



Nityananda cycles around 15 kilometres early in the morning every day to Khulna city to sell fish, such as tilapia and spotted snakehead (taki), which he collects from fishermen in different surrounding villages. The photo was taken in Bil Pabla area on Khulna City Bypass Road recently.

PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

## Garment tech, accessories shows begin in Dhaka

STAR BUSINESS DESK

The 22nd edition of the "Garment Technology Tradeshow in Bangladesh" (GTB 2025) concurrent with the 14th edition of the "Garment Accessories & Packaging Tradeshow 2025" (GAP Expo 2025) kicked off at the International Convention City Bashundhara (ICCB) in Dhaka yesterday.

The tradeshow is open to business visitors from 11 am to 7 pm.

Sk Bashir Uddin, adviser to the Ministry of Commerce and the Ministry of Textile and Jute, inaugurated the exhibitions as the chief guest, according to a press release.

PARK Young Sik, South Korean ambassador to Bangladesh, attended the inaugural programme as the guest of honour.

More than 500 exhibitors from 25 countries participated in this show, which was spread over 8 halls. They showcased their products in technology, machinery, garment accessories, packaging, allied products, and spares.

ASK Tradeshows & Exhibitions Pvt Limited and the Bangladesh Garment Accessories & Packaging Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGAPMEA) jointly organise the four-day expos, which will end on January 11.

The readymade garment (RMG) sector in Bangladesh is optimistic about a promising 2025 following a challenging 2024 that tested its resilience, the press release added.

Industry insiders point to signs of recovery in the global retail market as Western buyers return, aided by easing inflation in key markets like Europe and America.

Despite a tumultuous year marked by political upheaval and labour unrest, the RMG sector achieved a 6.23 percent increase in export earnings. This growth reflects resilience amid significant hurdles.

Tipu Sultan Bhuiyan, managing director of ASK Trade & Exhibitions, an organiser of the show, said, "In this backdrop, we notice that the orders have picked up and capacities are being utilised well. Another trend is the expansion and diversification into non cotton garments, especially sportswear. This increases the need for specialised machinery which GTB will be showcasing."



## Telecom stakeholders

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Bangladesh Mobile Phone Consumers' Association President Mohiuddin Ahmed views the NBR's actions as a reflection of a troubling authoritarian approach.

"Such reckless decisions bear the hallmarks of a bygone fascist regime. With 48 percent of the population still without internet access, this excessive taxation will only exacerbate the digital divide," he said.

Unless the government abandons this irrational and oppressive policy, citizens and consumer groups will have no choice but to take to the streets, Ahmed added.

"It is really unfortunate to see that the taxation regime for the telecom sector continues to defy rational thinking," Robi Chief Corporate and Regulatory Officer Shahed Alam said.

While there are sustained calls for price reductions, the prospect of additional tax burdens on consumers sends a contradictory and confusing message, he said.

"Time and again, we have seen that increasing consumer tax burdens in the telecom sector leads to reduced spending by mobile phone users.

This, in turn, negatively impacts the financial health of mobile phone operators and decreases government revenue."

While mobile operators face financial struggles, expectations regarding service quality continue to rise, he said.

"How can operators invest in next-generation networks if we are being systematically weakened by a taxation regime that clearly lacks purpose and direction?" he questioned.

## Modi looks

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The rupee has hit multiple lows in the past few weeks and 2024 was its seventh consecutive year of decline, mostly due to a surging dollar. On Wednesday, it hit a fresh all-time low.

India needs to "seriously implement tariff rationalisation to help embed itself more deeply into global value chains," Kathuria, also an Adjunct Professor at Georgetown University, said.

This could include tariff cuts aimed at pre-emptively heading off punitive levies from a Trump White House.

## Don't transplant Boro

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The dry-season Boro, which accounts for roughly 55 percent of total annual rice production, is cultivated between December and January and harvested mainly in May.

In its advisory, the Bangladesh Agro-Meteorological Information Service (BAMIS), a project under the DAE, suggested that farmers use transparent polythene to cover the seedlings for protection from fog if sunlight is visible during the day.

Besides, water should be removed from the fields every morning during the cold spell. BAMIS advises using tube well water in a way that keeps the seedlings above the water level.

The DAE said that seedlings

may suffer from blight diseases -- a bacterial disease that can severely damage crops.

It suggests using fungicide and spraying to control the disease.

The agency said that unfavourable weather may also cause pest attacks on potatoes, one of the most widely consumed vegetables, and mustard, the main oilseed crop in Bangladesh.

In its weather forecast yesterday, the Bangladesh Meteorological Department said that weather across the country is likely to remain mainly dry with temporary partly cloudy skies.

It said that moderate to dense fog may occur across the country from midnight to morning and may continue until tomorrow.

## NBR doubles tax to 20%

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This also aligns with conditions set by the IMF as part of its ongoing \$4.7 billion loan programme for Bangladesh.

The IMF has long been pushing for reforms to Bangladesh's tax system, including rationalising exemptions, improving compliance, and separating tax policy from administration.

Bangladesh has one of the lowest tax-to-GDP ratios globally, with widespread tax benefits contributing to frequent collection shortfalls.

In the July-November period of FY25, income tax receipts fell by 0.94 percent year-on-year to Tk 40,293 crore.

In FY25, the government provided Tk 1.63 lakh crore in tax benefits, also known as tax expenditures.

In a latest report on direct tax expenditure, the revenue board said the direct tax expenditure, a tax subsidy that includes rebates, exemptions, and reduced rates offered by the NBR, fell 8 percent year-on-year to Tk 1.15 lakh crore in fiscal year 2021-22.