

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:**Unemployment drops to 3.6% on increased women's participation**

- The unemployment rate in Bangladesh declined to 3.6% in 2022 mainly riding on an upward trend in women's and youths' participation, down from 4.2% reported in the previous survey conducted in 2016-17, shows the latest Labour Force Survey by the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS). The number of unemployed people in the country has decreased by 70,000 over the past five years, and now stands at 2.63 Mn.
- The latest survey revealed a shift in employment trends, with more people engaged in farm activities and service sector, while employment in industries dropped. Women's participation in the workforce has increased in 2022, which is reflected at the national level. Also, youth labour force increases, which could lead to economic growth and increased competitiveness.

<https://www.tbsnews.net/economy/unemployment-drops-36-increased-womens-participation-607726>

Insurance may be made mandatory for all vehicles

- The government is likely to make insurance mandatory for all types of vehicles, including motorcycles, cars and buses. To this end, the Insurance Development and Regulatory Authority (Idra) has sent a proposal recently to the finance ministry to take an initiative to amend the Road Transport Act 2018.
- Insiders said the Financial Institutions Division has prepared a summary in this regard for the Prime Ministers' Office for consideration. Vehicle owners will have to pay a fine of up to BDT 3,000 if not insured, according to the IDRA proposal.

<https://www.thedailystar.net/business/economy/news/insurance-may-be-made-mandatory-all-vehicles-3284191>

Japan to provide USD 1.27 Bn to Bangladesh

- Japan will provide 1,65,319 Mn Japanese yen or approximately USD 1.27 Bn for implementing three key projects in Bangladesh. Out of the total amount, 105,362 Mn Japanese yen or USD 811 Mn will be provided for the 2nd tranche of the Matarbari Port Development Project (II), 55,729 Mn Japanese yen or USD 429 Mn for the 1st tranche of the Chattogram-Cox's Bazar Highway Improvement Project (I) and 4,228 Mn Japanese yen or USD 32.56 Mn for the Project for Construction of dual gauge double line between Joydebpur-Ishwardi section.
- In this regard, 'exchange of notes' and 'loan agreements' for the three projects were signed between Bangladesh and Japan at the NEC-2 conference room in the capital's Sher-e-Bangla Nagar area on Wednesday, said a press release. The rate of interest of this loan will be 1.20% for construction, 0.01% for consultancy service and front end fee 0.2%.

<https://www.newagebd.net/article/198068/japan-to-provide-127b-to-bangladesh>

Increasing tax collection essential to meet higher interest costs: Economists

- Even if the country's debt does not increase, the cost of paying interest will increase in the future due to various reasons, including attaining the status of a middle-income country. In this situation, there are no options other than increasing tax collection to meet expenditure for priority sectors like education, health, and security after meeting the interest costs, said economists at a seminar organised by the Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS).

<https://www.tbsnews.net/economy/increasing-tax-collection-essential-meet-higher-interest-costs-economists-607682>

Kabir ship-breaking yard gets green certification

- Kabir Ship Recycling Facilities, a ship-breaking yard of Kabir Group, situated at Sitalpur in Chattogram's Sitakunda upazila, has received the certificate of 'Green Yard'. Earlier, ship-breaking yards of PHP and SN Corporation received the certificate.
- A 'Green Yard' refers to a yard that is compliant with the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) Guidelines for Safe and Environmentally Sound Ship Recycling under the Hong Kong Convention (HKC). Established in 1995 on seven acres of land, Kabir Ship Recycling Facilities currently employs over 800 people and produces an average of 150k tonnes of scrap materials per year through dismantling vessels.

<https://thefinancialexpress.com.bd/stock/bangladesh/kabir-ship-breaking-yard-gets-green-certification>

Loan contract awards remain below targets, holding back project growth: ADB

- Loan contract awards for development projects were below the targets both in 2021 and 2022, and more significant efforts are required by all agencies to expedite the procurement and implementation process, the Asian Development Bank (ADB) says.
- On loan disbursement, achievement in 2021 was better but 2022 missed to meet the annual target, it points out in its background paper presented at a review meeting in Dhaka yesterday. For 2023, ADB's loan contract awards target has been set at USD 886.9 Mn, whereas the disbursement target is USD 1,339.4 Mn.

<https://www.tbsnews.net/economy/loan-contract-awards-remain-below-targets-holding-back-project-growth-adb-607718>

Bank loan disbursement to poultry, livestock rises

- Banks disbursed a higher amount of loans to the poultry and livestock sector in the first seven months of the current fiscal year compared to the same period a year ago, according to data by Bangladesh Bank. In the seven months ending with January, the share of poultry and livestock in total farm loans of BDT 186.84 Bn rose 21% from 17% during the same period the previous year.
- Poultry and livestock producers got BDT 39.23 Bn in loans in the July-January period this fiscal, which was 35% higher from the same months a year ago, shows monthly report on agriculture and rural finance released yesterday.

<https://www.thedailystar.net/business/economy/news/bank-loan-disbursement-poultry-livestock-rises-3284151>

Stocks:**RINGSHINE | Ring Shine Textiles incurs BDT 190 Mn loss in Oct-Dec**

- Ring Shine Textiles Limited suffered a BDT 190 Mn loss in the October-December quarter of the current financial year. This compared to the BDT 5.0 Mn profit the textile manufacturer posted in the same quarter a year earlier. Thus, the earnings per share (EPS) were a negative BDT 0.38 for October-December of FY23 against a positive EPS of BDT 0.01 in the similar three-month period of 2021-22, according to the un-audited financial statements.
- This raised the loss to BDT 380.2 Mn in July-December of FY23, which was BDT 170 Mn in the identical half of 2021-22. As a result, the loss per share stood at BDT 0.76 in the first half of the ongoing financial year compared to BDT 0.34 in the July-December of FY22.

<https://www.thedailystar.net/business/organisation-news/news/ring-shine-textiles-incurs-BDT-19cr-loss-oct-dec-3284166>

EXCHANGE | Bonds excluded from banks' capital market exposure

- Corporate bonds and debentures will not be a part of the banking companies' capital market exposure, according to the modified bill to amend the Bank Companies Act. The draft bill approved by the cabinet on Tuesday, however, added a separate clause to let the Bangladesh Bank determine how much a bank can invest in corporate bonds, debentures and Shariah-based securities like Sukuk.
- All corporate bonds and debentures have been excluded from the banks' investment portfolio components that in total cannot exceed 25% of a bank's total equity for the sake of the development of the bond market, reads the rationale part of the proposed amendment.
- Hailing the development, Bangladesh Securities and Exchange Commission (BSEC) Chairman Professor Shibli Rubayat-UI-Islam said the much-needed exchange trading of corporate bonds has been given a hand through the proposed change.

<https://www.tbsnews.net/economy/stocks/bonds-excluded-banks-capital-market-exposure-607690>

TAMIJTEX | Tamijuddin Textile raises authorised capital to BDT 1 Bn

- Tamijuddin Textile Mills Limited yesterday said it has increased the authorised capital from BDT 350 Mn to BDT 1 Bn. This has been approved by the Registrar of Joint Stock Companies & Firms, said the textile company in a filing on the Dhaka Stock Exchange. Authorised share capital refers to the maximum number of shares a company is legally allowed to issue or offer based on its corporate charter.

<https://www.thedailystar.net/business/organisation-news/news/tamijuddin-textile-raises-authorised-capital-BDT-100cr-3284161>

DBH | Delta Brac Housing proposes 17% dividend for 2022

- Delta Brac Housing Finance Corporation has recommended a 17% dividend – 15% cash and 2% stock – for 2022. In 2021, the company had paid 15% cash and 10% stock dividends to its shareholders.
- According to Delta Brac, the stock dividend has been recommended to utilise its retained amount as paid-up capital for improving capital adequacy, and thereby facilitating the company's future business expansion. The stock dividend has been declared out of accumulated profit.

<https://www.tbsnews.net/economy/stocks/delta-brac-housing-proposes-17-dividend-2022-607674>

GEMINISEA | Two sponsors to sell 222,000 Gemini Sea Food shares

- Two sponsors have announced their intention to sell 222,000 shares of Gemini Sea Food Limited. The shares would be sold in the block market within 30 working days, according to the Dhaka Stock Exchange. Block market is the platform beyond the regular trading screen to facilitate large transactions without disrupting the public market flow.
- Gemini Sea Food sponsor Kazi Shahid Ahmed holds more than 793,000 shares of the company and he is planning to sell 122,000 shares. Ameenah Ahmed, who is a sponsor and a director of the company, holds more than 772,000 shares, of which she will sell 100,000.

<https://www.tbsnews.net/economy/stocks/two-sponsors-sell-222-lakh-gemini-sea-food-shares-607398>

World Stock and Commodities*

Index Name	Close Value	Value Change YTD	% Change YTD
Crude Oil (WTI)*	USD 72.97	(USD 2.24)	-2.98%
Crude Oil (Brent)*	USD 78.12	USD 0.34	0.44%
Gold Spot*	USD 1,964.70	USD 190.55	10.74%
DSEX	6,196.75	-10.25	-0.17%
S&P 500	4,027.81	188.31	4.90%
FTSE 100	7,564.27	112.53	1.51%
BSE SENSEX	57,960.09	-2,880.65	-4.73%
KSE-100	39,879.89	-540.56	-1.34%
CSEALL	9,272.43	769.94	9.06%

Exchange Rates**1 US Dollar = 106.85 BDT****1 GBP = 131.45 BDT****1 Euro = 115.78 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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Website

www.bracepl.com

Address

Symphony, Plot No. S.E. (F) - 9,
 Road No. 142, Gulshan-1, Dhaka

E-Mail

Research: research@bracepl.com
 Sales : frader@bracepl.com

Contact

Phone: +880 2 985 2446-50
 Fax: +880 2 985 2451