

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:**Asia Frontier Capital sees green shoots in Bangladesh stock market, said its fund manager**

- The lucrative prices of well-managed company shares, a stabilising economy, and expectations of political stability together are showing Hong Kong-based Asia Frontier Capital (AFC) green shoots in the Bangladesh stock market, said its fund manager Ruchir Desai.

<https://www.tbsnews.net/economy/stocks/asia-frontier-capital-sees-green-shoots-bangladesh-stock-market-said-its-fund-manager>

Japanese economic zone now looks to attract foreign investors

- The Bangladesh Special Economic Zone, also known as the Japanese Economic Zone, in Araihasar of Narayanganj, is now targeting foreign direct investment (FDI), especially from export-oriented companies. "We are now focusing on attracting FDI from companies that will export their products, as this will make Bangladesh a more attractive destination for FDI," Taro Kawachi, managing director of the Zone, told The Business Standard.

<https://www.tbsnews.net/economy/japanese-economic-zone-now-looks-attract-foreign-investors-1064156>

Bangladesh gets highest remittance from US in January

- Bangladeshi expatriates in the United States sent home the highest remittance amounting to USD 407.52 Mn in January, according to the latest Bangladesh Bank data. The country received a total of USD 2.18 Bn in remittances in January this year, the BB data revealed on Thursday.

<https://thefinancialexpress.com.bd/economy/bangladesh/bangladesh-gets-highest-remittance-from-us-in-jan>

NBR to fully operationalise bond automation this month to boost trade efficiency

- The National Board of Revenue (NBR) is set to fully operationalise its bond automation system this month, aiming to enhance efficiency, transparency, and accountability in the country's trade operations. NBR officials say the revenue authority was prepared to roll out the system last month but postponed the launch due to a lack of readiness among businesses

<https://www.tbsnews.net/economy/nbr-fully-operationalise-bond-automation-month-boost-trade-efficiency-1064111>

ADB projects slower growth amid political uncertainty

- The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has projected Bangladesh's GDP growth rate to slow to 4.3% in fiscal year (FY) 2025, reflecting a subdued outlook amid political uncertainty, supply disruptions and tight monetary policy.

<https://www.thedailystar.net/business/economy/news/adb-projects-slower-growth-amid-political-uncertainty-3819346>

Huge public funds drained through misdeeds

- Prolonged and corrupt processes of land valuation and acquisition and duplication of feasibility study on similar projects proved ploys for misuse of public funds during the past regime, a government-formed taskforce report. Some government agencies conducted feasibility studies on the same project by spending public funds, which is one of the reasons behind the misuse of the development funds too; it says about one instance of what went wrong on the development front during the government of unseated premier Sheikh Hasin.

<https://thefinancialexpress.com.bd/economy/huge-public-funds-drained-through-misdeeds>

Why so many problems with FDI?

- Bangladesh has mostly failed to achieve its targeted level of foreign direct investments (FDIs), with investment inflow amounting to only 0.75% of GDP in 2023, according to UNCTAD. Efforts to attract foreign investors by developing economic zones and adopting one-stop services have not yielded many results, raising the question: what's the country doing wrong?

<https://www.thedailystar.net/business/economy/news/why-so-many-problems-fdi-3819331>

Sovereign securities buyback envisaged for even annual debt service

- A new methodology is being devised to streamline lopsided government-liability management against treasuries as the existing system creates an unpredictable financial burden amid maturity of too many bills and bonds together. The government borrows through treasury bills and bonds and many of which mature in a single year.

<https://thefinancialexpress.com.bd/economy/sovereign-securities-buyback-envisaged-for-even-annual-debt-service>

New investments in start-ups dip 43%

- According to a report, new investments in local start-ups declined significantly in 2024 compared to the previous year, mainly due to political turmoil, economic uncertainties, and changing global trends. The volume of new funding fell by around 43% to USD 41.3 Mn last year from USD 72.0 Mn in 2023, according to the report titled "Bangladesh Start-up Investments Report 2024: Year in Review" and published recently by management consulting firm LightCastle Partners.

<https://thefinancialexpress.com.bd/economy/new-investments-in-start-ups-dip-43pc>

Sector & Industries:**RMG | RMG exports to US grow after a gap of two years**

- Garment export to the US has grown year-on-year in 2024 after a gap of two years as the sales of apparel in the American market is increasing with the easing of high inflationary pressure. Last year, meaning from January to December, Bangladesh's garment export to the US grew by 0.75% to USD 7.34 Bn, according to data from the US Office of Textiles and Apparel (OTEXA)

<https://www.thedailystar.net/business/news/rmg-exports-us-grow-after-gap-two-years-3819216>

HEALTHCARE | Preliminary health budget set at BDT 434 Bn for next fiscal

- The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare has set a preliminary budget allocation of BDT 434.83 Bn for the next fiscal year (2025-26), marking a BDT 20.75 Bn increase from the current fiscal year's allocation of BDT 414.08 Bn.

<https://thefinancialexpress.com.bd/economy/preliminary-health-budget-set-at-tk-434b-for-next-fiscal>

BANK | Janata Bank crippled by record default loans

- Janata Bank's defaulted loans surged to a record BDT 673 Bn by the end of last year, as politically exposed persons and business conglomerates became defaulters following the recent political changeover, reflecting the fragile condition of the state-run bank.

<https://www.thedailystar.net/business/economy/banks/news/janata-bank-crippled-record-default-loans-3819351>

ENGINEERING | Local AC industry seeks 'fair' govt procurement policy

- Local air conditioner (AC) manufacturers in Bangladesh are pushing for "fair" government procurement policies, arguing that existing rules favour foreign brands despite local companies meeting global standards. They urge the authorities to prioritise quality over origin.

<https://www.thedailystar.net/business/economy/news/local-ac-industry-seeks-fair-govt-procurement-policy-3819336>

FUEL & POWER | Overdue payments to LNG suppliers mount to USD 455 Mn

- The government's overdue payments to the liquefied natural gas (LNG) suppliers stood at around USD 455 Mn as state-run Petrobangla has been struggling to clear the bills due to the shortage of US dollar, said sources.

<https://thefinancialexpress.com.bd/economy/overdue-payments-to-lng-suppliers-mount-to-455m>

Stocks:**UPGDCL | United Power's profit up 5% in Q2**

- United Power Generation & Distribution Company (UPGDCL) saw its profit grow in the second quarter of the fiscal year 2024-25, driven by higher electricity tariffs and steady production. The power producer's profit grew 5% year-on-year to BDT 2.93 Bn in the October-December quarter of FY25.

<https://www.thedailystar.net/business/economy/news/united-powers-profit-5-q2-3819321>

POWERGRID | Power Grid Company reports strong profit driven by foreign exchange gains

- After suffering losses for two consecutive years, the Power Grid Company of Bangladesh has achieved a significant year-on-year profit in the second quarter of the current fiscal year 2024-25 riding on gains from foreign exchange.

<https://www.tbsnews.net/economy/stocks/power-grid-company-reports-strong-profit-driven-foreign-exchange-gains-1062831>

BATBC | BAT Bangladesh declares BDT 16.20 Bn dividend for 2024

- British American Tobacco (BAT) Bangladesh – a leading multinational cigarette manufacturer – has declared a 150% final cash dividend for 2024, according to a stock exchange filing. This brings the total dividend payout for the year to 300% cash, amounting to BDT 16.20 Bn, including the 150% interim dividend already paid in December. This compares to a 100% cash dividend, or BDT 5.4 Bn, in 2023.

<https://www.tbsnews.net/economy/stocks/bat-bangladesh-declares-150-cash-dividend-1062246>

SOUTHEASTB | Southeast Bank to issue BDT 10 Bn bond

- Southeast Bank, a private sector lender, has decided to raise the bond amount to BDT 10 Bn from its previous decision of BDT 5 Bn aiming to enhance its capital base. According to its price-sensitive statement, the floating rate non-convertible subordinate bond aimed at raising regulatory capital (tier-2) is expected to help the bank fulfil its Basel-III requirements.

<https://www.tbsnews.net/economy/stocks/southeast-bank-issue-tk1000cr-bond-1064106>

ACI | ACI logs BDT 2.91 Bn loss in Shwapno, foods, plastics, healthcare in H1

- ACI Limited's pre-tax loss rose by 15% year-on-year to BDT 2.91 Bn in its retail chain Shwapno, as well as its foods, consumer plastics, and healthcare businesses during the July-December period of FY25.

<https://www.tbsnews.net/economy/stocks/aci-logs-tk291cr-loss-shwapno-foods-plastics-healthcare-h1-1064121>

UCB | UCB signs MoU with DGePay to drive digital banking forward

- United Commercial Bank (UCB) PLC recently signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with DGePay, a leading payment gateway service provider and a concern of Dipon Group. The collaboration will facilitate advanced payment gateway services, enabling smoother and more secure digital transactions for UCB customers.

<https://www.thedailystar.net/business/economy/banks/news/ucb-signs-mou-dgepay-drive-digital-banking-forward-3819176>

Stock and Commodities*

Index Name	Close Value	Value Change YTD	% Change YTD
Crude Oil (WTI)*	USD 71.00	(USD 0.43)	-0.60%
Crude Oil (Brent)*	USD 74.66	USD 0.27	0.36%
Gold Spot*	USD 2,861.07	USD 252.59	9.68%
DSEX	5,179.18	-37.27	-0.71%
S&P 500	6,025.99	119.05	2.02%
FTSE 100	8,700.53	579.52	7.14%
BSE SENSEX	77,860.19	-339.74	-0.43%
KSE-100	110,322.94	-4,936.06	-4.28%
CSEALL	12,003.29	0.00	0.00%

Exchange Rates**1 US Dollar = 121.79 BDT****1 GBP = 151.10 BDT****1 Euro = 125.81 BDT****1 INR = 1.39 BDT**

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