

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:**Ecneec to approve Bay Terminal's dredging project mid-March: CPA chairman**

- The Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (Ecneec) is expected to approve the development project proposal (DPP) for breakwater construction and access channel dredging at the Bay Terminal of the Chattogram port in mid-March. Chittagong Port Authority (CPA) Chairman Rear Admiral SM Moniruzzaman shared the information today, adding that once the DPP is approved, a loan agreement with the World Bank will follow, enabling the start of physical work.

<https://www.thedailystar.net/business/news/ecneec-approve-bay-terminals-dredging-project-mid-march-cpa-chairman-3835431>

Bangladesh's bad loan saga

- Non-performing loans (NPLs) in Bangladesh soared by BDT 1,340 Bn in the second half of 2024, reaching BDT 3,450 Bn by December. The current volume of defaulted loans accounts for 20.2% of the banking sector's total loans. There is every hunch that the exact figure may be much higher if we apply qualitative judgment here.

<https://www.thedailystar.net/business/economy/news/bangladeshs-bad-loan-saga-3837176>

Foreign loan commitments drop sharply

- There has been a sharp decline in loans commitments by foreign sources to Bangladesh in the first seven months of fiscal year 2024-25, raising concerns about development funding. According to the latest data from the Economic Relations Division (ERD), commitments for a total of USD 2.35 Bn in foreign loans were made between July 2024 and January this year. In stark contrast, development partners had pledged USD 7.17 Bn in loans and grants in the same period of the previous fiscal year, meaning there has been a decline of around 67%.

<https://www.thedailystar.net/business/news/foreign-loan-commitments-drop-sharply-3835951>

NBR launches five-year Customs Strategic Plan

- The National Board of Revenue (NBR) has prepared the Customs Strategic Plan (CSP) 2024-2028, aiming to facilitate trade, enhance revenue collection, and modernise its operations to support businesses and economic growth. The five-year plan, structured around the four key pillars of revenue management, trade facilitation, border security, and organisational development, sets clear targets and timelines to drive efficiently in customs administration.

<https://www.thedailystar.net/business/news/nbr-launches-five-year-customs-strategic-plan-3835956>

EPB raises fees for exporter services, forms

- The Export Promotion Bureau (EPB) has increased fees for all services provided to exporters, effective from today. The changes, outlined in a notification issued yesterday, include a 50% rise in the cost of export-related forms and increased charges for GSP registration, renewal, and certificate issuance for both textile and non-textile products.

<https://www.tbsnews.net/economy/epb-raises-fees-exporter-services-forms-1081611>

Japan, UNHCR sign USD 1.6 Mn deal to boost Rohingya support in Bangladesh

- The government of Japan and UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, have recently signed a partnership agreement to improve living conditions, strengthen primary healthcare and empower Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh. The contribution of USD 1.6 Mn will support the construction of safer shelters in the Cox's Bazar camps, the provision of essential medicines and medical supplies, and the engagement of refugees as community health workers.

<https://www.tbsnews.net/economy/japan-unhcr-sign-16mn-deal-boost-rohingya-support-bangladesh-1079656>

July-Nov fiscal deficit BDT 387 Bn

- Bangladesh's fiscal deficit rose to approximately 0.7% of GDP, or BDT 387.72 Bn, in the first five months (July-November) of the current fiscal year in a rise from last year's 0.03%, according to official statistics. The surge in interest payments has significantly strained public finances, thereby raising concerns about debt sustainability. Interest payment, a major component of operating expenditure, stood at BDT 712.13 Bn, nearly 460% higher than a year earlier.

<https://thefinancialexpress.com.bd/economy/bangladesh/july-nov-fiscal-deficit-tk-387b>

Bangladesh, Indonesia explore new frontiers in sustainable finance

- In demonstration of their shared commitment to advancing sustainable economic growth, Bangladesh and Indonesia engaged in a high-level exchange on sustainable finance. A delegation of senior representatives from Bangladesh's Economic Relations Division (ERD), Ministry of Finance, led by the Cabinet Secretary and ERD Additional Secretary and supported by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and Impact Investment Exchange (IIX), visited Indonesian capital Jakarta from February 24 to 27.

<https://thefinancialexpress.com.bd/economy/bangladesh/bangladesh-indonesia-explore-new-frontiers-in-sustainable-finance>

EPA can boost Bangladesh-Korea trade

- An economic partnership agreement (EPA) between South Korea and Bangladesh can boost bilateral trade, Korean Ambassador to Bangladesh Park Young-sik said in Dhaka on Thursday, stressing the need for additional efforts by both countries to revive and accelerate trade growth. It can provide an impetus to increase Bangladesh's share in Korea's ready-made garment (RMG) imports, he said at a discussion with the members of Overseas Correspondents Association of Bangladesh (OCAB) at a local club.

<https://thefinancialexpress.com.bd/economy/bangladesh/epa-can-boost-bangladesh-korea-trade>

Sector & Industries:**MISCELLANEOUS | RFL to build BDT 2 Bn factory to expand global footprint**

- PRAN-RFL Group has taken an initiative to build a 100% export-oriented plastic factory in Kaliganj Industrial Park of Gazipur, with an investment of over BDT 2 Bn to expand its footprint in the global market. The business conglomerate will sign an agreement with China's Haitian Group today on the installation of factory equipment, said Kamruzzaman Kamal, director at Pran-RFL Group.

<https://www.tbsnews.net/economy/rfl-build-tk200cr-factory-expand-global-footprint-1081901>

TRADE | Dwindling trade threatens future of Banglabandha land port

- Once a thriving regional trade hub, Banglabandha land port—Bangladesh's only quadripartite port linking India, Nepal, Bhutan, and Bangladesh—is facing a severe downturn due to its heavy reliance on stone imports. Trade has plunged following a halt in Bhutanese stone shipments and reduced imports from India, leaving the port struggling to sustain operations.

<https://www.thedailystar.net/business/economy/news/dwindling-trade-threatens-future-banglabandha-land-port-3837171>

BANK | Nagad gets new administrator

- The Bangladesh Bank (BB) yesterday appointed a new administrator for Nagad, a mobile financial service provider mired in scandal, following the resignation of the previous administrator, Muhammad Badiuzzaman Dider. Motasem Billah, who previously served as director of the Bangladesh Bank's Chattogram office, will be the new administrator of the mobile financial services provider, according to an order issued by the central bank.

<https://www.thedailystar.net/business/news/nagad-gets-new-administrator-3835966>

BANK | ADB pledges to continue working with ICC Bangladesh

- The Asian Development Bank (ADB) will continue to work with the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC) Bangladesh, particularly in areas such as trade digitalisation, financial accessibility and sustainable business practices. This was stated by Hoe Yun Jeong, country director for Bangladesh at the ADB, while he was holding a meeting with members of the ICC Bangladesh's executive board at the chamber's secretariat in Dhaka recently, according to a press release.

<https://www.thedailystar.net/business/organisation-news/news/adb-pledges-continue-working-icc-bangladesh-3835541>

RMG | 500 RMG factories at risk of unrest over wages, bonuses before Eid-ul-Fitr

- As many as 500 readymade garment (RMG) factories have been identified as at risk of facing unrest over the payment of wages and festival allowances ahead of Eid-ul-Fitr, according to commerce ministry sources. The report, seen by The Business Standard, also noted that about 200 factories are under close monitoring of the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA), industrial police and other intelligence agencies.

<https://www.tbsnews.net/economy/rmg/500-rmg-factories-risk-unrest-over-wages-bonuses-eid-ul-fitr-1080556>

BANK | Islamic bank deposits fall again on fragile confidence

- Depositors continued to move their funds out of full-fledged Islamic banks in the October- December period last year, a sign that many savers have yet to regain confidence in Shariah-compliant banks due to alleged irregularities. The report, released yesterday, showed that deposits at the 10 full-fledged Islamic banks declined to BDT 3,885.07 Bn, the lowest since the April- June 2023 period.

<https://www.thedailystar.net/business/news/islamic-bank-deposits-fall-again-fragile-confidence-3835976>

BANK | Stabilisation fund within BB reserves stock planned

- Bangladesh Bank now plans to establish a stabilisation fund within its gross foreign -exchange reserves to forestall any volatility on the forex market. The move comes amid rising concerns over exchange- rate fluctuations that have put pressure on import costs, inflation, and overall stability in the economy. The proposed fund, estimated to range between USD 1.0 Bn and USD 1.5 Bn, will be deployed as needed to support banks in financing essential imports, particularly during periods of liquidity stress..

<https://today.thefinancialexpress.com.bd/first-page/stabilisation-fund-within-bb-reserves-stock-planned-1740849198>

Stocks:**EBL | EBL denies allegations of loan irregularities, embezzlement**

- The Eastern Bank Limited (EBL) has denied allegations of loan irregularities and fund embezzlement, a day after one of its customers sought legal action against nearly four dozen senior officials and the bank's chairman in a Chattogram court. The court ordered police to investigate the matter, while EBL at a press conference at its head office yesterday accused the customer of "creating unethical pressure" with "a bad intention."

<https://www.thedailystar.net/business/news/ebel-denies-allegations-loan-irregularities-embezzlement-3835921>

BEXIMCO | Govt to clear Beximco payroll

- The government will provide BDT 5.25 Bn from public coffers to clear wages and other service benefits of workers and officials of 14 Beximco textile and garment units that will shutter from today. The payment will be given to 31,669 workers and 1,565 officials of the mills and factories of the group, said M Sakhawat Hussain, labour and employment adviser, at a press conference held at the shipping ministry yesterday.

<https://www.thedailystar.net/business/news/govt-clear-beximco-payroll-3835296>

ZAHEENSPIN | Zaheen Spinning posts BDT 122.9 Mn loss in Q2

- Zaheen Spinning's losses piled up in the second quarter of the fiscal year 2024-25 as lower sales and higher production costs dented its earnings. It reported a loss of BDT 122.9 Mn in the October- December quarter of 2024. The company's loss per share stood at BDT 1.08 for the quarter, up from BDT 0.11 a year ago, according to a disclosure on the Dhaka Stock Exchange website (DSE) today.

<https://www.thedailystar.net/business/news/zaheen-spinning-posts-tk-1229-crore-loss-q2-3835371>

TITASGAS | Titas to issue preferred stock amid record-breaking losses

- State-owned Titas Gas is going to issue preference shares worth nearly BDT 3.52 Bn against funds received from the government to comply with a four-year-old regulatory order. In this regard, Titas Gas will hold a board meeting on March 6 to fix the date of extraordinary general meeting (EGM) to receive the shareholders' approval, according to a regulatory filing on Thursday.

<https://thefinancialexpress.com.bd/stock/bangladesh/titas-to-issue-preferred-stock-amid-record-breaking-losses>

Stock and Commodities*

Index Name	Close Value	Value Change YTD	% Change YTD
Crude Oil (WTI)*	USD 69.76	(USD 1.67)	-2.34%
Crude Oil (Brent)*	USD 72.81	(USD 1.58)	-2.12%
Gold Spot*	USD 2,857.83	USD 249.35	9.56%
DSEX	5,247.30	30.86	0.59%
S&P 500	5,954.50	47.56	0.81%
FTSE 100	8,809.74	688.73	8.48%
BSE SENSEX	73,198.10	-5,001.83	-6.40%
KSE-100	113,251.67	-2,007.33	-1.74%
CSEALL	12,003.29	0.00	0.00%

Exchange Rates**1 US Dollar = 121.89 BDT****1 GBP = 153.31 BDT****1 Euro = 126.50 BDT****1 INR = 1.39 BDT**

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