

Stock trading going mobile

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THE Barbados Stock Exchange Inc. (BSE), which up to Friday had shares worth \$5.66 billion listed on its main market, is taking steps to boost trading.

It is planning to launch a new trading application enabling prospective investors to buy shares via their mobile devices.

The BSE says it also intends to "promote the local capital market as a viable source of capital for businesses as well as a tool that enables wealth creation for the populace".

These are outlined in the BSE's Market Activity Report for 2023,

which shared that "overall market performance for securities listed and traded across the board of the [BSE] for the year ended December 31, 2023, showed improvement, as total trading volume and value increased by 537 per cent and 227 per cent respectively".

The put-through market, which facilitates trades made under pre-arranged terms included price, had an "extraordinary" boost when Eppley Fund Managers Limited paid \$5.91 million to acquire 24.33 million shares from the Shareholders of Eppley Caribbean Property Fund SCC.

The bond market "recorded decreases in activity while there was no activity recorded on the Block Trade Market, Innovation & Growth Market or

International Securities Market (ISM)".

The BSE said overall that "market performance for 2023 on the BSE was very promising".

"This was evident even with the exclusion of the extraordinary transaction which would have resulted in improvements in overall activity of 29 per cent in terms of volume with a corresponding increase of 147 per cent in terms of value," it elaborated.

"In 2024, the BSE expects regular market performance to mirror that of 2023. As previously indicated, five of the listed securities experienced share price appreciation for the period ended December 31, 2023, while seven experienced similar appreciation during the last quarter of 2023 alone.

"This is indicative of an improvement

in both perception and confidence, not only of these securities, but also of the local capital market," the market activity report added.

While reporting a promising 2023, the BSE is moving to increase investor trading.

"To further bolster the confidence and perception, the BSE will continue its efforts to promote the local capital market as a viable source of capital for businesses as well as a tool that enables wealth creation for the populace. We intend firstly, to raise greater awareness of investing by widening and improving our social media footprint," it said.

"This would allow us to connect with a wider cross section of the population, people of all ages and at varying stages of life, as it is never too late to get

involved in investing."

The organisation continued: "Secondly, we aim to promote direct access to the market with the roll-out of a new mobile trading application.

"This application will still require existing and prospective investors to have a formal relationship with a registered broker of the BSE but will allow investors to be more actively involved in plotting their investment journey by entering orders and executing trades from their mobile devices."

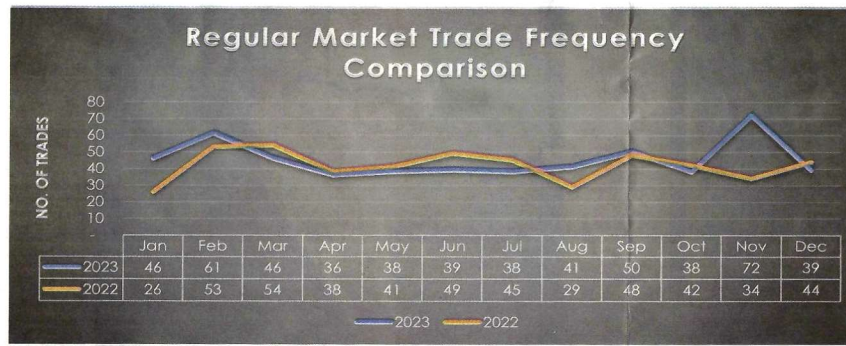
Last year 30.48 million shares worth about \$30 million traded on the local stock market, up from the 4.8 million traded in 2022 for \$6.4 million. The number of transactions last year were 549, up from 510 the previous year.

Figure 3: Index Movement for 2022 – 2023



THE LOCAL AND COMPOSITE INDICES recorded nominal increases last year. (Internet image)

Figure 2: Trade Frequency Comparison (Regular Market) – 2023 – 2022



BARBADOS STOCK EXCHANGE regular Market trades conducted increased by eight per cent in 2023. (Internet image)

Table 10: Fixed Income Market activity – 2023

Security	No. of Trades	Amount Traded
GOB SERIES B	25	\$ 1,267,243
GOB SERIES I	6	\$ 281,019
TOTALS	31	\$ 1,548,262

THERE WAS LIMITED activity in the market for Government bonds. (Internet image)

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Manager Management Reporting – Scotiabank (Barbados) Limited

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The Manager Management Reporting plays a lead role in the Caribbean East Regional District Finance Department in support of the execution and delivery of sustainable earnings growth, business (unit & segment) strategies, plans and initiatives in compliance with governing regulations, internal policies and internal procedures.

MAJOR ACCOUNTABILITIES:

- Responsible for supporting and reporting on planning and forecasting methodologies for the District and Executive Management by analysing targets.
- Responsible for preparing and ensuring the integrity and timely completion of management reporting for the District including Rolling Forecasts and Annual Profit Plans.
- Support the identification, recommendation and implementation of continuous improvements to the system and processes, to better meet corporate, regional and individual units' requirements.
- Responsible for calculation and/or accessing and reporting on key metrics and the monitoring of financial results of the District against appropriate performance measure criteria or KPIs (variance reporting).
- Provide analysis and insightful reporting on the trending of expenses to facilitate the proactive management of expenses.
- Monitor budgets to ensure effective controls are in place over expense management.
- Perform the finance review of Business Cases for proposed initiatives and provide recommendations to Approval committees.

EDUCATION / DESIRABLE CRITERIA

- The incumbent should have a Bachelor's degree in accounting or a finance related discipline and a recognised accounting qualification (i.e. ACCA, CGA etc).
- At least five years of working experience in a finance role, preferably in Commercial Banking or a Financial Institution.
- The incumbent requires a solid understanding of accounting procedures and principles, both Canadian and local accounting standards for the ECR.

Interested applicants should submit their applications by March 22, 2024 to: Career Opportunities: Manager Management Reporting Email: ceapportunities@scotiabank.com

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Securities investors need 'more options'

THE BARBADOS STOCK MARKET is short of where it needs to be for investors to find it an attractive option.

That is the assessment of experts at mutual fund company Fortress Fund Managers, who suggested that a well-incentivised junior stock market, establishment of the long-mooted Caribbean stock exchange, and more listings were options to consider in the quest for improvement on the Barbados Stock Exchange.

These views were shared by Fortress Fund Managers founder and chairman Roger Cave, chief executive officer (CEO) and chief investment officer Peter Arender, and financial analyst Rashada Lopez recently when the firm held the 12th Annual Fortress Investment Forum at the Frank Collymore Hall.

"Our capital markets at the Stock Exchange's levels have not really grown, in fact, in the case of Barbados it has shrunk from [the] listings that we had when Fortress was started 20-plus years ago," Cave said.

"And I would say... one example where it's been done well is in Jamaica, and they give their junior market attractive incentives of reduced taxation to smaller companies to list and 50 per cent tax in the first five years and attracted a lot of small companies.

"A number of them have graduated to the senior market and I think it's a model hopefully some of the other countries could follow. So I don't know if that would help for many small companies that are outside of the investment universe for funds like Fortress, because there's just no way to get capital to them," he noted.

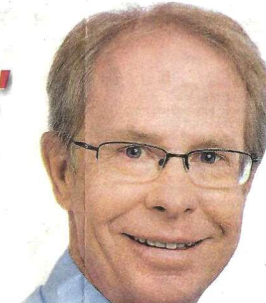
Lopez agreed that "incorporating a junior market structure like Jamaica would definitely help our stock exchange because it can help smaller companies list... on the stock exchange, so individuals or retail investors can have access to invest in those companies".

However, she believed that "it largely would depend on efforts on both the private sector side as well as the public sector side".

Arender called it a "chicken and egg" situation on the BSE where he observed that "there are not a lot of stocks that really are viable for people to buy and sell".

"And so I think, the more the thing builds to be something of interest, I think, possibly then the more you also get people who might be interested in participating," he suggested.

Reminding that Fortress Fund Managers was one of the larger institutional investors in the market, Cave also pointed to the challenge of billions of dollars in "excess savings"



FORTRESS FUND MANAGERS' founder and chairman Roger Cave. (PP)



FORTRESS FUND MANAGERS' chief executive officer and chief investment officer Peter Arender. (PP)

in Barbados and the fact that people and institutions did not have many investment options.

"We would love new listings that would come on the market to be able to invest in, but I don't remember the last time we had a new initial public offering in Barbados. So we certainly could play a role, but the listings are not there," he argued.

Cave recalled that there were several efforts over the years to establish a Caribbean stock



FORTRESS FUND MANAGERS' financial analyst Rashada Lopez addressing the recent investment forum. (PP)