

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's GDP to grow at 5.5% this year, 6.5% next year: IMF**

- The International Monetary Fund has kept Bangladesh's gross domestic product growth forecast for the current fiscal year (FY23) unchanged at 5.5%, lower than the government's target of 6.5%. Yet, Bangladesh is expected to remain one of the fastest-growing economies globally, with only seven countries projected to grow at a higher rate, the global lender says in its latest outlook.
- Earlier in January this year, the IMF set Bangladesh's growth forecast at 5.5%. The IMF's projection is slightly higher than that of the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank, which predicted 5.2% and 5.3% growth respectively for Bangladesh in the current fiscal. In the latest version of its World Economic Outlook released on Tuesday, the IMF said Bangladesh's GDP will grow at 6.5% in the next fiscal (FY24).

<https://www.tbsnews.net/economy/imf-keeps-bangladeshs-gdp-growth-forecast-unchanged-55-fy23-614918>

Women's domestic work to be added to GDP from next FY

- The government will include women's household work in its GDP calculation from the next financial year and an action plan in this regard will be prepared very soon, said Planning Minister MA Mannan on Tuesday. The minister said the prime minister has defined women's domestic work as a job that involves no fixed working hours, no breaks, no vacations, no wages, and no retirement benefits.
- The prime minister has stressed the importance of including the value of women's domestic work, which has traditionally been undervalued, in the calculation of GDP. She had previously instructed the Executive Committee of the National Economic Council [Ecne] on 4 March to take action in this regard," he added.

<https://www.tbsnews.net/economy/womens-domestic-work-be-added-gdp-next-fy-615054>

More tax on tobacco products in next budget stressed

- Imposition of effective tax on tobacco products could increase government's revenue as well as reduce consumption of the harmful products, according to a think tank. In this regard, Unnayan Shamannay suggested increasing minimum prices of different categories of cigarettes and taxes in the next national budget for the fiscal year 2023-24.
- It recommended increasing minimum retail price of the cheapest (lower) variety of cigarette to BDT 55 from existing BDT 40 per packet (10 sticks) and excise duty on maximum retail price from existing 57% to 65%.

<https://thefinancialexpress.com.bd/economy/bangladesh/more-tax-on-tobacco-products-in-next-budget-stressed>

Income tax ceiling may rise

- The government is going to raise the tax-free-income ceiling for individuals in the forthcoming budget for inflation relief amid higher cost of living, besides few other fiscal revisions including amnesty on 'black money'. Sources concerned said the ceiling might be increased to BDT 330,000 to BDT 350,000 for an individual taxpayer. Currently, the tax threshold for individuals is BDT 0.3 Mn. It means an individual have to pay tax if their income crosses BDT 25,000 per month.

<https://thefinancialexpress.com.bd/economy/bangladesh/income-tax-ceiling-may-rise>

No new pay scale, 20% dearness allowance proposed for FY24

- All government employees are likely to get a dearness allowance of up to 20% in the next fiscal year instead of a fresh pay scale anticipated by many, according to finance ministry sources. The Ministry of Finance has made a proposal for the special allowance in the budget for the fiscal 2023-24 in consideration of the high price of essentials due to the ongoing inflation.

<https://www.tbsnews.net/economy/budget/no-new-pay-scale-20-dearness-allowance-proposed-fy24-615058>

LPG import eased for industries

- Liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) import is eased by a latest measure allowing industries not belonging to a project or under industry-based customs stations for bringing the fuel. The National Board of Revenue (NBR) relaxed its condition on the LPG import -- at a time when demand for fuels in the country has been on the rise.
- As per the Customs Act 1969, import of LPG is only allowed through the customs stations based on project or dedicated to a company. In a recent clarification, signed by Second Secretary, Customs, international trade and agreement, Omar Mobin, the NBR says: "Importers can unload LPG if they have agreement with the companies linked with the Land Customs Station (LCS)."

<https://thefinancialexpress.com.bd/economy/bangladesh/lpg-import-eased-for-industries>

'Poverty reduced significantly'

- Despite the fear of a sharp rise in poverty due to the pandemic, Planning Minister MA Mannan today hinted at a significant reduction in the number of poor people in the country. He, however, refused to reveal the exact figures of the poverty rate as the Household Income and Expenditure Survey-2023 of the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS) will be launched tomorrow.

<https://www.thedailystar.net/business/economy/news/poverty-reduced-significantly-3294676>

PM for utilising untapped potentials of 'Blue Economy'

- Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on Tuesday asked the authorities concerned to stress more on utilising the untapped potentials of the 'Blue Economy'. The Premier gave the directive while chairing a meeting on the Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (EcneC) held at the NEC Conference Room in the capital's Sher-e-Bangla Nagar area. Ministers, State Ministers, Planning Commission members and secretaries concerned attended the meeting.
- The Planning Minister said the day's meeting approved a total of 11 projects involving an overall estimated cost of BDT 136.55 Bn. "Of the total project cost, BDT 31.29 Bn will come from the government while the rest of BDT 105.26 Bn as project assistance.

<https://www.tbsnews.net/economy/pm-utilising-untapped-potentials-blue-economy-614882>

Bangladesh seeks Japanese investment in joint economic dialogue

- Bangladesh today (April 11) invited Japan to invest here, especially in Maheshkhali Economic Zone, assuring them of providing all kinds of cooperation from the government. The invitation was made at the 5th Japan-Bangladesh public-private joint economic dialogue held online, said a press release of the Prime Minister's Office (PMO).
- Both Bangladesh and Japan discussed future plan in expanding the business of Japanese investors in Bangladesh and expressed satisfaction on the progress made in the activities of Bangladesh Special Economic Zone in Araihaaz Upazila of Narayanganj district based on G2G (government to government) model.

<https://thefinancialexpress.com.bd/economy/bangladesh/bangladesh-seeks-japanese-investment-in-joint-economic-dialogue>

Credit card spending hits four-month low

- Spending through credit cards hit a four-month low in February as people have become cautious in spending based on loans in the face of spiralling inflation, several bankers said today. Many have showed the lower number of days in February than January as a reason for the fall.
- In February, people bought BDT 23.12 Bn worth of products and services, which was nearly 8% lower than January's BDT 25.06 Bn, according to data of Bangladesh Bank. However, overall credit card-based loan, a high interest-bearing instrument, rose 10% year-on-year last month from TBDT 21.08 Bn in February of 2022.

<https://www.thedailystar.net/business/news/credit-card-spending-hits-four-month-low-3294666>

Fertiliser prices rise by BDT 5 per kg as govt reduces subsidy

- The government has increased the price of fertiliser at the farmers' level for the second time in nine months to deal with the excessive pressure of subsidy on fertilisers. This time, the price of urea, DAP, TSP and MOP fertilisers has been increased by BDT 5 per kilogram.
- Sources at the agriculture ministry said the government will save about BDT 70 Bn annually on subsidy expenditure for fertilisers by hiking the price as the money will come from the farmers' pockets. From now on, the price of urea at the dealer and farmer levels will be BDT 25 and BDT 27 per kg respectively, which was BDT 20 and BDT 22 previously, according to a notice issued by the ministry yesterday.

<https://www.tbsnews.net/economy/fertiliser-prices-tk5-kg-614670>

RMG export growth slows to 2.49% in US market

- Domestic apparel shipments to the US feel the effects of an economic downswing as export growth slowed down to 2.49% in the first two months of 2023. Bangladesh received USD 1.46 Bn this January-February period from its largest destination. Last January, ready-made garment (RMG) exports witnessed double-digit growth of 15.44% year on year while it recorded over 36% growth in 2022.
- The overall US apparel import in the last two months of the current calendar year, however, has declined by 11.86% to USD 13.21 Bn. Apparel exporters attributed economic slowdown, high inflation and interest rate in the USA to this decline in the demand for apparel.

<https://thefinancialexpress.com.bd/economy/bangladesh/rmg-export-growth-slows-to-249pc-in-us-market>

Stocks:**CITYBANK | City Bank profits drop by 13% in 2022**

- The City Bank has posted 13.1% lower profits for 2022 compared to the previous year. Its consolidated earnings per share (EPS) stood at BDT 3.98, down from BDT 4.58 in the previous year, according to a price sensitive information disclosure. The net asset value per share increased to BDT 28.21 at the end of last December.
- The top tier private sector bank's board of directors recommended 10% cash and 2% stock dividends for 2022, down from 12.5% cash and 12.5% stock in the previous year. The bank also will increase its authorized capital to BDT 20 Bn from BDT 15 Bn to create headroom for its higher paid up capital in coming years.

<https://www.tbsnews.net/economy/stocks/city-bank-profits-drop-13-2022-614938>

KAY&QUE | Kay & Que's profit drops by 76% in March quarter

- Kay & Que (Bangladesh) Limited – a publicly listed CNG filling station that also sells stones – has reported a 76% plunge in its net profit in the January to March quarter of the ongoing 2022-23 fiscal year, compared to the same quarter of the last fiscal. In the quarter, the company's net profit stood at BDT 0.566 Mn, which was BDT 2.4 Mn in the March quarter of FY22. Its earnings per share (EPS) stood at BDT 0.11.
- During the nine months from July 2022 to March 2023, the EPS was BDT 0.36. According to a disclosure by the company on the Dhaka Stock Exchange (DSE) website on Tuesday, its profit fell mainly because of a decline in revenue from both its CNG and stone businesses.

<https://www.tbsnews.net/economy/stocks/kay-ques-profit-declines-76-614646>

EXCHANGE | Al-Madina Pharma QIO subscription opens 7 May

- The electronic subscription of Al-Madina Pharmaceuticals Limited under the qualified investor offer (QIO) will start on 7 May and continue till 11 May 2023. Individual investors will submit applications that will maintain a minimum investment of BDT 2 Mn in the secondary market at a close price in matured listed securities as on 25 April 2023.
- Earlier in February this year, the Bangladesh Securities and Exchange Commission (BSEC) allowed Al-Madina Pharmaceuticals to raise BDT 50 Mn from the SME platform of the stock market through a QIO. The company will issue 5 Mn shares at face value of BDT 10 each and use the fund to expand its business and repay loans. Prime Bank Investment is the issue manager of the company's QIO.

<https://www.tbsnews.net/economy/stocks/al-madina-pharma-qio-subscription-opens-7-may-614674>

LEGACYFOOT | Legacy Footwear allowed to raise paid-up capital thru new shares

- The Bangladesh Securities and Exchange Commission (BSEC) has recently allowed Legacy Footwear to increase its paid-up capital by issuing 30 Mn ordinary shares. Legacy Footwear will issue the shares at a face value of BDT 10 each to its directors, other than existing shareholders, against cash consideration through private placement.
- Currently, the company's paid-up capital is BDT 130.8 Mn, which will reach BDT 430.8 Mn after the issuance of the new shares. As a result, the company will be able to comply with the minimum paid-up capital of BDT 300 Mn of the commission. BSEC Executive and Spokesperson Mohammad Rezaul Karim said out of the BDT 300 Mn, the company will repay its bank loan of BDT 250 Mn, and the remaining amount will be used as working capital.

<https://www.tbsnews.net/economy/stocks/legacy-footwear-allowed-raise-paid-capital-thru-new-shares-614466>

EMERALDOIL | Emerald Oil secures BSEC nod to issue 31.5 Mn fresh shares

- Emerald Oil Industries, an almost forgotten rice-bran oil producer, has secured the approval of the Bangladesh Securities and Exchange Commission (BSEC) to issue 31.5 Mn fresh shares against an investment by its new owner as a share money deposit. In its recent meeting, the BSEC approved the issuance of new shares at BDT 10 each – a price much lower than the shares' last trading price of BDT 34.7.
- The new shares will be issued in favour of Minori Bangladesh, a subsidiary of Japanese farming company Minori Co Limited, which took over the company in 2021 and has resumed production since January 2022. The shares will be locked-in as per rules.

<https://www.tbsnews.net/economy/stocks/emerald-oil-secures-bsec-nod-issue-315cr-fresh-shares-615014>

HIMADRI | Himadri Limited to start trading on CSE SME platform

- Trading of Himadri Limited's shares will start on the Chattogram Stock Exchange's (CSE) SME platform on 11 April, said CSE officials. Himadri Limited operates six cold storages in the country's northern part where mainly potatoes are stored. Earlier, it was delisted from the main board and transferred to the over-the-counter market in 2013 as the company failed to pay dividends for a long time. It was listed on the stock exchanges in 1990.
- The CSE said trading of Himadri shares will start at the reference price which will be determined by the last closing price at the Dhaka Stock Exchange (DSE). Its shares have been traded on the DSE's SME platform since 30 September 2021. The closing price of its share was determined at BDT 35.30 each at the end of Monday's session.

<https://www.tbsnews.net/economy/stocks/himadri-limited-start-trading-cse-sme-platform-614458>

ENVOYTEX | Envoy Textiles gears up for AGM as conflict among sponsors is over

- Envoy Textiles Limited is now gearing up to hold its pending annual general meeting (AGM), as the conflict between its two major owners, Kutubuddin Ahmed and Abdus Salam Murshedy, has finally come to an end. In its verdict, the High Court on 10 April reconstituted the board of the company and asked it to hold the AGM within the next 90 days, Envoy Textiles said in a Dhaka Stock Exchange (DSE) filing.

<https://www.tbsnews.net/economy/stocks/envoy-textiles-gears-agm-conflict-among-sponsors-over-615038>

World Stock and Commodities*

Index Name	Close Value	Value Change YTD	% Change YTD
Crude Oil (WTI)*	USD 81.55	USD 6.34	8.43%
Crude Oil (Brent)*	USD 85.69	USD 7.91	10.17%
Gold Spot*	USD 2,015.86	USD 241.71	13.62%
DSEX	6,196.49	-10.51	-0.17%
S&P 500	4,108.94	269.44	7.02%
FTSE 100	7,785.72	333.98	4.48%
BSE SENSEX	60,157.72	-683.02	-1.12%
KSE-100	39,804.71	-615.74	-1.52%
CSEALL	9,322.85	820.36	9.65%

Exchange Rates**1 US Dollar = 106.34 BDT****1 GBP = 132.22 BDT****1 Euro = 116.15 BDT****1 INR = 1.30 BDT**

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BRAC EPL Stock Brokerage Limited

Research

Salim Afzal Shawon, CFA	Head of Research	salim@bracepl.com	01708 805 221
Anika Mafiz	Research Analyst	anika.mafiz@bracepl.com	01708 805 206
Fahim Hassan	Research Analyst	fahim.hassan@bracepl.com	01709 636 546
Hossain Zaman Towhidi Khan	Senior Research Associate	hztowhidi.khan@bracepl.com	01708 805 224
Billal Hossain	Research Associate	billal.hossain@bracepl.com	01708 805 229
Md. Tanvir Ahmed	Research Associate	mtanvir.ahmed@bracepl.com	01708 805 201
Syed Tawsifuzzaman	Research Associate	s.tawsifuzzaman@bracepl.com	01708 805 202

International Trade and Sales

Ahsanur Rahman Bappi	Chief Executive Officer	bappi@bracepl.com	01730 357 991
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For any queries or services, you can reach us at care@bracepl.com or hotline **16285**.