higher than the same quarter of the previous year.

<https://www.tbsnews.net/economy/rmg/bangladesh-rmg-adds-more-value-products-582178>

Indian data centre major Yotta to invest BDT 20 Bn in Bangladesh

- Yotta Data Services – the data centre and cloud services arm of the Mumbai-based conglomerate Hiranandani Group – has announced plans to invest over BDT 20 Bn to set up a modern data centre facility in Bangladesh. The investment will arrive in four to six years, according to the announcement.
- Yotta, the operator of Asia's largest certified Tier-IV data centre, would build its data centre park at the Bangabandhu Hi-Tech City in Kaliakair, Gazipur to house two hyperscale data centre buildings, featuring 4,800 racks and 28.8MW IT power capacity, according to a statement by the company.

<https://www.tbsnews.net/economy/indian-data-centre-major-yotta-invest-BDT2000cr-bangladesh-582166>

BB moves to boost QR code-based transactions

- In a bid to gear up digital transactions, banks and financial institutions have been asked to replace their proprietary QR codes within June with a uniform one developed earlier by the Bangladesh Bank. The central bank gave the directive yesterday as most banks and financial institutions are reluctant to embrace the common platform although two years have passed since the system was launched. The central bank also withdrew a maximum daily transaction limit of BDT 20,000 for an individual client using Bangla QR.

<https://www.thedailystar.net/business/economy/news/bb-moves-boost-qr-code-based-transactions-3243016>

TCB buying 11 Mn litres of soybean oil for Ramadan

- The government is procuring 11 Mn litres of soybean oil and 8,000 tonnes of lentils for the Trading Corporation of Bangladesh (TCB) to sell at reduced prices during the upcoming Ramadan. Briefing journalists on the outcomes of the meeting, Cabinet Division Additional Secretary Syed Mahbub Khan said soybean oil and lentils are being bought in bulk for around BDT 1.95 Bn.
- Oil will cost BDT 176.88 per litre, which was BDT 177 during the previous purchase. Meghna Edible Oils Refinery will supply the soybean oil. He said the lentils will be bought from the local agent of a Turkish company at BDT 91.60 a kg, and the 8,000 tonnes will cost a total of BDT 732.9 Mn.

<https://www.tbsnews.net/economy/tcb-buy-soybean-oil-lentil-ahead-ramadan-581986>

Japan Bank keen to sign deal with Bangladesh to boost energy coop

- Governor of Japan Bank for International Cooperation Nobomitsu Hayashi on Wednesday emphasised on establishing better relations with Bangladesh, saying there is a need to sign a memorandum of understanding to enhance cooperation in energy sector and protect mutual interests.
- 'This MoU will make an important contribution to enhance cooperation in overall energy management development,' he said, while paying a call on with state minister for power, energy and mineral resources Nasrul Hamid at his ministry office.

<https://www.newagebd.net/article/193938/japan-bank-keen-to-sign-deal-with-bangladesh-to-boost-energy-coop>

70% listed firms incur profit drop, losses

- Around 70% of listed companies in Bangladesh either suffered losses or witnessed lower profit in the July to December period of the current financial year due to the surge in production costs, the sharp depreciation of the local currency and lower consumption.
- Among the 400 companies that trade on the Dhaka Stock Exchange, 214 have published their financial reports for the first half of 2022-23. Of them, the profits of 64 companies rose year-on-year and it dropped for 84.

<https://www.thedailystar.net/business/economy/news/70-listed-firms-incur-profit-drop-losses-3243026>

Logistics index: Bangladesh ranks lowest in South Asia

- India ranked second, Pakistan 26th and Sri Lanka was positioned 30th among the countries, according to the 14th annual edition of the index unveiled by Agility, a Kuwait-based global logistics company, revealed on Tuesday. Bangladesh has been stuck at the lowest position among the South Asian economies since 2019.
- The Index examined four key areas for logistics market development -- domestic logistics opportunities, international logistics opportunities, business fundamentals, and digital readiness – to assess and understand trends and their effects on 50 of the world's most promising emerging logistics markets.

<https://www.thedailystar.net/business/economy/news/logistics-index-bangladesh-ranks-lowest-south-asia-3242296>

Global energy prices drop, non-energy inch up

- Global energy prices dropped 8.9% in January, led by a 44% decline in natural gas in Europe and a 16.1% fall in coal, the World Bank's Pink sheet reported. The Pink Sheet is a monthly report that monitors commodity price movements. Non-energy prices gained 1.7%, led by metals.

<https://www.thedailystar.net/business/economy/news/global-energy-prices-drop-non-energy-inch-3242991>

15% spice demand met thru imports

- Bangladesh has to rely on imports to meet about 15% of the demand of the spice market, which highlighted the foreign currencies the country has to spend to bring in the items as well as the potential for local production. The country produces 4.93 Mn tonnes of spices against an annual demand of 5.85 Mn tonnes, said Shailendra Nath Mozumder, principal scientific officer of state-run Spice Research Center in Bogura.

<https://www.thedailystar.net/business/economy/news/15-spice-demand-met-thru-imports-3242971>

Stocks:**GPHISPAT | GPH Ispat suffers losses for two quarters straight due to strong dollar**

- GPH Ispat Limited has incurred losses for the two consecutive quarters of the ongoing fiscal year 2022-23 despite posting a significant growth in its sales revenue. The steel manufacturer has reported a loss of BDT 55.88 Mn in the second quarter (Q2) for October-December of FY23.
- In the first quarter, the company also suffered a huge loss of BDT 794.07 Mn. As a result, the company incurred a loss of BDT 849.95 Mn in total in the first half of the current FY23. In the same period of the previous FY22, the company made a profit of BDT 949.4 Mn.

<https://thefinancialexpress.com.bd/stock/gph-ispate-suffers-losses-for-two-quarters-straight-due-to-strong-dollar-1675839837>

AL-HAJTEX | Alhaj Textile Mills incurs losses

- Alhaj Textile Mills, a listed textile maker, has ended up suffering a loss in the July-December period of fiscal year 2022-23 due to increases in the prices of raw materials and costs rising in several of its operational segments. It incurred a loss of BDT 1.12 Mn, a far cry from the profit of BDT 2.57 Mn it secured in the same period of the previous year, according to its financial report. Thus, its earnings per share have come to stand at BDT 0.05 in the negative whereas it was BDT 0.12 in the six-month period of the preceding year.

<https://www.thedailystar.net/business/economy/news/alhaj-textile-mills-incurs-losses-3242986>

EXCHANGE | BSEC stands firm on gathering unclaimed dividends

- Following several warnings and deadlines for depositing unclaimed dividends to the Capital Market Stabilization Fund (CMSF), the stock market regulator is now becoming more stringent on gathering the funds that have been lying in issuer companies' accounts for years. The Bangladesh Securities and Exchange Commission (BSEC) has decided to appoint external auditors to bring issuers into compliance with the rules and to verify the status of unclaimed dividend payments to the fund.
- The regulator had set July last year for the deposit of the dividends, and some companies have complied with the order. But the majority have yet to do so. Thus, the fund formed for the purpose of increasing the supply of liquidity in the capital market is not getting the expected results, due to which the commission has decided to appoint auditors.
- As per its decision, the commission will now engage a maximum of four auditors and select issuer companies for audit based on information to be provided by CMSF, such as risk elements, default histories, and non-compliances of the issuer companies.

<https://www.tbsnews.net/economy/stocks/bsec-stands-firm-gathering-unclaimed-dividends-582162>

World Stock and Commodities*

Index Name	Close Value	Value Change YTD	% Change YTD
Crude Oil (WTI)*	USD 78.58	USD 3.37	4.48%
Crude Oil (Brent)*	USD 85.23	USD 7.45	9.58%
Gold Spot*	USD 1,879.42	USD 105.27	5.93%
DSEX	6,295.66	88.66	1.43%
S&P 500	4,117.86	278.36	7.25%
FTSE 100	7,885.17	433.43	5.82%
BSE SENSEX	60,663.79	-176.95	-0.29%
KSE-100	41,723.32	1,302.87	3.22%
CSEALL	8,987.45	484.96	5.70%

Exchange Rates**1 US Dollar = 106.50 BDT****1 GBP = 128.64 BDT****1 Euro = 114.26 BDT****1 INR = 1.29 BDT**

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