

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:**Interim govt drafts plan, eyes full digital economy, smart governance by 2030**

- The interim government eyes expediting the country's digital transformation for a "full digital economy and smart governance" by 2030, a decade ahead of the Awami League government's "Smart Bangladesh by 2041" plan. Within the same deadline, the government targets a "digital economy at scale" including a USD 5 Bn ICT export, a 50% increase in startup funding and global partnerships and making Bangladesh an AI and 4IR hub in South Asia.

<https://www.tbsnews.net/bangladesh/new-strategy-paper-eyes-full-digital-economy-smart-governance-2030-1069446>

NBR plans baggage rule change to curb gold import misuse

- The National Board of Revenue (NBR) plans to amend the existing baggage rules to prevent the misuse of gold import opportunities and is considering imposing additional taxes on jewelers. Despite the opportunity to import gold, commercial imports have been very low, with only 119kg brought in since 2019, according to the Bangladesh Bank. However, several times more gold has been brought in under the baggage rules, even though the tax is double on gold imported via baggage rules instead of through regular imports.

<https://www.tbsnews.net/economy/import-bills-rice-gas-unpaid-due-dollar-crisis-nbr-chairman-1070021>

US cancels USD 29 Mn funding for Bangladesh crisis

- The United States has canceled a USD 29 Mn initiative aimed at strengthening Bangladesh's political landscape as President Donald Trump makes a budget cut. The US has canceled millions of dollars in funding for several countries, including Bangladesh, India, Nepal, and some other countries. Elon Musk's Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) made the announcement in this regard on Sunday.

<https://thefinancialexpress.com.bd/national/us-cancels-29m-funding-for-bangladesh-crisis>

Int'l firms to be hired to recover laundered money

- The Bangladesh Financial Intelligence Unit (BFIU) is set to appoint international litigation firms to recover loans worth BDT 2.00 Bn and above that have been laundered abroad from 19 commercial banks. A meeting between BFIU and the managing directors of the banks made the decision on January 30, according to the meeting minutes.

<https://www.thedailystar.net/business/news/intl-firms-be-hired-recover-laundered-money-3826096>

Sector & Industries:**RMG | RMG exports to EU post moderate growth**

- Bangladesh's Ready-Made Garment (RMG) exports experienced moderate growth during the July-January period of the current fiscal year (FY25) with the European Union (EU) continuing to be a pivotal market, reports BSS. The EU represented 50.15% of Bangladesh's total RMG exports, with a total value of USD 11.81 Bn. Shipments to the United States reached USD 4.47 Bn, accounting for 18.99% of the total share, while the UK market was also significant, with exports valued at USD 2.5 Bn, equivalent to 10.83% of Bangladesh's total RMG exports during the specified timeframe.

<https://today.thefinancialexpress.com.bd/stock-corporate/rmg-exports-to-eu-post-moderate-growth-1739726083>

TELECOM | HC issues rule on unused mobile data, minutes, SMS carryover

- The High Court today issued a rule asking the authorities concerned why unused mobile internet data, minutes, and SMS should not be carried over to the next purchased package. Kayes said that Bangladesh has nearly 13.1 Mn mobile internet users. According to the law, unused mobile data should be added to the next purchased data package, but mobile operators do not allow unused data, minutes, and SMS to carry over.

<https://www.thedailystar.net/news/bangladesh/crime-justice/news/hc-issues-rule-unused-mobile-data-minutes-sms-carryover-3825746>

BANK | Banks begin lowering both deposit, lending rates

- A downturn in gains from investment in government securities prompts banks to begin lowering deposit and lending rates with their attention switched to private-sector lending, sources say. According to bankers and money-market analysts, the commercial lenders are cutting down rates on deposits and advances for corporate entities and plan to do the same for the commoners from April next under the gradually changing scenario in the interest regime.

<https://today.thefinancialexpress.com.bd/first-page/banks-begin-lowering-both-deposit-lending-rates-1739730169>

ENERGY | US company wants undoing of PPA termination

- Five years after the power-purchase agreement (PPA) was terminated, SunEdison USA has sought permission to build a 200-megawatt solar power plant in seaside Cox's Bazar. After the regime change in Bangladesh the Missouri-based renewable energy giant, which wanted to invest USD 200 Mn in the stalled project, has submitted an appeal to the energy adviser of the interim government with the hope of revocation of the PPA termination.

<https://thefinancialexpress.com.bd/economy/us-company-wants-undoing-of-ppa-termination>

FUEL & POWER | Service charges decrease to 5.0% from 9.0%

- The government has reduced the service charges on the import of high-sulfur fuel oil (HFO), also known as furnace oil, to 5.0% from the previous 9.0% to lower the electricity generation costs. State-run Bangladesh Power Development Board (BPDB) sent letters to all 48 privately-owned power companies, who have been importing HFO to generate electricity in their power plants, in this regard, said sources.

<https://today.thefinancialexpress.com.bd/last-page/service-charges-decrease-to-50pc-from-90pc-1739730721>

Stocks:**ASIATICLAB | Asiatic Lab sees 16% growth in Oct-Dec**

- Asiatic Laboratories, a pharmaceutical company listed on the stock market, reported a 16% growth in its earnings per share (EPS) for the second quarter, covering the period from October to December. However, the company experienced a 37% year-on-year decline in its half-yearly EPS during the July to December period, according to its unaudited financial report published.

<https://www.tbsnews.net/economy/stocks/asiatic-lab-sees-16-growth-oct-dec-1070206>

EXCHANGE | BSEC returns 10 mutual funds to RACE

- The Bangladesh Securities and Exchange Commission (BSEC) has withdrawn an order on investigating fund transfers of RACE Asset Management PLC while returning the right to manage the funds to the asset manager. The stock market regulator issued an order last week to withdraw the investigation and lifted its previous order forbidding block transactions of assets in the portfolios of RACE.

<https://www.thedailystar.net/business/news/bsec-returns-10-mutual-funds-race-3825661>

EXCHANGE | Heavily discounted mutual funds don't get buyers. Here is why

- Presently, one can purchase mutual fund units at only BDT 3 each when the net asset value per unit is more than BDT 11. That means investors will get a heavy discount of 72% for investing in an instrumented vehicle of this kind but still the market shows a clear lack of interest. A major reason is widespread skepticism about the asset value claimed by fund managers and the quality of underlying assets.

<https://thefinancialexpress.com.bd/stock/bangladesh/asiatic-laboratories-profit-up-16pc-in-q2>

Stock and Commodities*

Index Name	Close Value	Value Change YTD	% Change YTD
Crude Oil (WTI)*	USD 70.54	(USD 0.89)	-1.25%
Crude Oil (Brent)*	USD 74.62	USD 0.23	0.31%
Gold Spot*	USD 2,895.25	USD 286.77	10.99%
DSEX	5,198.78	-17.66	-0.34%
S&P 500	6,114.63	207.69	3.52%
FTSE 100	8,732.46	611.45	7.53%
BSE SENSEX	75,939.21	-2,260.72	-2.89%
KSE-100	112,085.30	-3,173.70	-2.75%
CSEALL	12,003.29	0.00	0.00%

Exchange Rates**1 US Dollar = 121.28 BDT****1 GBP = 152.80 BDT****1 Euro = 127.39 BDT****1 INR = 1.40 BDT**

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BRAC EPL Stock Brokerage Limited

Research

Salim Afzal Shawon, CFA	Head of Research	salim@bracepl.com	01708 805 221
Fahim Hassan	Research Analyst	fahim.hassan@bracepl.com	01709 636 546
Hossain Zaman Towhidi Khan	Research Analyst	hztowhidi.khan@bracepl.com	01708 805 224
Foyisal Ahmed	Research Associate	foysal.ahmed@bracepl.com	01708 805 201
S M Toufique Imran	Research Associate	smtoufique.imran@bracepl.com	01708 805 228
Rakibul Hasan	Research Associate	rakibul.hasan@bracepl.com	01708 805 229
Md Istiaz Uddin	Research Associate	mistiaz.uddin@bracepl.com	01708 805 202

International Trade and Sales

Ahsanur Rahman Bappi	CEO	bappi@bracepl.com	01730 357 991
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BRAC EPL Stock Brokerage Limited

www.bracepl.com

Symphony, Plot No.: S.E.(F) – 9(3rd Floor), Road No.: 142

Gulshan Avenue, Dhaka – 1212

Phone: + (88)-02-222282446-47

Fax: + (88)-02-222282452

E-Mail: research@bracepl.com