

Asian Bankers Association

Newsletter

April 2022

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ABA Announcements

Appointment of new Secretary-Treasurer Mr. David Hsu



the
Taiwan, and had been posted in various countries, both in and outside the Asian region.

The Board of Directors of ABA has approved of the appointment of Mr. Da-wei (David) Hsu as the new ABA Secretary-Treasurer.

Mr. Hsu's experience are as follows:

Education: Bachelor of Art (1980), National Chenchi University, Taiwan

Experience:

- Director, Professional Training Center, Ministry of Economic Affairs
- Director, Economic Division, Taipei Economic and Cultural Office in Malaysia (2018.07- 2020.08)
- Deputy Director General, Bureau of Foreign Trade, Ministry of Economic Affairs, Taiwan, (2013.02- 2018.07)

- Economic Director, Taipei Economic & Cultural Center in India (2009.07- 2013.02)
- Director, Bureau of Foreign Trade, Ministry of Economic Affairs (2008.09-2009.07)
- Director, Small & Medium Enterprises Administration, Ministry of Economic Affairs (2006.09-2008.09)
- Economic Counselor, Embassy of the Republic of China (Taiwan) in Panama (2002.08 – 2006.09)
- Commercial Director, Taipei Economic & Cultural Office in Toronto, Canada (2000.08– 2002.08)
- Deputy Director, Bureau of Foreign Trade, Ministry of Economic Affairs (1999.11- 2000.08)
- Special Assistant to Vice Minister of Ministry of Economic Affairs (1998.03-1999.10)
- Director, International Cooperation Dept., Ministry of Economic Affairs (1997.01-1998.02)
- Executive Secretary, Ad-hoc Committee, Textile Investigation Division, Ministry of Economic Affairs (1995.10-1996.12)
- Economic Director, Taipei Economic & Cultural Office in Jordan (1992.10-1995.10)
- Economic Secretary, Embassy of the Republic of China (Taiwan) in Saudi Arabia (1985.07-1992.10)

Training and Education

ABA and Oberthur holds a successful joint webinar on ATM protection



The Asian Bankers Association (ABA) and Oberthur Cash Protection (OCP), a provider of intelligent cash protection solutions, also an ABA Associate Member, held a successful webinar on “Physical Measures Against Cyber Attacks” March 24, 2022. The webinar was attended by more than 750 registrants from 35 different countries, and lasted over 70 minutes because of the numerous questions raised by the audience.

Moderated by Ms. Ee Ling Ooi,

Business Development APAC Manager and featuring Mr. Paul Nicholls, OCP Business Development Director, as main speaker, the

webinar: (a) presented OCP’s effective ATM protection solutions against physical attacks, (b) introduced antimicrobial protective films showing how to minimize the risk to customers from virus infections when using ATM touchscreens, (c) discussed various types of Logical and cyber attacks, and (d) reviewed security measures suggested by OC P to protect ATMs against cyber / logical attacks, physical measures introduced to protect ATMs against logical attacks, updates on the physical attacks on ATMs and

successful preventive measures and customer concerns on the use of ATM touch screens post Covid.

The video recording of the complete webinar is available at the ABA YouTube channel [HERE](#).

A copy of the presentation can be downloaded [HERE](#).

38th ABA Annual Conference will be held virtually on November 1 - 4, 2022

Training and Education

ABA and Fintelekt held webinar on "The Role of Video-KYC in Digital Onboarding and Ongoing Due Diligence"



The Asian Bankers Association (ABA) and Fintelekt Advisory Services jointly held a free webinar on "The Role of Video-KYC in Digital Onboarding and Ongoing Due Diligence" on April 12, 2022 at 11:00 AM – 12:00 noon, India Time.

The widespread acceptance of video-based customer

identification and verification is translating into significant cost savings and efficiency gains for financial institutions, besides the obvious convenience for customers. Especially during the Covid-19 pandemic, video-KYC has been particularly useful for maintaining operational continuity.

Despite the boost that digital onboarding has provided, regulators advise caution and a risk-based approach to customer due diligence, given the rise in financial crime, especially cybercrime.

The webinar aimed at an in-depth discussion on:

- The benefits of video-KYC beyond cost and efficiency
- Technology integration and implementation challenges
- Inherent risks and mitigation strategies
- Regulatory expectations and acceptance

ABA Members Invited to Join the Fintelekt-ABA Webinar on Cyber Security and Customer Fraud on May 13



The Fintelekt Advisory Services and the Asian Bankers Association (ABA) will jointly organise a complimentary webinar focusing on "Cyber Security and Customer Fraud" to be held on May 13, 2022 from 10:00am to 12:00 noon SGT/ HKT.

The webinar aims to share information and best practices on adopting and managing cyber security measures, and in dealing with and protecting one's organization from customer fraud, as well as on relevant government policies and regulations governing cyber security and customer fraud.

The webinar will provide a convenient virtual learning opportunity for ABA members and banking and financial services professionals in Asia.

Key Training Topics to be covered:

- Recent trends in fraud and key risks for banks
- Challenges due to the Covid-19 pandemic and its longterm impact
- Regulatory developments and expectations
- Cyber security best practices for banks
- The importance of awareness and training for staff

The speaker of this training program will be Dr. J Michael Skiba, an international expert on cybercrime.

The training programme will be followed by a short Assessment and participants who pass the assessment will be issued a Certificate of Participation. Interested parties may register through the [Registration Link](#).



Dr. Skiba, also known as Dr. Fraud[®], is an international expert in financial crime, cybercrime, and professional development (academic, public, and private sector) and is referred to as one of the top crime fighters in the world. He worked for two corporations for 25 years in special investigations and management and now owns his own international company focusing on consulting, training, and speaking on financial crime, cybercrime and professional development. He has worked on hundreds of projects across the globe, including Malaysia, Argentina, Singapore, Mexico, Germany, USA, and the Nordics. He has performed at over 500 public speaking events including keynoting, emceeing, moderating, and hosting. He has also been a university professor for 15 years and is currently Department Chair of Criminal Justice at Colorado State University Global. He holds an MBA and a PhD with a financial crime focus and governments, corporations, and colleges from around the world regularly call upon him to consult, train, and assist with financial crime, cybercrime, and professional development topics and strategies.

He also founded and manages Dr. Fraud Training Group, which offers fully online classes in financial crime. He is sought after as a media contributor that can be seen in many

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outlets including NBC, ABC, London Telegraph, and SiriusXM radio. He is an instructor for the U.S. ATF and a member of the Academic Council of the United Nations System. He is an accomplished author and recently published a book entitled "The Psychology of Fraud" and the host of DFTV-Dr Fraud TV, a show dedicated to investigating scams and fraud around the globe.

ABA & Cyberbeat to hold a webinar on "Winning the Customers' trust in the faceless marketplace and the digital world" on April 29



The Asian Bankers Association (ABA) and Cyberbeat, an associate member of ABA, are jointly conducting an one hour complimentary webinar on "Winning the Customers' trust in the faceless marketplace and the digital world" to be held on Friday April 29th 2022 from 2:00PM – 3:00PM Singapore Time.



This particular webinar, to be presented by Rajan S. Narayan, Cyberbeat CEO, will discuss the challenges that banks face with identity thefts, authentication processes and the technology solutions in cyber environment.

The agenda of the one-hour webinar will be as follows:

Agenda:

- (1) Challenges with identity access thefts and compromised second factor authentication facing banks with online services and products being used by customers.
- (2) Secure Second Factor Authentication – non SMS based
 - Typical challenges and scams with current 2FA solutions available in the market
 - Vken2FA© - Introducing Offline, mobile network independent 2FA solution from Cyberbeat
 - Real-world applications and Use cases
- (3) Secure Sign-in for banks APPs and portals
 - Typical challenges with Password based sign-in, identity frauds, Scams etc

- VkenSign-In© - Introducing Password-less, secure Sign-in solution from Cyberbeat
- Real-world applications & Use cases
- (4) Enhancing Online Card Payment Security
 - Typical challenges with CNP transactions, Tokenization etc.
- VkenPay© - Introducing Dynamic, Offline Virtual Card solution from Cyberbeat
- Scaling and lowering tokenization costs
- Real-world applications & Use cases
- (5) Cyberbeat payment processing Solutions - Truly a game changer
 - Enabling Cyberbeat solutions for your customers & key business benefits
- (6) Q&A

Participation in the webinar is free of charge. Interested parties can [register HERE](#).

ABA and Temenos holds Joint Webinar on How to Build a Digital Bank in 90 days



The Asian Bankers Association (ABA) and Temenos jointly conducted a webinar on "How to Build a Digital Bank in 90 days", held on March 22, 2022 with over 300 registrants and over 160 attendees.

The webinar featured as speakers Mr. Frankie Wai, Business Solution Director, APAC, Temenos; Mr. Charles Shum, Business Solution Consultant, Temenos; Mr. Niikhil Gujarl and Mr. Paolo Eugenio J. Baltao, Special Assistant to the President, Philippine National Bank.

Mr. Gujarl opened the webinar with a brief overview of how Digitization has accelerated post Covid. He also highlighted the trends that didn't come to pass as expected over the last two years.

Mr. Gujarl was followed by Mr. Wai, who gave a pan ASEAN view of digital banking licenses issued in key regions and sized the opportunity in these countries. He also elaborated on the platforms that are most suited for different banking

Training and Education

segments and their unique requirements. He ended with an overview of Temenos' footprint and some key digital banks that we have powered in recent times.

The penultimate session was a lively Fireside chat between Mr. Shum and Mr. Baltao on the impact of digital banks in transforming consumers' approach to

banking services'.

The event closed with a summary of key discussion points and an expression of thanks to the audience and speakers.

ADB to hold Webinar on Entrepreneurial Resilience During COVID-19

The poster for the webinar features the ADB logo and 'ASIAN IMPACT ADB RESEARCH IN ACTION'. The title is 'Entrepreneurial Resilience During COVID-19'. The text states: 'Entrepreneurial firms are important enablers of economic resilience during crises. Insights from four Asian countries and the UK show the diverse ways that entrepreneurs see their businesses through the worst of times.' The host is Yothin Jinjarak, Senior Economist, Economic Research and Regional Cooperation Department, Asian Development Bank. The panelists are Erkki Autio (Professor in Technology Venturing and Entrepreneurship, Imperial College Business School, London, UK), Onyaglanu Idoko (Lecturer, Institute for Global Prosperity, University College London, UK), Raymond Habaradas (Professor and Ambassador, Ramon V. del Rosario Chair in Entrepreneurship, Department of Management and Organization, De La Salle University, Philippines), and Yuki Xueqi Yuan (Doctoral Candidate, Imperial College Business School, London, UK). The event is a 'LIVE WEBINAR' on 6 May 2022, 4:00-5:00 p.m., Manila time (GMT +8). Registration is at <https://asianimpactadb.org>.

ADB will be holding a one-hour webinar on the Asian Impact on May 6, 2022 at 4:00pm – 5:00pm Manila time.

Mr. Yothin Jinjarak, Senior Economist, Economic Research and Regional Cooperation Department, Asian Development Bank will be serving as the host and moderator of the webinar, the featured speakers are Mr. Erkki Autio, Professor in Technology Venturing and Entrepreneurship, Imperial College Business School, London, UK; Ms. Onyaglanu Idoko, Lecturer, Institute for Global Prosperity, University College London, UK; Mr. Raymond Habaradas, Professor and Ambassador, Ramon V. del Rosario Chair in Entrepreneurship, Department of Management and Organization, De La Salle University, Philippines; and Ms. Yuki Xueqi Yuan, Doctoral Candidate, Imperial College Business School, London, UK. Interested parties may register [through here](https://asianimpactadb.org).

Invitation to Join United Nations SDG Investment Fair, April 26-28, 2022

The poster features a woman in a blue shirt and yellow safety vest holding a clipboard, standing in front of a construction site. The text reads: 'SDG Investment Fair Virtual | 26-28 April 2022. Discover exciting investment opportunities that support the Sustainable Development Goals. For more info and to register visit bit.ly/SDGIFair'.

The United Nations is pleased to invite public to the United Nations SDG Investment Fair, 26-28 April 2022.

The UN SDG Investment Fair promotes commercially viable, high impact sustainable development projects in emerging and frontier markets. This three-day virtual event brings together investors, private and public institutions, and representatives from UN agencies to view and discuss high impact bankable projects.

This edition of the SDG Investment Fair will feature:

- Live pitches of investment opportunities by participating countries
- Interaction amongst project sponsors, investors, and other SDG investing experts
- Panel discussions on public development banks

and the SDG investment ecosystem

Registering to the Fair gives access to two GISD Alliance policy spotlight sessions being held as side events for the 2022 ECOSOC Forum on Financing for Development:

Enhancing MDBs as catalyzers of private finance

Senior representatives of Multilateral Development Banks and the Global Investors for Sustainable Development (GISD) Alliance will discuss actions to unlock private sustainable finance by enhancing the catalytic role of MDBs, including the use of blended finance solutions and potential reforms to their business model.

Wednesday, 27 April, 12:30 pm to 1:30 pm (EST) ([Read more](#))

Understanding the impact of SDG investments by refining sustainability reporting

Policy spotlight on aligning sustainability reporting frameworks with the SDGs focusing on best practices and lessons for the private sector. This high-level session will bring together members of the Global Investors for Sustainable Development (GISD) Alliance and key actors in the sustainability reporting ecosystem.

Thursday, 28 April 2022, 8 am – 9 am (EST) ([Read more](#))

To register, please click [here](#) or visit [UNDESA's website](#) for more information.

Training and Education

ABA & ACRAA webinar on "Recent Developments in the Digital Currencies and The Digitalization Trends in The Banking Industry"



The Asian Bankers Association (ABA) and the Association of Credit Rating Agencies in Asia (ACRAA) jointly held a 90-minute webinar on “Recent Developments in the Digital Currencies and The Digitalization Trends in The Banking Industry” on April 21, 2022 at 02:00 PM, Taipei time.

The webinar featured Harry Hu, Senior Director & Sector Lead Analyst at S&P Global Ratings, Kiran Surve, CEO of CARE Risk Solutions Private Limited (a 100% subsidiary of CARE Ratings Limited), and Bennett Santiago, Chief Credit Officer at Rizal Commercial Banking Corporation (RCBC) of the Philippines.



Harry Hu, CFA
Senior Director & Sector
Lead Analyst
S&P Global Ratings



Kiran Surve
CEO
CARE Risk Solutions Pvt. Ltd.



Bennett Santiago
Chief Credit Officer
Rizal Commercial Banking Corp.
(RCBC)

The topics discussed were as follows:

(1) The Future Of Digital Currencies And The

Regulations That Shape It by Harry Hu

Crypto regulation is picking up pace in 2022 and the advent of Central Bank Digital Currencies (CBDCs) could reshape the growth trajectory of cryptocurrencies. In this session, we explore the latest updates in crypto, potential disruption from Decentralized Finance (Defi) as well as covering blockchain fundamentals and buzz words.

(2) The Digitalization Trends in The Banking Industry in South Asia and Middle East by Kiran Surve

Mr. Surve has over 25 years of experience in the Tech industry and he shall speak on the Digitalization trends in the banking industry in South Asia and Middle East. The perspective he will bring to the table shall be from the angle of a tech solutions provider to banks. He shall also touch base upon the use of AI / ML in ratings.

(3) Cold Booting Credit: Credit Risk Management Learning Amidst and Beyond the Pandemic by Bennett Santiago

Global lockdowns precipitated by the COVID 19 Pandemic was a black swan event that accelerated the inevitable shift towards digital banking, but on the flip side of that was the major puzzle of how banks will need to calibrate their credit risk management practices amidst unprecedented stress on its core lending businesses.

The discussion will focus on how RCBC reacted to the crisis, its learnings, what worked, what didn't work, and the role technology will play amidst uncertainties brought about by climate change and the Russia-Ukraine conflict.

(4) Q&A

News Updates

BaaS market to be valued at \$7 trillion by 2030

By Sara Velezmoro

Retailers and corporates are exploring new sources for the provision of financial services, and increasingly they are utilizing non-banking channels. This has contributed to the rapid growth of banking-as-service (BaaS) and will propel the BaaS market's value to \$7 trillion by 2030, Finastra believes.

The UK-headquartered software company surveyed 1,600 senior executives across sectors including retail, technology, banking and healthcare, and interviewed a further 50, for its latest [BaaS: Outlook 2022 Study](#).

85% of those surveyed said they are already implementing BaaS solutions,

or are planning to within the next 18 months.

BaaS is a subset of embedded finance that allows non-bank business to offer digital banking services to customers without the need to acquire a banking license. It enables firms, for example, e-commerce players, to hurdles associated with doing so.

SME lending and corporate treasury/FX services are poised to gain the highest traction and demand over the next three years, particularly in the banking and healthcare sectors, the Finastra report found.

However, the report found that

penetration of BaaS in corporate and SME banking remains relatively low compared to retail banking. This is something that reflects the complexity associated with the segment, said Angus Ross, chief revenue officer of BaaS for Finastra, in response to a question from Corporate Treasurer at a webinar presenting the report.

“The demand for the conversation and extent to which they are thinking about the use cases and the monetization [of BaaS] has been equal across retails, SMEs, and corporate banking, but putting a simple lending product into a digital banking platform for retail customers is a lot easier than

News Updates

Segment	Service type	Product	Current Penetration	Potential Growth
Retail Banking	Banking	Accounts	●	○
		Wealth Management	●	○
		Overdraft	○	○
	Payments	QR Payments	○	○
		E-Wallets	●	○
		Cards (also Corporate)	●	○
	Lending	Personal Loans	●	○
Point of Sale (POS) Financing / BNPL		○	●	
Corporate / SME Banking	Payments	Virtual Ledgers	○	○
	Treasury	Cash Management	○	○
		FX	○	●
	Lending	Working Capital	○	○
		Trade Finance	○	○
		Corporate Lending	○	○
		SME Lending	○	○

BaaS penetration within banking products. Source: Finastra

making wholesale changes to a corporate treasurer’s liquidity management system,” he explained.

Corporates across the board will nevertheless benefit from the rise of BaaS in the form of productivity enhancement, explained Bosky S., Finastra’s regional head of BaaS for Asia Pacific, at the same virtual event.

He cited the reconciliation of accounts receivable (AR) and accounts payable (AP) as an example: “Today, that process requires multiple step processes. With BaaS, it’s going to be seamless.”

Asia Pacific was found to be the region with the highest potential for the growth of BaaS. This is due to a number of factors, including the growth of an affluent middle class, changes in consumer behaviour and the increased acceptance of digital payments, and business model changes, said Bosky.

Southeast Asia is experiencing exponential growth in e-commerce and internet penetration, contributing to rise of BaaS in Asia, chimed Sachin Rajat Sharma, chief product and commercial officer for SC Nexus, Standard Chartered’s BaaS solution.

In addition, the Finastra report found that 80% of providers – that is, banks – surveyed expect BaaS to grow. Of those, 30% expect it to grow by more than 50% over the next five years.

“By and large, the banks, which arguably are the slowest adopters of embedded finance, are seeing it as a huge growth opportunity and necessary to stay relevant,” said Ross.

Corporate Treasurer

Global Banks Look to Decarbonise the Aviation Industry

Leading lenders to the global aviation sector — Bank of America, BNP Paribas, Citi, Crédit Agricole CIB, Societe Generale and Standard Chartered — are working together to develop a climate-aligned finance framework to support decarbonisation in the industry.

The banks have formed a working group to develop a collective climate-aligned finance (CAF) framework that defines common goals for action for aviation sector decarbonisation.

The coalition says the framework will create consistency and transparency in reporting, establishing a level playing field for measuring progress against climate targets. With the CAF framework, financial institutions will be able to assess the emissions of their aviation loan books and work with their clients to report their emissions, fund lower-carbon solutions and support investments in new technologies.

The aviation sector accounts for 2.5 percent of global CO2 emissions, and air traffic is projected to increase significantly through 2050. In a business-as-usual scenario, aviation alone could use up to 10 percent of the planet’s remaining global carbon budget by 2050. The industry has initiated efforts in response, including the International Air Transport Association’s



commitment to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050.

To support these goals, the aviation sector is seeking to invest in more efficient aircraft, support the development of new aviation technology and accelerate the transition to sustainable aviation fuels (SAF).

The financial sector will play a crucial role in funding the technologies, projects and companies involved in this net-zero transition.

José Abramovici, global head of asset finance group at Crédit Agricole CIB, comments: “Our intention is to propose a robust and effective framework for the benefit of all stakeholders in aviation finance including banks, investors, airlines and lessors. We firmly believe that decarbonisation is key to ensure the long-term future of the aviation industry.”

The aviation CAF framework will be based on the experience gained from the Poseidon Principles for maritime shipping and the soon-to-be-launched CAF agreement for steel. The Poseidon Principles were launched in 2019 with 11 banking signatories. Today Poseidon counts 29 signatories covering more than 50 percent of global ship finance.

Finextra

Should ESG Investors Own Cryptocurrency?

The growing popularity of cryptocurrency has created a new wrinkle for investors—how to balance its potential upside against its inherent environmental and social impacts. A look at both sides of the issue.

Despite the recent exponential growth in the cryptocurrency industry, this emerging asset class leaves many open questions for investors who integrate environmental, social and governance (ESG) issues into their portfolios.

While crypto can offer some societal benefits—such as financial inclusion and the ability to “be your own bank”—there are also potential downsides, including its carbon footprint, prevalence of theft through hacks and lack of centralized governance.

These issues are being hotly debated within the crypto community, as well as by policymakers, corporations and other entities around the world. Investors, for their part, should consider the nuances of individual digital currencies and weigh the pros and the cons in the context of their own sustainability goals.

As a key first step, Morgan Stanley’s Cryptocurrency and Sustainability Research teams did a deep dive on the key ESG issues surrounding this asset class. Here’s what they found.

Calculating Carbon Intensity

There is almost no escaping the fact that crypto requires a lot of energy-consuming computing power to create and verify new transactions on the blockchain—a process known as “mining.” The annual energy consumption of Bitcoin, for example, is equivalent to the total electricity produced in the Netherlands.

“Every \$1 of Bitcoin mined is materially more carbon intensive than every \$1 of gold mined,” says Jessica Alford, Global Head of Sustainability Research. Put another way, her team estimates that Bitcoin’s carbon intensity was 14.2 million times that of a Visa Credit Card transactions

Of course, many variables affect the carbon intensity of maintaining the cryptocurrency network, including how new transactions are validated. For example, the “proof of work” process used in Bitcoin requires significantly more energy than the “proof of stake” that the world’s second most prominent cryptocurrency, Ethereum, is hoping to adopt later this year.

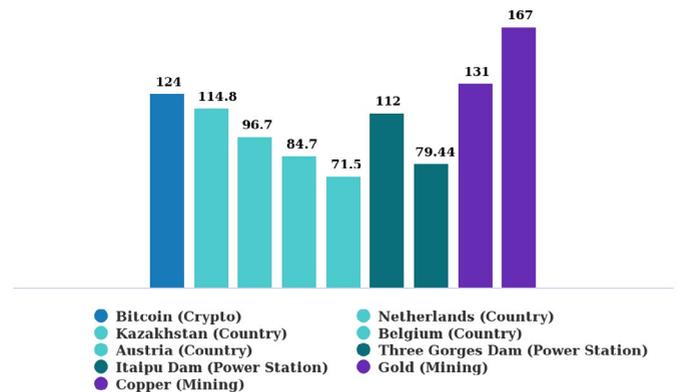
And many crypto mining companies are using renewable sources of power and have committed to carbon offsetting. Still, it’s a tall order. “We estimate that powering Bitcoin’s yearly energy requirement via green energy would require the equivalent infrastructure of the entire U.S. solar fleet,” says Alford. As long as Bitcoin and other crypto mining is profitable, the energy requirements will continue to increase over time but may use energy from increasingly greener sources.

What may be more critical: Concerns about crypto’s environmental impact are more than a matter of social responsibility. “We see continued risk of governments restricting energy use for crypto mining,” says Sheena Shah, Morgan Stanley’s lead Cryptocurrency analyst. She notes that many

countries, including China, have banned crypto mining, while others have restricted it.

“Mining bans are unlikely in developed markets, but the U.S. government has debated the climate impact and some EU representatives have proposed prohibiting energy-intensive crypto mining,” she adds.

Bitcoin's energy use exceeds electricity produced in the Netherlands



Source: Centre for Alternative Finance, IEA, Power-Technology, Water Power Magazine, Morgan Stanley Research.

Weighing Social Pros and Cons

Despite the energy demands of Bitcoin, many of the qualities that make it an attractive currency alternative go hand-in-hand with its real societal benefits, such as greater financial inclusion.

“Cryptocurrencies could be one way to increase access to financial systems for the unbanked,” says Alford. “Anyone with a smartphone or laptop and internet connection can access cryptocurrencies, which arguably is a lower requirement than that of traditional bank accounts.”

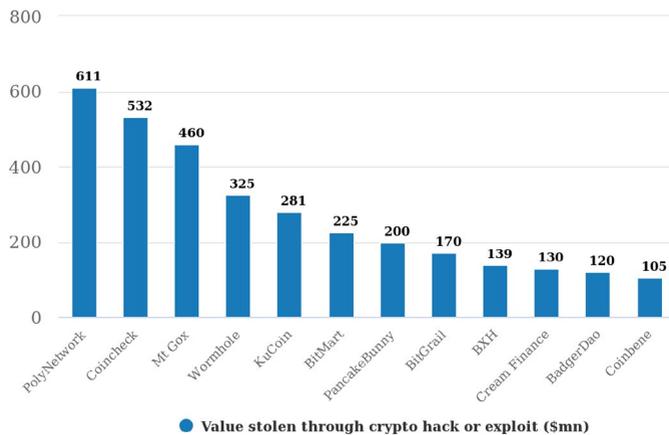
In addition, cryptocurrencies can support faster and more affordable cross-border transactions—specifically, giving people an easier way to send money to relatives in other countries— and may be a better alternative in countries with volatile or depreciating local currencies.

But while crypto could open doors for greater financial inclusion and the ability to transact without intermediaries, it’s also a popular payment option for illegal activities.

Academic researchers estimate that between January 2009 and April 2017, 46% of Bitcoin transactions were linked to illegal activity, to the tune of \$76 billion, which is equal to the U.S. and EU illegal drug markets. There is a counterpoint: Other estimates of illegal activity across all cryptocurrencies paint a different picture. In 2021, an estimated \$14 billion of cryptocurrency, or just 0.15% of crypto volume traded, was associated with criminal activity.

Special Features

Crypto hacks could grow in size and prevalence



Source: Elliptic, Coindesk, Twitter, Morgan Stanley Research.

Understanding the Role of Governance

Most cryptocurrencies use blockchain networks that

are decentralized databases of transactions where no single entity makes or enforces regulations. Anyone can create a new cryptocurrency, and, in fact, the world still doesn't definitively know who invented Bitcoin.

At first glance, this seems to defy good governance and raise myriad questions, including: Who makes the rules related to how a cryptocurrency operates? Is there a board of directors? Does the cryptocurrency or its applications always comply with the law?

Of course, proponents of cryptocurrency argue that such decentralization is the definition of good governance, precisely because no single entity has control.

For their part, the analysts covering cryptocurrency and sustainability at Morgan Stanley believe that new crypto regulations are likely to change the rules of investing in crypto-related products. Whether that simplifies the complicated nature of the asset class for sustainability-focused investors, however, seems unlikely, at least in the short term.

Morgan Stanley

Bankers still standing behind coal



It's still early in 2022, but signs are emerging that the amount of financing going to coal-related projects is running at a rate that's more than double 2021's pace.

With the first quarter coming to a close, banks (mostly based in China) have helped coal companies raise \$9.9 billion (¥ 1.21 trillion) via loans and bond sales, according to data compiled by Bloomberg. For comparison, the number was closer to \$4.4 billion during the first months of 2021.

While the biggest chunk of the coal money is being accumulated for Chinese coal endeavors, the increase nevertheless runs counter to all the global banking sector chatter about its supposed commitment to helping the world cut dangerous emissions. And there's no more dangerous fossil fuel than coal – the single largest source of global temperature rise.

"It's amazing that the numbers are so big," said Alison

Kirsch, research and policy manager at Rainforest Action Network, which published its 13th annual "Banking on Climate Chaos" report on March 30.

The world's 60 largest banks have helped raise about \$4.6 trillion – in total – for oil, gas and coal companies since the Paris climate agreement was announced at the end of 2015, according to Rainforest Action, citing Bloomberg data among other sources.

How is it possible in 2022 that "banks are still financing coal?" Kirsch said. Bankers put coal in "the penalty box" in 2015 when they started drawing a line around mining of the combustible, black-sedimentary rock, she said.

Since then, it looks like coal got back out on the ice. The data show coal financing close to doubled in 2017 and has remained elevated ever since.

Coal power needs to be phased out by nations in the OECD and the European Union by 2030 - and by 2040 in the rest of the world – to meet the goals of the Paris Agreement, Kirsch said, citing reports from the United Nations and Climate Analytics.

Increasing coal investment makes this more difficult.

Some banks seem to be trying. HSBC Holdings PLC promised to "phase down" its exposure to fossil fuels, sending a warning to oil and gas clients. The bank said it will look at updating its wider financing policies, including those for conventional and unconventional oil and gas, methane emissions and environmentally critical areas such as the Arctic and Amazon.

Special Features

As for coal, HSBC said in December that it plans to stop financing the industry by 2040. And despite HSBC's large China presence, the bank has done little in recent years to help coal miners raise money through the debt markets, Bloomberg data show.

Instead, the leaders in this area have been lenders such as China Securities, an affiliate of Citic Securities, and Industrial Bank Co., a mid-sized Chinese bank based in Fuzhou.

The main conclusion from the Rainforest Action publication is that runaway funding for fossil fuel extraction and infrastructure is "causing climate chaos and threatening the lives and livelihoods of millions."

The inability of bankers to cut off the spigot to coal is "just horrible," Kirsch said.

The conversation around coal has been growing since Vladimir Putin launched his war on Ukraine. Europe relies on natural gas from Russia, and the war has prompted nations, including Germany, to consider keeping open their coal plants.

"The big picture here is this is a moment to rapidly uptick the movement toward renewables, and instead, the opposite is happening," Kirsch said. "We aren't accelerating the transition."

Rainforest Action, which along with other climate-focused nonprofits including Bank-Track, Reclaim Finance

and Sierra Club that compile the report, has developed scores for banks.

Not too surprisingly, those that rank among the lowest have been lenders that extend the most funding to fossil fuels, namely JP Morgan Chase & Co. and Citi-group Inc. Wells Fargo & Co. has rated among the world's top fracking banker and Barclays PLC has placed at the bottom of the pack in Europe. As for coal, Industrial Bank has been among the biggest bankers of mining.

"It's pretty stark," Kirsch said. "It's past the time for every bank in every country to immediately end their support for the expansion of coal mining and power."

Bloomberg

38th ABA Annual
Conference will be held
virtually on November 1 - 4,
2022

Among Member Banks

The Bank of East Asia wins big at the Global Brands Magazine Awards



The Global Brand

Awards is an annual event held by Global Brands Magazine (GBM), an international publication headquartered in the UK. The awards aim to recognise global brands achieving excellence in performance across a broad range of sectors, selected by a magazine that keeps readers on top of key trends surrounding the branding world. The Bank of East Asia was evaluated based on customer service, satisfaction, digital innovation, strategic relationships and new business development.

Incorporated in Hong Kong in 1918, The Bank of East Asia, Limited ("BEA") is dedicated to providing comprehensive corporate banking, personal banking, wealth management, and investment services to its customers in Hong Kong, Mainland

China, and other major markets around the world.

BEA is a leading Hong Kong-based financial services group listed on The Stock Exchange of Hong Kong, serving the needs of customers throughout Greater China and beyond, with total consolidated assets of HK\$907.47 billion (US\$116.39 billion) as of 31st December, 2021. BEA also operates one of the largest branch networks in Hong Kong, with 58 branches, 49 SupremeGold Centres, and 9 i-Financial Centres throughout the city.

In Mainland China, BEA's operational presence dates back to the opening of the Bank's Shanghai Branch in 1920. Today, the BEA Group operates one of the most extensive networks of any foreign bank on the Mainland, with outlets in about 40 cities nationwide.

PR Newswire UK

Among Member Banks

State Bank of India shares list do's and don'ts for customers



The State Bank of India (SBI) has warned its customers against online fraud and phishing attacks. India's largest public sector lender has also adopted an OTP based cash withdrawal system for transactions at SBI ATMs to protect customers from fraud.

In an awareness message, SBI has offered a few safety tips for its customers.

LIST OF DO'S

If you receive any suspicious e-mail/phone call/SMS/link, please think before you are prompted to take any action.

Always check for the padlock and secure channel for safe banking.

Scrutinize your credit reports once a while to keep a check on your financial well-being.

Routinely review your bank and credit card statements

to keep a check on any unauthorized entries.

LIST OF DON'TS

Don't share personal information or account-specific details like internet banking credentials, ATM card details, credit card details, etc. via e-mail/phone call/SMS or on social media.

Don't click on any email or social media messages you don't expect to need.

Don't open attachments that you were not expecting, especially ZIP files, and never run .exe files.

Don't share fake messages, fake news, fake information.

OTP-BASED ATM

An OTP will be sent to your registered mobile number

The OTP is a four-digit number that authenticates the user for a single transaction.

This will protect SBI Card holders from unauthorized ATM cash withdrawals.

India Today

MUFG's announces Green Loan Extended for Morgan Stanley-advised Private Real Estate Fund's Acquisition of Yokohama Nomura Building



MUFG Bank, Ltd. has executed a non-recourse loan for the acquisition of a green building (Yokohama Nomura Building) by PPFA Japan VI TMK ("TMK") established under an Asia-focused private real estate fund advised by Morgan Stanley Real Estate Investing (MSREI), the global private real estate investment management arm of Morgan Stanley. This loan is one of the few examples of a private fund utilizing sustainable finance in Japan. Morgan Stanley Capital K.K. and Nomura Real Estate Asset Management Co., Ltd. are appointed as asset managers of TMK.

As a global leader in the financial industry, Morgan Stanley is strongly committed to achieving a sustainable society, pledging to reach the goal of carbon neutrality by 2022, and to eliminate net carbon emissions from its investment and loan portfolio by 2050.

Nomura Real Estate Asset Management, as a member

of the Nomura Real Estate Group, is working to promote real estate investment management operations that incorporate ESG considerations. Their Sustainability Policies are based on the philosophy that consideration of ESG is essential to increasing investor value in the long term.

The Yokohama Nomura Building is an office building located in Minatomirai, Nishi-ku, Yokohama City, Kanagawa Prefecture, and has obtained green building certification for its high environmental performance, including the introduction of a cogeneration system that uses waste heat from a generator for air conditioning. The Loan is executed in accordance with the Green Loan Framework established by Nomura Real Estate Asset Management and Morgan Stanley Capital. Sustainability, a leading independent ESG ratings firm, has provided a second party opinion stating that the project will lead to positive environmental impacts, is considerate of potentially negative environmental and social impacts, and is in alignment with the Green Loan Principles.

MUFG Newsroom

Mizuho Bank concludes a green loan agreement with JX Metals Circular Solutions Europe GmbH



Mizuho Bank, Ltd. has concluded a green loan agreement with JX Metals Circular Solutions Europe GmbH (JXCSE), which is a subsidiary of JX Nippon Mining & Metals Corporation.

A green loan is a type of loan that is exclusively made available to finance projects that contribute to resolving and mitigating environmental issues. Green loans must meet the requirements of the Green Loan Principles¹. This green loan has been accredited as aligning with the Green Loan Principles by the Japan Credit Rating Agency, Ltd. (JCR) and has been rated as "Green 1", which is the highest rating available in the JCR Green Finance Evaluation rating system².

JXCSE was founded within the JX Nippon Mining & Metals Group (JX Metals Group) in August, 2021 to promote

the recycling of used automotive lithium-ion batteries (LiB) and development of new battery materials. In line with efforts by the JX Metals Group to achieve decarbonization and a circular economy, JXCSE has been engaged in developing LiB closed-loop recycling technologies and accelerating the commercialization of LiB recycling.

Mizuho Bank arranged this green loan to support JXCSE's environmental initiatives through funding of capital investment and refinancing for R&D activities related to LiB recycling.

At Mizuho, we are strengthening our initiatives toward realizing a sustainable society, including responding to climate change and the transition to a low-carbon society. We will draw on our expertise as a financial services group to provide financing support, advice, and solutions for strengthening and shifting clients' business toward decarbonization.

Mizuho Newsroom

Among Member Banks

Maybank launches first ever ASEAN-Maybank Scholarship programme, invests RM5m for intakes up to 2025

Maybank has collaborated with the ASEAN Secretariat to jointly introduce the ASEAN-Maybank Scholarship (AMS) programme 2022 – the first ever scholarship programme by a regional organisation in partnership with the ASEAN Secretariat.

The scholarship, which will involve an investment of some RM5 million for the initial intakes up to 2025, is part of Maybank's continued commitment to invest in the future of ASEAN youth through education.

AMS is designed to provide young, talented and deserving ASEAN nationals, especially those from the lower income segment, with full scholarships to pursue their undergraduate education in prestigious universities outside their own countries, but within the ASEAN region. For the first intake of 2022, a total of three scholarships are being offered, which will progressively be increased to 10 a year by 2025 and thereafter.

Maybank Chairman, Tan Sri Dato' Sri Zamzamzairani Mohd Isa, who is also Chairman of Maybank Foundation,



said that Maybank was honoured to partner with the ASEAN Secretariat to launch the first intake for this scholarship programme to deserving students in the region.

“This is part of our commitment to invest in the future generation through education and help promote greater understanding among the people of ASEAN. It also aligns with our mission to humanise financial services and supports one of the four headline sustainability commitments in our M25 Plan, which is improving the lives of one million households across ASEAN by 2025.”

Tan Sri Zamzamzairani added that Maybank is hopeful the AMS scholarship programme would encourage greater intra-ASEAN integration by boosting educational links between its member countries. “It is designed to lay the foundation for a transformative cross-cultural experience that will have a far-reaching effect on its beneficiaries. This is why we have a target to sponsor 25 deserving students from 10 ASEAN countries by the year 2025. We hope the recipients will go on to positively impact their communities by becoming change makers and leaders, and contributing to the region's economic and social development.”

Maybank News

BML supports completion of projects in Felidhoo and Henbadhoo under BML Community Fund



BANK OF MALDIVES

Bank of Maldives has announced April 11, the successful completion of projects in V. Felidhoo and N. Henbadhoo as part of its Community Fund which focuses on empowering individuals to contribute to society through sustainable community projects.

Under the project, a community picnic area was developed by Felidhoo Zuvaan Ekuveringe Dhirun in V. Felidhoo. The space will be utilized by local residents, tourists and those visiting from neighbouring islands. The community

picnic area is equipped with traditional joali, swings, BBQ area and an outdoor shower.

Hamid Rasheed, recipient of community fund developed a BBQ area in N. Henbadhoo. The space is now open to the public with BBQ stands, seating area with a mini library, fish filleting platform and a dedicated storage area.

The Community Fund is a program to empower individuals and NGOs to contribute to their communities through sustainable projects. As of today, the Bank has provided financial assistance for 65 projects across the country through this Fund.

Bank of Maldives Newsroom

Sanima Bank: now at Tandhi, Chitwan



Sanima Bank

Sanima Bank inaugurated Tandhi branch at Ratnanagar-1, Tandhi, Chitwan on 24th March 2022. Sanima Bank's Tandhi branch was jointly inaugurated by Brand Ambassadors Mr. Madan Krishna Shrestha and Mr. Hari Bamsha Acharya (MAHA) and Director of Sanima Bank, Dr. Keshab Prasad Acharya amidst a ceremony.

MAHA Jodi congratulated Sanima Bank for its continuous growth and success as a strong and reliable bank. On the other hand, Mayor of Ratnanagar Municipality Mr. Narayan

Ban congratulated Sanima Bank for providing banking service and facilitating local people to fulfill their financial/banking needs which will help to promote business growth of Ratnanagar. Further, Director of Sanima Bank, Dr. Keshab Prasad Acharya and Chief Executive Officer of Sanima Bank, Mr. Nischal Raj Pandey expressed their gratitude to customers and stakeholders for continuous support and patronage and express commitment to provide a quality service.

Sanima Bank is providing banking services from 126 office and 114 ATM networks in all 7 provinces.

Sanima Bank News

Among Member Banks

PNB launches CashNet Plus mobile app for corporates

Philippine National Bank (PNB) levels up its digital banking offering as it rolls out the PNB CashNet Plus mobile application for corporate clients. The mobile app is now available for download from the App Store and Google Play.

PNB President and CEO Wick Veloso highlights how this new product further enhances the customer's experience, saying, "We are harnessing the power of technology to improve our engagement with customers. Our goal is to help them run their business more efficiently with the view of making them more competitive over the longer term. PNB's cash management system is designed to help companies manage their funding needs, cashflow, and budgets better. The PNB CashNet Plus mobile app is about arming our customers with the tools to better manage their business."

Veloso adds that PNB aims to encourage corporate customers to substitute bank visits with non-stop online service. "Even as the government has eased up the alert levels, we believe that we should continue to offer digital banking solutions that will not only keep our customers safe but also help them focus on recovery efforts."

Companies can use this mobile banking service by simply enrolling to the app. Clients have the option to log in via biometrics for added security and convenience in accessing their company accounts.



"The PNB CashNet Plus mobile app gives our clients that much-needed sense of security and convenience so they can have more time to focus on other important matters such as growing their business and developing their people," said PNB's EVP and Head for Institutional Banking Jun Audencial. "Clients can now access their accounts and perform transactions at the palm of their hands – anytime, anywhere."

Users of PNB CashNet Plus will be able to view their company's account balance and transaction history, and transfer funds within their own accounts or other third-party PNB accounts including other payment solutions such as InstaPay and PESONet. Clients can also authorize payroll and check disbursements, supplier payment instructions, tax payments, bills payment, as well as checkbook and stop payment order requests.

Audencial notes that PNB remains committed to provide a full suite of digital services to a wide range of clients. "Through the CashNet Plus mobile app, we can help not just the big corporates, but the small and medium enterprises as well. What we are offering is not just an array of products, but an efficient business solution."

This move by PNB is in line with the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas' Digital Payments Transformation Roadmap, which was launched last year. This roadmap serves as a blueprint for transforming the Philippines into a cash-lite society.

Philippine National Bank News

RCBC phasing out coal investments by 2031

Rizal Commercial Banking Corp. (RCBC) announced it plans to wipe out its remaining existing exposure to coal-fired power plant construction by 2031.

"As part of RCBC's commitment to the environment and to the world we all live in, we are phasing out lending to coal-fired power plants by 2031," Eugene Acevedo, RCBC president and chief executive officer, was quoted as saying in a statement.

"A call to be part of the net-zero revolution has started. Businesses need to redouble efforts in order to reach net zero. Much more needs to be learned on how sustainable finance can contribute to this," he added.

Following the Department of Energy's nationwide coal moratorium, the Yuchengco-led lender said it became the first local commercial bank to officially stop giving finance to new coal-fired power projects in December 2020.

Acevedo further said the bank has been focusing on



renewable energy (RE) since 2012 when it comes to supporting energy projects.

RCBC said it is on the verge of closing financial arrangements on RE projects with a total capacity of 1.6 gigawatts (GW). This comes on top of the 3.06 GW of RE projects the bank has previously backed since 2012.

RCBC Corporate Banking Group head Elizabeth Coronel said the bank expects to close these new RE deals — which include solar, wind, hydro and geothermal projects — within the next 12 to 24 months.

The lender also issued up to \$1.1 billion in funds under its Sustainable Finance Framework from 2019 to 2021. It also launched the Philippines' first environment-related time deposit earlier this year.

RCBC's peso green time deposit allows more individual consumers and even private organizations to invest in environmental protection because of its modest minimum investment amount of P5,000.

The Manila Times

Among Member Banks

Doha Bank CEO Seetharaman Resigns After 15 Years in Role

Doha Bank said its veteran Chief Executive Officer Raghavan Seetharaman resigned, ending his 15-year career at the Qatar-based lender.

The bank did not give further details on the resignation in a brief statement.



Seetharaman was appointed in 2007. Before joining Doha Bank, he was an assistant general manager at PricewaterhouseCoopers.

Doha Bank is one of Qatar's largest lenders with a market capitalization of \$2.2 billion. The bank's shares fell 0.9% while the country's benchmark index advanced. The shares decreased to 2.64 riyals from 2.66 riyals in the previous session.

Bloomberg

Singapore's DBS explores metaverse in digital push

Singapore's DBS Group Holdings is looking for ways to bring banking services to the metaverse, the company's chief information officer said, as Southeast Asia's largest bank continues to invest heavily in its digital transformation.

CIO Jimmy Ng told Nikkei Asia in an online interview that DBS has been investing about 1 billion Singapore dollars (\$730 million) annually in technology over the past decade in areas such as the cloud and artificial intelligence, and will maintain that amount of tech investment.

The metaverse is a concept championed by the likes of Microsoft and Facebook parent Meta in which people interact as digital avatars in a virtual world.

"There are a few key technologies that we are looking at. One of them, of course, is the metaverse," Ng said. "We are actively exploring this space even as it evolves."

Ng did not go into detail on how the bank plans to tap the metaverse's potential, but hinted that non-fungible tokens -- blockchain-based tokens that represent a unique digital asset -- could play a part. NFTs, he noted, are traded between online game players and between different metaverse platforms. "We believe that this is one of the areas that we can actually look at," he said.

While he did not specify when and what services the company might offer, Ng said that "the way we do banking can be imported to very different platforms, such as the metaverse."

"We believe that over time, emerging technologies such as blockchain, [augmented reality] and [virtual reality] will converge to create very interesting use cases that we have never imagined," he said. These technologies will be "game changers" for the industry over the next few years, he added.

The metaverse is already drawing attention from other



major banks. JP Morgan recently opened a metaverse "lounge" with an eye toward using it to offer financial services.

DBS started its digital transformation close to 10 years ago, Ng said, with 60% of customers now using its digital banking services.

DBS was named "the world's best digital bank" last year by U.K.-based financial publication Euromoney. Digital investment totaled SG\$4.8 billion over the four years through 2021, according to the bank.

Digital capability is increasingly important for DBS, especially as Singapore's regulators are leveling the playing field with technology startups.

The bank's digital push has not been without hitches. Its online banking services suffered a two-day disruption in November 2021, with the Monetary Authority later noting "deficiencies in [the bank's] incident management and recovery procedures." Ng said in the interview that DBS takes has "taken serious steps to review and improve our resilience and incident response."

Meanwhile, Singapore in early March announced financial sanctions against Russia after its invasion of Ukraine, prohibiting all financial institutions in the city-state from conducting transactions or establishing business relationships with four Russian banks, and requiring them to freeze the assets of those four banks. Financial institutions in Singapore were also barred from providing fundraising-related services for the Russian government, the central bank of Russia or entities controlled by them.

Asked about the sanctions' impact on DBS, Ng said DBS "complies with all applicable sanctions, including Singapore's recent actions, which are incorporated into these systems and processes to ensure compliance and to detect attempts at evasion."

Nikkei Asia

Among Member Banks

UOB expects 5% revenue at risk after new digital banks enter the fray



UNITED Overseas Bank (UOB) expects "limited" impact in the near term from competition from new digital banks - with about 5 per cent of its revenue at risk - as it believes the Singapore banking market is highly penetrated and incumbent banks are "well trusted" by consumers.

The bank, founded in 1935, was responding to questions from shareholders and investor watchdog, the Securities Investors Association (Singapore), prior to its April 21 annual general meeting, with the responses filed on April 9 with the bourse.

Singapore has issued the consortium made up of mainboard-listed Singtel and Nasdaq-listed Grab Holdings, and NYSE-listed consumer Internet company Sea each a full digital bank licence, allowing them to take deposits from and provide banking services to retail and non-retail customer segments.

Two digital wholesale bank licences went to an Ant Group unit and a consortium comprising Greenland Financial Holdings Group Co, Linklogis Hong Kong and Beijing Co-operative Equity Investment Fund Management Co, for them to take deposits from and provide banking services to small and medium enterprises and other non-retail customer segments.

Head of research and consulting at the Institute

of Service Excellence (ISE) at the Singapore Management University, Chen Yongchang, said digital banks will give traditional banks a run for their money in the credit card, current and savings account, and investment spaces.

Apart from the upcoming competition, UOB - Singapore's third-largest bank by market capitalisation - said in the responses that it is confident in the long-term prospects of Asia, especially Asean, with the gradual reopening of economies.

"Our average growth forecast for Asean is about 5 per cent for 2022, compared with 4.2 per cent in 2021. Orderly normalisation of interest rate curves globally augurs well for the bank, given our current asset and liability profile. We do not expect any material impact on our resilient and well-collateralised loan portfolio," wrote UOB.

The bank added that despite there being high climate risks in South-east Asia, there are opportunities in green technologies and business models, sustainable cities and infrastructure. The sector, the bank noted, is projected to be valued at about US\$1 trillion annually, and climate risk is an integral component of the bank's sustainability strategy.

As a South-east Asian regional bank, the focus for UOB is on intra-Asia and Asean trade, it added. "Therefore, we are less directly impacted by the Russia-Ukraine conflict. We are monitoring closely any indirect impact and are working with the industry to ensure compliance with sanctions."

The Business Times

HNB wins 'Best IoT Initiative' award at Asian Digital Finance Forum

HNB FIT, Asia's first fitness related app launched by Sri Lanka's most digitally-savvy bank HNB PLC, was crowned as the 'Best IoT initiative' at the Asian Digital Finance Forum and Awards recently.

Hosted by the Asian FinTech Academy (AFTA) in Colombo, the forum recognised and awarded organizations and impactful individuals at a hybrid event. Central Bank of Sri Lanka Assistant Governor Dharmasiri Kumaratunge, Fintech Association of Sri Lanka (FASL) President Rajkumar Kanagasigam and Fintech Association of Japan Vice-Chair Takeshi Kito participated in the event as Guests of Honor together with representatives from leading organisations in Sri Lanka.

Sharing his thoughts on the win, HNB Head of Deposits, Viranga Gamage shared: "We are honoured to see the HNB



FIT banking product recognized and awarded as an impactful initiative. The product is unique to the Asian region and was mainly aimed to incentivize accountholders encouraging them to take minimum 6,000 steps per day, and be a healthier version of themselves. HNB FIT is the cohesive union of new tech and the fitness culture which aims to improve an individual's health and wellbeing.

"Given that AFTA is a prestigious global body that has supported and encouraged digital expansion across the region by executing programmes on revolutionary financial solutions, we are delighted to be recognised for our efforts. We are thrilled to see our creativity entwined with technology pay off, especially amongst the youth of the nation."

HNB FIT promotes health and wellbeing by rewarding attractive interest rates for achieving a foot count on a daily basis. This one-of-a-kind initiative introduced in 2017 has received positive feedback since its launch.

Hatton National Bank News

Among Member Banks

E.SUN joins National Taiwan University in promoting the ESG Centenary Project to strive for ecologically sustainable development

State-run First Financial Holding Co. said that it would continue the “E.Sun-NTU ESG Centenary Project,” a collaboration between E.Sun Commercial Bank and National Taiwan University (NTU), was officially launched on March 25. The project is composed of two sub-projects, one aimed at planting cypress trees native to Taiwan and the other at reviving millet cultivation in Xinyi Township of Nantou County.

Joining forces and their resources, E.Sun and NTU demonstrate a commitment to society by taking action to forge a sustainable symbiotic relationship between the economy and nature, and protect the environment and ecosystem of Taiwan.

The cypress planting project is focused on growing cypress trees in the Yushan mountain range. Cypress trees native to Taiwan include *Chamaecyparis formosensis* (Taiwan red cypress), *Chamaecyparis taiwanensis*, *Taiwania*, *Calocedrus formosana* (Taiwan incense cedar) and *Taiwan cunninghamia*.

Through the project, 100,000 trees would be planted over 10 years, covering 50 hectares. The trees are expected to absorb 242,000 tonnes of carbon dioxide in 100 years or an annual carbon sequestration equivalent to 617 Daan Forest Parks.

After some growth, the trees would be thinned, leaving 25,000 trees to grow for hundreds of years. The sub-project would help pave the way for preserving natural resources in Taiwan and provide the benefits of a circular carbon economy.

The millet revival project aims to revive 28 varieties of millet that were once native to Xinyi, but are now rarely seen in the area. Thanks to the professional endeavors of NTU, a few varieties of millet were brought back home to Taiwan from a seed bank in the US. The seeds will be used to revitalize the millet industry and culture of the Bunun community, thereby bringing back the culture and values of indigenous peoples in Taiwan.

E.Sun Commercial Bank chairman Joseph Huang said



From right, National Taiwan University (NTU) executive vice president Lo Ching-hua, NTU executive vice president Chou Chia-pei, NTU president Kuan Chung-ming, E.Sun Commercial Bank chairman Joseph Huang, E.Sun Financial Holding Co president Magi Chen and E.Sun Financial chief human resources officer J.C. Wang pose in Taipei on March 25 after announcing the “E.Sun-NTU ESG Centenary Project.” Photo courtesy of E.Sun Commercial Bank

that working with NTU on making a centennial commitment through a project as beautiful and meaningful as this is a historical moment, especially in the 30th anniversary of the bank.

NTU president Kuan Chung-ming commended the Experimental Forest of NTU for its dedication to promoting forestry management. Kuan also expressed his sincere gratitude to E.Sun Bank for working with NTU in the ESG Centenary Project, as growing thousands of trees to protect Yushan and reviving millet cultivation in Xinyi are conducive to the mitigation of global warming and preservation of biodiversity, which are significant and valuable to environmental sustainability.

Preserving biodiversity is the foundation for the sustainable development of humanity. E.Sun Bank is long committed to environmental sustainability and ecological conservation, focusing particularly on species conservation, habitat maintenance and environmental sustainability.

E.Sun also supports organic farming and the conservation of Formosan black bears, butterflies and sea turtles, among other species, taking action to tackle ESG or sustainability issues and planting seeds of hope to create a sustainable future.

Taipei Times

Shanghai Commercial board approves cash dividend of NT\$1.8 per share



上海商業銀行
SHANGHAI COMMERCIAL BANK

Taiwan-based Shanghai Commercial and Savings Bank (SCSB) said its board of directors had approved a proposal to pay a cash dividend of NT\$1.8 per share.

The board also voted to sell NT\$3 billion (US\$104.85 million) of subordinated debentures this year to increase SCSB's working capital, the bank said in a Taiwan Stock Exchange (TWSE) filing.

SCSB is to have its annual general meeting on June 17,

2022, at which it would seek shareholders' approval for the two proposals, it said.

The bank reported earnings per share of NT\$3.19 for 2021, up from NT\$3.01 the previous year. The proposed dividend represents a payout ratio of 56.43 percent, flat from last year.

Based on SCSB's closing price of NT\$49.55 on March 25, the planned payout would translate into a dividend yield of 3.63 percent, higher than the interest rates on fixed-term deposits offered by local banks.

Taipei Times

Among Member Banks

CTBC Financial Holding, subsidiaries receive outstanding enterprise award



CTBC Financial

Holding Co and its two subsidiaries, CTBC Bank Co and Taiwan Life Insurance Co, have received the CG6013 (2021) outstanding enterprise certification, the highest rating for corporate governance system evaluation granted to a financial institution by the Taiwan Corporate Governance Association.

The association presented the certification to CTBC Financial vice chairman Thomas Chen at a ceremony in Taipei.

The corporate governance system evaluation reflects the Financial Supervisory Commission's policy direction to encourage sustainable development of enterprises in the nation, CTBC Financial said in a statement.

While receiving the certificate, Chen said the company would continue to follow its founding principles, grow its operations and improve corporate governance.

Acting on its commitments, the company in June 2020 established a sustainable development committee under its board as its highest supervisory body.

In 2021, the company was in the top fifth percentile in the commission's ranking of corporate governance and led the financial sector in Taiwan by publishing the Climate Risk

Assessment Report, the statement said.

CBTC Bank in 2019 became a signatory of the Equator Principles to mandate stringent controls to regulate the environmental and social effects of its financial projects. The same year, it announced it would comply with the UN Principles for Responsible Banking, the statement said.

Pursuant to the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the bank has over the past two years responded to the COVID-19 pandemic by offering short-term stimulus, debt moratorium, favorable financing and other instruments to clients to stabilize Taiwanese society, the statement said, adding that the bank remains committed to sustainable banking to align with SDGs.

At the same time, Taiwan Life Insurance has established responsible investment and sustainable insurance policies to promote responsible investments, sustainable products and fair client practices with an eye toward integrating environmental, social and governance concerns, the statement said.

Leading the industry, the insurer has further promised NT\$53.45 billion (US\$1.86 billion) in green energy loans and investments while focusing on the IFRS 17, Insurance Capital Standard 2.0 and fair client practices, among other policies on its client and sustainability-oriented road map, it said.

Taipei Times

Taiwan's State-run banks to raise rates on select products

Taiwan's State-run banks said on March 21 that they would raise interest rates on savings deposits and loans after the central bank last week raised its policy rates by 25 basis points, but would approach the matter guided by business needs and other considerations.

Top officials from state-run lenders made known their intentions during a meeting of the legislature's Finance Committee in Taipei, where lawmakers raised questions about the impact of the rate hikes.

State-owned Bank of Taiwan has increased the interest rates on its savings deposits by 0.25 percentage points, but would not impose similar charges on all lending operations to retain customers, chairman Joseph Lyu said.

The nation's largest lender by assets raised the interest rate on time savings deposits of different tenures by 25 basis points, benefits that failed to be extended to large deposits and demand deposit accounts.

Bank of Taiwan did not comment on how the rate hike would affect syndicated loans, land financing, corporate lending and mortgage operations.

Similarly, state-run Mega International Commercial Bank is to raise interest rates on time savings deposits by 25 basis points, but the adjustment for demand deposits would be smaller, chairman Michael Chang said.

Taiwan Cooperative Bank chairman Lei Chung-dar



said that he would stand by the central bank's policy in dealing with savings and loans except for demand deposits. Lenders generally offer very small interest rates for demand deposits.

State-run and private banks are to discuss lending rates this week and implement the changes next month.

Interest rates for mortgages are likely to rise from 1.31 percent to upward of 1.56 percent to reflect the central bank's monetary normalization, adding an extra NT\$1,200 (US\$42.12) a month for homeowners with a NT\$10 million mortgage.

Interest rates for land financing are likely to climb to at least 2.05 percent from 1.8 percent to help discourage land hoarding.

While ample liquidity and record-low borrowing costs aimed at mitigating the pain of the COVID-19 pandemic had helped drive up property prices, the increase in funding costs would reduce developers' and builders' financing needs, and the property market would reflect real demand by home buyers, Capital Investment Management Corp said in a note yesterday, adding that demand would remain strong as the nation's economic fundamentals continue to improve.

State-owned Land Bank of Taiwan announced earlier that it would not take on new land financing after related lending approached the regulatory limit.

The Financial Supervisory Commission has tightened capital requirements for real-estate lending, obligating banks intent on growing their real-estate lending to demonstrate higher capitalization, but it remains to be seen if developers and builders would pass higher interest expenses to home buyers, analysts said.

Taipei Times

Among Member Banks

Bangkok Bank joins AIA Thailand to sell life insurance online focusing on high coverage, affordable premiums and easy access via mobile banking to serve individual needs



Bangkok Bank Executive Vice Presidents Prassanee Ouyiamaphan and Pornpimon Trongtiengdham joined AIA Company Limited Chief Strategic Bancassurance Alliance Officer Alisa Simaroj and Chief Strategy and Digital Officer Dr. Christian Roland to launch “Be Together For You”, a life and health insurance policy designed to serve personalized, individual needs. It is easy to buy via the Bangkok Bank Mobile Banking app with the

product offering high coverage and affordable premiums. Each insurance package is tailored for each customer with coverage for life, accidents, daily compensation, critical illnesses and total permanent disability. Customers will receive a special promotion of free protection against Covid-19 vaccine side-effects when purchasing the “Be Together For You” policy from March 22 - June 30, 2022.

Customers who receive the online offer of the “Be Together For You” insurance can purchase the policy via the Bangkok Bank Mobile Banking app from today. For more information, please call Bualuang Phone 1333 or contact AIA Call Center 0 2353 8855, every day from 8:00 a.m. - 10:00 p.m.

Bangkok Bank News

Vietcombank plans a profit of over 30,000 billion VND



In 2022, Joint Stock Commercial Bank for Foreign Trade of Vietnam (Vietcombank) aims to increase at least 12% of pre-tax profit compared to the previous year, equivalent to over VND 30,676 billion.

This is one of the notable information in the draft document of Vietcombank's 2022 Annual General Meeting of Shareholders scheduled to take place on April 29 in Hanoi.

Also, according to the draft document, Vietcombank plans to grow its total assets by about 8%; credit balance increased by 15%; capital mobilization is expected to increase by 9%, in line with the credit growth rate; bad debt ratio lower than 1.5%.

At the meeting, Vietcombank's Board of Directors is expected to submit to shareholders to approve the plan to increase charter capital in 2022 through the issuance of shares to pay dividends from the remaining profit in 2019 and 2020.

Specifically, the bank plans to issue 856 million common shares with an issue rate of 18.1%, that is, shareholders owning 1,000 shares at the cut-off date will receive an additional 181 new shares. The number of shares issued to existing shareholders will be rounded down to the number of units, the decimals will be cancelled. For example, a shareholder holding 160 shares at the time of closing the list will receive a new number of shares of 28 shares.

After the successful issuance, Vietcombank's charter

capital will increase from the current 47,325 billion dong to more than 55,891 billion dong. The implementation period is in 2022.

Vietcombank said the additional charter capital will be used in the bank's business activities on the principle of ensuring safety, efficiency and bringing the highest benefits to shareholders. It is expected to be used for investment in material and technological infrastructure: building working offices, expanding operation network, investing in technology and fixed assets (about VND 500 billion); expanding credit activities, capital trading and other business activities of Vietcombank.

In addition, this meeting is also expected to approve the remuneration for the Board of Directors and Supervisory Board in 2022, up to 0.27% of consolidated profit after tax, in case the profit target is fulfilled. consolidated before tax 2022 according to the assigned plan. In addition, the meeting is also expected to elect an additional member of the Supervisory Board for the 2018-2023 term and submit to shareholders to choose an independent auditing company.

In 2021, Vietcombank recorded a 19% increase in pre-tax profit compared to the previous year, reaching VND 27,389 billion. Total assets reached 1.41 million billion VND, up 7%. Credit balance increased by 15% compared to 2020 and total capital mobilization increased by 9%. The bad debt ratio reached 0.63% and the on-balance sheet bad debt provision ratio was 424%, the highest in the banking industry as well as in the history of this bank.

Bnews.vn

Among Member Banks

Agribank receives 2 awards for Typical Vietnamese Bank in 2021



AGRIBANK

Agribank has just been honored to be awarded two awards "A bank with typical innovative products and services" and "A typical bank for the community".

The event is within the framework of Vietnam Retail Banking Forum 2021, organized by the Vietnam Banks Association (VNBA) in collaboration with the International Data Group in Vietnam (IDG Vietnam).

This is the 10th year in a row that the Typical Vietnam Bank Award has been organized, a prestigious annual title in the banking sector, given to banks with outstanding performance in various aspects, new, important, outstanding business or product or service that is of interest to the community.

During its operation, Agribank always spends 70% of outstanding loans for investment in agriculture and rural areas, accounting for nearly 40% of total outstanding

loans to agriculture and rural areas of the entire system of credit institutions. use.

Agribank's credit programs have been making a very important contribution to poverty reduction, promoting the restructuring of the agricultural sector and building new rural areas of the country, contributing to the development of the country. The breakthrough of agriculture confirms its role as the backbone of the economy.

In addition to business activities, Agribank is very interested in supporting social security with many overall and long-term funding projects and programs across the country, supporting the COVID-19 epidemic prevention and control.

From 2021 up to now, the whole Agribank system has donated more than 550 billion VND for disease prevention and control throughout the country, including many practical activities such as: Support vaccine fund; funding expenses, medical equipment for the hospital; Support medical team.

Bnews.vn

Banking and Finance Newsbriefs

Bhutan

Bhutan's Private sector development for economic recovery: ADO

With the economic recovery, Bhutan has to create a conducive environment for the private sector development, while at the same time reducing dependence on the hydropower sector and state-owned enterprises (SOEs), according to Asian Development Outlook (ADO) 2022 released April 6, 2022.

The ADO report estimated Bhutan's gross domestic product (GDP) to moderately grow by 3.5 percent in 2021, as economic activity picked up following the government's stimulus measures and steps to ease supply chain disruptions caused by Covid-19 pandemic.

With progressive relaxation of containment measures, including opening the tourism and other policy measures, the GDP is projected to grow faster to 4.5 percent in 2022 and 7.5 percent by 2023.

Asian Development Bank's (ADB) country director, Shamit Chakravarti, said that Bhutan's economy over the past decades had seen not much change in the economic structure or employment profile.

"Bhutan's focus on hydropower as the main source of growth, exports, and

foreign exchange earnings has come at the cost of a vibrant and competitive private sector," he added.

According to the report, net foreign direct investment inflows tallied just 0.5 percent of GDP in the fiscal year 2019—low compared to other economies with similar per capita incomes such as Vietnam (6.2 percent of GDP), the Philippines (2.3 percent), and South Asia of 1.6 percent average.

Shamit Chakravarti said that the hydropower sector, which generated 57 percent of the government revenue on average from 2011 to 2020, contributed less than 2 percent to the total employment.

He said that Bhutan's economy should be diversified as hydropower could take a beating from earthquakes and other disasters.

Shamit Chakravarti said that the agriculture (15 percent of GDP) employment share fell to around 50 percent, but the shift into industry did not translate to a higher industry share of GDP over the past decades.

The industry that contributes about 40 percent to GDP has an employment of less than 15 percent. The services sector contributed to 50 percent of GDP and employs about 30 percent, he said.

Shamit Chakravarti said that

the manufacturing sector is supposed to generate a large number of jobs as the economy moves from agriculture to industries to services.

He added that the SOEs with preferential government finance are competing with the private sector.

"I am aware that the government would rationalise the number of SOEs, the role of SOEs, and make sure that they are not crowding out the private sectors," Shamit Chakravarti.

Shamit Chakravarti said that the government must attract the private sector as a partner and investor in economic development, diversify the economy beyond hydropower, and reduce the oversized role played by the public sector.

Over the years, the government has undertaken policy reforms, simplified licensing requirements, and provided incentives for the private sector. The results, however, have not been encouraging, the report stated.

"Businesses continue to identify tight access to finance, high rents, erratic electricity supply, multiple licensing requirements, delays in getting clearances, and high-interest loans as the main obstacles affecting their operations," the report added.

Simplifying licensing, reducing the number of clearances required, and

Banking and Finance Newsbriefs

reducing the cost of business to register are the measures to create conducive environment for the private sector, Shamit Chakravarti said.

He added that the ADB and government are working to update the commercial or insolvency law and make it more transparent to offer timely and cost-effective solutions for cottage and small industries (CSIs); small firms in financial distress should be considered.

"The CSIs that comprise 95

percent of the total industries need to be protected from bankruptcy since they are different from large companies. Law usually only focuses on the big players," Shamit Chakravarti said.

Reforming technical and vocational education and training or balancing demand and supply in the job market to address very high levels of youth unemployment are also to be looked at, he said.

Shamit Chakravarti said that for

a small country like Bhutan, many leaving for employment abroad was a matter of concern.

He also said that Bhutan must promote digitalisation, easier access to finance, and foster entrepreneurship.

Bhutan, he said, should take bold reforms for sustainable economic recovery and a strong growth trajectory. "We can draw comfort from the recovery, and the recovery will be on strong footings."

Kuensel Online

Hong Kong

Hong Kong Holds Third Spot in World's Financial Centers Ranking

Hong Kong, in the midst of an exodus of residents as it grapples with its largest ever outbreak of Covid-19, held its third place ranking among the world's financial centers, trailing New York and London, according to a survey.

In the main areas of competitiveness, Hong Kong ranked in the top four for business environment,

human capital, infrastructure and general reputation, but out of the top 10 in financial sector development.

Its overall hold on the third spot came as financial centers in Asia "generally recovered losses" experienced in the previous study, suggesting restored confidence in the region's economic strength, according to the Global Financial Centres Index published by Z/Yen and the China Development Institute. Shanghai and Shenzhen moved up to fourth and 10th place, respectively.

Hong Kong's strict pursuit of

Covid zero, coupled with a brain drain over the past years amid a political crackdown on media and civil society groups, has prompted warnings over the city's status as a financial hub. In part as a response to the mounting frustration of financial institutions and the public, Chief Executive Carrie Lam this week moved to ease some measures, calling an end to a travel ban from nine countries, including the U.S. and the U.K., and halving required hotel quarantine to seven days.

Bloomberg

India

Asian Development Bank projects India's economy to grow by 7.5 per cent in FY23; to pick-up to 8 per cent next fiscal

Asian Development Bank on April 6 projected a seven per cent collective growth for South Asian economies in 2022 with the sub region's largest economy, India, growing by 7.5 per cent in the current fiscal year before picking up to eight per cent in 2023.

Releasing its flagship Asian Development Outlook (ADO) 2022, the Manila-based multi-lateral funding agency said the growth in South Asia is projected to slow down to seven per cent in 2022, before picking up to 7.4 per cent in 2023.

The sub region's growth dynamics are largely driven by India and Pakistan.

"South Asian economies are expected to expand collectively by seven per cent in 2022 and 7.4 per cent in

2023, with India, the sub region's largest economy, expected to grow by 7.5 per cent this fiscal year (FY23) and eight per cent next fiscal year (FY24)," the agency's ADO report said.

Pakistan's growth is forecast to moderate to four per cent in 2022 on weaker domestic demand from monetary tightening and fiscal consolidation before picking up to 4.5 per cent in 2023, it said.

ADB said developing Asia's economies are predicted to grow by 5.2 per cent this year and 5.3 per cent in 2023, thanks to a robust recovery in domestic demand and continued expansion in exports.

"However, uncertainties stemming from the Russian invasion of Ukraine, the continuing coronavirus disease (Covid-19) pandemic, and tightening by the United States Federal Reserve pose risks to the outlook," ADB Outlook said.

Developing Asia comprises 46 member countries of ADB by geographic group: the Caucasus and Central Asia,

East Asia, South Asia, Southeast Asia and the Pacific.

South Asia comprises Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka.

"Economies in developing Asia are starting to find their footing as they slowly emerge from the worst of the Covid-19 pandemic," said ADB Chief Economist Albert Park.

However, geopolitical uncertainty and new Covid-19 outbreaks and virus variants could derail this momentum.

"Governments in the region will need to remain vigilant and prepared to take steps to counter these risks. That includes making sure as many people as possible are fully vaccinated against Covid-19. Monetary authorities should also continue to monitor their inflation situation closely and not fall behind the curve," Park said.

The Tribune

Banking and Finance Newsbriefs

Japan

Japan Finance Minister closely communicating on yen moves with US

Japan will communicate closely with the United States and other countries to respond to currency moves appropriately, Finance Minister Shunichi Suzuki said, as policymakers kept a wary watch on the yen after it slumped to six-year lows against the dollar.

Speaking to reporters after a cabinet meeting, Suzuki stressed the importance of stable currency moves, saying rapid moves were undesirable.

The Japanese currency broke beyond 125 yen on April 11 due to widening interest rate differentials between Japan and the United States, as bets the US Federal Reserve will accelerate tightening contrasted with the Bank of Japan's commitment to keep in place its ultra-easy monetary settings.

"The government is closely watching currency moves, including the recent yen weakening, and its impact on Japanese economy with a sense of

urgency," Suzuki said.

He noted the Group of Seven (G7) advanced economies have agreed to have exchange rates set by markets, to closely consult on action in the currency market and have acknowledge that excess volatility and disorderly moves can have adverse effects on economic and financial stability.

"Based on the G7 agreement, we'll respond appropriately while closely communicating with currency authorities of the United States and others," Suzuki said.

Despite the verbal jawboning, investors see little chance of immediate action by Japanese currency authorities, especially as long as policymakers maintain that the current yen weakness is good for Japan, said Daisuke Karakama, chief market economist at Mizuho Bank.

Chief Cabinet Secretary Hirokazu Matsuno has occasionally attempted to talk up a weak yen, while Bank of Japan Governor Haruhiko Kuroda hasn't shown any serious concerns about the current downturn in the currency.

A weak yen tends to boost

exporters' earnings, while lifting the cost of imports for the resource-deficient Japanese economy, squeezing household incomes and importers' bottom line.

Moreover, over the past decade or so, the benefits to exporters from a weak yen have lessened as many Japanese manufacturers moved overseas to produce goods.

"Japanese authorities are not yet escalating warning against the weak yen," Karakama said, adding that the currency's further descent beyond 130 yen towards 140 yen could be a trigger.

"If that becomes political issues by further fuelling oil and other price hikes, policymakers may be prompted into action."

Ruling party secretary-general Toshimitsu Motegi said on Tuesday that the government will compile measures later this month, by tapping budget reserves to help households and small firms cope with surging oil and broader price hikes as a resurgence of coronavirus cases and the war in Ukraine cloud Japan's outlook.

Reuters

Malaysia

Malaysia to Utilise business tax cuts, finance minister tells MSMEs

Finance Minister Datuk Seri Tengku Zafrul Abdul Aziz has called on entrepreneurs to utilise the business tax cuts provided for in Budget 2022.

Referencing the 92nd People's Financial Report, the minister said the government has announced various tax cuts, including delayed tax payments of six months up to June 30, 2022 for micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs).

"Apart from that, there are also extended tax cuts for renovation costs of up to RM300,000 to support the compliance of standard operating procedures such as

improvement to air circulation," he added.

Tengku Zafrul said there are also extra tax cuts of up to RM50,000 for rental of accommodation premises for workers and delayed income tax instalment payments, amendments to tax assessment, as well as tax cuts for rental reduction and accumulated losses that were brought forward.

Meanwhile, the finance minister said the government might launch various initiatives for the people, business and the economy this week.

"The government has also launched the housing loan initiative (i-Biaya) to help people own homes, especially those without a fixed income and a salary slip.

"The government is aware of this problem and this is in line with the National Housing Policy which stresses home ownership for the lower income group," Tengku Zafrul said in the financial report.

The finance minister also commented on the e-Pemula initiative that aims to lighten the financial burden of local enterprises and encourage cashless transactions by physical businesses.

"This initiative aims to support local businesses and online purchases, hence Malaysians can help support the country's economic recovery," he said.

Malay Mail

Banking and Finance Newsbriefs

Philippines

Bangko Sentral expects limited fallout from Ukraine crisis

The direct impact of the Russia-Ukraine war on the Philippines is “inconsequential,” representing less than 1% of merchandise trade and banks’ financial exposure, but the conflict might make a dent on inbound remittances, according to the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) chief.

BSP governor Benjamin Diokno told reporters that the Philippines has limited economic and business links with either of the countries at war.

In terms of cross-border

financial exposure of Philippine banks to Russia and Ukraine, these were estimated at less than US\$1mil (RM4.2mil) each – US\$672,200 (RM2.66mil) and US\$960,200 (RM4.07mil) in terms of deposit liabilities, respectively, as of the end of September 2021.

“The sum (of these liabilities) is less than 1% of the banking system’s total deposit liabilities as of the same period,” Diokno said, adding that banks have no cross-border financial assets in either Russia or Ukraine. However, two Philippine banks have investments in two Russian banks – the VTB Bank Public Joint Stock Co and the Russian Agricultural Bank – amounting to

254.12 million pesos (RM20.66mil) as of December 2021.

This is less than 1% of the total assets under management of these banks.

In terms of trade, the country generated US\$120mil (RM509mil) in export receipts from Russia and US\$5mil (RM21mil) from Ukraine in 2021.

Combined, these represented just about 0.2% of total exports last year.

“In brief, trade financing transactions of banks with Russian counterparts are inconsequential,” Diokno said.

The Star

Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka appoints new central bank governor

Amid the worst economic crisis since its independence, Sri Lanka appointed Dr. Nandalal Weerasinghe as the new Governor of the country’s Central Bank.

In addition, KMM Siriwardhana was appointed as the new secretary to the country’s Ministry of Finance.

Weerasinghe worked at the University of Colombo, as an external for a post-degree in economics and as an

external research economist at the Siasan Center in Malaysia. He is also a member of the advisory board at the Australian National University of Crawford’s Public Policy and Applied Economic analysis Center.

KMM Siriwardhana worked as the Alternative Executive Director of the International Finance Fund for Sri Lanka, India, Bangladesh and Bhutan. He has also served as the Director-General of the State Finance Department and the Additional Director General of the National Planning Department.

Earlier, Sri Lankan President Gotabaya Rajapaksa appointed a

new financial and economic team for multilateral affairs and debt sustainability.

Sri Lanka is battling a severe economic crisis with food and fuel scarcity affecting a large number of the people in the island nation. The economy has been in a free-fall since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Sri Lanka is also facing a foreign exchange shortage, which has, incidentally, affected its capacity to import food and fuel, leading to the power cuts in the country. The shortage of essential goods forced Sri Lanka to seek assistance from friendly countries.

ANI News

Singapore

Lawrence Wong: Singapore's Finance Minister and new leader of the PAP's 4G team

Finance Minister Lawrence Wong had on Feb 18 delivered his first Budget speech, announcing measures to chart a new way forward for Singapore.

On April 14, he was announced as leader of the People’s Action Party’s (PAP) fourth-generation (4G) team.

Cabinet ministers affirmed their choice after a process of consultation and the decision was endorsed by all government Members of Parliament, said Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong in a statement on Thursday.

Mr Wong, 49, was first elected as a Member of Parliament in May 2011

as part of a West Coast GRC team. He contested in the new Marsiling-Yew Tee GRC in the 2015 General Election and was elected again in 2020.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, he has fronted key announcements as co-chair of the multi-ministry task force. Then the Minister for National Development when he was appointed co-chair, Mr. Wong helped coordinate responses across different government agencies, working alongside fellow co-chair Gan Kim Yong, the Health Minister at the time.

According to the Prime Minister’s Office, Mr. Wong obtained his Bachelor’s and Master’s degrees in economics from the University of Wisconsin-Madison and the University of Michigan-Ann Arbor.

He is the deputy chairman of the Monetary Authority of Singapore (MAS),

having been appointed to the role in May 2021.

He is also a member of the GIC Board, the Future Economy Council, the Research, Innovation and Enterprise Council and the National Research Foundation Board. He co-chairs the Singapore-Shanghai Comprehensive Cooperation Council.

Beginning his career as a civil servant, Mr. Wong was previously chief executive of the Energy Market Authority, as well as the Principal Private Secretary to Prime Minister Lee.

He chairs the PAP Community Foundation and contributes to the labour movement as chairman of the Singapore Labour Foundation, as well as an advisor to the Union of Power and Gas Employees.

CNA

Taiwan

Taiwan will not follow US rate policy: CB Governor

Taiwan will not follow the US in setting its monetary policy, but it would pay attention to global peers' moves, international raw material price trends and geopolitical risks, central bank Governor Yang Chin-long told a meeting of the legislature's Finance Committee on April 13.

"There is no need for Taiwan to follow the US monetary decisions," as the US Federal Reserve is widely believed to raise interest rates by 50 basis points next month in another of six more rate hikes for this year to curb inflation, Yang said.

US inflation last month hit 8.5 percent, while Taiwan's rose 3.27 percent, rendering drastic rate hikes unwarranted, he said.

Rather, the central bank will approach the matter by taking into consideration policy moves by global

peers, inflationary pressures at home, and international fuel and raw material price movements, he said.

In addition, the central bank will seek to support the nation's economy to meet its duty, he said.

Yang said he stood by the view that Taiwan could achieve a GDP growth of 4 percent this year, although international research bodies have cut their forecast to an average of 3.8 percent after Russia invaded Ukraine in February and crude prices have since shot up.

Consumer prices in Taiwan are likely to ease next quarter, although the landscape is teeming with uncertainties, Yang said.

The central bank will make its quarterly decisions guided by the latest global and domestic economic data, Yang said, while acknowledging that the ongoing weakening of the New Taiwan dollar against the greenback is lending force to inflation.

Consumer prices picked up 0.1

to 0.17 percentage points after the NT dollar recently softened from NT\$28 to NT\$29 versus the US currency, Yang said, describing the extra inflationary burden as moderate.

A weak NT dollar will not necessarily become a norm, but has much to do with global funds responding to the Fed's rate hikes and asset adjustments, he said.

"The market will have the final say on the NT dollar's movements, but it remains the best performer in the past two years, thanks to Taiwan's robust economy and corporate profitability," Yang said.

The governor reiterated that the rate hike on March 17 is not aimed at cooling the property market, even though it inevitably sent unfavorable messages.

The central bank would favor selective credit controls to prevent funds from overflowing to the property market, he said.

Taipei Times

Thailand

Thai economy to continue recovery but risks increase: Central bank minutes

Thailand's economy will continue to recover, driven by improving local demand and foreign tourist numbers, while recent negative shocks have had a limited impact on the recovery, according to minutes of the central bank's last policy meeting.

Downside risks to short-term growth increased, however, as there could be prolonged shortages of some raw materials while households and businesses could be affected by higher costs, the minutes released on April 12 said.

On March 30, the Bank of Thailand's monetary policy committee

unanimously voted to leave the benchmark interest rate at a record low of 0.50 per cent, where it has been since May 2020, maintaining support for growth.

Its next policy review is in June, and most economists expect no policy change through this year.

The BOT forecasts economic growth of 3.2 per cent this year and 4.4 per cent next year, with foreign tourists at 5.6 million and 19 million, respectively.

It predicted inflation at 4.9 per cent this year, exceeding its target range of 1-3 per cent, before slowing to 1.7 per cent next year.

Medium-term inflation expectations remained within the target range while inflation pass-through to wage was assessed to be limited due to a fragile recovery in the labour market and

an uneven recovery across industries, the minutes said.

"Employment remained lower than the pre-pandemic level and might recover more slowly than in past crises," they said.

While the committee continued to focus on growth, it should reassess the balance of risks in the period ahead "when the robust economic recovery resumed and the associated risks subsided", the minutes said.

On future policy tightening, Governor Sethaput Suthiwartnarueput told Reuters the BOT would watch for signs of "deviation from the expected recovery" such as second-round effects on prices and unanchored inflation expectations.

Reuters

Banking and Finance Newsbriefs

Vietnam

The COVID-19 vaccine fund has spent more than VND 7,672 billion

According to the Management Board of the COVID-19 Vaccine Fund, by the end of April 14, the COVID-19 vaccine fund had mobilized VND 8,971.96 billion; in which, including interest on bank deposits of 62.7 billion dong.

The Fund Management Board said that there were 611,421 organizations and individuals contributing to the fund.

Up to now, the COVID-19 Vaccine Fund Management Board has spent VND 7,672.2 billion from the Fund. Among them, spending on buying and using vaccines is 7,667.6 billion VND; Spending to support research and testing

of vaccines is 4.6 billion VND, so the surplus at the end of the day is 1,299.76 billion VND.

To ensure transparency and fairness, the Management Board of the COVID-19 Vaccine Fund has fully disclosed all units and organizations, including those that have transferred money or have committed but will transfer later. The business units that have transferred the contributions have clear confirmations and complete statistics.

This is the basis for tax authorities to calculate deductible expenses when determining corporate income for expenditures to support and sponsor businesses and organizations for COVID-19 prevention and control activities according to Decree No. Decree 44/2021/ND-CP of the Government

guiding the implementation of deductible expenses when determining corporate income taxable income for support and sponsorship expenditures of enterprises and organizations for activities COVID-19 prevention and control.

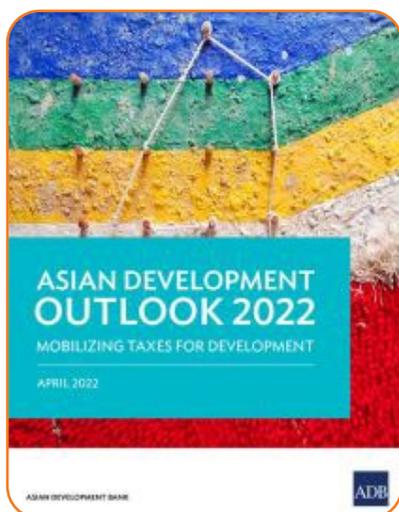
Currently, the Management Board of the COVID-19 Vaccine Fund has opened 22 receiving accounts for 3 currencies VND, USD and EUR at the State Treasury Exchange and 7 commercial banks including BIDV, Vietcombank, VietinBank, HDBank, MB, Agribank and TPBank.

The management and use of the fund, and the opening of deposit accounts with the State Treasury are publicized on the mass media, and the donation amounts are aggregated and widely communicated on a daily basis by the State Treasury.

Bnews.vn

Publications

Asian Development Outlook (ADO) 2022: Mobilizing Taxes for Development



Developing Asia's outlook remains positive, with growth of 5.2% expected in 2022 and 5.3% in 2023. Downside risks include spillover from geopolitical tensions, such as via

higher-than-expected commodity prices. The Russian invasion of Ukraine has upended the global economic outlook and greatly amplified uncertainty for a world economy still contending with COVID-19. Aggressive monetary policy tightening in the United States could lead to financial instability. In the medium term, scarring from the pandemic poses significant risks, including learning losses from continued school closures that could worsen economic inequality.

The region's economies urgently need to mobilize fiscal resources to restore the health of public finances and build a more inclusive and sustainable future. Opportunities to strengthen revenue will depend on specific circumstances, but more efficient value-added tax and better-optimized tax incentives hold promise for many economies. Strengthening personal income and property taxes can raise additional revenue and make tax systems more progressive. Significant opportunities exist to expand the use of tax and other fiscal instruments to tackle environmental and health priorities while raising revenue.

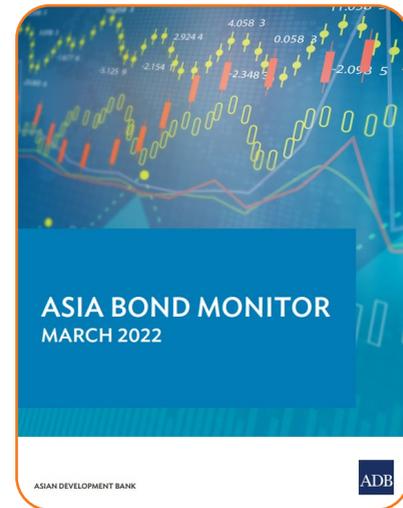
Contact Details: [ADB Publication](#)

Publications

Asia Bond Monitor – March 2022

This edition of the Asia Bond Monitor also discusses the pricing of frequent green bond issuances, foreign participation in Asian local currency bond markets, and financial stability risks. It provides a summary of insights on progress toward greater efficiency and integrity in sustainable financial markets from the Asian Development Bank–State Street Global Advisors Webinar Series.

Contact Details: [ADB Publication](#)



About ABA

The ABA aims to provide a forum for advancing the cause of the banking and finance industry in the region and promoting regional economic cooperation. Its primary objectives include the following:

- To provide a venue for an exchange of views and information on banking opportunities in the Asia-Pacific region;
- To facilitate the meeting of bankers in the region in an atmosphere of fellowship and friendship;
- To encourage joint activities that would enhance the role of its members in servicing the financial needs of their respective economies and in promoting regional development; and
- To undertake projects that will encourage trade, industrial, and investment cooperation in the Asia-Pacific region.

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