

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:**Bank deposits increase by BDT 170 Bn in Feb**

- Deposits in the country's banks increased by about BDT 170 Bn in February compared to the previous month. The amount of loans disbursed by banks during the period has increased by around BDT 60 Bn. Regarding the reasons for the increase in bank deposit, Syed Mahbubur Rahman, managing director and CEO of Mutual Trust Bank, told TBS, "In October and November last year, there was a crisis of confidence due to various incidents in the banking sector. At that time, we saw a lot of withdrawal pressure in the banks
- The customers' confidence in banks has recently increased due to various campaigns of the central bank and the commercial banks. Customers are now returning to banks. Besides, most banks have increased interest rates on deposits.

<https://www.tbsnews.net/economy/banking/bank-deposits-increase-tk17000cr-feb-610570>

Social safety spending to rise BDT 15 Bn in FY24

- The Ministry of Finance has decided to expand the social safety net for the elderly, widows, and disabled persons, increasing the number of beneficiaries by BDT .73 Mn in the upcoming fiscal 2023-24. The ministry is also going to raise the monthly old age allowance and widow allowance in the new budget after a decade-long break, in light of the recent surge in commodity prices.
- The decisions – finalized at an inter-ministerial meeting held at the secretariat yesterday – will result in an additional expenditure of BDT 15.26 Bn in the next financial year, sources at the finance ministry said.

<https://www.tbsnews.net/economy/social-safety-spending-rise-tk1500cr-fy24-610566>

Huawei to develop 50,000 ICT talents in South Asia

- Global tech giant Huawei has taken an ambitious plan of developing 50,000 ICT talents in South Asia in the next five years. The Chinese multinational will take various programmes like building ICT academies, organising different ICT and startup competitions, online course enrolment and fresh employee recruitment.
- The announcement came in an event titled 'Building a Smart Talent Ecosystem, In South Asia, For South Asia' held at Huawei's representative office of South Asia in Dhaka today. Yuying Karl, director for Bangladesh at Huawei's south Asia public relations department, shared the insight and plan at the event.

<https://www.thedailystar.net/business/news/huawei-develop-50000-ict-talents-south-asia-3287776>

Bangladesh cosmetics, toiletries replacing imported ones

- The country's cosmetics and toiletries products are gradually substituting the imported ones - following intensified efforts of local manufacturers on research and innovation to launch new items. Industry sources said a good number of consumers of personal and homecare products have switched to using the locally manufactured ones, as a bunch of new and advanced quality products are now available in market.

<https://thefinancialexpress.com.bd/economy/bangladesh/bangladesh-cosmetics-toiletries-replacing-imported-ones>

S Alam Group to invest USD 400 Mn to set up two more sugar refineries

- S Alam Group, one of the leading industrial groups in the country, plans to set up two more sugar refineries in Narayanganj and Chattogram with an investment of USD 400 Mn. The new refineries will mostly produce liquid sugar for the industry and refined sugar will be exported as well, said the company officials. The two refineries will jointly process 6,400 tonnes of sugar a day, 3,200 tonnes each, they informed.
- One of the two proposed refineries will be constructed at Ichanagar in Azimpara union of Karnaphuli upazila in Chattogram and the other at Ganga Nagar in Rupganj upazila of Narayanganj, he informed, adding that the two refineries are expected to be fully operational by 2025.

<https://www.tbsnews.net/economy/s-alam-group-invest-400m-set-two-more-sugar-refineries-610530>

Bankers hail proposed tougher law against willful defaulters, want speedy case disposal

- Top bankers have welcomed the proposed tough laws on wilful defaulters and sought a speedy disposal of default loan cases as habitual defaulters are benefiting from the lengthy hold-ups in settling the disputes. For effective implementation of the proposed changes in the recently approved bank company act, money loan courts need to be strengthened to prevent willful defaulters from taking advantage of the weak judicial system, in their view.
- According to bankers, some cases filed with the Artha Rin Adalat (money loan court) are pending for 8-10 years and willful defaulters are banking on the delay to find legal loopholes for a way out of their obligations. In many cases, these habitual defaulters manage to secure a stay order from the court delaying the legal process further. That is why bankers demanded a reform of the money loan court to recover the default loan from willful defaulters.

<https://www.tbsnews.net/economy/banking/bankers-hail-proposed-tougher-law-against-willful-defaulters-want-speedy-case>

Taka devalued yet again

- Taka has been devalued against the US dollar yet again. The Bangladesh Bank made the adjustment on Monday to sell dollars from its reserve at BDT 103, which was BDT 102 until Sunday. With the latest adjustment, the greenback price has increased 14 times since the beginning of FY23 amid depleting foreign exchange reserves.
- The central bank supplied USD 70 Mn to different banks at the new rate on Monday, according to official data, while the total release of dollars from the reserve in the current fiscal year amounted to USD 10 Bn.

<https://www.tbsnews.net/economy/taka-devalued-yet-again-610526>

Evaded taxes 8 times social safety net budget: CPD

- The yearly tax evasion and avoidance and exemptions mostly in the corporate sector could amount to BDT 2930 Bn at its highest, which is about eight times the amount of social safety net and welfare expenditure in the country, according to a study by the Center for Policy Dialogue (CPD). The tax evasion is also almost equal to the total revenue collection, the CPD said.
- In the fiscal 2021-22, the National Board of Revenue collected slightly higher than BDT 3000 Bn in revenues. The CPD has identified reserve and provision, showing less income, taking the help of legal advisors and tax practitioners, showing more investment allowances, individual intention, and high informal or cash-based transactions as the primary ways for tax avoidance and evasion.

<https://www.tbsnews.net/nbr/tax-evasion-avoidance-almost-equal-amount-revene-collection-cpd-610398>

Stocks:**UTTARABANK | Uttara Bank's annual profit grows by 22%**

- Uttara Bank Ltd has posted 21.92% year-on-year growth in its consolidated net profit for 2022. The publicly traded commercial bank, along with its subsidiaries, generated BDT 2.706 Bn in net profit after taxes in 2022, which was BDT 2.22 Bn in the previous year.
- Earnings per share (EPS) jumped to BDT 4.2 from BDT 3.45, according to a price sensitive information disclosure by the bank on Monday. At the end of last December, Uttara Bank's consolidated net asset value per share stood at BDT 31.79. Uttara Bank's board of directors recommended 14% stock dividends alongside 14% cash for 2022.

<https://www.tbsnews.net/economy/stocks/uttara-banks-annual-profit-grows-22-610534>

BARKAPOWER | Three directors to transfer Baraka Power stakes to holding companies

- Three directors of Baraka Power Ltd have announced plans to transfer their entire stakes at the company to two holding companies, according to the Dhaka Stock Exchange (DSE). Directors Ahsanul Kabir, Faisal Ahmed Chowdhury and Nanu Kazi Mohammed Miah will sell a total of more than 14.3 Mn shares in the block market, according to the disclosure.
- On the other hand, two of the corporate directors of Baraka Power – NRB Ventures (Pvt) Limited and Fusion Holdings (Pvt) Limited – together will buy the same number of shares from the block market.

<https://www.tbsnews.net/economy/stocks/three-directors-transfer-baraka-power-stakes-holding-companies-610202>

BIFC | Investor petitions in HC for liquidation of BIFC

- A foreign investor of the Bangladesh Industrial Finance Company (BIFC), a controversial non-banking financial institution, has filed an application in the High Court seeking liquidation of the company. A single company bench of Justice Khizir Ahmed Choudhury accepted the petition on Monday.
- Loquit Ullah, the foreign investor, invested about BDT 150 Mn in the BIFC, which has been going through a financial crisis for a long time. He did not get the money back. So, he has sought help from the court, the plaintiff's lawyer Omar Faruque told reporters.

<https://www.tbsnews.net/economy/investor-petitions-hc-liquidation-bifc-610542>

EXCHANGE | Stabilisation Fund: A new financing window for stock market

- The Capital Market Stabilization Fund (CMSF), which has been created by collecting investors' unclaimed dividends, is turning into a new funding window for the stock market. Last year, the Fund provided the Investment Corporation of Bangladesh (ICB) with BDT 2.25 Bn in several phases for investing in the secondary market.
- Now, the CMSF will provide market intermediaries with loans at low interest rates to increase liquidity in the capital market. The tenure of this loan will be 180 days, but it is renewable. According to the Bangladesh Securities and Exchange Commission (BSEC), the CMSF board will decide the interest rate, which will be at the higher end of the three-month average of fixed deposit receipt (FDR) rates.

<https://www.tbsnews.net/economy/stocks/stabilisation-fund-new-financing-window-stock-market-610546>

EXCHANGE | Why BSEC took a year to approve 2 banks' stock dividends

- The Bangladesh Securities and Exchange Commission (BSEC) has taken nearly one year to approve the stock dividends declared by two newly listed banks. The Union Bank, on 28 April last year, declared 5% cash and 5% stock dividends to its shareholders for 2021, and the South Bangla Agriculture and Commerce Bank (SBAC) on 27 April 2022 declared 3% cash and 1% stock dividends for 2021.
- When asked about the delay, Rezaul Karim, spokesperson and executive director of BSEC, told The Business Standard (TBS), "The two banks failed to meet the conditions of the commission. But the commission gave a late approval under special consideration as the banks are also obliged to meet the conditions of Basel-III."

<https://www.tbsnews.net/economy/stocks/why-bsec-took-year-approve-2-banks-stock-dividends-610538>

EXCHANGE | BMSL's mutual fund gets go-ahead

- The Bangladesh Securities and Exchange Commission (BSEC) has given go-ahead to the BMSL National Housing Growth Fund. The primary target of the open-ended mutual fund is to collect BDT 250 Mn. Of that, the National Housing Finance and Investments has already provided BDT 25 Mn and the rest of the fund will come from the general investors.
- Each unit price of the fund is BDT 10. BMSL Asset Management Company is the asset manager of the fund. Trustee and custodian of the fund is Bangladesh General Insurance and Brac Bank respectively.

<https://www.thedailystar.net/business/news/bmsls-mutual-fund-gets-go-ahead-3287811>

World Stock and Commodities*

Index Name	Close Value	Value Change YTD	% Change YTD
Crude Oil (WTI)*	USD 80.61	USD 5.40	7.18%
Crude Oil (Brent)*	USD 85.06	USD 7.28	9.36%
Gold Spot*	USD 1,979.40	USD 205.25	11.57%
DSEX	6,213.45	6.45	0.10%
S&P 500	4,124.51	285.01	7.42%
FTSE 100	7,673.00	221.26	2.97%
BSE SENSEX	59,106.44	-1,734.30	-2.85%
KSE-100	39,889.90	-530.55	-1.31%
CSEALL	9,250.96	748.47	8.80%

Exchange Rates

1 US Dollar = 105.40 BDT

1 GBP = 130.75 BDT

1 Euro = 114.84 BDT

1 INR = 1.28 BDT

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