

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:**Half of Japanese firms optimistic about profit growth in 2025: survey**

- After a challenging year, Japanese companies in Bangladesh are eyeing 2025 with cautious optimism, as 50% anticipate a rise in operating profits despite persistent hurdles. However, political instability, unclear regulatory policies, and difficulties in local procurement continue to hinder smooth business operations, according to findings of the latest Japan External Trade Organisation (Jetro) survey 2024, which will be released today.

<https://www.thedailystar.net/business/economy/news/half-japanese-firms-optimistic-about-profit-growth-2025-survey-3855101>

Trade bodies call for easier tax structures

- Trade associations in Bangladesh are demanding a simpler and investment-friendly tax structure that would ensure sustainable economic growth and broaden tax collection in the country. Leaders of the Bangladesh Chamber of Industries (BCI), Bangladesh Knitwear Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BKMEA), Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry (DCCI), and other trade bodies placed this demand at a meeting with officials of the finance ministry and the National Board of Revenue (NBR) yesterday.

<https://www.thedailystar.net/business/news/trade-bodies-call-easier-tax-structures-3853526>

Ambitious budget causes high debt: NBR chairman

- The National Board of Revenue (NBR) has set tax collection targets year after year based on the national budget's ambitious spending goals rather than using scientific methods or considering current realities, NBR Chairman Abdur Rahman Khan said yesterday. As a result, the tax authority is never able to meet the target, and the government has to borrow continuously to cover spending, increasing the country's debt burden, he said.

<https://www.thedailystar.net/business/economy/news/ambitious-budget-causes-high-debt-nbr-chairman-3854931>

Remittance inflow shoots up by 79% to USD 2.25 Bn in first 19 days of March

- Bangladesh's remittance inflow has witnessed an impressive 78.57% year-on-year growth, reaching USD 2.25 Bn in the first 19 days of March. During the same period last year, the country's remittance inflow stood at USD 1.26 Bn, Bangladesh Bank Spokesperson Arif Hossain Khan informed reporters yesterday (20 March).

<https://www.tbsnews.net/economy/remittance-inflow-shoots-79-225b-first-20-days-march-1097631>

CA invites global investors to explore "extraordinary opportunities" in BD

- Ahead of the Bangladesh Investment Summit, Chief Adviser Professor Muhammad Yunus has invited Bangladesh's friends, partners and global leaders to explore the extraordinary investment opportunities that Bangladesh has to offer. "There has never been a better moment to explore the extraordinary investment opportunities in Bangladesh," he said, as the government is set to host the Bangladesh Investment Summit 2025 next month.

<https://today.thefinancialexpress.com.bd/last-page/ca-invites-global-investors-to-explore-extraordinary-opportunities-in-bd-1742664610>

Sector & Industries:**MISCELLANEOUS | Toiletries market brims with opportunities**

- Bangladesh's toiletries market is growing and there is a significant potential for further expansion as incomes rise alongside increasing awareness and lifestyle changes. Per capita toiletries consumption in Bangladesh is USD 20, compared to USD 40 in India and USD 100 in Indonesia.

<https://www.thedailystar.net/business/economy/news/toiletries-market-brims-opportunities-3855076>

BANK | Depositors to get max BDT 0.2 Mn on bank liquidation

- The Bangladesh Bank (BB) has drafted a Deposit Protection Ordinance, proposing a maximum payout of BDT 0.2 Mn per depositor if a bank undergoes liquidation. The limit will be reviewed every three years. The draft, now open for public feedback, maps out the establishment of a Deposit Protection Authority within the central bank, which will oversee a separate fund maintained through premiums from financial institutions.

<https://www.thedailystar.net/business/economy/news/depositors-get-max-tk-2-lakh-bank-liquidation-3855106>

RMG | Large industries see double-digit growth in Dec riding on RMG

- Country's large-scale manufacturing sector recorded a double-digit growth of 10.37% in December last year, rising from the same period in 2023, according to data released last week by the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS). Large-scale manufacturing contributes over 11% to the country's GDP and serves as a key indicator of industrial performance.

<https://today.thefinancialexpress.com.bd/last-page/large-industries-see-double-digit-growth-in-dec-riding-on-rmg-1742664285>

FUEL & POWER | BERC initiates public hearing to fix prices of petroleum products

- The Bangladesh Energy Regulatory Commission (BERC) has initiated a public hearing process to fix the prices of petroleum products, similar to how prices for other energy utilities, including natural gas and electricity, are determined. State-run Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation (BPC) has long been fixing the price of jet fuel, also known as aviation fuel, on its own for both domestic and international flights. With the movement in the price of jet fuel, the prices of air tickets for both domestic and international routes will also change.

<https://today.thefinancialexpress.com.bd/last-page/berc-initiates-public-hearing-to-fix-prices-of-petroleum-products-1742664329>

FUEL & POWER | BD to import four spot LNG cargoes in Apr

- Bangladesh's state-run Rupantarita Prakritik Gas Company Ltd (RPGCL) has floated one fresh tender and re-issued one to purchase two spot LNG cargoes respectively for April 23-24 and April 14-15 delivery windows. Earlier, it awarded two spot LNG tenders for early April delivery windows. The bid winners will deliver the cargoes at either of the country's two floating storage re-gasification units (FSRUs), located on Moheshkhali island.

<https://today.thefinancialexpress.com.bd/last-page/bd-to-import-four-spot-lng-cargoes-in-apr-1742664485>

INSURANCE | IDRA should liquidate cos for insurance claims

- Stakeholders in the insurance sector have proposed selling off assets of defaulting companies to settle customer claims against the backdrop of a further decline in claim settlement rates. Life insurance companies in the country settled 72.43% of all claims in 2023, down from 74.28% the year before, according to the latest data of the Insurance Development and Regulatory Authority (IDRA). Non-life insurance companies' performance was worse, with the claim settlement rate falling year-on-year by around 8% to 35.58% in 2023.

<https://today.thefinancialexpress.com.bd/stock-corporate/idra-should-liquidate-cos-for-insurance-claims-1742660098>

Stocks:**SUMITPOWER | Summit Power profit drops by 37% in Jul-Dec**

- Summit Power Limited, a leading independent power producer, reported a 37% decline in its consolidated net profit for the July-December period of fiscal year 2024-25 compared to the same period in the previous fiscal year. As per the statement, the consolidated net profit for the first half of FY25 stood at BDT 1145.6 Mn, down from BDT 1822.2 Mn during the same period in the previous fiscal year.

<https://www.tbsnews.net/economy/stocks/summit-power-profit-drops-37-jul-dec-1099226>

EXCHANGE | Norway's SWF investment in Bangladesh stocks drops by 6% in 2024

- Norway's sovereign wealth fund (SWF), the largest investment fund in the world, reported a 6% drop in its investments in Bangladesh's capital market in 2024, according to data from Norges Bank Investment Management, the fund's global manager. The SWF, Government Pension Fund of Norway, had investments in only 12 companies in 2024, up from 10 companies in 2023.

<https://www.tbsnews.net/economy/stocks/norways-swf-investment-bangladesh-stocks-drops-6-2024-1099276>

Stock and Commodities*

Index Name	Close Value	Value Change YTD	% Change YTD
Crude Oil (WTI)*	USD 68.28	(USD 3.15)	-4.41%
Crude Oil (Brent)*	USD 72.16	(USD 2.23)	-3.00%
Gold Spot*	USD 3,022.15	USD 413.67	15.86%
DSEX	5,201.70	-14.75	-0.28%
S&P 500	5,667.56	-239.38	-4.05%
FTSE 100	8,646.79	525.78	6.47%
BSE SENSEX	76,905.51	-1,294.42	-1.66%
KSE-100	118,442.18	3,183.18	2.76%
CSEALL	15,879.33	-65.28	-0.41%

Exchange Rates**1 US Dollar = 121.89 BDT****1 GBP = 157.62 BDT****1 Euro = 132.57 BDT****1 INR = 1.42 BDT**

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