

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE DAY

Bangladesh: Economy

March 06, 2022

Beza to Introduce Business Continuity Plan for Economic Zones

Bangladesh Economic Zones Authority (BEZA) is planning to introduce business continuity plan (BCP) in economic zones to protect investment from disaster related losses and develop institutional mechanism for promoting resilience in business.

As part of this initiative, an inception workshop on business continuity plan was held at a city hotel today jointly organised by the Programming Division of Bangladesh Planning Commission and Beza.

The Programming Division is supporting Beza for this piloting with the assistance of National Resilience Program (NRP) technically supported by the United Nations Development programme and funded by the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office and Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) of the government of Sweden.

Under this piloting initiative, guidelines will be developed for area specific and enterprise level business continuity plan and capacity development training on BCP will be imparted to the business administrators and Beza officials.

Source: <https://www.thedailystar.net/business/news/beza-introduce-business-continuity-plan-economic-zones-2974831>



Investors across the Globe Can take Sonali Bank's Online Service

Investors from anywhere in the world can now open an account at any branch of Sonali Bank through the one stop service portal of Bangladesh Investment Development Authority (Bida).

Bida and Sonali Bank jointly launched the online banking service for the investors at the office of the investment authority in Dhaka on Wednesday.

Bida is working towards providing maximum investment services to the investors and it has already come up with 57 services of 18 organisations.

Investors have to pay a service charge to take service from Bida's portal now, but the services will be available for free in two to three years, she said. Md Abdul Hamid Mian, chief revenue officer of Dhaka North City Corporation, also spoke.

Source: <https://www.thedailystar.net/business/economy/banks/news/investors-across-the-globe-can-take-sonali-banks-online-service-2975276>



Sri Lankan Firm Eyes Agora Takeover

Softlogic Holdings PLC is in talks with Agora to acquire the full operation of Bangladesh's oldest supermarket chain, said the Sri Lankan conglomerate and people familiar with the matter.

A subsidiary, Softlogic Retail Holdings (private), inked an agreement on Friday to acquire Agora, said the group in a disclosure at Colombo Stock Exchange (CSE).

Agora began discussions with the Sri Lankan conglomerate after its talks with Gemcon Group, owner of Meena Bazar, another leading supermarket chain in the country, fell through by the end of last year.

Agora and Softlogic have been in discussions for the past couple of months, according to the official.

With some 72.5 per cent owned by Frontier Fund-managed Swedish hedge fund Brummer & Partners and the rest by Rahimafrooz, Agora started its journey in 2001 as the country's first supermarket chain.

Source: <https://www.thedailystar.net/business/economy/news/lankan-firm-eyes-agora-takeover-2976581>



Brac Bank to Host Summit on Values-based Banking

Brac Bank will host the 14th annual meeting of the Global Alliance for Banking on Values, a network of the most environmentally progressive and socially inclusive banks in the world.

The three-day event on "Banking for Good in an Age of Change - How Values Can Secure a Positive Future" starts on March 8. The event will bring together chief executive officers and their co-workers from values-based banks to explore their challenges and opportunities in an era of rapid change.

Values-based banks are independent financial organisations that use money to deliver positive social and environmental impact.

They are private banks, credit cooperatives, microfinance institutions, credit unions, and community banks, serving more than 60 million customers in 44 countries and holding over \$200 billion in assets. Brac Bank co-founded the network in 2009.

Source: <https://www.thedailystar.net/business/organisation-news/news/brac-bank-host-summit-values-based-banking-2976431>



Turnover Leaders Grab 30.72pc of Weekly Transaction

Top 10 turnover leaders in last week posted an aggregate amount of transaction worth Tk 11.51 billion.

During the week, the companies grabbed 30.72 per cent of the weekly turnover of Dhaka Stock Exchange (DSE).

In last week, the premier bourse posted a total turnover of Tk 37.46 billion which was 6.07 per cent less against the previous week.

Three companies' turnover ranged between Tk 1.12 billion and Tk 3.77 billion. Bangladesh Export Import Company topped the scrip wise weekly turnover chart with a value of Tk 3.77 billion.

The company contributed 10.08 per cent in weekly market turnover. Bangladesh Shipping Corporation posted a turnover of Tk 1.81 billion and grabbed 4.84 per cent of weekly market transaction.

Source: <https://thefinancialexpress.com.bd/stock/turnover-leaders-grab-3072pc-of-weekly-transaction-1646537523>



Only 1.85 lakh Investors Hold Shares Worth over Tk 5 lakh each

The Bangladesh Securities and Exchange Commission has found that 1.85 lakh beneficiary owners' accountholders hold investments worth Tk 5 lakh or above.

The BSEC has recently collected data from the Central Depository of Bangladesh about investments in individual beneficiary owners' account.

After analyzing data of CDBL, the BSEC observed that 1.12 lakh BO accounts hold more than Tk 10 lakh followed by 62,463 accounts held more than Tk 20 lakh, 43,126 accounts held more than Tk 30 lakh, 33,093 accounts held Tk 40 lakh and 27,030 accounts had more than Tk 50 lakh.

Around half of the active BO (beneficiary owner) accounts have not played any role in daily transactions over the years as those accounts either have zero balance or have never been used in share trading.

Source: <https://www.newagebd.net/article/164538/only-185-lakh-investors-hold-shares-worth-over-tk-5-lakh-each>



Commodity Prices at Multi-year Highs

Commodity markets extended their bull runs on Thursday, with aluminium, coal and palm oil all hitting new records while crude oil and wheat scaled multi-year highs as Russia's invasion of Ukraine disrupted global raw material flows.

Russia's stature as a top supplier in oil, gas, metals, grain and shipping markets has meant that the harsh sanctions applied to several Russian entities following Moscow's invasion of Ukraine has upended several critical resource supply chains.

Aluminium prices on the London Metal Exchange have gained 30 percent this year, while US wheat futures have surged 25 per cent this week alone as markets attempt to price in the impact of a potential loss of Russian supplies if the international community rolls out additional punitive measures against Moscow.

Source: <https://www.thedailystar.net/business/global-economy/news/commodity-prices-multi-year-highs-2975291>



US Economy Adds 6,78,000 Jobs in February, Jobless Rate 3.8pc: Govt

US employers added 6,78,000 workers to their payrolls in February, driving the unemployment rate down to 3.8 per cent and edging it closer to the pre-pandemic rate, the government reported Friday.

Job gains were widespread, according to the Labor Department, led by the 1,79,000 new jobs in the leisure and hospitality sector that was hard hit by Covid-19 shutdowns and restrictions.

The surge in hiring far surpassed the consensus forecast, although some economists were calling for a big increase as the world's largest economy gets back on track.

As the Omicron variant wave has faded and local authorities lift mask restrictions, bars and restaurants have reopened and Americans have begun to travel more.

Manufacturing and construction saw modest hiring gains, while professional services increased by 95,000, the report said.

Source: <https://www.newagebd.net/article/164531/us-economy-adds-678000-jobs-in-february-jobless-rate-38pc-govt>



Thailand's Economy Rebounds in Q4

Thailand's economy rebounded in the fourth quarter of last year on the back of rising exports and the easing of coronavirus restrictions that allowed tourists to return, senior officials said Monday.

The 1.9 per cent on-year expansion was more than double what was forecast and marked a strong bounce after a 0.2 per cent contraction in the previous three months.

For the whole year the economy grew 1.6 per cent, according to the National Economic and Social Development Council, and also beat expectations.

South East Asia's second largest economy was hit with a 6.1 per cent contraction in 2020 -- its worst economic performance since the 1997 Asian Economic Crisis.

The NESDC said it saw growth of 3.5-4.5 per cent this year as tourism picks up and government spending kicks in.

Source: <https://www.thedailystar.net/business/global-economy/news/thailands-economy-rebounds-q4-2967516>



Gold Bid, Stocks Dumped further

Russia's invasion of Ukraine saw investors scrambling for the safety of gold and the protection of inflation hedges as weeks of brinkmanship came to a head on Thursday.

While market participants had been bracing for some form of aggression on Russia's part, Thursday's attack that brought explosions even in the Ukrainian capital of Kyiv, and across the country, made the war real for market participants.

Trader playbooks seemed to change from one that was built around the possibility of a diplomatic resolution to the crisis, to what had at one point been a tail-risk, or extreme, scenario.

"It looks pretty clear that they are moving toward Kyiv, which was always one of the worst case scenarios, because we now have a long night ahead of us trying to understand how bad this gets, and what sanctions get put up," said Chris Weston, head of research at brokerage Pepperstone in Melbourne.

Source: <https://www.thedailystar.net/business/global-economy/news/gold-bid-stocks-dumped-further-2970031>



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