

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:**Govt utilising full capacity to overcome lacking in trade initiatives: Adviser Bashir**

- "I can say that through utilising our full capacity, we're taking all necessary measures so that there is no lack of trade initiatives and capacity, including our Smooth Transition Strategy [STS]. We're working on keeping ahead all related aspects on the whole," he said. The commerce adviser said this in an interview with the national news agency BSS on the overall aspects of the country's move towards signing different trade deals like Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA), Free Trade Agreement (FTA), and Preferential Trade Agreement (PTA) with various countries amid Bangladesh's LDC graduation in 2026.

<https://www.tbsnews.net/economy/govt-utilising-full-capacity-overcome-lacking-trade-initiatives-adviser-bashir-1093266>

Foreign loan costs to rise after LDC graduation: Fahmida Khatun

- Fahmida Khatun, executive director of the Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD), has said that Bangladesh will face higher costs for foreign loans after graduating from the Least Developed Country (LDC) list. "We currently receive grace periods and low interest rates on loans from many international institutions. After graduation, the grace period will be reduced, and we will have to pay competitive interest rates, increasing overall costs. We should consider this in advance," she said.

<https://www.tbsnews.net/economy/foreign-loan-costs-rise-after-ldc-graduation-fahmida-khatun-1092921>

Govt releases BDT 20 Bn for cash incentives to export industries

- The government has disbursed BDT 20 Bn in cash incentives for export-oriented industries to support workers' monthly wages and bonus payments ahead of Eid-ul-Fitr, according to sources. The Finance Division move follows an appeal from Bangladesh Knitwear Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BKMEA) President Mohammad Hatem earlier in this month to ensure timely payments to workers before Eid vacations.

<https://www.tbsnews.net/economy/govt-releases-tk2000-crore-cash-incentives-export-industries-1091986>

UN chief supports Bangladesh reforms, slates Rohingya aid cuts

- United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres extended unqualified support to the reform process initiated by Bangladesh's interim government and offered to do whatever they can for the country's real transformation. He deplored declining humanitarian aid for over a Mn Rohingya refugees sheltered in the country's southeast frontier area, and pledged efforts for mobilising world assistance until their dignified repatriation to Myanmar.

<https://thefinancialexpress.com.bd/national/un-chief-supports-bangladesh-reforms-slates-rohingya-aid-cuts>

RADP sees highest block allocation

Although all of the ministries and divisions of the government collectively placed their demand for BDT 1.91 Tn to implement all of the ongoing development projects in the current fiscal year, the Planning Commission has allocated BDT 248.87 Bn (13.02%) more than the requested amount in the Revised Annual Development Programme (RADP). Since this huge allocation has been made without specifying the ministries, divisions, sectors, or projects, the block allocation in RADP has surged to BDT 266.32 Bn -- the highest in the country's history. At the beginning of the fiscal year, the original ADP included BDT 63.29 Bn as block allocation.

<https://thefinancialexpress.com.bd/economy/radp-sees-highest-block-allocation>

BB to borrow 2.2 Bn in Chinese Yuan from AIIB

- Bangladesh bids to borrow variable-spread credits worth 2.2 Bn RMB, equivalent to BDT 36.96 Bn, from the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) to ensure fund flow in Cottage, Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (CMSME) sector. The central bank will implement a project namely 'Sustainable Development for CMSME' with the funds that have to be repaid in 20 years, officials said.

<https://thefinancialexpress.com.bd/economy/bb-to-borrow-22b-in-chinese-yuan-from-aiib>

Sector & Industries:**FUEL & POWER | Tenders floated to buy 3 spot LNG cargoes in April**

- Bangladesh's state-run Rupantarita Prakritik Gas Company Ltd (RPGCL) intends to buy three spot liquefied natural gas (LNG) cargoes by mid-April to meet mounting demand for summer. The RPGCL has already floated tenders for April 01-02, April 12-13 and April 14-15 delivery windows, a senior RPGCL official told The Financial Express Saturday. The RPGCL might float more tenders to buy spot LNG cargoes in April, which is considered the hottest month of summer in Bangladesh, said the official.

<https://today.thefinancialexpress.com.bd/last-page/tenders-floated-to-buy-3-spot-lng-cargoes-in-april-1742059073>

BANK | Deposit, lending rates rise in Q4 '24 as some banks bet big

- The weighted average interest rates on both deposits and advances increased in the fourth quarter (October-December) of 2024, according to a latest report of Bangladesh Bank. The average deposit rate at the end of December last stood at 6.04% , rising 2.7% points from the previous quarter (July-September), according to BB data. As a result, the total deposit (excluding interbank items) of the scheduled banks increased by 3.2% to BDT 18.84 Tn in Q4 although the lending rates remained sluggish on back of dimmed private sector growth.

<https://thefinancialexpress.com.bd/economy/deposit-lending-rates-rise-in-q4-24-as-some-banks-bet-big>

BANK | Banks' deposit growth dropped in 2024 amid confidence crisis

- Banks in Bangladesh saw slower deposit growth last year mainly due to high inflation, the people's confidence crisis regarding some banks and a crackdown on money laundering, according to officials of the country's central bank. Bank deposits registered an average annual growth rate of 7.69% by the end of 2024 while it was 10.15% the year prior, showed data of the Bangladesh Bank.

<https://www.thedailystar.net/business/news/banks-deposit-growth-dropped-2024-amid-confidence-crisis-3848826>

BANK | Many banks unlikely to pay dividends as BB tightens rules

- A good number of banks in the country will likely be unable to pay dividends after the Bangladesh Bank tightened the relevant rules through a notice yesterday. Under the new rules, banks that have taken a deferral facility from the central bank to maintain provisioning requirements will be barred from paying dividends from 2024 onwards. Additionally, banks with non-performing loans (NPLs) exceeding 10% of their total loans will not be able to declare dividends to shareholders from 2025.

<https://www.thedailystar.net/business/news/many-banks-unlikely-pay-dividends-bb-tightens-rules-3847711>

TRADE | Private ICDs revise charges for Patenga terminal bound containers

- Owners of private inland container depots (ICDs) have revised tariffs for three types of services related to handling containers to and from Patenga Container Terminal, a privately operated terminal of Chattogram port. The Bangladesh Inland Container Depots Association in a recent circular announced that the charges would be raised by BDT 1,000 to BDT 2,000 per container. The new charges will take effect from April 1.

<https://www.thedailystar.net/business/news/private-icds-revise-charges-patenga-terminal-bound-containers-3848851>

CONSUMER GOODS | Consumer uncertainty weighs on electronics sales

- The electronics and home appliance sector in Bangladesh is facing one of its most challenging periods in recent years due to inflation, currency devaluation and declining consumer spending on non-essential items. This has forced home appliance companies like Singer Bangladesh to adjust their strategies to navigate these uncertain times, according to MHM Fairoz, managing director and CEO of Singer Bangladesh.

<https://www.thedailystar.net/business/news/consumer-uncertainty-weighs-electronics-sales-3848811>

TRADE | Economic slowdown lowers container handling at Mongla port

- Mongla port, the second largest seaport in Bangladesh, witnessed a sharp decline in container handling throughout the first seven months of the current fiscal year (FY), with growing economic constraints eroding business activities in the country. Official data shows that the seaport handled around 12,083 twenty-foot equivalent units (TEUs) of containers in the July-January period of FY25, down 36.78% year-on-year.

<https://www.thedailystar.net/business/economy/news/economic-slowdown-lowers-container-handling-mongla-port-3848981>

RMG | Prices of garments shipped to US, EU see a decline

- In recent months, Bangladesh's garment shipments to major markets such as the European Union (EU) and the US have rebounded strongly, but the price per unit has declined. For instance, in January this year, the unit price of garments shipped from Bangladesh to the US decreased by 2.20%, according to data from the Office of Textiles and Apparel (OTEXA) of the US. However, the value of exports grew by 45.93% year-on-year in January, reaching USD 799.65 Mn.

<https://www.thedailystar.net/business/economy/news/prices-garments-shipped-us-eu-see-decline-3848976>

BANK | Call-money market not hot as usual for fund switch

- Interbank call-money market has yet to get vibrant even amid Ramadan business binge despite various regulatory moves as affluent banks' trust deficit over their peers prompt their surplus fund switch into low-yield standing deposit facility (SDF). Because of the latest switch of the surplus funds of the well-off commercial banks, the volume of cash deposits in the state-guaranteed SDF continues ballooning while the transactions on interbank market are not gaining momentum. Such paradigm shift on the money market comes out as a matter of serious concern for the banks that need short-term credits to maintain their day-to-day banking operations, officials and bankers said.

<https://thefinancialexpress.com.bd/economy/call-money-market-not-hot-as-usual-for-fund-switch>

Stocks:**SIBL, FIRSTSBANK | Two banks provided with fresh liquidity support of BDT 25 Bn**

- Of the total amount, BDT 15 Bn was provided to Social Islami Bank PLC and BDT 10 Bn to First Security Islami Bank PLC for the tenure of 90 days without any securities, a senior official of the Bangladesh Bank (BB) told the Financial Express (FE), in response to a question.

<https://thefinancialexpress.com.bd/economy/bangladesh/two-banks-provided-with-fresh-liquidity-support-of-tk-25b>

PRIMEBANK | Prime Bank secures record BDT 7 Bn profit in 2024

- Prime Bank – a second-generation private sector lender in the country – has achieved a milestone by reporting a consolidated net profit of BDT 7 Bn for the first time in 2024. This marks a significant leap in the bank's financial performance, driven by strong growth across key income streams, according to insiders. In a recent board meeting held on 13 March, the bank announced a 20% dividend proposal, its highest since 2011. The dividend comprises 17.50% cash and 2.50% stock, reflecting the lender's robust financial health and commitment to rewarding shareholders, according to its price-sensitive statement disclosed on its website.

<https://www.tbsnews.net/economy/stocks/prime-bank-secures-record-tk700cr-profit-2024-1093636>

DOREENPWR | Govt scraps deal with another plant of Doreen Power

- The government has canceled the power purchase agreement (PPA) with another 22MW plant of Doreen Power Generations and Systems, exposing investors to a greater risk of losing their investment. In April 2023 before the expiry of the power purchase deal, the independent power producer sought a 10-year extension of the contract so that it could continue supplying electricity to the Bangladesh Rural Electrification Board (BREB).

<https://thefinancialexpress.com.bd/stock/bangladesh/govt-scraps-deal-with-another-plant-of-doreen-power>

LINEDBD | Linde shareholders to get further 400% cash dividend for 2024

- The Linde Bangladesh has declared a 400% final cash dividend for 2024, taking the total return on investments to 4,500% for the year. This is the highest-ever annual cash dividend declared by any company in Bangladesh's stock market, said market operators. The multinational company has already paid 4,100% interim cash dividends for January-July last year, riding on money earned from the sale of its subsidiary. It earned BDT 7.72 Bn by selling Linde Industries Pvt Ltd last year.

<https://thefinancialexpress.com.bd/stock/bangladesh/linde-shareholders-to-get-further-400pc-cash-dividend-for-2024>

PREMIERCEM | Why Premier Cement is absorbing two sister firms

- Facing pressure from investors and analysts, Premier Cement Mills has announced that it will merge its associate company, National Cement Mills, and its power subsidiary, Premier Power Generation, with itself. Premier Cement has not yet shared the details of how the share exchange will work. The plan will need approval from its shareholders, creditors, regulators, and the high court before it can go ahead.

<https://www.tbsnews.net/economy/stocks/why-premier-cement-absorbing-two-sister-firms-1093626>

BSCPLC | Submarine Cables revises down EPS for Q1, Q2

- Bangladesh Submarine Cables has revised its earnings per share (EPS) for the first and second quarters of FY25 as it last time did not take into account all the shares issued to the government against share money deposits. "We took permission from the regulators before we published our earnings last time, but after we published the results they ordered us to show earnings considering total shares we have issued to the government," said Md. Aslam Hossain, managing director and CEO of Bangladesh Submarine Cables. Hence, the EPS for the first quarter was reduced to BDT 2.33 from BDT 2.57. And for the second quarter it has been revised down to BDT 2.12 from BDT 2.24.

<https://thefinancialexpress.com.bd/stock/bangladesh/submarine-cables-revises-down-eps-for-q1-q2>

Stock and Commodities*

Index Name	Close Value	Value Change YTD	% Change YTD
Crude Oil (WTI)*	USD 67.18	(USD 4.25)	-5.95%
Crude Oil (Brent)*	USD 70.58	(USD 3.81)	-5.12%
Gold Spot*	USD 2,984.16	USD 375.68	14.40%
DSEX	5,225.61	9.17	0.18%
S&P 500	5,638.94	-268.00	-4.54%
FTSE 100	8,632.33	511.32	6.30%
BSE SENSEX	73,828.91	-4,371.02	-5.59%
KSE-100	115,536.17	277.17	0.24%
CSEALL	15,860.44	-84.17	-0.53%

Exchange Rates**1 US Dollar = 121.50 BDT****1 GBP = 157.22 BDT****1 Euro = 132.70 BDT****1 INR = 1.40 BDT**

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