

# Star BUSINESS



## 3 Bangladeshis on list of 100 Global Tech's Changemakers

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Sonia Bashir Kabir, Afeef Zaman and Morin Talukder, three Bangladeshi tech and start-up entrepreneurs, have been named in the Rest of World's (RoW) 100 Global Tech's Changemakers' list for their contribution to the technology sector amidst challenges.

The RoW is a global non-profit publication covering the impact of technology beyond the West.

From tech leaders, innovators and investors to activists, the RoW identified those people outside Silicon Valley and the West whose efforts directly impact countries where the majority of the world's population lives.

**From tech leaders, innovators and investors to activists, the RoW identified these people outside Silicon Valley and the West**

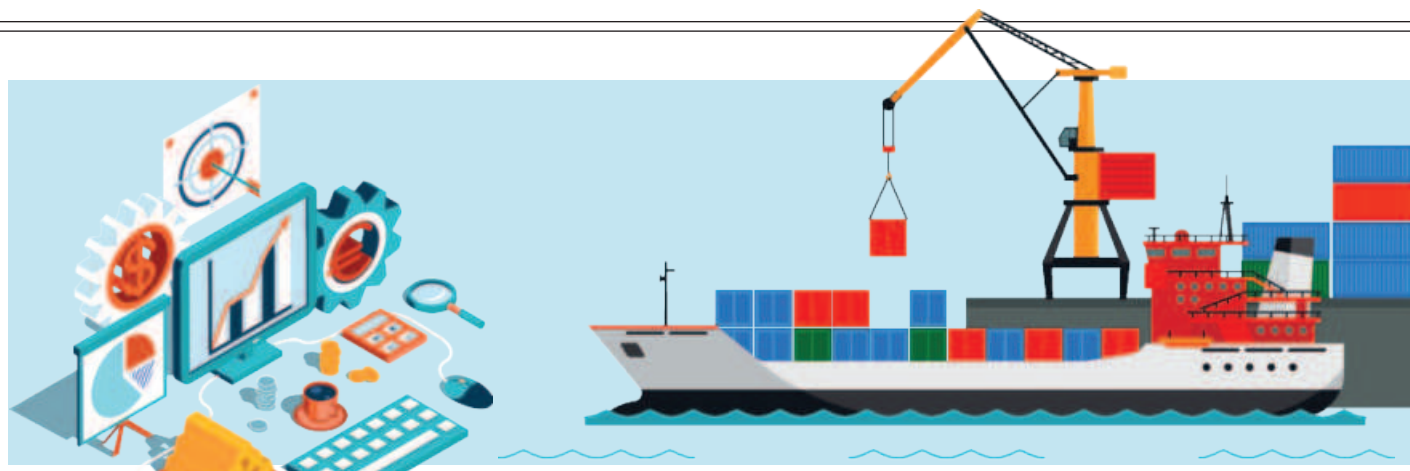
Earlier this year, it set out to find 100 of the most influential, innovative and trailblazing personalities in fintech, e-commerce, policy, digital infrastructure, and a range of other sectors that intersect with and influence technology. "To put together the list, our reporters and editors researched individuals in each regional ecosystem who have made an outsized contribution to their sectors while facing logistical, financial, and political challenges that come with building something groundbreaking in those communities," said the RoW.

Among the three, Sonia Bashir Kabir is the founder and managing director of SBK Tech Ventures, a Bangladesh-focused venture capital fund which invests in startups that support the digital development of rural areas.

The SBK's portfolio includes Dmoney, Solshare, and Praava Health.

Previously, as country manager of Microsoft Bangladesh, Sonia partnered with

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## ECONOMIC INDICATORS

<b>Export</b> \$43.34b in July-April, rises 35.14%	<b>Import</b> \$61.5b in July-March, rises 44%	<b>Remittance</b> \$15.3b in July-March, falls 21.56%	<b>Trade deficit</b> \$24.9b as of March, all time high	<b>Forex reserve</b> \$41.9b as of May 11	<b>Inflation</b> 6.22% in March, a 17-month high
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### RISKS AHEAD

- Exports might be impacted
- Remittance is feared to come down
- Inflation may go up further for high import costs

### RECOMMENDATIONS

- Increase competitiveness of exports
- Speed up trade facilitation
- Incentivise export
- Rationalise foreign exchange rate
- Focus on bilateral trade
- Manage public expenditure more efficiently

# RENEWED THREATS for economy as global recession looms

AHSAN HABIB and MD FAZLUR RAHMAN

At the beginning of 2022, Bangladesh's economy seemed to be on course to grow at a faster clip buoyed by plummeting coronavirus infections, rebound in economic activities and the reopening of global economies.

But things began worsening in late February following the Russian invasion of Ukraine. Although neither Russia nor Ukraine is a large export destination or sourcing nation for Bangladesh, they are vital to the countries on which the country relies to drive its growth.

But as the Ukraine war, Covid-19 flare-ups in China, rising inflationary pressures, and continued disruptions in the global supply chain have raised the spectre of recession globally, Bangladesh might not escape unscathed if a global economic downturn hits.

With inflation at the highest level in 40 years and the central bank of the US taking increasingly aggressive action to cool consumer demand and prices, the risk of a global recession is on the rise,

according to Morgan Stanley economists.

"We live in the most chaotic, hard-to-predict macroeconomic times in decades. The ingredients for a global recession are on the table."



Bank of America and Deutsche Bank are among the Wall Street firms predicting a recession in the next two years, largely because of the monetary policy tightening.

Wall Street tumbled toward its lowest point in more than a year on Monday amid concerns about rising interest rates, as well as a slowdown in China.

"For the moment, the odds of a recession in Europe, the US, and China are significant and increasing," wrote Kenneth

Rogoff, professor of economics and public policy at Harvard University and a former chief economist of the International Monetary Fund, on April 26.

Bangladesh did not face a recession during the global financial crisis of 2007 and

are now squeezing the reserves as it fell to \$41.9 billion on May 11. The reserves are expected to fall further as the Bangladesh Bank's attempts to rein in international purchases have failed to yield any significant results.

Remittance, the cheapest form of US dollars for Bangladesh, dipped 21.56 per cent in the first nine months of the current fiscal year.

The exchange rate of the taka has remained volatile even though the Bangladesh Bank has depreciated the currency against US dollars four times this year. In a major blow to the households, inflation rose to 6.22 per cent in March, a 17-month high.

The only encouraging macroeconomic indicator is export earnings have been stellar. Between July and April, shipments rose 35.14 per cent.

The government is worried about the worsening situation and it was evident on Wednesday when it decided to stop foreign trips of its officials and postponed the implementation of less important projects.

This was not the first such

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## Bangladesh 7th highest remittance recipient: WB

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Bangladesh has retained its position as the recipient of the seventh highest amount of money transferred by migrant workers among 10 top recipient nations in 2021.

This year, however, the country may continue to experience a meagre growth in remittance inflow of only 2 per cent this year.

The World Bank revealed the projection in a report titled "Migration and Development Brief" published on Tuesday.

The top six remittance recipient countries ahead of Bangladesh are India, Mexico (which moved up to replace China in second position), China, the Philippines, Egypt and Pakistan.

However, among the eight South Asian nations, Bangladesh laid claim to the 3rd highest remittance inflow after India and Pakistan.

Remittance inflow to Bangladesh increased by only 2.2 per cent in 2021 to \$22 billion.

According to the report, the remittance growth was powered mainly by government incentives and support from migrants for their families back home.

In Bangladesh, except for a 24 per cent spike in March 2022 marking the start of the holy month of Ramadan, monthly remittance growth has been decreasing over the past eight months, mentioned the report.

The global lender, in the report, anticipated a 2 per cent remittance growth in Bangladesh in 2022.

South Asia's performance in remittance inflows in 2021 was spearheaded by India and Pakistan.

After a lull in 2020, remittance flows to India grew at 8 per cent in 2021 to \$89 billion while in Pakistan it increased at an impressive 20 per cent in 2021 to \$31 billion.

The report cited the main drivers for the rise in remittances from the US to South Asia in 2021.

Among them were better-than-expected economic recovery, generous fiscal stimulus measures, vaccine availability and record-high employment rates complemented with wage hikes.

While migration dynamics in the Middle East,

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STOCKS	
DSEX ▼	CASPI ▼
0.40%	0.41%
6,565.47	19,248.61

COMMODITIES	
Gold ▲	Oil ▲
\$1,839.77	\$106.66
(per ounce)	(per barrel)

ASIAN MARKETS			
MUMBAI	TOKYO	SINGAPORE	SHANGHAI
▼ 2.14%	▼ 1.77%	▼ 1.89%	▼ 0.12%
52,930.31	25,748.72	3,165.18	3,054.99

## Labour law to be amended by this year

Secretary says

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The government has formed two committees which will bring amendments to the labour law by December 31 this year, said a top government official yesterday.

"It will be a good law...it will be a better law that will help all of us to maintain decent work in the industrial sectors," said Md Ehsan E. Elahi, secretary to the labour and employment ministry.

He made the comments at a daylong programme titled "First Industrial Safety Forum in Bangladesh" jointly organised by the Center for Policy Dialogue (CPD) and International Labour Organization (ILO) at Dhaka Sheraton Hotel.

Elahi also said the Department of Inspection for Factories and Establishments has already gone through around 5,200 entities to see if appropriate labour safety initiatives were in place.

"We have already formed 12 industrial safety units...focusing non-readymade garment factories. They have set their target to inspect around 45,000 establishments," he said.

"If needed, a policy would be formulated to improve industrial safety for non-RMG sectors...We are very much concerned about non-RMG and informal sectors," he said.

"We are working for the sectors...on how to establish decent workplaces and how to establish labour rights," he said.

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A farmer weeds his jute plantation in Boutipara village of Faridpur's Nagarkanda upazila. Jute is a cash crop grown in the rainy season, sown from March to May and harvested from June to September. Yields are a little less than 12 bales per hectare. The natural fibre sold for around Tk 3,000 per maund (37 kilogrammes) in mid-December last year. In the ongoing fiscal year, some 6.43 lakh hectares of land have been cultivated whereas it was 6.81 lakh hectares in the preceding year. The photo was taken on Monday.

PHOTO: SUZIT KUMAR DAS

## EDIBLE OIL 8 companies sued for market manipulation

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The Bangladesh Competition Commission filed cases against eight edible oil companies on Wednesday for manipulating the key cooking ingredient's local production and supply.

The companies are: City Edible Oil Limited (Teer), Bangladesh Edible Oil Limited (Rupchanda), Meghna and United Edible Oils Refinery Limited (Fresh), Bashundhara Oil Refinery Mill (Bashundhara), Shabnam Vegetable Oil Industries Limited (Pusti), S Alam Super Edible Oil Company Limited (S Alam), Prime Edible Oil Limited (Prime) and Globe Edible Oil Limited (Royal Chef).

The commission also served notices to the companies asking them to participate in the hearing of their cases.

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