

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:**WB to provide USD 200 Mn to strengthen SSNPs**

- The World Bank (WB) is set to provide USD 200 Mn worth of assistance to ensure accountability and transparency in Bangladesh's social safety-net programmes (SSNPs), officials said, after completing the negotiations on Thursday. "We have completed negotiations with the World Bank on Thursday. We are hopeful of getting the loan within a couple of months," said a senior official at the MoF.

<https://thefinancialexpress.com.bd/economy/bangladesh/wb-to-provide-200m-to-strengthen-ssnps>

BB chief expects USD 30 Bn remittances in FY25

- Bangladesh Bank (BB) Governor Dr Ahsan H Mansur on Thursday expected that the inflow of remittances will hit a new record of USD 30 Bn in the fiscal year 2024-25 (FY25). According to BB data, expatriate Bangladeshis sent a total of USD 15.96 Bn remittances during the first seven months of the ongoing fiscal year 2024-25, registering a 24% year-on-year growth.

<https://thefinancialexpress.com.bd/economy/bb-chief-expects-30b-remittances-in-fy25>

NBR halves VAT hike on biscuits

- The National Board of Revenue (NBR) has halved the amount of value added tax (VAT) it had initially decided to impose on biscuit sales, according to a government notification issued yesterday.

<https://www.thedailystar.net/business/economy/news/nbr-halves-vat-hike-biscuits-3829751>

USD 1.29 Bn WB loans in five projects stalled as consultant recruitment delayed

- The Bangladesh Private Investment and Digital Entrepreneurship Project, launched to support digital entrepreneurs in hi-tech parks and attract private investment in economic zones, secured USD 500 Mn in World Bank funding in June 2020. With the loan tenure set to expire this December, USD 418.66 Mn – 86% of the total – remains undisbursed due to delays in consultant recruitment.

<https://www.tbsnews.net/economy/129b-wb-loans-five-projects-stalled-consultant-recruitment-delayed-1074716>

Kamalapur-bound containers can be delivered from Pangaon

- In a bid to clear a pile-up of containers, the National Board of Revenue (NBR) has approved the delivery of import-laden containers bound for the Dhaka inland container depot (ICD) to consignees from the Pangaon Inland Container Terminal (ICT) in Keraniganj. Such containers will be delivered from the Chattogram port yard as well, a decision welcomed by businesses.

<https://www.thedailystar.net/business/economy/news/kamalapur-bound-containers-can-be-delivered-pangaon-3829761>

Asset recovery should not stop for political reasons: BB governor

- The process of recovering laundered assets should not be interrupted due to political reasons, Bangladesh Bank Governor Ahsan H Mansur said yesterday. While it may be possible to seize laundered assets within this year, completing the legal process and recovering the stolen assets may take at least five years, he mentioned.

<https://www.thedailystar.net/business/economy/news/asset-recovery-should-not-stop-political-reasons-bb-governor-3829776>

'USD 29 Mn of US funds went to firm with 2 people'

- "USD 29 Mn to strengthen the political landscape in Bangladesh. Went to a firm that nobody ever heard of," said the US president. "Can you imagine you have a little firm? You get 10,000 here, 10,000 there, and then we get USD 29 Mn from the United States government. They had two people working in that firm, two people, I think they're very happy, they're very rich."

<https://www.thedailystar.net/news/bangladesh/news/29-million-us-funds-went-firm-2-people-3830681>

65% of registered Bangladeshi taxpayers skip filing returns -- what would be the fallout?

- Tax compliance is a vital pillar of a country's economic stability. But in Bangladesh, despite various government efforts to widen the tax net, an alarming 65% of eligible taxpayers did not bother filing their returns within the deadline, which was extended thrice this year. That means two out of every three taxpayers are yet to submit their income tax returns.

<https://www.thedailystar.net/business/news/65-registered-bangladeshi-taxpayers-skip-filing-returns-what-would-be-the-fallout-3829406>

Economic outlook clouded by inflation, high borrowing costs: DCCI

- The private sector is grappling with growing uncertainty as inflation, investment stagnation, and energy shortages continue to weigh on businesses, speakers said at a seminar today. "In recent months, business sentiment has been significantly affected by inflationary pressures, high borrowing costs, and exchange rate volatility," said Taskeen Ahmed, president of the DCCI.

<https://www.thedailystar.net/business/news/economic-outlook-clouded-inflation-high-borrowing-costs-dcci-3830706>

Talks on trade deals show no major progress

- Talks on preferential trade deals with a dozen countries have stalled since the political changeover in August last year, potentially adding to the challenges related to Bangladesh's graduation from the club of Least Developed Countries in 2026, according to economists and business leaders.

<https://www.thedailystar.net/business/economy/news/talks-trade-deals-show-no-major-progress-3829786>

ICSB calls for reform of Companies Act 1994

- Bangladesh's Companies Act needs to be updated to strengthen corporate governance, boost economic growth, and align with global best practices, said M. Nurul Alam, acting president of the Institute of Chartered Secretaries of Bangladesh (ICSB).

<https://www.thedailystar.net/business/news/icsb-calls-reform-companies-act-1994-3830621>

Smooth energy supply, increased pvt credit flow crucial for attracting investment: Biz leaders

- Business leaders and economists have emphasised the need for uninterrupted energy supply, double-digit private sector credit growth, labour stability in industries and consistent policy support for creating a business- and investment-friendly environment in the country. "We are still facing the gas-electricity crisis, and the government must take serious steps to resolve it," said Taskeen Ahmed, president of Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry (DCCI).

<https://www.tbsnews.net/economy/smooth-energy-supply-increased-pvt-credit-flow-crucial-attracting-investment-biz-leaders>

Taka stays overvalued, undercuts country's trade competitiveness

- Bangladesh's currency remains overvalued and impacts adversely the country's trade competitiveness with international trading partners, according to official statistics. According to a Bangladesh Bank's latest report, the Bangladesh Taka is overvalued by more than 3.0% or BDT 3.67. The central bank of Bangladesh calculates the Real Effective Exchange Rate (REER) index, which stood at 103.01 in January. When converted using the exchange rate, the real exchange rate stands at BDT 125.67 against the US dollar and thus leaves a gap of BDT 3.67.

<https://today.thefinancialexpress.com.bd/first-page/taka-stays-overvalued-undercuts-countrys-trade-competitiveness-1740244396>

Railways ministry seeks BDT 148 Bn for next FY

- The railways ministry has sought an allocation of more than BDT 148 Bn under the medium term budget framework for the financial year (FY) 2025-26 against its 32 ongoing development projects, sources said. The ministry has set a ceiling of BDT 124.37 Bn under the development budget for the next fiscal year. It is noted that an additional amount of BDT 20.78 Bn will be required for resettlement and project implementation and practical work purposes in the FY.

<https://today.thefinancialexpress.com.bd/last-page/railways-ministry-seeks-tk-148b-for-next-fy-1740244732>

DMTCL seeks one-third of cost for less important, allied works

- Dhaka metro rail company has sought more than one-third of the proposed MRT-5 South line project cost for the less important and associated works, causing the Planning Commission (PC) officials to raise their eyebrows. Of the BDT 447.21 Bn costs estimated for the Gabtoli-Dasherbandi project, the Dhaka Mass Transit Company Limited (DMTCL) sought nearly BDT 134 Bn, or more than 30%, for such works, insiders said on Saturday.

<https://today.thefinancialexpress.com.bd/first-page/dmtcl-seeks-one-third-of-cost-for-less-important-allied-works-1740244344>

Private sector struggling under mounting pressure

- The private sector is facing increasing uncertainty as stubbornly high inflation, stagnant investments and inconsistent energy supplies continue to weigh on businesses, according to industry leaders. "In recent months, business sentiment has been significantly affected by inflationary pressures, high borrowing costs and exchange rate volatility," said Taskeen Ahmed, president of the Dhaka Chamber of Commerce & Industry (DCCI), at an event in Dhaka yesterday.

<https://www.thedailystar.net/business/economy/news/private-sector-struggling-under-mounting-pressure-3831126>

Sector & Industries:**RMG | Large listed RMG makers secure higher profits**

- Most listed readymade garment (RMG) producers secured higher profits during the October-December period of this fiscal year, buoyed by global demand even amidst the myriad challenges plaguing Bangladesh's overall business climate. Among the 40 listed companies from this sector that published the data, 25 saw higher profits while 15 saw lower profits. However, 15 companies that have been in the Z category for many years have not published any data yet.

<https://www.thedailystar.net/business/economy/news/large-listed-rmg-makers-secure-higher-profits-3831121>

TELECOM | BTRC limits bandwidth imports from India

- Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (BTRC) has capped bandwidth imports from India at 50% of the country's consumption of 6,500 Gbps to reduce reliance on a single source and promote diversified international connectivity. Currently, about 60% of Bangladesh's bandwidth consumption is imported from India by international internet gateway (IIG) operators through international terrestrial cable (ITC) companies.

<https://www.thedailystar.net/business/economy/news/btrc-limits-bandwidth-imports-india-3829771>

BANK | Govt launches new account verification system to prevent fraud

- The government has launched an account verification system (AVS) through Bangladesh Bank to enhance transparency in public expenditure and prevent financial fraud. The initiative, part of the government's push to make transactions cashless, aims to reduce customer inconvenience and save BDT 5-6 Bn annually by eliminating the need for cheque printing. The system will be implemented in all accounting offices nationwide by June 2025.

<https://www.thedailystar.net/business/news/govt-launches-new-account-verification-system-prevent-fraud-3830686>

TEXTILE | Textile millers urged to adopt solar energy

- Commerce Adviser Sk Bashir Uddin today urged textile millers to increase the use of solar energy to cut production costs and reduce dependence on gas and fossil fuels in order to stay competitive. Businesses must enhance their capacity to remain competitive in global trade as Bangladesh will no longer enjoy the preferential market access after it graduates from the least developed country (LDC) category, he said.

<https://www.thedailystar.net/business/news/textile-millers-urged-adopt-solar-energy-3829471>

RMG | Cornell researchers call for annual review of Bangladesh RMG wages

- Researchers from the Global Labor Institute (GLI) of Cornell University in New York, US, have called for an annual wage review and wage-setting process in Bangladesh's new government, a practice currently in place in Cambodia. "Garment workers paid the national minimum wage in Bangladesh are 'under-water' and losing income year-on-year," reads a press release issued by the GLI on 20 February.

<https://www.tbsnews.net/economy/rmg/cornell-researchers-call-annual-review-bangladesh-rmg-wages-1074066>

FUEL & POWER | Fresh project on stalled refinery moves, at a cost

- A BDT 364.1 Bn fresh project now moves for establishing a stalled second petroleum-refining unit at the Eastern Refinery Limited (ERL), ditching detractors' subtle bids for handover of the fuel business to vested quarters, sources said. The Energy and Mineral Resources Division (EMRD) has submitted Preliminary Development Project Proposal (PDPP) to the Planning Commission for setting up the new ERL unit with an annual refining capacity of 3.0 Mn tonnes.

<https://thefinancialexpress.com.bd/economy/fresh-project-on-stalled-refinery-moves-at-a-cost>

FUEL & POWER | Suspend move to gas tariff hike: CAB

- The Consumers Association of Bangladesh (CAB) on Saturday demanded suspending Wednesday's public hearing over the proposed gas tariff hike for new industries and extended units of existing industries. Sources said the Bangladesh Energy Regulatory Commission (BERC) arranged the hearing following submission of proposals by state-run Petrobangla and its subsidiaries - gas marketing and distribution companies - for the tariff hikes.

<https://today.thefinancialexpress.com.bd/last-page/suspend-move-to-gas-tariff-hike-cab-1740244703>

INSURANCE | Islamic life insurers required to invest 30% of funds in sukuk

- The Insurance Development and Regulatory Authority (IDRA) has mandated that Islamic insurance companies invest in government securities, a requirement that previously applied only to conventional insurers while Shariah-based Islamic insurers were exempt. Under the new directive, Islamic life insurance companies must allocate at least 30% of their funds to government Islamic bonds (Sukuk) or securities, while Islamic general insurance companies are required to invest a minimum of 7.5%.

<https://www.tbsnews.net/economy/stocks/islamic-life-insurers-required-invest-30-funds-sukuk-1075466>

BANK | MFS sees significant growth

- Mobile Financial Services (MFS) in Bangladesh have experienced remarkable growth, with both "NAGAD" and MFS platforms offered by scheduled banks-such as bKash, Rocket, and Upay-contributing to the expansion. As of December 2024, the total number of MFS accounts stood at 238.68 Mn-107.72 Mn in urban areas and 130.96 Mn in rural areas, according to the latest Bangladesh Bank report.

<https://today.thefinancialexpress.com.bd/last-page/mfs-sees-significant-growth-1740244901>

BANK | Deposits with banks rising in a rebound

- Deposits with Bangladesh's 61 banks increased during July-December in a rebound from a crunch amid initial panic-driven withdrawals triggered by the student-mass uprising and subsequent uncertainty. According to the latest report from Bangladesh Bank, the aggregate deposits with the banks rose by BDT 345.17 Bn to over BDT 17.77 Tn by the end of December 2024.

<https://thefinancialexpress.com.bd/economy/deposits-with-banks-rising-in-a-rebound>

BANK | Microcredit interest rates in rural Bangladesh declining

- Microcredit-interest rates in the rural areas are declining due to increasing competition, driven by the presence of a substantial number of non-governmental organisations (NGOs), experts and economists said on Thursday. They noted that NGO-led microfinance institutions have played a crucial role in boosting the rural economy, with many villages now having five to six active NGOs, significantly curbing reliance on high-interest loans from traditional moneylenders.

<https://thefinancialexpress.com.bd/economy/bangladesh/microcredit-interest-rates-in-rural-bangladesh-declining>

BANK | Proposals for full BB autonomy, law to resolve problem banks' issues underway

- Bangladesh Bank will submit a package proposal for transforming the central bank into a fully autonomous body within four months to the head of interim government, as part of full-course reforms in the banking sector Bangladesh Bank Governor Dr Ahsan H. Mansur unveiled the plans, including a new law in the making, while speaking as the chief guest at a discussion Thursday in Dhaka.

<https://thefinancialexpress.com.bd/economy/proposals-for-full-bb-autonomy-law-to-resolve-problem-banks-issues-underway>

Stocks:

BRACBANK | BRAC Bank to raise funds for City Sugar Industries via mortgage-backed zero coupon bond

- BRAC Bank has been entrusted by City Sugar Industries Limited, a flagship concern of City Group and an AAA-rated corporate entity, to facilitate fund mobilisation through the issuance of the Teer 100% Mortgage-Backed Zero Coupon Bond worth BDT 15.0 Bn (face value). The bond issuance is subject to approval from the Bangladesh Securities and Exchange Commission, according to a press release.

<https://thefinancialexpress.com.bd/stock/bangladesh/brac-bank-to-raise-funds-for-city-sugar-industries-via-mortgage-backed-zero-coupon-bond>

EXCHANGE | Nearly 49,000 BO accounts emptied in six months

- Over the past six months, a staggering 49,000 beneficiary owners' (BO) accounts were emptied by 20 February, reflecting growing investor frustration over prolonged poor returns and prompting many to exit the stock market. Market insiders attribute this exodus to rising concerns over substantial losses amid a prolonged downturn.

<https://www.tbsnews.net/economy/stocks/nearly-49000-bo-accounts-emptied-six-months-1075336>

Stock and Commodities*

Index Name	Close Value	Value Change YTD	% Change YTD
Crude Oil (WTI)*	USD 70.40	(USD 1.03)	-1.44%
Crude Oil (Brent)*	USD 74.43	USD 0.04	0.05%
Gold Spot*	USD 2,936.05	USD 327.57	12.56%
DSEX	5,200.37	-16.07	-0.31%
S&P 500	6,013.13	106.19	1.80%
FTSE 100	8,659.37	538.36	6.63%
BSE SENSEX	75,311.06	-2,888.87	-3.69%
KSE-100	112,800.93	-2,458.07	-2.13%
CSEALL	12,003.29	0.00	0.00%

Exchange Rates**1 US Dollar = 121.68 BDT****1 GBP = 153.73 BDT****1 Euro = 127.30 BDT****1 INR = 1.41 BDT**

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