

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:**Bangladesh, Singapore to finalise FTA by end of next year**

- Bangladesh and Singapore have committed to finalising a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) by the end of next year, as discussed during the fourth Bangladesh-Singapore Foreign Office Consultations held in Singapore today. The Bangladesh delegation was led by Foreign Secretary Masud Bin Momen, while the Singaporean side was headed by Luke Goh, Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

<https://www.thedailystar.net/news/bangladesh/diplomacy/news/bangladesh-singapore-finalise-fta-end-next-year-3871286>

Overdue import bills down to USD 88 Mn from USD 445 Mn in five months

- The overdue import bills of several Bangladeshi banks have dropped significantly, from USD 445 Mn to USD 88 Mn, over the past five months. A recent report by the Bangladesh Bank revealed that a number of banks had failed to settle their import payment dues to foreign banks for a long time.

<https://www.tbsnews.net/economy/overdue-import-bills-down-88m-445m-five-months-1115361>

BDT 31 Bn promised: BIDA

- The recently concluded Bangladesh Investment Summit 2025 has yielded investment declaration worth BDT 31 Bn, says Chowdhury Ashik Mahmud Bin Harun, executive chairman of the Bangladesh Investment Development Authority (BIDA). He shared the information at a press conference at the Foreign Service Academy in the capital yesterday.

<https://www.thedailystar.net/business/news/tk-3100-crore-promised-bida-3870391>

Licences of 10 economic zones cancelled: Beza executive chairman

- The government has cancelled the licences of 10 economic zones, said Ashik Chowdhury, executive chairman of the Bida and Beza. The cancelled government economic zones are: Sonadia Eco Tourism Park, Cox's Bazar; Sundarban Tourism, Bagerhat; Gajaria Economic Zone, Munshiganj; Shreepur Economic Zone, Gazipur; and Mymensingh Economic Zone, Ishwarganj Mymensingh. The cancelled private economic zones are: 'Garments Industries Park' proposed by BGMEA, Munshiganj; Chatak Economic Zone, Sunamganj; Famkam Economic Zone, Bagerhat; City Special Economic Zone, Dhaka; and Sonargaon Economic Zone, Narayanganj.

<https://www.tbsnews.net/economy/approval-10-economic-zones-cancelled-bida-chief-ashik-1115121>

No scope to cut corporate tax

- The National Board of Revenue (NBR) yesterday said there was no scope to reduce corporate or individual tax rates in the budget for the upcoming fiscal year, a stance that businesses opposed. At a pre-budget discussion organised by the DCCI, Daily Samakal and Channel 24 at the InterContinental Dhaka, NBR Chairman Abdur Rahman Khan said the national debt burden has increased over the past 50 years and those debts need to be repaid.

<https://www.thedailystar.net/business/news/no-scope-cut-corporate-tax-3870841>

How Bangladesh struggles to secure WTO trade benefits ahead of LDC graduation

- Despite efforts since 2018 to secure WTO trade benefits ahead of LDC graduation – including duty-free exports and continuing government subsidies for agricultural and non-agricultural products – Bangladesh has yet to achieve them due to member states' lack of interest, according to former and current commerce ministry officials.

<https://www.tbsnews.net/economy/how-bangladesh-struggles-secure-wto-trade-benefits-ahead-ldc-graduation-1115426>

Go all out to remove trade barriers with US

- Business leaders from Bangladesh and the United States have called on the government to make every effort to remove both tariff and non-tariff barriers on imports from the US to narrow the trade gap and facilitate Bangladeshi exports to the American market. At a dialogue in Dhaka yesterday, organised by the AmCham, the trade leaders also called for modernising key government services to improve efficiency and reduce delays.

<https://www.thedailystar.net/business/news/go-all-out-remove-trade-barriers-us-3870846>

NBR mulls uniform tax rate across sectors; RMG owners oppose

- The National Board of Revenue (NBR) is contemplating the introduction of a uniform tax rate across all sectors in a move to eliminate existing disparities, NBR Chairman Abdur Rahman Khan announced at a pre-budget discussion in the capital on 12 April. "You must consider taxes when planning a business. If there is taxable income, you pay tax; if not, you don't."

<https://www.tbsnews.net/nbr/nbr-mulls-uniform-tax-rate-across-sectors-says-chairman-rmg-owners-oppose-1114706>

Ctg port authority eases tender terms for Kamalapur ICD contractor appointment

- The Chattogram Port Authority has dropped a key condition from its latest contractor recruitment tender for container and cargo handling at the Kamalapur Inland Container Depot (ICD), raising hopes among logistics businesses for fairer competition and an end to the dominance of a single operator.

<https://www.tbsnews.net/economy/ctg-port-authority-eases-tender-terms-kamalapur-icd-contractor-appointment-1115286>

Businesses for resolving US tariff hurdles within 90-day suspension period

- Leading business figures in the country on 13 April said that non-tariff barriers, including lengthy lab tests and delays in product transportation, alongside tariffs and taxes cause significant obstacles to trade. "If the issue is not resolved within the 90 days, Bangladesh risks losing the entire apparel export season," Syed Nasim Manzur, managing director (MD) of Apex Footwear, said.

<https://www.tbsnews.net/economy/businesses-resolving-us-tariff-hurdles-within-90-day-suspension-period-1115281>

Sector & Industries:**BANK | BB again asks banks to clear overdue LC payments**

- The Bangladesh Bank instructed banks to further clear overdue letters of credit (LC) payments, as this type of non-payment tarnishes the image of the country's banking system, increases the cost of foreign trade, and disrupts the trade environment. After issuing similar directives a couple of times over the past five months, the central bank reiterated the order to all banks in a circular issued yesterday.

<https://www.thedailystar.net/business/news/bb-again-asks-banks-clear-overdue-lc-payments-3870821>

INSURANCE | 68% of claims unpaid in non-life insurance sector, policyholders in distress

- Insurance companies in the non-life sector are failing to settle around 68% of the claims, resulting in outstanding claims amounting to approximately BDT 26.35 Bn by the end of 2024. As a result, many policyholders are suffering, unable to receive their rightful compensation. This information was obtained from the Insurance Development and Regulatory Authority (IDRA), based on unaudited data from 46 public and private non-life insurance companies for the year 2024.

<https://www.tbsnews.net/economy/stocks/68-claims-unpaid-non-life-insurance-sector-policyholders-distress-1115311>

Stocks:**UCB, SSSTEEL | Now UCB to auction off SS Steel assets to recoup BDT 2.9 Bn debt**

- United Commercial Bank (UCB) has announced plans to auction off the assets of publicly listed SS Steel Limited in a bid to recover an outstanding loan of BDT 2.9 Bn. An auction notice issued by the Pragati Sarani branch of the bank, published in daily newspapers on Friday, invited interested buyers to submit price quotations by 8 May. The auction follows provisions of the Money Loan Court Act, 2003.

<https://www.tbsnews.net/economy/stocks/now-ucb-auction-ss-steel-assets-recoup-tk290cr-debt-1115376>

ACI | ACI director to buy company shares worth BDT 160 Mn

- Shusmita Anis, a director of ACI PLC, has announced plans to buy 0.78 Mn shares of the company from the block market within the next 30 days, according to a disclosure on the Dhaka Stock Exchange (DSE) today. This move follows Shusmita's acquisition of 1.52 Mn shares in January. As per the March shareholding report, she currently holds 3.2 Mn shares, which is 3.66% of ACI's total shares.

<https://www.tbsnews.net/economy/stocks/aci-director-buy-company-shares-worth-tk16cr-1115331>

EASTLAND | Eastland Insurance declares 10% cash dividend

- Eastland Insurance has announced a 10% cash dividend exclusively for its general shareholders for the fiscal year 2024. In a recent statement, the company disclosed that its sponsors and directors opted to forgo their dividends due to the insurer's underwhelming financial performance in the past year.

<https://www.tbsnews.net/economy/stocks/eastland-insurance-declares-10-cash-dividend-1115326>

EXCHANGE | Foreign investors exit equity market as fresh concerns replace optimism

- Foreign investors have retreated from Bangladesh's equity market once again over persistent economic challenges and political uncertainties after signs of a return following political changeover in August last year. Economic reform measures taken by the interim government gave rise to optimism about a turnaround of the market, which was why foreign stakes in well-performing companies jumped in October last year compared to what was in June the same year.

<https://thefinancialexpress.com.bd/stock/bangladesh/foreign-investors-exit-equity-market-as-fresh-concerns-replace-optimism>

Stock and Commodities*

Index Name	Close Value	Value Change YTD	% Change YTD
Crude Oil (WTI)*	USD 61.67	(USD 9.76)	-13.66%
Crude Oil (Brent)*	USD 64.99	(USD 9.40)	-12.64%
Gold Spot*	USD 3,222.97	USD 614.49	23.56%
DSEX	5,169.68	-46.76	-0.90%
S&P 500	5,405.97	-500.97	-8.48%
FTSE 100	8,134.34	13.33	0.16%
BSE SENSEX	75,157.26	-3,042.67	-3.89%
KSE-100	116,390.04	1,131.04	0.98%
CSEALL	15,526.20	-418.41	-2.62%

Exchange Rates**1 US Dollar = 121.41 BDT****1 GBP = 160.30 BDT****1 Euro = 137.81 BDT****1 INR = 1.41 BDT**

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