

PRESS RELEASE

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இலங்கை மத்திய வங்கி
CENTRAL BANK OF SRI LANKA

Issued By Economic Research Department

Date 27 February 2026

External Sector Performance – January 2026

TOTAL EXPORTS (Goods and Services)

USD 1,883 mn
7.1% ▲ in Jan 2026 (y-o-y)

Goods Exports
USD 1,149 mn
9.1% ▲ in Jan 2026 (y-o-y)

Services Exports
USD 734 mn
4.1% ▲ in Jan 2026 (y-o-y)

GOODS IMPORTS

USD 1,803 mn
1.0% ▲ in Jan 2026 (y-o-y)



TOURIST EARNINGS

USD 378 mn*
(Tourist arrivals: 277,327)
in Jan 2026

USD 401 mn
(Tourist arrivals: 252,761)
in Jan 2025

* Based on the revised survey results of Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority



MERCHANDISE TRADE DEFICIT

USD 655 mn
in Jan 2026

USD 733 mn
in Jan 2025



CURRENT ACCOUNT BALANCE

USD 370 mn
in Jan 2026



WORKERS' REMITTANCES **

USD 751 mn
in Jan 2026

USD 573 mn
in Jan 2025

** This may include other remittances, such as those received following Cyclone Ditwah



GROSS OFFICIAL RESERVES ***

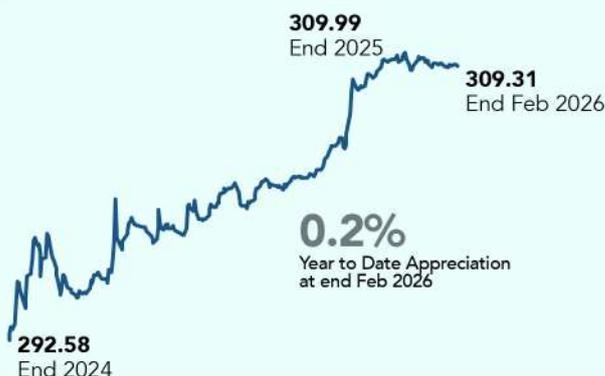
USD 6.8 bn
at end Jan 2026

Import Coverage
3.8 Months



*** Including the swap facility with the People's Bank of China

EXCHANGE RATE (LKR/USD)



EXTERNAL SECTOR PERFORMANCE SUMMARY

January 2026

- The external current account recorded a larger surplus in January 2026, compared with recent months as well as January 2025. This follows the estimated surplus of US\$ 1.7 billion (provisional) in 2025 and indicates continued improvement in external sector performance.
- The merchandise trade deficit narrowed on a year-on-year basis in January 2026, as export growth exceeded the growth in imports.
- Imports of vehicles, including both personal and commercial vehicles, amounted to US\$ 224 million during January 2026, compared to US\$ 301 million recorded in December 2025.
- However, the terms of trade deteriorated compared to January 2025, as import prices rose at a faster pace than export prices.
- The surplus in the services account marginally decreased in January 2026 on a year-on-year basis, reflecting a higher growth in services outflows compared to inflows to the services account. The increase in services outflows was mainly driven by higher expenditure on overseas travel.
- In January 2026, tourist arrivals recorded an increase on a year-on-year basis and surpassed the monthly level recorded in 2025. Tourist earnings¹ were estimated at US\$ 378 million in January 2026.
- Workers' remittances² amounted to US\$ 751 million in January 2026, recording a notable increase of 31.1 per cent from the same month of the previous year.
- In January 2026, foreign investments in the government securities market recorded a net inflow of US\$ 17 million. Meanwhile, foreign investments in the Colombo Stock Exchange (CSE), including both primary and secondary market transactions, recorded a net outflow of US\$ 22 million in January 2026.
- Gross official reserves (GOR), including the swap facility with the People's Bank of China (PBOC), recorded at US\$ 6.8 billion at end January 2026. The Central Bank remained a net purchaser foreign exchange from the domestic foreign exchange market during the month.
- As of end February 2026, the year to date appreciation of the Sri Lanka rupee against the US dollar was 0.2 per cent.

Detailed statistics are available in the Monthly External Sector Bulletin, and in the External Sector Statistics web pages in the CBSL website, which can be accessed through the following web links:

<https://www.cbsl.gov.lk/en/external-sector-bulletin>

<https://www.cbsl.gov.lk/en/statistics/statistical-tables/external-sector>

¹ Average spending per day is revised from August 2025 onwards based on survey results conducted by Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority.

² This may include other remittances, such as those received following Cyclone Ditwah.

Summary of External Sector Performance (a)

Category	Jan 2025 (USD mn)	Jan 2026 (USD mn)	Change (%)	2024 (USD mn)	2025 (USD mn)	Change (%)
Current Account Balance	99.8	369.7	270.6	1,205.7	1,733.4	43.8
Trade Balance	-732.7	-654.5		-6,069.4	-7,898.6	
Merchandise Exports	1,052.8	1,148.7	9.1	12,772.0	13,581.4	6.3
Merchandise Imports	1,785.5	1,803.3	1.0	18,841.4	21,479.9	14.0
Services Account (net)	418.3	406.4	-2.8	3,434.8	3,707.2	7.9
Services - Inflows	705.7	734.4	4.1	6,910.0	7,065.7	2.3
<i>of which,</i>						
Tourist Earnings (b)	400.7	378.3	-5.6	3,168.6	3,219.2	1.6
Sea and Air Transport Services	168.0	184.4	9.7	1,793.1	1,882.4	5.0
Computer and IT/BPO services	65.0	66.5	2.4	848.4	799.7	-5.7
Services - Outflows	287.4	328.0	14.1	3,475.2	3,358.5	-3.4
<i>of which,</i>						
Travel Abroad	52.4	133.4	154.5	755.4	828.6	9.7
Sea and Air Transport Services	112.0	71.6	-36.1	1,010.8	994.3	-1.6
Primary Income Account (net)	-143.0	-122.6		-2,599.0	-2,024.3	
Primary Income Account - Inflows	43.0	64.6	50.1	609.4	621.2	1.9
Primary Income Account - Outflows	186.1	187.2	0.6	3,208.4	2,645.5	-17.5
<i>of which,</i>						
Direct Investment related	79.0	65.4	-17.2	941.7	1,065.1	13.1
Portfolio Investment related	38.2	47.7	25.0	877.5	507.2	-42.2
Other Investment Interest	66.9	71.6	7.0	1,369.0	1,044.9	-23.7
Secondary Income Account (net)	557.2	740.4	32.9	6,439.3	7,949.1	23.4
<i>of which,</i>						
Workers' Remittances - Inflows ²	573.0	751.1	31.1	6,575.4	8,076.2	22.8
Personal Transfers - Outflows	16.0	10.8	-32.5	145.9	130.4	-10.6
Main Flows to the Financial Account						
Net Flows to the CSE (c)	-21.7	-21.9	1.0	33.0	-122.0	
Net Flows to the G-Sec. Market	34.0	16.6	-51.2	-178.9	247.9	
Change in Reserves (d)	-56.5	-6.2		1,729.8	702.8	

Sources: Central Bank of Sri Lanka (CBSL), Sri Lanka Customs (SLC), Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority (SLTDA), Colombo Stock Exchange (CSE)

(a) Provisional

(b) Tourist earnings are calculated based on tourist arrivals, average stay period and average spending per day. Average stay period changes monthly and is based on tourist immigration data. Average spending per day is revised from August 2025 onwards based on revised survey results conducted by SLTDA.

(c) Includes primary and secondary transactions

(d) Includes valuation changes that impact reserve asset position

² This may include other remittances, such as those received following Cyclone Ditwah.