

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:**Per capita monthly income rises to BDT 7,614**

- The per capita monthly income of Bangladesh has increased by more than 93% to BDT 7,614 in the last six years, according to the Household Income and Expenditure Survey 2022 of the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS). In 2016, people in the country earned an average of BDT 3,936 per month which means the income has increased by BDT 3,678 in the last six years.
- The BBS survey says every household in the country earns an average of BDT 32,422 per month. After splitting the amount among a little over four-member family, the per capita income stands at BDT 7,614. Although the per capita income as per HIES has increased relatively this time, the report has a big difference with the per capita income mentioned in the GDP report published by the National Statistics Wing of the Bureau of Statistics.

<https://www.tbsnews.net/economy/capita-monthly-income-rises-tk7614-615386>

Poverty rate drops to 18.6% with a rise in inequality

- The latest household survey comes with good news that the poverty rate in Bangladesh dropped to 18.6% in the last six years – half of the period being devastated by twin global shocks. But there is a note of warning too - the improvement comes with widening income inequality.
- The HIES 2022 shows that the poverty rate has declined by 5.6% points in six years from 24.3% in 2016, marking a less than 1% fall per year. While this is still a positive trend, the reduction rate has been decreasing continuously from over 1% average decline per year since 2000.

<https://www.tbsnews.net/economy/incomes-grow-inequality-widens-615274>

Govt's bank borrowing increases by BDT 110 Bn in March

- The government borrowed around BDT 177.70 Bn from the banks, while it collected only BDT 14.09 Bn from non-banking sources in February and March of this year. The government borrowed around BDT 68.03 Bn in February and around BDT 110 Bn from the banking sector in March this year.
- According to a Bangladesh Bank report, the government has borrowed BDT 523 Bn from the banking system from July to March in FY23. Out of that amount, BDT 503.80 Bn (96.21%) was taken from the central bank. Meanwhile, customers have been withdrawing more money from the banking system rather than investing in saving certificates.

<https://www.tbsnews.net/economy/banking/govts-bank-borrowing-increases-tk11000cr-march-615554>

Bangladesh requests AIIB, JICA, Korea to disburse USD 820 Mn as budget support

- Bangladesh has requested disbursement of USD 820 Mn fund from the development financiers and Korean government, apart from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) loan, officials said. The fund would be used for attaining inclusive recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic fallout, continued efforts towards sustainable development, and ensuring solid macro-economic stability, they added.

<https://thefinancialexpress.com.bd/economy/bangladesh/bd-requests-aiib-jica-korea-to-disburse-820m-as-budget-support>

Foreign currency account facility for local shippers, airlines

- The central bank has allowed banks to open foreign currency accounts in the names of shipping companies, airlines and freight forwarders to support their global operations. In view of the growing trend of global operations by shipping companies and airlines, banks may open FC accounts in the names of the companies having global operations, said the Bangladesh Bank in a notice yesterday. Up to 75% of the inward remittances of the companies can be kept as deposits in the accounts. The remainder has to be encashed in the local currency.

<https://www.thedailystar.net/business/economy/news/foreign-currency-account-facility-local-shippers-airlines-3294771>

Dollar transactions thru RTGS cross USD 10 Bn in seven months

- Foreign currency transactions through the Bangladesh Bank's online platform Real Time Gross Settlement (RTGS) crossed USD 10 Bn within seven months of launch. According to central bank data, USD 1.74 Bn was transacted in March, which is 7.76% higher than the USD 1.61 Bn transacted in February. Similar to March, most months saw an increase in both the number and volume of transactions compared to the previous month.
- The central bank has been using the RTGS platform since 4 September to settle transactions in five foreign currencies, including the US dollar, pound, euro, the Canadian dollar and yen. In this system, transactions are settled from one bank to another on a currency basis, such as dollar against dollar or euro against euro. Since its launch in September, the RTGS platform has facilitated transactions totalling USD 10.4 Bn as of March.

<https://www.tbsnews.net/economy/dollar-transactions-thru-rtgs-cross-10b-seven-months-615558>

Japan proposes industrial hub in Bangladesh

- Japan has proposed developing an industrial hub in Bangladesh with supply chains to the landlocked northeastern states of India, and to Nepal and Bhutan beyond by developing a port and transport in the region, officials said on Tuesday. It comes after Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida's visit to India last month in which he touted the idea of a new industrial hub for the Bay of Bengal and northeast India that could bolster development in the impoverished region of 300 Mn people, reports Reuters.
- After Kishida's visit, his government approved USD 1.27 Bn in funding to Bangladesh for three infrastructure projects - including a new commercial port in the Matarbari area with links to adjacent landlocked Indian states, including Tripura, and wider international markets.

<https://thefinancialexpress.com.bd/economy/bangladesh/japan-proposes-industrial-hub-in-bangladesh>

Businesses for caution on cutting tax exemption in FY24 budget

- While the International Monetary Fund (IMF) has asked for a reduction in tax exemptions as a condition for granting Bangladesh a USD 4.7 Bn loan, the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI) urges "cautious decisions" on the issue. The country's apex business body believes that the government should not make any decisions about tax exemptions without first verifying the importance of such exemptions, especially given the current condition of the national economy.

<https://www.tbsnews.net/nbr/businesses-caution-cutting-tax-exemption-fy24-budget-615562>

Cashless LD Tax system to be implemented from Pahela Baisakh

- The cashless land development tax (LD Tax) system will be implemented from Pahela Baishakh (14 April), said a land ministry notice Wednesday (12 April). Earlier on 29 March, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina announced introducing the LD Tax system, effective from Pahela Baishakh, during the National Land Conference held in Dhaka.

<https://www.tbsnews.net/economy/cashless-ld-tax-system-be-implemented-pahela-baisakh-615194>

BGMEA urges EU to extend GSP trade benefits

- The Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA) has requested the European Union (EU) to extend the trade facilities provided under the GSP scheme for six more years, rather than three, said a press release on Wednesday.
- They argued that such an extension would aid Bangladesh in graduating smoothly from the least developed country (LDC) category and continuing the country's development journey in the years to come. Issues including bilateral trade, LDC graduation and its implications on Bangladesh's trade and economy, the current situation of the RMG industry, and its prospects and challenges were discussed in the meeting, the press release reads.

<https://www.tbsnews.net/economy/bgmea-urges-eu-extend-gsp-trade-benefits-615462>

IMF team due on 25 April to discuss 2nd tranche of USD 4.7 Bn loan

- A team from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) is due to arrive in Dhaka on 25 April to discuss the progress in the use of the first tranche of its USD 4.7 Bn loan programme for Bangladesh and the release of the second installment. IMF Asia and Pacific Division Head Rahul Anand will lead the team comprising three to four members, the ministry sources said speaking on condition of anonymity.
- Bangladesh received the first tranche of USD 476.2 Mn of the USD 4.7 Bn loan approved by the IMF on 30 January. The entire amount of the loan will be paid in seven installments in three and a half years until 2026. As such there are six more installments left.
- A senior official of the ministry said the IMF usually reviews various aspects of compliance before disbursing each tranche. Accordingly, an IMF team will come next September to review the fulfillment of loan conditions before disbursing the second tranche.

<https://www.tbsnews.net/economy/imf-team-due-dhaka-25-april-discuss-2nd-tranche-47b-loan-615226>

Per capita rice intake keeps falling: BBS

- Average daily per capita rice consumption in Bangladesh maintained its declining trend in 2022, as it fell by 10% to 328.9 grammes from 367.2 grammes in 2016 thanks to increased income that enable people to consume more non-rice items, according to data of the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS). Mentionable, per capita consumption of rice was 416 grammes in 2010, according to the Household Income and Expenditure Survey 2022 unveiled by the BBS.
- Khondaker Golam Moazzem, research director of the Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD), said food habits change in line with increase in income. The latest data showed that people in urban areas consume 284.7 grammes of rice, which is 13.44% lower than the national average. But rural people take 348.1 grammes, which is 5.84% higher than the national average. As such, Bangladesh's annual human consumption requirement of rice would be over 20 Mn tonnes, which was much lower than the country's estimated rice production of 38 Mn tonnes in fiscal year 2021-22.

<https://www.thedailystar.net/business/economy/news/capita-rice-intake-keeps-falling-bbs-3295806>

Entrepreneurship fund moves too slow to live up to expectations

- The Entrepreneurship Support Fund (ESF), a government initiative aimed at creating entrepreneurs through easy loan facilities, has financed only 11 projects in the past five years, that too only partially, amid a lack of interest of the banks citing complex rules and risk as the main hurdles.
- The fund provides 49% of the total investment of a project at only 2% interest rate with a tenure of 8 years, of which 4 years falls within the grace period. The entrepreneurs, on their part, are responsible for the remaining 51% including land and equity.

<https://www.tbsnews.net/economy/entrepreneurship-fund-moves-too-slow-live-expectations-615198>

Stocks:**BRACBANK | Brac Bank profits grow by 10.13% in 2022**

- Brac Bank Ltd has posted a 10.13% growth in its annual profits in 2022. The private sector commercial bank and its subsidiaries' combined earnings per share (EPS) stood at BDT 4.02 which was BDT 3.65 in the previous year, according to the Dhaka Stock Exchange (DSE).
- At the end of December, the net asset value of the bank and its subsidiaries stood at BDT 40.86. The bank's board of directors on Tuesday recommended 7.5% cash and 7.5% stock dividends for 2022. Brac Bank also announced to increase its authorised capital to BDT 50 Bn from BDT 20 Bn to create headroom for its paid-up capital.

<https://www.tbsnews.net/economy/stocks/brac-bank-profits-grow-1013-2022-615186>

BERGERPBL | Berger to borrow USD 60 Mn from its foreign parent company

- Berger Paints Bangladesh Ltd has decided to enter an agreement with its foreign parent company J&N Investments (Asia) Limited to avail USD 60 Mn in loans, according to a public disclosure of the company. The loan will facilitate the opening of letters of credit for raw material imports by Berger Paints Bangladesh and will be disbursed in phases based on business requirements.
- The board regulation for the planned loan agreement was approved on Wednesday and the company would apply to the Bangladesh Investment Development and Regulatory Authority for approval. The interest rate and repayment period would be determined by the regulatory authorities during their approval, according to Sazzad Rahim Chowdhury.

<https://www.tbsnews.net/economy/stocks/berger-borrow-60m-its-foreign-parent-company-615546>

SHAHJABANK | Bangladesh Bank, Shahjalal Islami Bank sign deal to facilitate CMSMEs

- The Bangladesh Bank (BB) and Shahjalal Islami Bank Limited signed an agreement on Sunday at the central bank headquarters in Dhaka to boost money flow to the country's Cottage, Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises (CMSMEs), according to a press release. Abu Farah Md Nasser, deputy governor of Bangladesh Bank; Mosleh Uddin Ahmed, managing director & CEO of Shahjalal Islami Bank; and Md Abdul Wahab, project director of Bangladesh Bank's Covid-19 Emergency and Crisis Response Facility Project, signed the agreement on behalf of their respective organisations.

<https://thefinancialexpress.com.bd/stock/bangladesh/bangladesh-bank-shahjalal-islami-bank-sign-deal-to-facilitate-cmsmes>

EXCHANGE | Why BD Hotels' SME board debut got halted at the eleventh hour

- The Dhaka Stock Exchange (DSE), on Wednesday, halted the trading of Bangladesh Hotels Ltd shares that was supposed to start on Thursday on the small-cap companies' platform or SME board. Just a day before the scheduled SME board debut of the infrastructure owner firm of three-star Hotel Purbani International, the premier bourse, in a statement on Wednesday, said the decision was due to "inevitable circumstances".
- Sources, however, said fearing a speculative manipulation of the share prices, the Bangladesh Securities and Exchange Commission (BSEC) asked the small-cap company to increase its paid-up capital to an acceptable level. BSEC and stock exchange officials told The Business Standard, the company, earlier set to come back to the secondary market trading from the defunct over-the-counter (OTC), was significantly lacking in share sufficiency.

<https://www.tbsnews.net/economy/stocks/why-bd-hotels-sme-board-debut-got-halted-eleventh-hour-615550>

World Stock and Commodities*

Index Name	Close Value	Value Change YTD	% Change YTD
Crude Oil (WTI)*	USD 83.20	USD 7.99	10.62%
Crude Oil (Brent)*	USD 87.23	USD 9.45	12.15%
Gold Spot*	USD 2,018.88	USD 244.73	13.79%
DSEX	6,204.88	-2.12	-0.03%
S&P 500	4,091.95	252.45	6.58%
FTSE 100	7,824.84	373.10	5.01%
BSE SENSEX	60,392.77	-447.97	-0.74%
KSE-100	40,126.05	-294.40	-0.73%
CSEALL	9,415.28	912.79	10.74%

Exchange Rates**1 US Dollar = 106.35 BDT****1 GBP = 132.83 BDT****1 Euro = 116.99 BDT****1 INR = 1.30 BDT**

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