

# Challenging days ahead for microfinance: BB governor

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Microfinance institutions (MFIs) are set to face significant challenges in the days to come as they have to compete with the fast-growing agent banking services, mobile financial service (MFS) providers, and the emerging digital banks, Bangladesh Bank Governor Ahsan H Mansur said yesterday.



"The microfinance institutions must prepare to face these challenges. This will not be easy because competitors are equipped with advanced technology, such as computers and tablets, and benefit from lower funding costs," he said.

Mansur added: "You [MFIs] must tackle the technological advancements and lower cost structures of these competitors in a

competitive way because the government will not provide a bailout."

The central bank governor made the comments while speaking at a national workshop on microfinance in Bangladesh, held at the CIRDA auditorium in the capital.

The workshop, titled "Annual Statistical Publication on Microfinance in Bangladesh," was organised by the Microcredit Regulatory Authority (MRA).

While MFIs have 26,000 branches nationwide, the number of agent banking outlets has reached 16,000 and is expected to grow to 60,000 in the near future, Mansur said.

He noted that donor agency grants have dwindled to almost zero, emphasising the need

for MFIs to become self-reliant and compete with banks, which are now more aggressive in offering financial services.

"If customers can obtain loans at interest rates of just 10 to 12 percent, we will not restrict banks. Ultimately, we want customers to benefit, and you [MFIs] must operate more efficiently," he said.

The governor also pointed out the need for regulatory reforms and improved governance within the microfinance sector, which he identified as a major challenge.

"There is no logic in having thousands of MFIs in the country. This is not sustainable, and some institutions will collapse due to market forces. Those that adopt IT and technology-driven operations will survive in the long run," he said.

The Bangladesh Bank governor predicted that the number of MFIs will decrease while access to credit will increase in the future.

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# Ctg customs to auction off 44 cars

## 24 are Land Cruisers imported by ex-MPs

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Customs authorities are planning to auction off a total of 44 cars on February 16, including 24 of the luxurious Land Cruiser ZX model by Japanese automaker Toyota, which were purchased by former members of parliament (MPs).

Customs halted the release of the 24 vehicles because the individuals who imported them are no longer MPs and, therefore, are not eligible to avail themselves of the vehicles under a duty-free facility.

Before the Awami League government fell in early August last year, seven cars brought under the provision were released. Most of the vehicles were imported from Japan and Singapore and have engine capacities ranging from 3,000cc to 4,000cc.

Customs officials said they issued

several notices to the importers, including the former MPs, to collect the vehicles by paying the applicable duties. However, only former MP Abul Kalam Azad got his car released.

The remaining 20 vehicles—10 dump trucks, five Harriers, and two RAV4 sport utility vehicles (SUVs), an Esquire, and two of the Land Cruiser model—were seized as their importers failed to provide the necessary documents on time.

The auction process began on February 2 and will remain open to bidders until February 16.

"Bidders can physically inspect the vehicles from February 2 to February 4, and anyone can purchase these vehicles through e-tender," said Md Shakib Hossain, assistant commissioner of Chattogram Customs.

READ FULL STORY ONLINE

# Bank Asia, EBL avail \$70m

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Bank Asia, with its strong balance sheet and nearly 8 million customers, is uniquely positioned to expand its SME portfolio by leveraging its agent banking network, said Hussain.

"Bank Asia is the pioneer of agent banking in Bangladesh," he noted.

"EBL is a strong partner of Bangladesh's development growth. This partnership with the IFC will help us extend working capital and trade finance solutions to local corporates and SMEs," said Iftikhar.

EBL stated that it currently manages 5 percent of the country's total trade business and considers small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) a core component of its growth strategy.

The bank also stated that it finances everything from large-scale infrastructure and manufacturing projects to complex trade

transactions.

"IFC has been a steadfast partner in Bangladesh's financial sector, working to expand access to finance for micro, small, and medium enterprises, which are the backbone of the country's economy," said Forlemu.

The investment in the two banks is a part of the IFC's ongoing commitment to strengthening Bangladesh by providing much-needed liquidity to export- and import-oriented SMEs, he said.

Ensuring the resources will not only enable SMEs to grow, innovate, trade, and create jobs but also help them build long-term resilience, navigate evolving economic challenges, and foster sustainable economic development, he added.

Shafiuzzaman and ANM Mahfuz, additional managing directors of Bank Asia; Zia Arfin, senior executive vice president; and Willfried Tamegnon,

manager of the Financial Institutions Group for Bangladesh, Nepal, and Sri Lanka, IFC, were present.

## Govt to sell

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Besides, another 1 crore people are at risk of slipping below the poverty line due to sustained inflationary pressures, said Md Deen Islam, research director of RAPID.

In the past year, the price of fine rice has increased by 13.14 percent, medium-grain by 13.89 percent, and coarse by 5.77 percent, according to the state-run Trading Corporation of Bangladesh.

In December 2024, inflation eased slightly to 10.89 percent from 11.38 percent the month prior.

It remained above the 10 percent threshold throughout October and November, as per the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics.

# Farmers forced

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"I recently paid Tk 3,500 for two bags of TSP, although the official price is Tk 2,700," he said.

He added that dealers in his area do not generally overcharge, but alleged that retailers charge more than set prices.

"We are compelled to buy fertiliser at higher rates as there is no alternative. The dealers often cite transportation costs or low availability as reasons for price hikes," said Gouranga Das, another farmer in Bagerhat.

However, Md Nazrul Islam, a fertiliser dealer in Pabna, said they are selling fertiliser to retailers in line with government prices. He alleged that retailers will be increasing prices a little bit to make some profit.

Although insiders said there is a shortage of DAP, the deputy directors of the Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE) in Dinajpur and Pabna denied that there is any fertiliser shortage.

"We are getting supplies from the Bangladesh Agricultural Development Corporation (BADC) as required. We are waiting," an official of the Bangladesh Fertilizer Association (BFA) said.

Md Jamal Uddin, the deputy director of the DAE in Pabna, said there is no scope for a fertiliser crisis during the Boro season.

Asked about the hike in fertiliser prices at the retail level, he said his office and local administration are continuing drives to keep the market under control during the peak of the cultivation season.

Farmers are accustomed to buying the entire stock of fertiliser for the Boro season when they start cultivation, which causes trouble later.

Contacted, Md Aminul Islam, the deputy director of the DAE's Dhaka office who is in charge of fertiliser management, said prices are not supposed to be higher than the rate fixed by the government. "We get such allegations occasionally and take action," he said.

The BFA official added that one of the reasons farmers are forced to pay more than administered rates is the low commission for dealers and transport costs.

"Dealers get only Tk 2 as commission plus transport costs. The commission was fixed in 2008 and has not been hiked even though we have repeatedly requested the government to do so."

Agriculture Secretary Mohammad Emdad Ullah Mian could not be reached for comment over the phone despite repeated efforts. BADC Chairman Md Ruhul Amin Khan could not be reached for comment either.

# Top UAE firms

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the chief adviser to attend the "World Government Summit" in the UAE in February.

Khalilur Rahman, high representative of the chief adviser; and Lamiya Morshed, senior secretary for SDG affairs, among others, were also present.

Additionally, a seven-member delegation led by UAE Ambassador ALHmoudi made a call on Shipping Adviser Brig Gen (ret) M Sakhawat Hussain at his secretariat office in the capital yesterday.

The delegation included AD Ports Group CEO Ahmad Ibrahim Al Mutawa. The shipping adviser urged the Abu Dhabi (AD) Ports Group of the UAE to invest in the infrastructure development of Mongla port.

The adviser said Mongla Port, the country's second-largest seaport, would be transformed into a regional

trade hub, according to a press release issued by the shipping ministry.

With the development of waterway, road, and railway infrastructure, it is now possible to transport goods easily from this port to different parts of the country, he informed.

"At the same time, the use of this port has become a great potential for the neighbouring countries of Nepal, India, and Bhutan. In this context, domestic and foreign investors, including AD Ports Group, have excellent investment opportunities in Mongla port," the adviser said.

Welcoming the adviser's proposal, the delegate members informed the meeting that AD Ports Group is interested in investing in the infrastructure development of various ports in Bangladesh, including Chattogram and Mongla, the press release said.

# Bangladesh may

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Participants of a side discussion said Bangladesh's progress in adopting measures for promoting renewable energy usage in producing garments remains below 2 percent even though competing countries have already made significant strides in this regard.

Garment exporters, representatives of international clothing retailers and brands, climate experts, lawyers, government high-ups, union leaders, garment factory owners, and experts and researchers from home and abroad participated in the discussion.

Garments and construction industries remain at the heart of Bangladesh's overall

industrial sector, employing 12 million people and contributing 34 percent of the country's gross domestic product (GDP).

However, it also generates 15 percent of the country's greenhouse gas emissions, with this contribution expected to rise by about 5 percent by 2030.

The garments and construction sectors, which include brickmaking, cement, and steel manufacturing industries, are critical to an industry transition in the country.

Together, these sectors constitute 74 percent of the industrial sector's contributions to the GDP and are responsible for about half of the emissions in Bangladesh.

READ FULL STORY ONLINE

**Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh**  
Office of the Divisional Forest Officer  
Coastal Forest Division  
Kheyaghat Road, Chonroabad, Bhola.

Memo No : 22.01.0900.557.02.001.2025-148 Date : 28.01.2025.

**e-Tender Notice : 12(OTM)/Revenue/2024-2025**

e-Tenders (OTM) are invited in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for the procurement of the following goods:

Tender/Proposal ID	Package No	Name of Goods	Last Date & Time for Selling/Downloading	Tender Closing date & Time	Tender Opening date & Time
1069023	BHOCFAFD/REVENUE/2024-2025/GD-02	Supply of Official Uniform and accessories	12-Feb-2025 11:00	12-Feb-2025 14:00	12-Feb-2025 14:00

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's Branches. Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP system Portal and from e-GP help desk ([helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd](mailto:helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd)).

*[Signature]*  
Divisional Forest Officer  
Coastal Forest Division, Bhola  
Phone: 02479966291  
E-mail: dfohola@gmail.com

GD-299

**Titas Gas Transmission & Distribution PLC**  
(A Company of Petrobangla)  
105, Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue  
Kawran Bazar  
Dhaka-1215

Ref. No.: 28.13.0000.301.99.003.25 Date: 28 January, 2025

**e-Tender Notice (OTM)**

Following tenders are invited in the national e-GP system portal (<https://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for the Procurement of

Tender ID No	Package No	Name of Works	Last selling Date & Time	Closing Date & Time	Opening Date & Time
1046905	CED/Maintenance/2 024-25/02	Maintenance & Repair Works of 9th Floor Common Toilet & Finance Department at Head Office Building, Kawran Bazar, Dhaka.	11/02/2025 10:00	11/02/2025 11:15	11/02/2025 11:15
1048645	CED/Maintenance/2 024-25/03	Site Development, Guard Room Construction & Maintenance Works for the Existing Control Building With Internal Walkway & Other Necessary Civil Works at Gazaria TBS, Munshiganj.	11/02/2025 10:00	11/02/2025 11:30	11/02/2025 11:30
1062958	CED/Construction/2 024-25/02	Bituminous Carpeting Work of Internal Road, Demra CGS Complex at Demra, Dhaka.	11/02/2025 10:00	11/02/2025 11:45	11/02/2025 11:45
1068272	CED/Construction/2 024-25/03	Re-arrangement and Interior Decoration Works Including Other Necessary Civil Works of Existing Office Spaces for Relocation of Newly Created Division, Department and Sections as per Company's New Organogram-2024 at Head Office Building, Kawran Bazar, Dhaka.	18/02/2025 11:30	18/02/2025 12:00	18/02/2025 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 (<https://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required.

Further information and guidelines are available in national e-GP System portal and from e-GP help desk (<http://www.helpdesk.eprocure.gov.bd>).

*[Signature]*  
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Deputy General Manager  
Civil Engineering Department  
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GD-300

MINISTRY OF WOMEN AND CHILDREN AFFAIRS  
SUPPORTING IMPLEMENTATION OF THE MOTHER AND CHILD BENEFIT PROGRAMME (SIMCBP)  
Bangladesh Enhancing Investments and Benefits for Early Years  
Bhaban-06, Bangladesh Secretariat  
Abdul Gani Rd, Dhaka-1207.  
<https://mowca.gov.bd/>

**Invitation for Tender**

**GOVERNMENT OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF BANGLADESH**

1	Ministry/Division	Ministry of Women and Children Affairs		
2	Agency	Ministry of Women and Children Affairs		
3	Procuring Entity Name	Supporting Implementation of the Mother and Child Benefit Programme (SIMCBP) / Bangladesh Enhancing Investments and Benefits for Early Years (BEIBEY) Project		
4	Procuring Entity Code	Not used at present		
5	Procuring Entity District	Dhaka		
6	Invitation for	Fitting and fixtures (PMMCU and PIU refurbishment)		
7	Invitation Ref No	MOWCA/SIMCBP/NCS-03/2024		
8	Date	Issued on 28/01/2025		
<b>KEY INFORMATION</b>				
9	Procurement Method	National Open Tendering Method		
<b>FUNDING INFORMATION</b>				
10	Budget and Source of Funds	World Bank IDA Credit		
11	Development Partners (if applicable)	World Bank		
<b>PARTICULAR INFORMATION</b>				
12	Project / Programme Code (if applicable)	N/A		
13	Project / Programme Name (if applicable)	Supporting Implementation of the Mother and Child Benefit Programme (SIMCBP) / Bangladesh Enhancing Investments and Benefits for Early Years (BEIBEY) Project		
14	Tender Package No.	MOWCA/SIMCBP/BEIBEY/NCS-3		
15	Tender Package Name	Fitting and fixtures (PMMCU and PIU refurbishment)		
		<b>Date</b> <b>Time</b>		
16	Tender Publication Date	29 January 2025		
17	Tender Last Selling Date (up to the day before the day of the deadline for Submission)	13 February 2025 4:00 pm		
		<b>Date</b> <b>Time</b>		
18	Tender Closing Date and Time	16 February 2025 2:00 p.m.		
19	Tender Opening Date and Time	16 February 2025 2:30 p.m.		
20	Name & Address of the office(s)	<b>Address</b>		
- Selling and Receiving Tender Document (Principal)	Supporting Implementation of the Mother and Child Benefit Programme (SIMCBP) / Bangladesh Enhancing Investments and Benefits for Early Years (BEIBEY) Project Room No.-810, Level-7, Paribahan Pool Bhavan, Dhaka-1000.			
<b>NO CONDITIONS APPLY FOR SALE, PURCHASE OR DISTRIBUTION OF TENDER DOCUMENTS</b>				
- Opening Tender Document	Supporting Implementation of the Mother and Child Benefit Programme (SIMCBP) / Bangladesh Enhancing Investments and Benefits for Early Years (BEIBEY) Project Room No.-810, Level-7, Paribahan Pool Bhavan, Dhaka-1000.			
21	Place / Date / Time of Pre-Tender Meeting (Optional)	<b>Date</b> <b>Time</b> NA NA		
<b>INFORMATION FOR TENDERER</b>				
22	Brief Eligibility and Qualification of Tenderer	The tenderers must have proven qualifications/abilities and experience in fitting and fixtures (PMMCU and PIU refurbishment). They must also have the legal and financial capacity/ability to enter into the contract. In support of eligibility, the Tenderers must submit a valid and up-to-date trade license, tax identification number, latest income tax payment receipt/certificate (TIN), VAT registration financial soundness certificate, etc.		
23	Brief Description of Service and associated Goods	Fitting and fixtures (PMMCU and PIU refurbishment): To renovate and refurbish the office space of about 3180 sqft office with necessary cleaning, refurbishment, civil works, electrical works, partitioning, fixtures, and fittings of required materials with pieces of equipment.		
24	Price of Tender Document (BDT)	BDT 2,000.00 (two thousand only)		
25	Tender Security and work completion timeline:			
Package No	Identification of Package	Location	Tender Security Amount (BDT)	Completion Time in Months
NCS-3	Fitting and fixtures (PMMCU and PIU refurbishment)	Dhaka	80,000.00 (Eighty thousand) only	45 Days from the date of signing the contract.
26	Name of Official Inviting Tender	Dr. Prakash Kanti Chowdhury		
27	Designation of Official Inviting Tender	Project Director (Joint Secretary)		
28	Address of Official Inviting Tender	Supporting Implementation of the Mother and Child Benefit Programme (SIMCBP) / Bangladesh Enhancing Investments and Benefits for Early Years (BEIBEY) Project Room No.-810, Level-7, Paribahan Pool Bhavan, Dhaka-1000.		
29	Contact details of Official Inviting Tender	Telephone: 00-88-02-55100646 Electronic mail address: pdbeiby.simcbp@gmail.com		
<b>The procuring entity reserves the right to reject all tenders or annul the Tender proceedings.</b>				

*[Signature]*  
Dr. Prakash Kanti Chowdhury  
Project Director (Joint Secretary)  
Supporting Implementation of the Mother and Child Benefit Programme (SIMCBP)  
MOWCA

GD-301