

Economy

Govt eyes USD 2bn from multilateral lenders for BoP support

March 30, 2026

- Bangladesh is eyeing an additional USD 2bn from multilateral partners, including the International Monetary Fund (IMF), to manage pressure on external payments amid increased emergency energy purchases caused by the US-Israel war on Iran, said the central bank governor yesterday.
- The disclosure comes as oil prices soar amid Iran's effective closure of the Strait of Hormuz, a key chokepoint handling one-fifth of global oil trade.

From: <https://www.thedailystar.net/business/economy/news/govt-eyes-2b-multilateral-lenders-bop-support-4138636>

National foreign debt rises by USD 1.30bn in last quarter of 2025

March 30, 2026

- Bangladesh's foreign debt increased by USD 1.30bn in the October-December quarter of 2025, taking the total outstanding amount to USD 113.51bn, according to data released by Bangladesh Bank. At the end of the July-September quarter of the same year, foreign debt stood at over USD 112bn. In the June quarter, it was USD 113.58bn.
- Senior officials of Bangladesh Bank said the increase was mainly driven by higher foreign borrowing in both the public and private sectors. According to the data, foreign debt in the public sector stood at USD 93.46bn, while the private sector accounted for USD 20.05bn.

From: <https://www.tbsnews.net/economy/national-foreign-debt-rises-130b-year-end-1393576>

No plan to hike tax, govt eyes stronger revenue growth: PM's adviser

March 30, 2026

- The government has ruled out any increase in tax rates, opting instead to expand the tax base and curb evasion to raise the tax-to-GDP ratio, said Rashed Al Mahmud Titumir, economic adviser to the prime minister.
- The focus remains on boosting investment and improving compliance to enhance collection, he said at a press briefing at the National Board of Revenue (NBR) headquarters in Dhaka.

From: <https://www.thedailystar.net/business/news/no-plan-hike-tax-govt-eyes-stronger-revenue-growth-pms-adviser-4138371>

Investment, savings slide as growth slows

March 30, 2026

- Bangladesh's investment and savings ratios declined sharply in FY2024–25, reflecting a broader economic slowdown that has pushed GDP growth to its lowest level since the pandemic
- The latest official data point to weakening domestic demand and a more cautious investment climate. Economists warn that the twin decline in investment and savings could have far-reaching consequences for employment, income growth and poverty reduction, raising fresh concerns over the country's macroeconomic stability.
- According to the recently released final estimates of the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS), the investment-to-GDP ratio fell to 28.54pc in FY25, down from 30.70pc in the previous FY24.

From:

<https://thefinancialexpress.com.bd/economy/bangladesh/investment-savings-slide-as-growth-slows>

Banking

Defaulted loans rise by 12pc in December quarter

March 30, 2026

- The central bank published a banking "update" report this month, which shows that by the end of the December quarter, the default rate for loans stood at 31.20pc, up from 19.90pc during the same period the previous year.
- In monetary terms, a 31.20pc default rate for loans amounts to BDT 5.54tn (USD 45.17bn) out of the BDT 17.77tn (USD 145.65bn) total loans. The default rate for loans stood at 36.30pc at the end of September 2025.

From: <https://www.tbsnews.net/economy/banking/defaulted-loans-rises-12-december-quarter-1396286>

Trade and Commerce

Pharma sector faces supply risks amid Iran war fallout

March 30, 2026

- Bangladesh's pharmaceutical industry is facing mounting pressure as the ongoing US-Israel war on Iran disrupts global supply chains, threatening the availability of raw materials, pushing up freight costs and raising concerns over production stability.
- The issue was highlighted at the inaugural session of the 17th Asia Pharma Expo 2026 and Asia Lab Expo 2026, held at the Bangladesh-China Friendship Exhibition Center in Dhaka's Purbachal.

From: <https://www.thedailystar.net/business/economy/news/pharma-sector-faces-supply-risks-amid-iran-war-fallout-4138721>

Half of Japanese firms in Bangladesh expect profits in 2026

March 30, 2026

- Nearly half of Japanese firms doing business in Bangladesh are expecting to post operating profits this year, thanks to rebounding business confidence after national polls, strong domestic demand and cost competitiveness, according to a survey.
- The number is up by more than 8 percentage points from 2024 and stands at the highest level since 2019.

From: <https://www.thedailystar.net/business/economy/news/half-japanese-firms-bangladesh-expect-profits-2026-4138666>

Food exports to the Gulf feel war shock

March 30, 2026

- The country's merchandised shipments of processed foods and agricultural products to Gulf nations are facing a serious shock from the war in the Middle East, with freight charges soaring fourfold and new orders plunging.
- Before the US and Israel launched the war on Iran on February 28, sending a container of processed foods cost around USD 1,500. Manufacturers say rerouting has now pushed the price to roughly USD 6,500.

From: <https://www.thedailystar.net/business/economy/news/food-exports-the-gulf-feel-war-shock-4138631>

Flat Saarc exports reveal Bangladesh's vulnerability to global shocks

March 30, 2026

- Bangladesh's exports have become a powerhouse for its economy, increasing by some USD 10bn over the last six years. But when it comes to its immediate South Asian neighbors, the outward trade has remained trapped in a narrow range, failing to grow by even a billion dollars throughout.
- Total global export earnings reached USD 43.6bn in fiscal year 2024-25 (FY25), up from USD 33bn six years ago, Bangladesh Bank (BB) data shows.
- Meanwhile, exports to seven member countries of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (Saarc) stood at just USD 1.9bn in FY25, a mere 4.4pc of the total. The figure was USD 1.4bn in FY19.

From: <https://www.thedailystar.net/business/economy/news/flat-saarc-exports-reveal-bangladeshs-vulnerability-global-shocks-4138761>

Bangladesh seeks alternatives as Mideast war disrupts fertilizer imports

March 30, 2026

- The geopolitical instability has created significant uncertainty regarding whether the 17 registered suppliers can deliver fertilizer through the volatile Strait of Hormuz.
- In response, the BCIC has shifted from its restricted supplier list to an open international tender, inviting global bidders – including Singapore-based firms – to secure the essential agricultural input.

From: <https://www.tbsnews.net/economy/bangladesh-seeks-alternatives-mideast-war-disrupts-fertiliser-imports-1396316>

Bangladesh loses USD 68bn in illicit trade flows from 2013 to 2022: Report

March 30, 2026

- Bangladesh lost an estimated USD 68.3bn through trade-related illicit financial flows between 2013 and 2022, according to a report by Global Financial Integrity released on Thursday (26 March).
- Trade mis-invoicing involves deliberately falsifying the value or quantity of imports and exports to evade taxes, shift profits, or transfer capital abroad, report said.
- The report finds that Bangladesh is among the top 10 countries in developing Asia in terms of total trade value gaps.

From: <https://www.tbsnews.net/economy/bangladesh-loses-68b-illicit-trade-flows-2013-22-report-1396306>

Energy and Power

Duties of tag officers in petrol pumps outlined

March 30, 2026

- In a sweeping move to tighten monitoring of the country's fuel distribution system, authorities have formally outlined the responsibilities of "tag officers" assigned to every filling station in Dhaka and Chattogram.
- The directive, issued Sunday, aims to ensure transparency, prevent irregularities, and strengthen accountability across depots, tankers, and retail pumps.

From: <https://thefinancialexpress.com.bd/trade/duties-of-tag-officers-in-petrol-pumps-outlined>

Govt may have to spend extra BDT 610bn (USD 5.0bn) annually: Change Initiative

March 30, 2026

- Bangladesh faces a looming economic challenge stemming from global oil price crossing a critical threshold of USD 120 per barrel amid the escalating Mideast tensions, with an extra burden on its cautiously tailored budget. Researchers at a press briefing Saturday warned that such an oil surge could impose a huge burden of BDT 610bn (USD 5.0bn) in additional annual spending to fuel the country's economy.
- Change Initiative has carried out a study on this score where the researchers have revealed that every USD 10 increase in Brent crude-oil price per barrel translates into nearly USD 1.0bn in extra annual expenditure for Bangladesh.
- RMG export performance in the coming quarters will largely depend on the pace of economic recovery in major importing countries, stabilization of global supply chains, and the ability of the sector to diversify products and markets, Bangladesh Bank (BB) said in a report.
- The near-term outlook for the readymade garments industry will remain "cautiously moderate," reflecting a combination of external demand uncertainty and emerging opportunities in key export markets, according to the "Quarterly Review of Readymade Garments (RMG): October-December of FY26" by BB

From: <https://thefinancialexpress.com.bd/economy/govt-may-have-to-spend-extra-tk-610b-annually>

Energy plans strain under budget constraints

March 30, 2026

- The Energy and Mineral Resources Division has sought an additional BDT 16.30bn (USD 132.79mn) in the FY2026-27 budget, warning that a funding shortfall could disrupt key projects and weaken the country's energy security efforts.
- The request comes amid mounting pressure on public finances, as authorities push ahead with ambitious plans to boost domestic gas output and reduce reliance on imports.

From: <https://thefinancialexpress.com.bd/economy/bangladesh/energy-plans-strain-under-budget-constraints>

First LPG shipment arrives in Ctg through Hormuz since Iran war started

March 30, 2026

- Only one LPG-carrying vessel has reached Bangladesh from the Middle East since tensions escalated in the region, with shipping through the Strait of Hormuz virtually suspended, according to port data and shipping sources.
- No ships have arrived via the key route since the outbreak of conflict, leaving at least two fuel-laden tankers stranded in the region.
- Against this backdrop, a small LPG tanker, MT BWEK Bornholm, arrived in Chattogram's Sitakunda on 25 March via the Gulf of Oman, carrying around 3,800 tons of liquefied petroleum gas.

From: <https://www.tbsnews.net/economy/single-lpg-shipment-reaches-bangladesh-hormuz-route-stalls-1396536>

RMG

RMG sector faces headwinds, outlook cautiously moderate: BB

March 30, 2026

From: <https://www.thedailystar.net/business/news/rmg-sector-faces-headwinds-outlook-cautiously-moderate-bb-4138341>

5 new factories get LEED certification

March 30, 2026

- With the latest addition, Bangladesh now has 118 Platinum- and 143 Gold-rated LEED-certified RMG factories.
- The country also boasts 52 factories among the top 100 highest-rated LEED-certified factories in the world, reflecting its strong commitment to sustainable and environmentally friendly industrial practices.

From: <https://www.tbsnews.net/economy/rmg/5-new-factories-get-leed-certification-1396476>

Corporate

Bank Asia to buy Bank Alfalah's Bangladesh operations at BDT 5.8bn (USD 47.5mn)

March 30, 2026

- Bank Asia PLC, a listed private bank, is set to acquire the Bangladesh operations of Bank Alfalah in a deal valued at BDT 5.8bn (USD 47.5mn). According to a disclosure published by Bank Alfalah at the Pakistan Stock Exchange, the decision was approved by 96.5pc of its shareholders at the annual general meeting held on March 26.
- The acquisition is contingent upon approval from the Bangladesh Bank, the State Bank of Pakistan, and other relevant regulatory bodies, as well as consent from Bank Asia's shareholders. To this end, Bank Asia will hold an extraordinary general meeting on April 12.

From: <https://www.thedailystar.net/business/economy/news/bank-asia-buy-bank-alfalahs-bangladesh-operations-tk-580cr-4138651>

Interim govt's rushed move risks depriving workers

March 30, 2026

- Foreign energy companies' mandatory contribution to workers' profit-sharing funds has been reduced from 5pc to 1.5pc ahead of the elected government assuming power, raising concerns that other firms may follow suit and deprive workers.
- The interim government issued a gazette notification amending the labor law just a day before handing over power to the elected government on February 17.

From: <https://thefinancialexpress.com.bd/stock/bangladesh/interim-govts-rushed-move-risks-depriving-workers>

Akij Food gets nod for BDT 5.0bn (USD 40.98mn) bond

March 30, 2026

- Akij Food & Beverage Limited, one of the largest beverage conglomerates in Bangladesh, has secured approval from the stock market regulator to issue a Tk500-crore zero-coupon bond, aiming to repay existing loans and diversify its funding sources.
- Given the nature of a zero-coupon bond, Akij Food & Beverage will raise approximately BDT 3.9bn (USD 31.8mn) from the capital market and use the entire amount to repay existing loans. However, the company will repay BDT 5.0bn (USD 40.98mn) to investors upon maturity, according to sources involved in the bond issuance.
- According to a press release of the commission, the bond will be unsecured, non-convertible, and fully redeemable, with a tenure ranging from six months to a maximum of five years.

From: <https://www.tbsnews.net/economy/stocks/akij-food-gets-approval-raise-tk500cr-through-bonds-1393731>

International

Ship insurers juggle war risks for perilous Gulf route

March 30, 2026

- Iranian forces' threat to ships in the crucial Strait of Hormuz has driven up payments for the insurance that underpins the world freight industry.
- Before the current Middle East conflict, a war risk premium would typically have cost less than one percent of the vessel's so-called hull value. Now, war risk insurance could run into tens of millions of dollars for a single trip through the Hormuz Strait. Premiums have surged for ships seeking special cover to cross the strait, according to Robert Peters of UK maritime consultancy Ambrey, which has an insurance arm.

From: <https://www.thedailystar.net/business/global-economy/news/ship-insurers-juggle-war-risks-perilous-gulf-route-4138751>

66 WTO members adopt interim e-Com pact

March 30, 2026

- Sixty-six World Trade Organization (WTO) member countries, representing 70pc of global trade, have adopted a pathway to bring into force electronic commerce (e-Commerce) agreement through interim arrangements.
- The adoption to bring the agreement into force via interim arrangements took place on March 28 at the 14th WTO Ministerial Conference (MC14) in Yaoundé, Cameroon.

From: <https://www.thedailystar.net/business/economy/news/66-wto-members-adopt-interim-e-com-pact-4138656>

IMF agrees to unlock USD 1.2bn for Pakistan

March 30, 2026

- The International Monetary Fund (IMF) announced on Friday that it has reached a staff-level agreement with Pakistan to unlock a new USD 1.2bn package as part of its support programs for the country.
- The South Asian nation is one of the largest debtors to the IMF after Argentina and Ukraine.

From: <https://www.thedailystar.net/business/global-economy/news/imf-agrees-unlock-12b-pakistan-4138736>

Thai PM says reached deal with Iran for vessels to transit Hormuz Strait

March 30, 2026

- Thailand has reached an agreement with Iran to allow Thai oil vessels safe passage through the Strait of Hormuz, the Southeast Asian nation's Prime Minister said on Saturday.
- Iranian forces have effectively slowed shipping through the strait to a trickle during the Middle East war, which began late last month.

From: <https://www.thedailystar.net/business/global-economy/news/thai-pm-says-reached-deal-iran-vessels-transit-hormuz-strait-4138731>

Gold demand improves in India as prices ease

March 30, 2026

- Gold demand in India saw a slight uptick this week as softer bullion prices attracted some buyers, though many remained cautious and held off for further price drop, while premiums in China narrowed as physical demand slowed.
- Bullion dealers in India offered discounts of up to USD 61 per ounce over official domestic gold

prices this week, down from as much as USD 75 last week.

From: <https://www.thedailystar.net/business/global-economy/news/gold-demand-improves-india-prices-ease-4138691>

Banks ask India's RBI for 3 months to comply with FX position caps, sources say

March 30, 2026

- Lenders have urged the Indian central bank to grant three months for compliance with new foreign exchange position limits, noting that a quick implementation could trigger disorderly unwinding of positions and potential losses, six bankers told Reuters.
- The Reserve Bank of India said after the market close on Friday that banks must ensure that by April 10 their net open rupee positions in the onshore deliverable market do not exceed USD 100mn at the end of each business day.

From: <https://thefinancialexpress.com.bd/trade/banks-ask-indias-rbi-for-3-months-to-comply-with-fx-position-caps-sources-say>

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Morning Newsflash

Monday, 30 March, 2026

IDLC-SL Research



Research Team

Name	Designation	Email	Contact Number
Tanay Kumar Roy, CFA	Head of Equity Research	tanay@idlc.com	880 1708 46 95 80
Md. Fahad Been Ayub	Business Analyst	MdFahad@IDLC.com	880 1521 43 81 88
Mohammad Tashnim	Research Associate	mtashnim@idlc.com	880 1730 70 16 45
Zareen Binte Shahjahan	Research Associate	zareen@idlc.com	880 1708 46 95 95
Muntasir Mohammad	Analyst	muntasirm@idlc.com	

IDLC Securities Limited

DR Tower (4th Floor), 65/2/2 Bir Protik Gazi Golam Dastagir Road,

Purana Paltan, Dhaka - 1000

Tel: +8809609994352

Fax: +88029574366

E-mail: IDLCResearch@idlc.com