

Star BUSINESS



BB unearths fresh irregularities in Islami Bank

MD MEHEDI HASAN

The Bangladesh Bank (BB) has unearthed fresh loan irregularities at Islami Bank Bangladesh, even after the board of directors was restructured following the fall of the Sheikh Hasina-led government in August last year.

The banking regulator found the involvement of Md Abdul Jalil, independent director and executive committee chairman of the bank, in these loan irregularities.

After detecting the rule violations, the central bank on January 12 asked the chairman of the bank to provide an explanation within five working days.

LOAN IRREGULARITIES

Prior approval from the central bank is now mandatory for Islami Bank to disburse loans of over Tk 5 crore, according to a central bank inspection report.

However, the commercial lender's executive committee, on December 10 last year, approved a loan rescheduling facility of Tk 210 crore and a fresh loan of Tk 40 crore as working capital for TRU Fabrics Ltd, said the report.

The probe report reviewed a relevant executive committee memo. It showed that the rescheduling and fresh proposals were presented before the bank's executive committee without any approval from the central bank.

Md Abdul Jalil, chairman of the executive committee, is liable for the irregularities, the report stated.



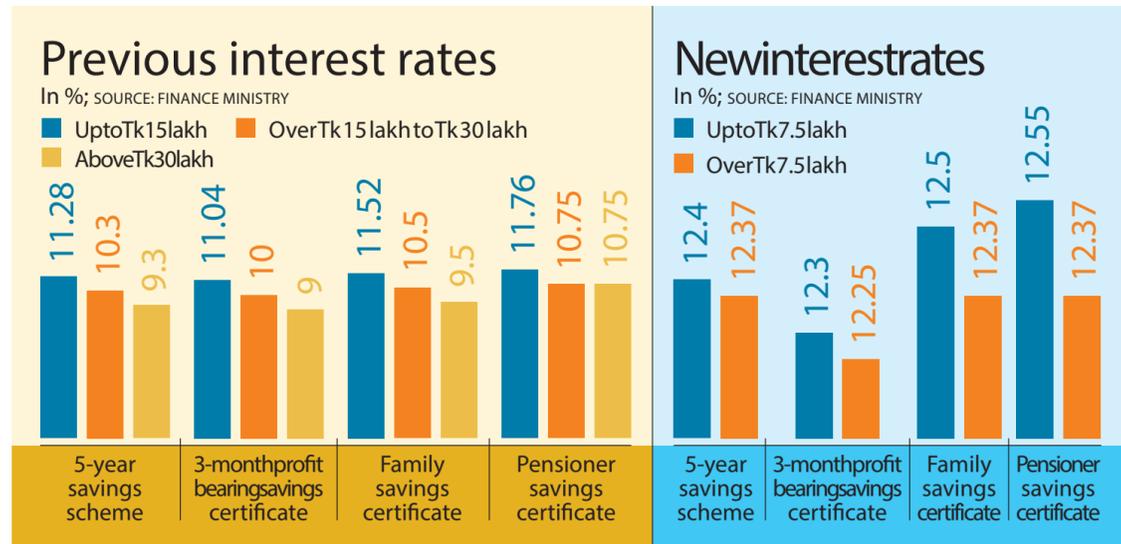
He worked as a finance advisor at TRU Fabrics Ltd and its associate company, Unifill Textile Mills Ltd, for more than six years before joining the bank as a board member, as per the BB probe.

The Shariah-based bank cancelled both the loan rescheduling and loan approvals on December 23 last year.

However, the fresh fund was allowed to be withdrawn between December 10 and December 26, which is a serious irregularity, according to the BB inspection report.

READ MORE ON B3

Govt raises savings rates to cool inflation, woo investors



REJAU KARIM BYRON and AHSAN HABIB

The interim government has increased interest rates on various national savings certificates to upwards of 12 percent in an effort to make these instruments more attractive to savers and to cool inflation.

The finance ministry issued a circular yesterday regarding the interest rate hike on savings tools. The new rates will be effective from January 1, according to the circular.

the rate applicable during their investment period.

Additionally, a premium of up to 50 basis points will be added to the weighted average treasury bond interest rates when setting savings certificate rates, according to a finance ministry source.

The savings instruments include the five-year Bangladesh savings certificate, the three-monthly profit-bearing Sanchayapatra, the five-year family savings certificate and the

loan repayment burden.

On the other hand, he said, it will make it more difficult for the private sector to get loans from the banking sector.

"People may keep their funds in the banking sector. But it may not flow to private players. Rather, it will flow to the government," Rahman said.

"As the non-bank financial institutions [NBFIs] were offering higher interest rates, people earlier were not encouraged to invest funds in the savings tools," he said.

The economist noted that the government has taken this decision as an inflation control measure, which aligns with its contractionary monetary policy.

At the same time, it will also provide the government with more liquidity to cover its expenditures, he added.

For the family savings instrument, the new interest rates will range from 12.5 percent to 12.37 percent while the existing interest rates range from 11.5 percent to 9.5 percent.

Similarly, the interest rates on the pensioners' scheme will be 12.55 percent to 12.37 percent under the new rates. At present, these rates range from 11.76 percent to 9.75 percent.

Meanwhile, interest rates on other savings instruments – the wage earners' bond, the US dollar investment bond and the US dollar premium bond – will remain unchanged.

The interest rate on post office term deposits ranges from 12.30 percent to 12.25 percent.

GOVT IN SEARCH OF MONEY

During the July-September period of fiscal 2024-25, the total sale of national savings tools amounted to Tk 14,991.95 crore, which was 30.77 percent lower compared to the same period of previous year.

During the first quarter of FY25, total

READ MORE ON B3

STOCKS	
DSEX ▼	CASPI ▲
0.16%	0.03%
5,142.52	14,389.82

COMMODITIES	
Gold ▲	Oil ▼
\$2,686.55	\$77.58
(per ounce)	(per barrel)

ASIAN MARKETS			
MUMBAI	TOKYO	SINGAPORE	SHANGHAI
▲ 0.30%	▼ 0.08%	▼ 0.43%	▼ 0.43%
76,732.47	38,444.58	3,772.58	3,227.12

NBR to reduce VAT on restaurants

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

The National Board of Revenue (NBR) is set to revise the value-added tax (VAT) on restaurants, reducing it from the standard rate of 15 percent.

The tax administration informed the Bangladesh Restaurant Owners Association of the decision in a letter, though it did not specify the new rate.

The NBR stated that the decision was made after reviewing a letter sent earlier by the association.

"Under the circumstances, your cooperation is sought for increased revenue collection and maintaining peace and stability," the letter said.

This move follows mounting pressure from restaurant owners, who had threatened to strike indefinitely in response to the increased VAT.

The NBR's decision comes less than a week after the interim government issued an ordinance raising VAT and Supplementary Duty on nearly 100 goods and services, including restaurants and non-AC hotels.

Lack of marine insurance coverage, awareness costing industry: expert

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

The maritime industry in Bangladesh is facing challenges due to outdated regulatory frameworks, limited access to specialised insurance products, and a lack of awareness among its stakeholders about the importance of comprehensive marine insurance coverage.

Addressing these gaps requires a concerted effort by policymakers, industry leaders, and legal professionals, according to Justice Khazir Ahmed Choudhury of the High Court Division of the country's Supreme Court.

He made this comment at a seminar on "Contemporary Issues of Marine Insurance Law" at the CIRDP auditorium in Dhaka yesterday.

The event was organised by the Bangladesh Maritime Law Society (BMLS), with the support of the Maritime Anti-Corruption Network (MACN) and MCLaw Services Ltd.

Choudhury emphasised that education and awareness are key, as shipowners, operators,



One of the two ships of Bangladesh Shipping Corporation that were damaged by fire. Marine insurance law is critical for mitigating maritime risks, experts said.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

and relevant policymakers must have the tools and knowledge to effectively navigate the challenges of modern maritime operations.

"As we deliberate on the complexities of marine insurance today, let us not lose sight of the broader goal: creating a resilient and sustainable maritime

industry," he said.

This requires not only robust legal and regulatory frameworks but also the active engagement of all stakeholders, Choudhury added.

He pointed out that the country's reliance on maritime

READ MORE ON B3

Businesses express frustration for red tape, VAT hike

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Businesspeople yesterday expressed frustration over bureaucratic red tape, increasing value added tax (VAT), and a recent proposal to raise gas prices, stating that these are barriers to fresh investment.

They alleged that the government did not hold any discussions with stakeholders before raising VAT rates and proposing higher energy prices, nor did it conduct any cost-benefit analysis.

Everyone wants to exploit businesspeople, claimed AK Azad, a former president of the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry.

Businesspeople alleged that the government did not hold any discussions with stakeholders before raising VAT rates and proposing higher energy prices

Some 40 percent of business expenses are behind bribes. "No one comes to move files a little quicker... There is no one to advocate for us. So, who will invest in this country?" he said.

Azad was addressing a seminar on the country's investment prospects and challenges at Economic Reporters Forum (ERF) in Dhaka.

The country is not attracting new investments due to policy inconsistencies. But Bangladesh has potential and businesses should be allowed to conveniently conduct trade, he said.

Speaking about the recent VAT and gas price hikes, Azad emphasised the need for careful planning.

READ MORE ON B3

€14.45m deals signed with Germany for sustainability

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Bangladesh and Germany signed three new technical cooperation agreements yesterday.

The deals, valued at €14.45 million, focus on transforming the textile sector, enhancing climate adaptation efforts, and advancing sustainable electric mobility, according to a press release.

Md Shahriar Kader Siddiky, secretary of the Economic Relations Division (ERD), and Andreas Kuck, country director of GIZ Bangladesh, signed the agreements, highlighting the shared commitment of both nations to sustainable growth.

The agreement on the "Programme for Sustainability in the Textile Sector II (STILE-II)", with funding of €7.3 million under the Ministry of Commerce, aims to modernise Bangladesh's textile and ready-made garment (RMG) industries, aligning them with EU sustainability standards.

Key outcomes include policy alignment, strengthened sectoral instruments, and the promotion of gender equality.

The "Localisation of National Climate Adaptation Targets (LOCAT)" deal, backed by €3 million, will help the Local Government Division enhance institutional capacities for urban climate action plans aligned with the National Adaptation Plan. Outputs include gender-responsive tools and a learning framework for city-level climate strategies.

The "Transition to Sustainable E-Mobility (Trans2SMo)" deal will enable the Power Division to utilise €4.15 million to promote electric mobility.

Southeast Bank signs deal with MetLife for group insurance

STAR BUSINESS DESK

Southeast Bank PLC recently signed an agreement with MetLife Bangladesh to provide comprehensive group insurance coverage for its employees and their dependents.

Nuruddin Md Sadeque Hossain, managing director of the bank, and Ala Ahmad, chief executive officer of the life insurer, signed the deal at the bank's head office in the capital's Banglamotor, according to a press release.

Hossain stated that the long-anticipated group insurance facility will ensure affordable, quality treatment for employees and their dependents, protect against unexpected medical costs, and provide financial security and peace of mind.

As part of the bank's 30th anniversary celebrations in 2025, with the motto "A Journey of Maturity, Stability, and Consolidation," the insurance will inspire employees to work with greater devotion, contributing to the bank's continued success, he added.

Ahmad said, "By providing insurance coverage to employees and their family members, Southeast Bank has added another significant milestone to its successful journey of 30 years."

The coverage includes a "Group Life Insurance" facility for 3,100 permanent employees and sub-staff of the bank, covering natural death, permanent total disability, permanent partial disability, and double the coverage amount in the case of accidental death.



Ala Ahmad, chief executive officer of MetLife Bangladesh, and Nuruddin Md Sadeque Hossain, managing director of Southeast Bank, pose for photographs after signing the agreement at the latter's head office in the capital's Banglamotor. PHOTO: SOUTHEAST BANK

Pubali Bank gets new DMD

STAR BUSINESS DESK



Pubali Bank PLC has promoted Sultana Sarifun Nahar to the post of deputy managing director (DMD).

Nahar is the first woman to hold this position, marking a significant milestone in the history of the bank, according to a press release.

Before her appointment as DMD, she was serving the bank as the general manager and head of the principal branch.

She began her career as a lecturer in economics and also served as an examiner for the Dhaka Education Board. Nahar later embarked on her banking career at Pubali Bank as a probationary senior officer in 1997.

She has enriched her expertise through successful roles in various departments.

She demonstrated her professional excellence as a manager at several key branches, including three corporate branches. As the regional head of the Dhaka central region, she played a pivotal role in enhancing the quality of banking services across branches.

She obtained her master's degree from Eden Mohila College.

US deficit tops \$700b to hit record in Oct-Dec

AFP, Washington

The US budget deficit widened to a new record in the October to December period, according to Treasury Department data released Tuesday, as spending grew while tax revenue slipped.

The expansion took the deficit to \$711 billion in the first three months of the government's fiscal year.

This was a 39 percent increase from \$510 billion in the same period a year ago, the department added.

In particular, spending rose by 11 percent to a fresh record as well, while revenues crept down, said the Treasury.

Outlays reached 1.8 trillion for the three-month period, a Treasury official told reporters.



Waliul Islam, chairman of SMC and SMC Enterprises, speaks at a press meeting held at its head office in Dhaka yesterday. Toslim Uddin Khan, managing director and CEO of SMC, and Saif Nasir, managing director of SMC Enterprises, were present. PHOTO: SMC

SMC unveils logo for 50th anniversary

STAR BUSINESS DESK

Social Marketing Company (SMC) unveiled a logo for its 50th anniversary, which will be celebrated on January 25.

Waliul Islam, chairman of SMC and SMC Enterprises Limited, revealed the logo at a press meeting held at the company's head office in Dhaka yesterday, according to a press release.

Islam attributed SMC's success to strong institutional governance, strategic planning, dedicated leadership, and the unwavering support of the government and development partners.

He expressed optimism for the future,

stating that SMC will continue expanding its programmes to enhance the quality of life for women, children, and families in Bangladesh.

During the briefing, Toslim Uddin Khan, managing director and CEO of SMC, highlighted SMC's milestone of completing five decades of impactful contributions to Bangladesh's health sector.

He emphasised that this achievement reflects the organisation's relentless dedication to improving the nation's health. Khan extended heartfelt gratitude to the government, USAID, media professionals, well-wishers, and consumers of SMC's products and services.

Mutual Trust Bank joins Dhaka Travel Mart

STAR BUSINESS DESK

Mutual Trust Bank PLC (MTB) recently signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with The Bangladesh Monitor to become the banking partner for the 20th edition of the international tourism fair "Dhaka Travel Mart 2025".

Md Rozar Ibna Azad, Head of Brand at MTB, and Farhad Kamal, Managing Editor of The Bangladesh Monitor, signed the MoU at the latter's office in Dhaka, according to a press release.

Organised by The Bangladesh Monitor, the premier travel and tourism publication of the country, the three-day fair will be held at the Pan Pacific Sonargaon Dhaka from February 6-8 this year.

Under the agreement, MTB will provide full support to The Bangladesh Monitor in organising and promoting the fair both domestically and internationally. MTB will also promote its card and travel products during the fair and announce special offers for visitors.

This year, more than 45 public and private organisations, including national tourism organisations, airlines, tour operators, hotels and resorts, travel agencies, and financial institutions, from eight countries will participate and showcase their products and services in the event.

Kazi Wahidul Alam, editor of The Bangladesh Monitor, was also present at the signing ceremony.



Farhad Kamal, managing editor of The Bangladesh Monitor, and Md Rozar Ibna Azad, head of brand at Mutual Trust Bank, shake hands and exchange signed documents of a memorandum of understanding at the former's office in Dhaka recently. PHOTO: TRIUNE GROUP

PRICES OF KEY ESSENTIALS IN DHAKA CITY			
	PRICE (JAN 15, 2024)	% CHANGES FROM A MONTH AGO	% CHANGE FROM A YEAR AGO
Fine rice (kg)	Tk 70-Tk 84	4.05 ↑	12.41 ↑
Coarse rice (kg)	Tk 54-Tk 58	6.67 ↑	9.80 ↑
Loose flour (kg)	Tk 40-Tk 45	0	-10.53 ↓
Lentil (kg)	Tk 105-Tk 110	0	0
Soybean (litre)	Tk 164-Tk 166	.61 ↑	4.76 ↑
Potato (kg)	Tk 30-Tk 50	-44.83 ↓	-27.27 ↓
Onion (kg)	Tk 50-Tk 70	-41.46 ↓	-25.00 ↓
Egg (4 pcs)	Tk 44-Tk 50	-3.09 ↓	8.05 ↑

SOURCE: TCB

GOVERNMENT OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF BANGLADESH
Office of the Executive Engineer, RHD
Road Division, Barishal.
Tel: 02-478831254
e-mail: eebar@rhd.gov.bd

Memo No. 35.01.0651.403.07.019.24-236 Dated: - 14.01.2025

Invitation for e-Tender (LTM)

e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for the works mentioned in the table below:-

Invitation Reference No.	23/e-GP/LTM/BRD/PMP/2024-2025
Tender ID	1062990
Name of Works	Construction of Rigid Pavement at Ch. 170+662 to 170+714 near Sahid Abdur Rab Serniabat Bridge Toll Plaza (Dopdopia Bridge) of Dhaka (Jatrabari)-Mawa-Bhanga-Barishal-Patuaakhali Road (N-8) under Road Division Barishal during the fiscal year 2024-25.
Qualification Criteria	As Stated in Tender Notice & Tender Data Sheet (TDS) of the Tender Document.
Tender Document Price	Tk. 1,000.00 (one thousand) only.
Tender security Amount	Tk. 1,20,000.00 (one lakh twenty thousand) only.
Tender Document last selling	Date: 28 January 2025, Time: 17:00
Last Date and Time for Tender Security Submission	Date: 29 January 2025, Time: 11:00
Tender Closing Date and Time	Date: 29 January 2025, Time: 12:00
Tender Opening Date and Time	Date: 29 January 2025, Time: 12:00

- This is an online tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted.
- To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required.
- The fees for downloading the e-Tender Documents from the National e-GP System Portal have to be deposited online through any registered Bank branch.
- Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).

(Md. Nazmul Islam)
ID No. 602232
Executive Engineer, RHD
Road Division, Barishal.

GD-152

AB Bank provides financial aid thru 'Shampurna' insurance benefit

STAR BUSINESS DESK

AB Bank PLC recently provided financial support of Tk 50,000 to the family member of a "Shampurna" account holder under the life insurance coverage provided by GD Assist Limited.

Syed Mizanur Rahman, Acting Managing Director of the bank, handed over a cheque to the family member of the bank's "Shampurna" account holder at its head office in Dhaka, according to a press release.

"Shampurna" is a specialised savings account for women, offering an attractive interest rate along with complimentary life insurance.

This account is designed to ensure financial security for female customers and their families during unexpected life events.

Syed Moynuddin Ahmed, Managing Director of GD Assist Limited, a subsidiary of Green Delta Insurance, and Reazul Islam, additional managing director of the bank, along with senior officials from both organisations, were also present.



Syed Mizanur Rahman, acting managing director of AB Bank, hands over a cheque to the family member of the bank's "Shampurna" account holder at its head office in Dhaka recently. PHOTO: AB BANK

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Road Transport And Highways Division
Bangladesh Road Transport Corporation (BRTC)
21, Rajuk Avenue, Dhaka-1000
www.brtc.gov.bd

Ref. No. 35.04.0000.018.00.251.2021/32, Date: 15/01/2025

e-Tender Notice (LTM)

e-Tender is invited in the e-GP System Portal for the procurement of the following works:

SL No.	Tender ID	Description of works	Tender document selling date & time	Tender proposal closing & opening date & time
1	1061817	Some Renovation Works at HBB Yard, Drain, HBB Road & Canteen Repair BRTC ICWS Gazipur.	12-Jan-2025, 12:00am to 26-Jan-2025, 12:00am	26-Jan-2025, 12:20pm

These are the online tender where only e-Tender will be accepted through National e-GP Portal <https://www.eprocure.gov.bd> and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP System Portal is required. The fees for downloading the e-Tender documents from the National e-GP System Portal have to be deposited online through any registered banks branches.

Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and e-GP help desk (<https://www.eprocure.gov.bd/HelpDesk.jsp>).

Major Mohammad Jahangir Hossain Azad
General Manager (Technical)
BRTC



Majedur made CEO of BIAC

STAR BUSINESS DESK
KAM Majedur Rahman, a seasoned banker and experienced capital market professional, has been appointed as chief executive officer of Bangladesh International Arbitration Centre (BIAC). Prior to joining BIAC, Rahman was the Group CEO of AK Khan & Company, and served as managing director of Dhaka Stock Exchange (DSE), managing director and CEO of Premier Bank, said a press release. Currently, Rahman serves as an independent director and chairman of Maldives Islamic Bank in the Maldives, a sponsor director of Financial Excellence (FinExcel), and vice-chairman of Valor Bangladesh.

US remains top country in credit card spending by Bangladeshis

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

The USA has been the top country in terms of international spending by Bangladeshi cardholders for the fifth consecutive month until November. The North American country replaced India in July last year when Bangladesh faced deadly student protests over public job quotas, which subsequently toppled the Sheikh Hasina government in early August. Since then, it has remained the top country for international spending by Bangladesh's credit cardholders, according to the Bangladesh Bank's (BB) monthly report on domestic and international usage of credit cards. In November 2024, the USA accounted for 15.87 percent of the total Tk 431 crore spent by holders of Bangladesh's credit cards in foreign countries. Spending in India, where thousands of Bangladeshi people visit for medical treatment, business, and tourism, was the second-highest in terms of international spending through credit cards in November. In October, spending through credit cards issued by banks in Bangladesh was the second highest in Thailand. The central bank reported that



overall transactions through credit cards in domestic and international markets declined in November compared to the previous month. Transactions within Bangladesh fell by 2.55 percent to Tk 2,793 crore in November from Tk 2,866 crore in October. Similarly, transactions outside the country stood at Tk 431 crore in November, down 13.5 percent from the previous month, according to the Bangladesh Bank, which prepared the report using data from 44 banks and one non-banking financial institution. The data indicates a mixed spending pattern across different sectors.

Domestic spending at department stores fell to Tk 1,333 crore in November from Tk 1,400 crore a month ago. The Bangladesh Bank also noted that cash withdrawals and transportation expenses experienced slight increases. Internationally, department stores continued to dominate spending, contributing to 29 percent of total transactions abroad. Based on the data, it can be concluded that Bangladeshi credit cardholders conducted approximately 2.13 times more transactions outside the country compared to foreign nationals within Bangladesh in November 2024, the Bangladesh Bank reported.

BSC to sell two fire-damaged ships as scrap at Tk 50cr

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

The Bangladesh Shipping Corporation (BSC) has decided to dispose of its two fire-damaged oil tankers, "Banglar Shourabh" and "Banglar Jyoti", for Tk 50.56 crore, including value-added tax (VAT) and taxes. The amount was offered by Chattogram-based shipbreaker Master & Brothers, the highest bidder in an international tender. The decision was made at the 323rd (special) meeting of the BSC Board of Directors, held at the Shipping Ministry on Tuesday. BSC issued an international tender in this regard on December 5 last year, with January 6 of 2025 as the last date for submission. BSC Managing Director Commodore Mahmudul Malek told The Daily that some 16 companies participated in the tender process, 15 of which were responsive. Master & Brothers submitted the highest bid of Tk 50.56 crore, including VAT and taxes, while the original offered price stood at Tk 40.44 crore. "The decision was made to sell the two oil tankers as scrap to the highest bidder," said the BSC MD.

The tankers, which are set to be sold to the shipbreaker, were built in Denmark in 1987 and were customised specifically for ship-to-ship fuel transfer operations at sea. These tankers had been engaged in lightering crude oil imported by Eastern Refinery Limited. They transferred oil from larger tankers anchored at the outer anchorage to the port's dolphin jetty for unloading at the refinery's facilities. Banglar Jyoti was damaged in a fire caused by an explosion on September 30 last year while unloading fuel at the port's dolphin jetty, resulting in the deaths of three individuals onboard. Banglar Shourabh sustained fire damage on October 5 last year after completing a ship-to-ship fuel transfer at the port's outer anchorage, resulting in one fatality. Although both ships became unfit for operation by 2015, BSC continued using them due to its inability to purchase replacements, according to merchant mariners. Following the sale of the tankers, the state-owned shipping company will have five ships, built in 2018 and 2019 by China, according to its latest annual report.

Global electric car sales rose by 25% in 2024

AFP, Paris

Electric car sales rose by 25 percent globally last year, surging in China but slowing in Europe, according to figures published Tuesday by the British consultancy Rho Motion. A record 17.1 million battery electric vehicles (excluding plug-in hybrids) were sold last year across the world, according to figures compiled by the firm. China pulled further ahead as the world's leading market for electric cars, with 11 million sold, an increase of 40 percent from 2023. In Europe (including Britain, Iceland, Norway and Switzerland), sales slipped by three percent to three million vehicles after four years of strong growth. In an overall declining market in Europe hybrids took the largest market share at the expense of petrol and diesel vehicles.

The end of state financial purchase incentives to consumers penalised sales in Germany last year, while they jumped by 21.4 percent in Britain, which became Europe's top market for electric vehicles, due in part to sales objectives imposed on carmakers.

Boeing plane deliveries tumble on labour, safety woes

AFP, New York

Boeing delivered just 348 commercial planes in 2024 according to figures released Tuesday that showed the ugly effects from a year of labor disruption and safety setbacks. The annual figure was well below 2023 deliveries and less than half the 766 aircraft European rival Airbus brought to customers last year. The figures cap a difficult year for the US aviation giant, kicked off by an emergency landing in January 2024 of a 737 MAX flown by Alaska Airlines after the plane suffered a mid-flight blowout on a window panel. That incident prompted heavy scrutiny on Capitol Hill and from the Federal Aviation Administration, leading to Boeing cutting output on the MAX while it intensified quality control efforts.

Lack of marine insurance

FROM PAGE B1
commerce means any disruption to the sector could have far-reaching economic and social consequences. Choudhury highlighted that challenges facing the maritime industry are global in nature and require global solutions. Against this backdrop, he noted that forums like this seminar are invaluable in fostering partnerships and understanding what is needed to tackle these challenges head-on. BMIS President Mohiuddin Abdul Kadir said marine insurance law is critical for mitigating maritime risks. Alluding to how cooperation and knowledge sharing would help further the industry, Kadir asked all present to work together, exchange ideas, propose solutions, and thereby work towards a resilient

BB unearths

FROM PAGE B1
Various other irregularities came up in the central bank's probe report, including loans being taken for one company to adjust the loans of another company. The BB report said TRU Fabrics Ltd was given Tk 10.19 crore, exceeding its exposure limit. It also mentioned that the bank did not conduct an on-site inspection of the company's goods as per the Guidelines on Credit Risk Management. The company's ability to repay the bank loans was also not analysed, it added. An office room had been allocated for Jalil at the head office of the bank, which is a violation of the central bank's circular, it said. Jalil also appointed one of his

Govt raises savings rates

FROM PAGE B1
repayment of the tools decreased by 70.95 percent to Tk 6,659.15 crore compared to the same period of previous fiscal year. Therefore, the net sale of savings tools during the July-September months of FY25 increased substantially by 758.74 percent year-on-year, resulting in a net sale of Tk 8,332.80 crore. Revenue collection in the July-November period was down by 2.62 percent compared to the corresponding

and progressive maritime future for Bangladesh.

Kadir, also an advocate of the Supreme Court, stressed that organisations like maritime protection and indemnity clubs provide a unique opportunity to identify and support talented professionals in the maritime industry. A maritime protection and indemnity club is a group of shipowners that acts as a non-profit platform of marine insurers pooling their resources to cover the liabilities of members.

"By providing employment and mentorship opportunities at such clubs, they can help build a skilled workforce that will contribute not only to the maritime industry but also to the country's broader economic development," he said.

relatives at a subsidiary of the bank, which is a conflict of interest, the BB report said.

The Daily Star tried to reach Islami Bank Chairman Md Obayed Ullah Al Masud and Managing Director Mohammad Monirul Mawla, but neither responded to phone calls till the filing of this report last night.

When contacted, Jalil told this newspaper that not only himself but also the board of directors approved the loans.

"There is no irregularity here, and the company is a reputed and old client of the bank," he pointed out.

The issue is now being handled by the board of directors, he said, adding that the bank was preparing to provide an explanation about the issue to the central bank.

period of the previous year.

Bangladesh got \$1.54 billion in the July-November period of the current fiscal year, which is 27 percent lower than the corresponding period last year.

Meanwhile, the country's debt servicing surged by more than 28 percent to \$1.71 billion during the period.

These figures indicate that the government's pool of funds was drying up, prompting the authorities to look for liquidity to cover overall expenditures.

Businesses express frustration

FROM PAGE B1
"If this policy is implemented, where will we go? Before increasing the price of gas, it should be considered who uses gas, why it is used, what its current production cost is, and how much it will increase," he said. Policymakers should consult businesses and perform a cost analysis before taking such decisions, irrespective of whether it involves local products or export-oriented ones, he added. Azad also expressed concern about law and order. "If the deterioration of law and order cannot be controlled, we will not be able to utilise this potential. All opportunities will go to our friends (other countries). They know when to implement policies," he said. Echoing this sentiment, Abul

Kashem, a former president of the Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry, said a lack of policy continuity was the main obstacle to increasing investment. "Policy changes are frequently made through Statutory Regulatory Orders to benefit specific groups," he said. Kashem added that the private sector was not involved in policymaking. All sectors have been ruined due to corruption, he alleged, suggesting that these issues should be addressed and institutions strengthened. "We have to work for the country to create a sustainable investment environment," he said. Hafizur Rahman, administrator of the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association, urged a revision of the

rules for obtaining business-related certificates. "The existing requirements for VAT, tax, and business certificates create challenges for new investors," he said. Regarding concerns about the gas supply crisis in the industry, Bangladesh Investment Development Authority Chairman Chowdhury Ashik Mahmud Bin Harun stated that plans were underway to transfer state-owned industries to the private sector. "This move will be helpful as these industries already have gas, water, and electricity supply facilities," he said. Among others, Mohammad Iqbal Chowdhury, chief executive officer of LafargeHolcim Bangladesh, and ERF President Doulot Akter Mala also spoke at the event.

Bangladesh Rural Electrification Board
Power Division, Ministry of Power, Energy and Mineral Resources
Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Memo No. 27.12.6152.118.07.011.25.336 Date: 09-01-2025

e-Tender Notice (LTM)

e-Tenders are invited in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for Installation of Insulated conductor, Conversion of LT to HT & HT (1Ph to 3Ph) under the geographical area of Mymensingh PBS-1/2, Netrokona & Kishorgonj PBS against MCEP (DMD). BREB enlisted Pre-qualified Line Construction contractors are eligible for respective field. Enlistment & Renewal documents to be uploaded. Tender submission deadlines are mentioned below:

Lot No.	Description of works	Tender ID No.	Closing date	Closing time
W-330-2-Ins-LT-HT HT(1PH-3PH)	Installation of 20.15 KM Insulated conductor, Conversion of LT to HT & HT (1Ph to 3Ph) Line under the geographical area of Kishorgonj PBS against MCEP (DMD).	1057549	03-02-25	10:30
W-330-3-Ins-LT-HT-HT(1PH-3PH)	Installation of 20.40 KM Insulated conductor, Conversion of LT to HT & HT (1Ph to 3Ph) Line under the geographical area of Kishorgonj PBS against MCEP (DMD).	1057550	03-02-25	10:45
W-330-5-Ins-LT-HT-HT(1PH-3PH)	Installation of 20.03 KM Insulated conductor, Conversion of LT to HT & HT (1Ph to 3Ph) Line under the geographical area of Kishorgonj PBS against MCEP (DMD).	1057551	03-02-25	11:00
W-330-4-Ins-LT-HT-HT(1PH-3PH)	Installation of 20.02 KM Insulated conductor, Conversion of LT to HT & HT (1Ph to 3Ph) Line under the geographical area of Kishorgonj PBS against MCEP (DMD).	1057552	03-02-25	11:15
W-353-1-Ins-LT-HT-HT(1PH-3PH)	Installation of 19.95 KM Insulated conductor, Conversion of LT to HT & HT (1Ph to 3Ph) Line under the geographical area of MPBS-1 against MCEP (DMD).	1057553	03-02-25	11:30
W-353-3-Ins-LT-HT-H(1PH-3PH)	Installation of 20.11 KM Insulated conductor, Conversion of LT to HT & HT (1Ph to 3Ph) Line under the geographical area of MPBS-1 against MCEP (DMD).	1057554	03-02-25	11:45
W-353-4-Ins-LT-HT-HT(1PH-3PH)	Installation of 20.29 KM Insulated conductor, Conversion of LT to HT & HT (1Ph to 3Ph) Line under the geographical area of MPBS-1 against MCEP (DMD).	1057555	03-02-25	12:00
W-353-5-Ins-LT-HT-HT(1PH-3PH)	Installation of 20.11 KM Insulated conductor, Conversion of LT to HT & HT (1Ph to 3Ph) Line under the geographical area of MPBS-1 against MCEP (DMD).	1057556	03-02-25	12:15
W-372-1-Ins-LT-HT-HT(1PH-3PH)	Installation of 20.02 KM Insulated conductor, Conversion of LT to HT & HT (1Ph to 3Ph) Line under the geographical area of Netrokona PBS against MCEP (DMD).	1057557	03-02-25	12:30
W-372-2-Ins-LT-HT-HT(1PH-3PH)	Installation of 20.01 KM Insulated conductor, Conversion of LT to HT & HT (1Ph to 3Ph) Line under the geographical area of Netrokona PBS against MCEP (DMD).	1057558	03-02-25	12:45
W-372-3-Ins-LT-HT-HT(1PH-3PH)	Installation of 20.11 KM Insulated conductor, Conversion of LT to HT & HT (1Ph to 3Ph) Line under the geographical area of Netrokona PBS against MCEP (DMD).	1057559	03-02-25	13:00
W-372-4-Ins-LT-HT-HT(1PH-3PH)	Installation of 20.03 KM Insulated conductor, Conversion of LT to HT & HT (1Ph to 3Ph) Line under the geographical area of Netrokona PBS against MCEP (DMD).	1057560	03-02-25	13:15
W-330-1-Ins-LT-HT-HT(1PH-3PH)	Installation of 19.98 KM Insulated conductor, Conversion of LT to HT & HT (1Ph to 3Ph) Line under the geographical area of Kishorgonj PBS against MCEP (DMD).	1057561	03-02-25	13:30
W-361-1-Ins-LT-HT-HT(1PH-3PH)	Installation of 20.16 KM Insulated conductor, Conversion of LT to HT & HT (1Ph to 3Ph) Line under the geographical area of MPBS-2 against MCEP (DMD).	1057562	03-02-25	13:45
W-372-5-Ins-LT-HT-HT(1PH-3PH)	Installation of 20.20 KM Insulated conductor, Conversion of LT to HT & HT (1Ph to 3Ph) Line under the geographical area of Netrokona PBS against MCEP (DMD).	1057563	03-02-25	14:00
W-361-2-Ins-LT-HT-HT(1PH-3PH)	Installation of 20.05 KM Insulated conductor, Conversion of LT to HT & HT (1Ph to 3Ph) Line under the geographical area of MPBS-2 against MCEP (DMD).	1057564	03-02-25	14:15
W-361-3-Ins-LT-HT-HT(1PH-3PH)	Installation of 20.27 KM Insulated conductor, Conversion of LT to HT & HT (1Ph to 3Ph) Line under the geographical area of MPBS-2 against MCEP (DMD).	1057565	03-02-25	14:30
W-361-4-Ins-LT-HT-HT(1PH-3PH)	Installation of 20.27 KM Insulated conductor, Conversion of LT to HT & HT (1Ph to 3Ph) Line under the geographical area of MPBS-2 against MCEP (DMD).	1057566	03-02-25	14:45
W-353-2-Ins-LT-HT-HT(1PH-3PH)	Installation of 20.53 KM Insulated conductor, Conversion of LT to HT & HT (1Ph to 3Ph) Line under the geographical area of MPBS-1 against MCEP (DMD).	1057567	03-02-25	15:00
W-361-5-Ins-LT-HT-HT(1PH-3PH)	Installation of 20.16 KM Insulated conductor, Conversion of LT to HT & HT (1Ph to 3Ph) Line under the geographical area of MPBS-2 against MCEP (DMD).	1057568	03-02-25	15:15

This is an online tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required. The fees for downloading the e-Tender documents from the National e-GP System Portal have to be deposited online through any e-GP registered banks branches for up to 02-02-2025 at 17:00pm. Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP helpdesk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).



বাংলাদেশ পল্লী বিদ্যুতায়ন বোর্ড
BANGLADESH RURAL ELECTRIFICATION BOARD
বাপবিবো/ জন (২৫০১-১২০) ২০২৪-২০২৫

Biplab Banta
Superintending Engineer
Bangladesh Rural Electrification Board
Mymensingh Zone, Mymensingh
E-mail: serebmyen@gmail.com

GD- 154

NBR moves to activate Bangladesh Single Window system

Manual issuance of certificates by seven agencies will not be allowed from Feb

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

The National Board of Revenue (NBR) has announced that certificates, licences and permits (CLP) issued manually by seven state agencies will no longer be accepted for duty assessment and customs clearance from February 1.

These documents must instead be submitted through the Bangladesh Single Window (BSW) system.

The announcement comes after the NBR earlier this month integrated seven of the 19 state agencies that issue CLP for

Since there will be no human interaction, overall transparency and accountability in government activities will be ensured, the NBR said

exporters and importers into the BSW, an electronic gateway enabling businesses to submit documents for imports and exports and clear goods more efficiently.

The NBR said that businesses will be able to obtain CLP electronically by applying online. Firms must first



Due to the new move, time and costs for imports and exports will come down, while trade and investment will grow because of improved confidence among local and foreign investors, the National Board of Revenue said.

PHOTO: STAR/FILE

register with the BSW using their Business Identification Numbers before accessing the CLP services.

"All CLP-related work will now be done online. Since there will

be no human interaction, overall transparency and accountability in government activities will be ensured," the NBR said in a statement.

"Time and costs for imports

and exports will be reduced. Trade and investment will grow due to improved confidence among local and foreign investors," it added.

The seven agencies now

issuing CLP through the BSW are the Directorate General of Drug Administration, the Export Promotion Bureau, the Department of Explosives, the Bangladesh National Authority for Chemical Weapons Convention, the Bangladesh Economic Zones Authority, the Bangladesh Export Processing Zones Authority, and the Department of Environment.

The government launched the BSW project in 2017 to provide an electronic, online solution for facilitating faster and more transparent international trade procedures. The initiative aims to expedite the clearance of international cargo and reduce the cost and time of doing business.

The approximately Tk 600 crore project has undergone several revisions since its inception.

The NBR has previously said that the electronic platform will benefit 319,000 Bangladeshi traders by cutting time and costs associated with trade processes.

The average processing time for imports is expected to decrease to 122 hours, while the average processing time for exports is projected to fall to 88 hours.

Industries strained by tax hike, energy crisis

ASIF IBRAHIM

More than a hundred distinct goods and services are subjected to the newly announced value-added tax (VAT) and supplemental duty (SD) rates, further complicating matters for businesses in Bangladesh. Services, industrial manufacturing, apparel and food processing all fall under this category.

The country's private sector already faces numerous challenges. Industries in Bangladesh are grappling with higher costs when importing capital machinery and raw materials due to the devaluation of the Taka. Since the central bank raised interest rates, the cost of borrowing for term loans from banks has increased to 14-15 percent.

Many enterprises are operating at reduced capacities due to the gas supply constraint and high demand for captive energy generation. For months, business owners have been waiting for gas supplies after importing and setting up machinery. The burden of repaying project loans has become a serious concern for them.

The usual functioning of the global supply chain continues to be disrupted by geopolitical turmoil. Businesses in Bangladesh engaged in international trade are also finding this to be a difficult situation to navigate.

Although inflation dropped from 11.38 percent in November to 10.89 percent in December due to some measures taken by the central bank, the persistently high rate continues to reduce consumer demand for goods and services.

The business sector is already struggling to stay afloat, so the announcement of a price hike for energy along with additional VAT and SD charges, has made matters worse.

Many fear that these recent decisions could lead to a sharp decline in industrial production and private sector credit expansion. This, in turn, might have a chilling effect on job creation and GDP growth, in addition to reducing export competitiveness.

According to reliable sources, the purpose of implementing these increases in VAT and SD is to meet the International Monetary Fund's requirement to raise the tax-to-GDP ratio by half a percent annually until 2026.

The private sector is deeply dissatisfied with the timing and approach of such measures, especially given the current state of purchasing power parity, the closure of several manufacturing units in the ready-made garment sector and difficulties faced by small and medium enterprises due to declining consumer demand.

The government and businesses have long been at odds over VAT, with discussions ongoing about establishing uniform rates. It remains uncertain whether raising the rate will result in higher collection. Unfortunately, over 65 percent of the country's total revenue comes from indirect taxes, which are inherently regressive. A more effective approach could have involved expanding the tax net to collect more direct income taxes.

An improvement in the collection rate could also be achieved by addressing corruption and leakages in the current process. For nearly a decade, parties have been attempting to resolve disputes over approximately \$2 billion in unrealised revenue. Faster progress on the tax-to-GDP ratio might be possible through alternative dispute resolution mechanisms.

A recent decision to reorganise the National Board of Revenue into a separate entity from tax policy and collection has been widely praised. We eagerly await the implementation of this much-needed reform. But for now, it is essential to recognise that the private sector cannot shoulder such an enormous burden at this critical time.

The author is a former president of the Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry



Donald Trump

Trump's policies won't push up inflation

Economic adviser says

AFP, Washington

Donald Trump's policies are not likely to cause inflation to reignite as many analysts fear, one of the president-elect's longtime economic advisers told AFP Tuesday, less than a week before Trump returns to the White House.

Many economists have warned that Trump's campaign proposals, which included imposing sweeping import tariffs and overseeing the largest deportation in US history, could cause a spike in inflation, forcing the Federal Reserve to keep interest rates higher for longer.

In an interview, Stephen Moore, a longtime economic adviser to Trump, said that the full suite of policies the president-elect wants to push through, including deregulation and the extension of expiring tax cuts, should help keep price increases in check.

"You could point to some specific policies like tariffs that could be inflationary," said Moore, who is a senior visiting fellow at the conservative Heritage Foundation. "But you have to remember that we're also going to be reducing other taxes."

"Things that are made in the United States will have a lower tax, and things that are made in China will have a higher tax," he added. "So when you balance those out, you have, you may have relative price shifts, but not overall price increases."

Renewed US trade war threatens China's 'lifeline'

AFP, Beijing

China might not be able to rely on trade to steer it out of trouble as blistering tariffs being considered by US President-elect Donald Trump threaten an already struggling economy.

Exports have historically represented a key engine in the world's number two economy, where authorities will release 2024 growth data on Friday that is expected to be among the lowest in decades.

Worse still, Trump's return to the White House three days later could mean that Beijing won't be able to rely on trade to drive activity in 2025.

Exports "are likely to stay resilient in the near-term", wrote Zichun Huang of Capital Economics, noting that a recent surge was due in part to US importers stockpiling Chinese goods ahead of expected tariff hikes.

"But outbound shipments will weaken later this year if Trump follows through on his threat to impose 60 percent tariffs on all Chinese goods," she said.

China's economy likely grew 4.9 percent last year, according to an AFP survey of experts, fractionally short of the government's five percent target and down from 5.2 percent in 2023.

The increase -- already the lowest in decades, apart from the Covid-19 pandemic -- was helped by a record-setting year for Chinese exports.

Overseas shipments reached a historic high of nearly \$3.5 trillion in 2024, up 7.1 percent year-on-year, according to official statistics



The photo shows electric cars for export stacked at the international container terminal of Taicang Port in Suzhou, in China's eastern Jiangsu Province.

PHOTO: AFP/FILE

published on Monday.

Adjusted for inflation, China's trade surplus last year "outstripped any global surplus seen in the past century, overshadowing even the historical export powerhouses like Germany, Japan or the United States post-World War II", wrote Stephen Innes of SPI Asset Management in a note.

The increase in China's trade surplus has contributed five to six points to the growth of the country's gross domestic product over the past three years, Francois Chimits of the Mercator Institute for China Studies told AFP.

"The vitality of foreign trade has been one of the lifelines of the Chinese economy," he said.

That pillar of growth could come

under attack in 2025, as the United States and European countries retaliate against what they call unfair competition resulting from China's generous subsidies to its manufacturers. The European Union imposed additional customs duties in October on electric vehicles imported from China, citing distortions in trade practices by Beijing.

And Trump promised during his recent US presidential campaign to slap even hettier tariffs on Chinese goods than those implemented in his first term. The specific trade imposts Trump intends to levy against China are not yet clear but the country's export surge last year "will ignite further fury among US trade hawks", Innes said.

READ FULL STORY ONLINE

UK inflation dips, easing some pressure on government

AFP, London

Britain's annual inflation rate unexpectedly fell to 2.5 percent last month, official data showed Wednesday, easing some pressure on the Labour government faced with economic unrest.

Analysts had forecast no change in the Consumer Prices Index (CPI) from the 2.6 percent figure in November.

The latest reading from the Office for National Statistics (ONS) comes one day after finance minister Rachel Reeves was forced to defend the government's handling of the economy following a recent sharp runup in state borrowing costs and a hefty drop in the pound.

Reacting to the data, Reeves said "there is still work to be done to help families across the country with the cost of living".

"I will fight every day to deliver that growth and improve living standards in every part of the UK," she added.

Britons remain hampered by high



People shop at a stall in Camden Market in London.

PHOTO: AFP/FILE

interest rates and elevated energy bills despite the annual inflation rate retreating from a four-decade peak of above 11 percent in October 2022.

Last month, "inflation eased very slightly as hotel prices dipped" after rising in December 2023, noted chief ONS economist Grant Fitzner.

"The cost of tobacco was another downward driver, as prices

increased" less than a year earlier, he added.

"This was partly offset by the cost of fuel and also second-hand cars, which saw their first annual growth since July 2023," Fitzner said.

Wednesday's data showed also that on a monthly basis, CPI rose 0.3 percent in December, down from 0.4 percent a year earlier.