

Following is a summary of important business news published in the leading daily newspapers of Bangladesh. For the complete news, please follow the online link given below each news. Please note that the news summary doesn't reflect the opinion of BRAC EPL Stock Brokerage Limited.

Macro:**National budget FY25-26: Govt to recast social safety net schemes**

- The interim government is likely to introduce a transparent system for social safety net schemes in the upcoming budget, increasing the number of beneficiaries by around 1 Mn while slashing one-third of the existing programmes. In the new system, there will be fewer than 100 schemes, down from the current 140. Thirty-eight of the schemes will be grouped as "pro-poor" as suggested by the European Union and other development partners.

<https://www.thedailystar.net/business/bangladesh-budget-2025-26/news/national-budget-fy25-26-govt-recast-social-safety-net-schemes-3901686>

Govt plans 31% hike in food subsidy in FY26 budget

- The government plans to raise the food subsidy allocation by 31% to BDT 95 Bn in the upcoming fiscal year, aiming to ensure access to affordable food for poor and low-income households. In the current fiscal year (FY) 2024-25, the food subsidy budget was initially set at BDT 72 Bn before being revised to BDT 80.59 Bn.

<https://www.thedailystar.net/business/news/govt-plans-31-hike-food-subsidy-fy26-budget-3901191>

External debt doubles in seven years

- Bangladesh's external debt soared to USD 103 Bn by the end of December 2024, doubling from USD 51 Bn in fiscal year (FY) 2016–17, as the sharp increase in borrowing coincided with a rapid expansion of the economy. During the period, the country's gross domestic product (GDP) grew from USD 223 Bn in FY17 to USD 450 Bn in FY24, show the latest figures of the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS).

<https://www.thedailystar.net/business/news/external-debt-doubles-seven-years-3901161>

BPO summit to begin on June 21

- A two-day BPO Summit Bangladesh 2025 is set to begin for the sixth time on June 21 at Senaprangon in the capital, bringing together firms in the business process outsourcing (BPO) sector. This year's summit carries the theme "BPO 2.0: Revolution to Innovation", signalling a transformative era of innovation-driven growth for Bangladesh.

<https://www.thedailystar.net/business/news/bpo-summit-begin-june-21-3901151>

BB should be transparent about its consumer credit rating licence

- In July last year, the Bangladesh Bank quietly issued invitations for applications to establish the country's first consumer credit rating bureau. The initiative, which received little public attention at the time due to political instability, represents a critical juncture in Bangladesh's financial infrastructure development.

<https://www.thedailystar.net/business/news/bb-should-be-transparent-about-its-consumer-credit-rating-licence-3900691>

Sammilito Parishad vows to help achieve USD 100 Bn exports by 2030

- Sammilito Parishad, a panel contesting in the biennial election of the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA), yesterday committed to working towards achieving the export target of garments at USD 100 Bn by 2030 by improving the energy supply and developing small and medium enterprises.

<https://www.thedailystar.net/business/news/sammilito-parishad-vows-help-achieve-100b-exports-2030-3900551>

Govt to address tea tax mismanagement: Bashir

- The government wants to address various types of mismanagement involving tariff and tax in the local tea sector, which accounts for annual sales of around BDT 100 Bn, said Sk Bashir Uddin, adviser to the Ministry of Commerce, yesterday. The sales figure is a combination of BDT 40 Bn worth of tea leaves and the value of milk and sugar and revenue of retailers, he said.

<https://www.thedailystar.net/business/news/govt-address-tea-tax-mismanagement-bashir-3900646>

Labour coalition protests move to lease Chattogram port terminal to foreign firm

- The Chattogram chapter of the Sramik Karmachari Oikya Parishad, a coalition of labour organisations, has voiced strong concern over the government's reported move to lease the New Mooring Container Terminal (NCT) of Chattogram Port to a foreign entity. At a views-exchange meeting held today (23 May) at the BILS-LRSC office, speakers questioned the legitimacy of the caretaker government in taking such decisions.

<https://www.tbsnews.net/economy/labour-coalition-protests-move-lease-chattogram-port-terminal-foreign-firm-1150021>

Import advance tax set to climb 7.5%, affecting from baby food to cars

- The government is poised to significantly increase the Advance Tax (AT) on commercial imports in the upcoming budget, a move aimed at boosting revenue and compensating for persistent compliance failures in local Value Added Tax (VAT) collection. The proposed hike is drawing sharp criticism from businesses and consumer rights advocates, who warn of immediate price increases for a wide array of goods.

<https://www.tbsnews.net/economy/import-advance-tax-set-climb-75-affecting-baby-food-cars-1149596>

Inflation expected to drop to 5% by end of 2025: BB governor

- "In June, the inflation rate will fall to 8%. By August, this rate will come down to 7%. We expect it to reach 5% by the end of 2025. If inflation can be brought down to 3-4%, it will then be able to support the exchange rate," he said.

<https://www.tbsnews.net/economy/bb-governor-predicts-inflation-drop-5-2025-end-1149491>

CAAB hopes to complete negotiation with Japanese consortium by June

- The Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh (CAAB) is expecting to complete the negotiation with the Japanese consortium that will take the charge of operation and maintenance work of the newly-built third terminal of the country's prime international airport by June this year. CAAB Chairman Air Vice-Marshal Md Monjur Kabir Bhuiyan told this correspondent that they are currently in negotiation with the consortium and hope to complete the formalities by June this year.

<https://today.thefinancialexpress.com.bd/first-page/caab-hopes-to-complete-negotiation-with-japanese-consortium-by-june-1748025556>

BD cancels USD 21 Mn deal with Indian defence shipyard amid strained ties

- Bangladesh has reportedly cancelled a USD 21 Mn contract with Kolkata-based defence shipyard Garden Reach Shipbuilding & Engineers (GRSE) for the construction of an advanced ocean-going tug amid fraught ties with India. The agreement, signed last year, involved the design, construction, and delivery of a 61-metre, 800-tonne tug within 24 months, Times of India reports.

<https://today.thefinancialexpress.com.bd/first-page/bd-cancels-21m-deal-with-indian-defence-shipyard-amid-strained-ties-1748025580>

Work together to overcome economic challenges

- Finance Adviser Dr Salehuddin Ahmed on Friday urged all to work together for overcoming all challenges facing the country's economy. "We are in the midst of all sorts of challenges," he said while speaking as the chief guest at the national finals of the Bangladesh Economics Olympiad 2025, held at Dhaka Residential Model College in the city.

<https://today.thefinancialexpress.com.bd/last-page/work-together-to-overcome-economic-challenges-1748025938>

Sector & Industries:**TANNERY | Govt to allow rawhide exports despite tanners' objections**

- Although tanners have voiced opposition, the government will allow rawhide exports during the Eid-ul-Azha season with the aim of fostering demand and ensuring better prices for traders at the field level, Commerce Secretary Mahbubur Rahman said yesterday.

<https://www.thedailystar.net/business/news/govt-allow-rawhide-exports-despite-tanners-objections-3901171>

BANK | Rules eased for sending money abroad for language courses

- Bangladesh Bank has made it easier for students to send money abroad for language courses. In a circular issued today, the central bank said students no longer need its approval to send foreign exchange for such courses, even if the course is not a requirement for a bachelor's degree.

<https://www.thedailystar.net/business/news/rules-eased-sending-money-abroad-language-courses-3900831>

BANK | State-owned banks: Too big to fail or just too broken to fix?

- For years, the government has been on a life-support mission – pumping taxpayers' money into state-owned banks to keep them afloat. Between 2009 and 2024, under Sheikh Hasina's regime alone, over BDT 250 Bn has been injected into these corruption-riddled banks. The rationale? Recapitalisation. The hope? Recovery. The outcome? A gradual deterioration in financial health, driven by politically motivated loans, poor governance, and the consistent failure of politically appointed boards of directors.

<https://www.tbsnews.net/economy/banking/state-owned-banks-too-big-fail-or-just-too-broken-fix-1150131>

BANK | PKSF's BDT 2.4 Bn scheme to guarantee bank loans for micro-financiers

- The Palli Karma-Sahayak Foundation (PKSF) is expected to launch the country's first-ever Credit Enhancement Scheme (CES) today to facilitate the flow of microcredit from banks, through microfinance institutions (MFIs), to small businesses struggling for funds. Under the scheme, the PKSF will guarantee loans taken by its partner MFIs from banks, backed by a BDT 2.4 Bn reserve fund. In return, a one-time commission of 0.5% will be charged on the loan amount.

<https://www.tbsnews.net/economy/pksfs-tk240cr-scheme-guarantee-bank-loans-micro-financiers-1150076>

BANK | Eight banks defer scheduled board meetings

- Eight publicly listed banks have rescheduled their upcoming board meetings — mandated for announcing the annual financials and dividends for 2024, as well as publishing the first-quarter financials for 2025 — leaving investors in the dark. The banks have published separate disclosures on the Dhaka Stock Exchange (DSE) on Thursday (22 May). The rescheduling has primarily occurred to obtain central bank approval for declaring dividends for 2024, according to sources within the banks. The banks are – AB Bank, First Security Islami Bank, Social Islami Bank, NRB Bank, NRBC Bank, United Commercial Bank, South Bangla Agricultural Bank, and Southeast Bank.

<https://www.tbsnews.net/economy/stocks/eight-banks-defer-scheduled-board-meetings-1149461>

MISCELLANEOUS | Govt to provide policy support to plastic toy industry: Commerce secy

- The government will offer policy support to help grow the plastic toy industry, said Commerce Secretary Mahbubur Rahman, adding that expanding exports will require high-quality, competitive products. He made the statement at the opening ceremony of the two-day "Plastic Toy Exhibition Fair," which started today (22 May) at the InterContinental Hotel in Dhaka.

<https://www.tbsnews.net/economy/govt-provide-policy-support-plastic-toy-industry-commerce-secy-1149311>

BANK | Banks snapping up windfall from gaping interest spread

- Banks are bagging a windfall from gaping spread between lending and deposit interest rates that banking experts dub a violation of relevant guidelines and international best practices. On an ascent in a pickup from a descent two years back, the interest-rate spread for banks recorded a significant rise in March 2025, indicating a potential rise in their profitability.

<https://today.thefinancialexpress.com.bd/first-page/banks-snapping-up-windfall-from-gaping-interest-spread-1748025407>

FUEL & POWER | Gas distributor gets lavish on borrowed money, receives PC rebuff

- A gas-pipeline project is spurned by government planners for a lavish estimation of expenditures, including a fat consultancy cost, to be funded with local and foreign loans, insiders said Friday. Titas Gas Transmission and Distribution Company PLC proposed to spend BDT 3.085 Bn for consultancy service alone out of the BDT 81.61- Bn pipeline-installation project, they said, only to be spurned by the Planning Commission (PC).

<https://today.thefinancialexpress.com.bd/first-page/gas-distributor-gets-lavish-on-borrowed-money-receives-pc-rebuff-1748025456>

Stocks:**OLYMPIC | Olympic to import cookie production line worth BDT 131.9 Mn**

- Olympic Industries Ltd will import a new multi-colour cookie production line with standard accessories at a cost of around BDT 131.9 Mn. The company's board approved the decision at a meeting held on May 21, according to a disclosure posted on the Dhaka Stock Exchange (DSE) website today.

<https://www.thedailystar.net/business/news/olympic-import-cookie-production-line-worth-tk-1319-crore-3900761>

RUNNERAUTO | Runner to buy 781 decimal land in Bhaluka, Magura to expand business

- Runner Automobiles decided to buy 374 decimals land at Sreepur, Magura and 407 decimals land nearby its existing factory complex at Bhaluka, Mymensingh. It will also sell a 552 decimal plot at Boradoba, Mymensingh, according to a disclosure at the Dhaka Stock Exchange (DSE).

<https://www.tbsnews.net/economy/stocks/runner-buy-781-decimal-land-bhaluka-magura-expand-business-1149511>

NTC | National Tea's shares soar BDT 28.4 for each in two days

- Despite keeping its investors in the dark, the share price of National Tea Company has soared by BDT 28.40 to BDT 164.20 each over the past two days, according to the data of the Dhaka Stock Exchange (DSE). In the last two consecutive trading sessions, the share price of the tea producer hit the upper limit—the maximum allowable single-day price increase—and topped the gainers' chart with the highest gains.

<https://www.tbsnews.net/economy/stocks/national-teas-shares-soar-tk284-each-two-days-1149471>

PHOENIXFIN | Phoenix Finance suffers record loss of BDT 8 Bn in 2024

- Phoenix Finance and Investments suffered a record loss in 2024, driven by increased provisioning and reduced income from the ailing stock market. The non-bank financial institution reported a loss of BDT 8.08 Bn in 2024, compared to a loss of BDT 7.05 Bn the previous year.

<https://today.thefinancialexpress.com.bd/stock-corporate/phoenix-finance-suffers-record-loss-of-tk-8b-in-2024-1748020784>

Stock and Commodities*

Index Name	Close Value	Value Change YTD	% Change YTD
Crude Oil (WTI)*	USD 61.53	(USD 9.90)	-13.86%
Crude Oil (Brent)*	USD 64.78	(USD 9.61)	-12.92%
Gold Spot*	USD 3,357.51	USD 749.03	28.72%
DSEX	4,785.12	-431.33	-8.27%
S&P 500	5,802.82	-104.12	-1.76%
FTSE 100	8,717.97	596.96	7.35%
BSE SENSEX	81,721.08	3,521.15	4.50%
KSE-100	119,102.67	3,843.67	3.33%
CSEALL	16,494.46	549.85	3.45%

Exchange Rates

1 US Dollar = 121.81 BDT

1 GBP = 164.93 BDT

1 Euro = 138.46 BDT

1 INR = 1.43 BDT

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