

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:**Local IT firms eye USD 5 Bn export by 2025**

- With growing demand for information technology-enabled services and industry automation, Bangladesh IT firms have expanded their global footprint, fetching the country USD 1.4 Bn annually by exporting software and other services.
- More than 350 local firms are now exporting the IT products to around 80 countries including the US and the European Union countries, according to the Bangladesh Association of Software and Information Services (BASIS). "We are aiming to reach the USD 5 Bn export-mark by 2025 and USD 20 Bn by 2031," Russell T Ahmed, president of Basis, told The Business Standard.

<https://www.tbsnews.net/economy/local-it-firms-eye-5b-export-2025-560974>

First half was promising for apparel

- The first and second quarters of the outgoing year were fine for the garment exporters as the international retailers and brands were coming up with quite a lot of work orders with the recovery of the global supply chain from the severe fallouts of the Covid-19.
- However, the inflow of work orders from the international retailers and brands started declining since October in the outgoing year. The placement of work orders between October and December till date this year has declined by more than 20% compared with the corresponding period of last year because of the Russia-Ukraine war.

<https://www.thedailystar.net/business/economy/news/first-half-was-promising-apparel-3209436>

Revenue collection grows 14%

- Domestic revenue mobilisation posted more than 14% growth in the outgoing year 2022 amid inflation-fuelled economic slowdown and erosion of real income. Despite disrupted supply chain for the Russia-Ukraine war, costly dollar and high commodity prices globally, the government's revenue-collection efforts paid off.
- However, the revenue board faced challenges like dollar crisis, higher import margin, regulatory duty to restrict import of non-essential products, discouraging import of luxuries and tax reduction in essential goods like petroleum products, sugar and rice.

<https://thefinancialexpress.com.bd/economy/bangladesh/revenue-collection-grows-14pc-1672455516>

Land info to be available in AI-based govt portal

- The government is set to launch an artificial intelligence-based web portal to impart land-related knowledge among the masses and deliver all kinds of information on land. This AI-based portal will have a chatbot, which one can use for free by opening a profile. The chatbot is equipped with both Bangla and English voice recognition systems.
- Apart from land-related laws and regulations, the portal will have digital versions of books related to land and land laws that can be read online. Software company Dream71 Bangladesh will develop the portal titled "Intelligence Land Knowledge Management System" by March this year.

<https://www.thedailystar.net/business/news/land-info-be-available-ai-based-govt-portal-3209556>

Local company to invest USD 4.8 Mn in Mongla EPZ

- ASM Packall Export Industry has signed an agreement with the Bangladesh Export Processing Zone Authority (Bepza) to invest USD 4.8 Mn to establish a garment accessories plant in the Mongla Export Processing Zone (Mongla EPZ).
- Ali Reza Mazid, member (investment promotion) of Bepza, and Md Ashraful Alam, managing director of ASM Packall Export Industry, inked the deal to this effect at Bepza Complex in Dhaka, said a press release. The investment will create an employment opportunity for 400 Bangladeshi nationals.

<https://www.thedailystar.net/business/economy/news/local-company-invest-48m-mongla-epz-3208516>

Banks see operating profit

- A number of state-owned and private banks have registered operating profit in 2022 thanks to Bangladesh Bank's relaxed policy that allowed the lenders to show unrealised interests as profits and a credit growth in the private sector. An analysis of available operating profit figures of 11 banks shows that 10 banks registered a 10-25% year-on-year increase in operating profits while one posted a decrease.

<https://www.tbsnews.net/economy/banking/banks-see-operating-profit-560950>

USD 67 Bn export earning target will be achieved despite global crisis: Tipu Munshi

- Commerce Minister Tipu Munshi said the country will achieve the export earning target of USD 67 Bn in 2022-23FY despite the ongoing global economic crisis.
- "The government set an export revenue target of USD 67 Bn this fiscal and achieved a 10% growth till November," he said during a press briefing organised ahead of the Dhaka International Trade Fair at Bangladesh-China Friendship Exhibition Centre on Saturday.

<https://www.tbsnews.net/economy/67b-export-earning-target-will-be-achieved-despite-global-crisis-tipu-munshi-560774>

After quick success, Chinese medicalwear co invests USD 10 Mn for new factory

- Chinese company Jiehong Medical Products (BD) Co Ltd started operation in Chattogram Export Processing Zone in September 2019 – just a few months before the first Covid-19 outbreak was reported.
- The company expanded its operation to keep up with the increased demand for medical products amid the raging pandemic and now it is setting up a new factory in the Bepza Economic Zone of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Shilpa Nagar in Mirsarai, Chattogram with an investment of USD 10 Mn.

<https://www.tbsnews.net/economy/industry/after-quick-success-chinese-medicalwear-co-invests-10m-new-factory-559698>

Financial sector most talked about issue

- The most talked-about sector of the economy in 2022 was the financial sector which is already burdened with an increasing amount of non-performing loans. The performance of the financial sector could have been better if a market based foreign exchange rate and interest rate were adopted.
- Reduction of import through some restrictions has yielded good results temporarily but will have an effect in the coming months on the GDP growth. The interest rate cap on deposits for the non-bank financial institution sector was imposed at a time when inflation and non-performing loans in the entire financial sector were rising.

<https://www.thedailystar.net/business/economy/news/financial-sector-most-talked-about-issue-3209441>

82% of foreign debt in 2041 to be market-based

- The share of foreign loans at floating rates in Bangladesh's total external debt will climb to over 82% in 2041 from 26% in 2020, the Economic Relations Division (ERD) and the General Economic Division (GED) forecast. According to an ERD report, the loss of concessional elements in financial support received from official donors will also lead to increased debt servicing costs.
- However, Bangladesh's scope for obtaining foreign loans will increase significantly in the coming years, thanks to a continuous increase in per capita income, the report presented by ERD Additional Secretary Md Mostafizur Rahman in a workshop last week said.

<https://www.tbsnews.net/economy/82-foreign-debt-2041-be-market-based-559998>

Import dearth may cause food crisis

- The outgoing year has been an exceptional one for global commodity markets due to the surge in prices triggered by the Russia-Ukraine war and spike in demand following the recovery of economies from the Covid-19 pandemic.
- The war has affected the commodity market severely. Commodity prices were high in the international market. Locally, imports became expensive because of the depreciation of taka against the US dollar. Taka lost around 23% in value against the greenback. As Bangladesh imports a number of key commodities -- wheat, edible oil, and sugar -- the country was also affected.

<https://www.thedailystar.net/business/economy/news/import-dearth-may-cause-food-crisis-3209426>

Ctg port ends year at 3m TEU club despite fall in container handling

- Chattogram port, the prime seaport of the country, has managed to end the year 2022 in the three-million-TEU (Twenty Foot Equivalent) club despite a fall of inbound-outbound cargo due to import curbs on luxury goods and global trade disruptions.
- While the port handled some 74,500 fewer TEUs in 2022 than in the previous year, ship handling increased by 3.10% – 4,344 inbound ships from 4,209 ships in 2021.

<https://www.tbsnews.net/economy/ctg-port-ends-year-3m-teu-club-despite-fall-container-handling-560970>

Stocks:**BRACBANK | Brac Bank Tara, Go DESHi to serve women entrepreneurs**

- Brac Bank signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with online platform Go DESHi to jointly work for developing women entrepreneurs in Bangladesh. Syed Abdul Momen, deputy managing director of the bank, and Sabera Anwar, founder of Go DESHi, signed the MoU at the former's head office in Dhaka recently, said a press release.

<https://www.thedailystar.net/business/economy/banks/news/brac-bank-tara-go-deshi-serve-women-entrepreneurs-3208496>

SILVAPHL | Shareholders allow Silva Pharma till Dec 2023 to use IPO fund

- The shareholders of Silva Pharmaceuticals Limited have approved the company's proposal to extend its time to utilise the initial public offering (IPO) fund till 31 December 2023. According to its initial plan, the company was supposed to use the IPO fund by 10 April 2020. The company secured its general shareholders' approval at its annual general meeting on Thursday. But it still needs the approval of the Bangladesh Securities and Exchange Commission (BSEC) to extend the deadline.

<https://www.tbsnews.net/economy/stocks/shareholders-allow-silva-pharma-till-dec-2023-use-ipo-fund-559986>

EXCHANGE | 6 SME firms listed in 2022, five more in queue for 2023

- In a year when the main market of the Dhaka bourse saw the least number of initial public offerings (IPOs) in five years, the small and medium-sized enterprises (SME) platform bagged six companies which raised BDT 610 Mn in total.
- Among them, Nialco Alloys raised BDT 75 Mn, Mamun Agro Products BDT 100 Mn, Krishibid Seed BDT 116 Mn, Star Adhesives BDT 50 Mn, BD Paints BDT 120 Mn, and Achia Sea Foods raised BDT 150 Mn. Besides, five companies applied to the Bangladesh Securities and Exchange Commission (BSEC) to raise BDT 500 Mn in total.

<https://www.tbsnews.net/economy/6-sme-firms-listed-2022-five-more-queue-2023-560942>

World Stock and Commodities*

Index Name	Close Value	Value Change YTD	% Change YTD
Crude Oil (WTI)*	USD 80.26	USD 5.05	6.71%
Crude Oil (Brent)*	USD 85.91	USD 8.13	10.45%
Gold Spot*	USD 1,824.02	(USD 5.18)	-0.28%
DSEX	6,206.81	-549.84	-8.14%
S&P 500	3,839.50	-926.68	-19.44%
FTSE 100	7,451.74	67.20	0.91%
BSE SENSEX	60,840.74	2,586.92	4.44%
KSE-100	40,420.45	-4,175.62	-9.36%
CSEALL	8,502.49	-3,723.52	-30.46%

Exchange Rates**1 US Dollar = 106.35 BDT****1 GBP = 128.70 BDT****1 Euro = 114.13 BDT****1 INR = 1.29 BDT**

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