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BUSINESS


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SCAN FOR DETAILS






PERFORMANCES OF LISTED HOTELS			REASONS FOR BETTER PERFORMANCE					
Hotels Bangladesh Services (InterContinental, BICC) Peninsula Chittagong Sea Pearl Beach Resort & Spa Unique Hotel and Resorts (Westin Dhaka, Sheraton)	Jul '20-Mar '21 Tk 81cr loss Tk 5.51cr profit Tk 14.51cr profit Tk 9.63cr loss	Jul '21-Mar '22 Tk 74cr loss Tk 8.55cr profit Tk 12.22cr profit Tk 88.54cr profit	 Local consumption rose	 Attractive packages to lure consumers	 Social media impact	 Corporate events increased	 Foreign guests' number went up	



PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Luxury hotels recovering thanks to local guests

AHSAN HABIB and SUKANTA HALDER

Luxury hotel businesses in Bangladesh are on the path of recovery to pre-pandemic levels, with local customers playing a vital role in renting rooms, holding a large number of events and seeking food made by their restaurants.

People's inclination to avoid crowded areas, high incomes of a section of society and social media are propelling local customers towards availing hotel services.

All four listed companies having hotels saw better performances year on year in the July 2021 to March 2022 period, especially centring the two annual Eid vacations.

Non-listed companies also experienced a better occupancy rate, higher number of guests at restaurants and a large number of events.

"In some cases, we rebounded fully, say, like in restaurant business, but we are yet to

rebound to the pre-pandemic level in every sphere," said Shahidus Sadeque, director of marketing and business promotion at InterContinental Dhaka.

Foreign travellers are still not arriving in the same numbers as in 2019 but domestic consumption soared, so 30 rooms to 40 rooms are occupied daily with local guests and it rises on the weekends, he said.

"We have created the demand by offering attractive packages and that worked well," he said.

Social media also influenced local guests into booking rooms and dine at the higher-end restaurants, he said, adding that a huge number of rooms were occupied during the Eid holidays.

Bangladesh Services, the company owning InterContinental Dhaka, InterContinental Dhaka Balaka Executive Lounge and Bangabandhu International Conference Center, logged a profit of Tk 24 crore in the July-

March period of fiscal 2019-20.

In contrast, it had incurred a loss of Tk 81 crore in the same nine months of the following fiscal year.

However, in the nine-month period of fiscal year 2021-22, its business slightly improved with

international flights and holding events, the business of the hotel was hit hard in the year, it said.

Mohammad G Jisan, manager for sales of Radisson Blu Dhaka Water Garden, said their business has picked up considerably.

At the beginning of the

during the pandemic.

"As Cox's Bazar alongside many tourism sites were shut down during the pandemic and many people wanted to avoid crowded areas, people chose us," he said.

"If we talk about the overall recovery of the business of hotels, it is not complete yet," he added.

"In the meantime, inflation has increased significantly in different countries of the world. That has an impact on our business," he added.

As taka depreciated, room rent and foreign travel costs rose. So, they either shortened their stay plans or tried completing their work online, he said.

Among the listed hotels, the profit of The Peninsula Chittagong soared 55 per cent to Tk 8.55 crore in the first nine months of fiscal year 2021-22.

In the same period, profits of the Sea Pearl Beach Resort & Spa dropped 15 per cent to Tk 12.22 crore.



the loss reducing 8.4 per cent to Tk 74 crore, says its financial report.

Worldwide, the hospitality and tourism sectors are two of the worst-hit sectors of the pandemic.

Due to lockdowns, restrictions on people's movements,

pandemic, room occupancy was at only 40 per cent. In the last two Eids, all 200 rooms were fully booked for four days to five days in a row.

Following Eid-ul-Azha, the occupancy is now at 70 per cent, said Jisan, adding that the number of local guests rose

Trial run of new Ctg port terminal on Thursday

DWAIPAYAN BARUA, Ctg

At long last a new container terminal is going to be added to the Chattogram port as the authority is going to start trial operation of a newly built Patenga Container Terminal (PCT) this week.

Though some of the construction works of the new terminal, including of the yards, are yet to be fully completed, Chittagong Port Authority (CPA) has planned to berth a bulk carrier on a trial basis at one of its four jetties on Thursday.

With this, a new terminal will be added to the country's premier sea port after over 14 and a half years since the construction of the last one, New Mooring Container Terminal (NCT), which was completed in December 2007.

However, the new terminal may not become fully operational until the appointment of a private operator and inclusion of container handling equipment by the operator which could take another one and a half years.

But until then, the CPA has planned to make the terminal operational with its own equipment which would enhance the port's productivity and capacity to a great extent.

The port currently has three terminals, General Cargo Berth (GCB), Chittagong Container Terminal (CCT) and New Mooring Container Terminal (NCT), having a total of 19 jetties – six for bulk carriers and the rest for container vessels.

The new terminal has four jetties – three for container vessels and the remaining one for oil tankers.

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Built at a cost Tk 1,229 crore, the Patenga Container Terminal of Chattogram port is capable of handling five lakh TEUs (twenty-foot equivalent units) of containers annually. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

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BB moves to ease volatility in forex market

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Bangladesh Bank yesterday withdrew the interest rate ceiling on non-resident foreign currency deposits in order to increase supply of the US dollar and arrest the ongoing volatility in the foreign exchange market.

The move followed a series of measures taken by the central bank to halt the weakening of the Bangladeshi taka against the US dollar which crossed Tk 100 mark for importers last week.

Yesterday, the forex market was stable as pressure from import payments was low for it being a weekly holiday in major global markets.

Bangladesh Bank earlier had asked banks to set the interest rate in line with the euro currency deposit rates followed by the lenders in the eurozone.

Local banks offered interest rates ranging from 0.25 per cent to 0.80 per cent to depositor as per the BB instruction.

From now on, banks are allowed to avoid such ceilings to mobilise deposits from non-resident Bangladeshis and individuals of Bangladeshi origin, including those having dual nationality, according to a BB notice.

The withdrawal of the interest rate ceiling will also be applicable for foreign companies, firms registered or incorporated abroad, and banks and other financial institutions including institutional investors.

In addition, banks can also manage foreign currency funds from industrial units which are fully owned by foreign nationals and entities in the export processing zones and economic zones.

Officials of two banks said banks had hardly put in any effort to mobilise such funds from clients. Besides, depositors do not feel encouraged to keep their funds at banks due to the interest rate being low.

But the latest relaxation on the interest rate ceiling of non-resident foreign currency deposits will give a boost to banks in increasing their foreign exchange.

In another move, the central bank has also taken decision to slash net open position, a limit for banks to hold foreign currencies.

Under the new net open position limit, banks will be permitted to hold 15 per cent of foreign

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STOCKS	
DSEX ▼	CSCX ▼
0.31% 6,304.28	0.38% 18,523.51

COMMODITIES		AS OF FRIDAY
Gold ▼	Oil ▲	
\$1,707.27 (per ounce)	\$97.63 (per barrel)	

ASIAN MARKETS				FRIDAY CLOSINGS
MUMBAI	TOKYO	SINGAPORE	SHANGHAI	
▲ 0.65% 53,760.78	▲ 0.54% 26,788.47	▲ 0.28% 3,099.15	▼ 1.64% 3,228.06	

SME stocks shed 7pc amid fear of BSEC action

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

The share price index for small and medium enterprises (SMEs) listed with the Dhaka Stock Exchange took a massive plunge yesterday as some investors sold large volumes of their stocks in the sector, according to market analysts.

The index dropped a whopping 147 points, or 6.97 per cent, to close the trading session at 1,965 as all 12 listed SMEs saw their stocks plummet.

The development directly contrasts the scenario for the past few months, when the SME index was in a bull run riding on rumours and speculation while other indices were in a falling trend.

Investors started selling their shares in SMEs after speculations surfaced that the Bangladesh Securities

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