

Amin Bazar landfill’s toxic impact

We need an environment-friendly waste management system

We are alarmed by the extent of pollution spreading from the Amin Bazar landfill to its surrounding areas. Since the landfill’s establishment in Baliarpur, Savar, in 2007, pollutants have been infiltrating the soil, air, and groundwater of the area, severely affecting the villages around Amin Bazar. These villages, once known for their fertile farmlands and fresh air, are now grappling with widespread environmental degradation. Experts warn that untreated leachate from the landfill may be spreading toxic substances across a radius of up to five kilometres, polluting nearby ecosystems and water sources. The Turag River, already polluted by untreated industrial waste, has suffered further contamination from the landfill’s runoff.

According to a 2022 study, leachate, a hazardous liquid produced by decomposing waste, is infiltrating the soil and groundwater within a 1.5 km radius of the landfill, carrying heavy metals such as arsenic, nickel, chromium, and lead. High levels of arsenic and nickel were detected in both surface water and groundwater near the landfill, while the presence of cadmium and nickel in surface water indicates high levels of toxicity. In groundwater, the highest concentration of heavy metals was found in areas near the landfill, indicating that these toxic metals are emanating from it. Additionally, the soil in the vicinity has also been contaminated, with chromium levels measured at 108.5 milligrammes per kilogramme—exceeding the permissible limit of 100 milligrammes per kilogramme—indicating alarming levels of pollution.

The long-term consumption of crops grown in the polluted soil poses a significant risk of cancer and other life-threatening diseases. In fact, residents of the area have already been affected, with many suffering from asthma, skin diseases, and other respiratory illnesses. This raises critical questions: what actions has the Dhaka North City Corporation (DNCC) taken over the years to prevent the landfill from becoming such an environmental hazard? Why is the leachate treatment pond at the landfill not functioning properly? The authorities’ inaction in addressing environmental degradation in the area is totally unacceptable.

We urge the government to take immediate action to address the health and environmental risks posed by the Amin Bazar landfill. While it is reassuring that a waste-to-energy plant is under construction in Amin Bazar, which is expected to help reduce pollution in the area once completed next year, urgent short-term measures are also needed. The landfill authorities must ensure that the leachate management pond functions effectively and implement mechanisms to prevent leakage. Additionally, they must stop burning waste to curb air pollution. The government must recognise that waste management is a critical issue for the country and should, therefore, prioritise the establishment of environmentally friendly and sustainable waste management systems.

We must prepare for all uncertainties

Early steps can help avert spillover effects of US-China tariff war

We are deeply concerned about the escalating tariff war between the US and China which, according to experts, would not only negatively impact the world’s two largest economies but would also likely affect the entire global economy. Our main concern, however, lies with the challenges that Bangladesh’s RMG-export-dependent economy could face amid the trade war between these two giants.

On April 11, China reportedly imposed a 125 percent tariff on US goods in retaliation for President Trump’s increase of duties on Chinese goods to 145 percent. Earlier, on April 2, the US president imposed “reciprocal tariffs” ranging from 10 to over 50 percent on almost all countries. Later, he paused the higher tariffs on most countries except China. Between March and April 9, US tariffs on Chinese goods rose from around 20 to 145 percent, while China’s tariffs on US goods increased from around 21 percent to 125 percent. Consequently, the Director-General of the World Trade Organization (WTO) Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala warned that “merchandise trade between these two economies could decrease by as much as 80 percent”—and since US-China trade together accounts for three percent of global trade, other economies would be negatively affected.

This is particularly true for countries that depend on these two trade giants. Bangladesh, for instance, relies heavily on the US market for its RMG exports. Although initially, Bangladesh was hit with a 37 percent tariff by the Trump administration, the 90-day pause in tariffs brought some relief. However, if a recession hits the US, demand for clothing will likely decline, thereby hurting our exports. Moreover, the possible collapse of the WTO-led trade order—which has somewhat protected vulnerable economies—adds to the uncertainty facing Bangladesh. If countries are left to fend for themselves, capturing export markets will depend solely on individual countries’ negotiating capacities, where more powerful and wealthier nations would have an inherent advantage.

Another concern for Bangladesh is an impending price war. Bangladesh will not be the only country seeking to diversify its markets if and when a US recession occurs. International competitors are likely to adopt similar strategies. Even local competition to capture a shrinking RMG market is likely to hurt many companies within Bangladesh. It is, therefore, crucial for the government, diplomats, policymakers, and businesses to collaboratively develop innovative strategies to navigate these uncertain times and prepare for global economic turmoil.

Diversifying products and markets, forging bilateral and regional trade ties, encouraging foreign investments and joint ventures, and enhancing the country’s brand value must be explored creatively and with urgency. Proactive measures from all stakeholders are essential to make our economy more resilient to upcoming shocks.

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

First human on space

On this day in 1961, Soviet cosmonaut Yuri Alekseyevich Gagarin became the first human to travel into space.



What more can the state do for our diaspora?



M M Mahbub Hasan is head of financial inclusion and school banking at Prime Bank PLC. He can be reached at mmmahbubhasan11@gmail.com.

M M MAHBUB HASAN

Bangladeshis working in various countries around the world are playing a significant role in the nation’s overall economic growth by sending their hard-earned remittances. According to data from Bangladesh Bank, remittances contribute approximately 6 to 7 percent to Bangladesh’s national economy.

As of July 2023, the number of Bangladeshi diasporas was approximately 15.513 million. The countries with the largest Bangladeshi diaspora populations include Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Kuwait, Oman, Malaysia, the UK, the US, and Canada—home to about 36.45 percent of the total diaspora. An estimated 5 to 7 million Bangladeshis reside in the Middle East alone, with more than 2.5 million living in Saudi Arabia. In terms of the foreign labour market in Saudi Arabia, Bangladesh ranks just behind India and Pakistan.

It goes without saying that members of the diaspora face various challenges, including limited employment opportunities, complications related to passports and visas, and a lack of social recognition. The state must pay greater attention to the struggles and hardships experienced by the diaspora community.

A report by the digital migration platform Ami Probashi mentioned that manpower export in 2024 decreased by 27.4 percent compared to 2023, which has become a cause of great concern for Bangladesh. The Refugee and Migratory Movements Research Unit (RMMRU) mentioned in their report that around 1.12 million Bangladeshi workers went abroad in 2024. Among them, the number of skilled workers was 214,044, which is 23.62 percent of the total labour market. At the same time, 491,480 people, or 54.23 percent, went abroad as low-skilled workers.

Despite the obstacles, Bangladeshis living abroad sent \$27 billion in 2024.

As a result, Bangladesh ranked seventh globally among remittance-earning countries—its highest position in history. India was the top remittance recipient in the world, receiving an estimated \$129.1 billion in 2024. In the same year, Bangladesh ranked fifth among remittance-earning countries in Asia—Pakistan ranked fourth with \$33 billion, the Philippines third with \$40 billion, and China second with \$48 billion.

In 2025, it is likely that all previous



FILE VISUAL: SALMAN SAKIB SHAHRYAR

records for remittance inflows to Bangladesh will be surpassed. A new record was set in March during Eid-ul-Fitr, when remittances totalled \$3.29 billion. In February, total diaspora income rose to \$2.53 billion, also marking the highest ever for a single month. Statistics show that the total amount of remittances sent by the diaspora over the last 10 years amounted to \$177.59 billion.

Although remittance flows faced some challenges during the 2023-24 fiscal year, there has been promising

progress in recent times. However, many of the demands made by the diaspora remain unaddressed. Among them, several urgent issues require immediate attention from the state.

To increase remittance flows, the dominance of hundi systems must be eradicated. Sending money through hundi instead of official banking channels undermines legitimate remittance flows. To combat this, awareness must be raised, and banking services should be made more accessible, efficient, user-friendly, and appealing.

The government must take more effective steps to export skilled manpower. Due to a lack of adequate skills, many members of the diaspora are employed in low-paying jobs. Although there are Technical Training Centres (TTCs) across the country, the desired progress has yet to be achieved.



FILE VISUAL: SALMAN SAKIB SHAHRYAR

Employment issues faced by members of the diaspora must be addressed swiftly. In cases involving labour abuse or other employment-related problems, prompt action should be taken through embassies or diplomatic channels.

Bangladesh should reduce its dependence on remittances in the national budget. The country must boost its overall exports and local production to ensure long-term economic stability.

A special insurance policy for

the diaspora could be introduced. The current 2.5 percent incentive for sending remittances via banking channels could be increased, with a portion allocated towards life and health insurance for diaspora families. Banks offering insurance products for the diaspora may provide valuable guidance in this regard.

The security of diaspora families and their assets must be strengthened. Many members of the diaspora are concerned about the safety of their families and properties. In some cases, hard-earned assets are unlawfully seized. Appropriate and strict legal action must be taken to prevent this.

Partial tuition fee waivers and other benefits could be offered for the education of diaspora children. Educational institutions might also offer special provisions for children of those who send remittances through banking channels.

Passport issuance and renewal should be made more convenient for the diaspora. Primary personal data and photographs could be authenticated digitally during the renewal process, or when issuing national identity cards, birth certificates, and other documents.

Airports must be upgraded to provide a more comfortable experience for the diaspora upon arrival and departure. Many complain of mistreatment at airports, including loss of valuables and unnecessary harassment. The government has responded to some concerns by inaugurating a VIP lounge at the airport, a move that has been widely appreciated. However, it remains vital to treat diaspora members as VIPs, recognising them as a key driving force in the nation’s economy.

Remittance inflows should not be restricted to a few Middle Eastern countries. There is significant potential for exporting manpower to regions such as Europe, Japan, South Korea, and Australia. Accessing these labour markets could further boost remittance inflows.

Lastly, loans and other banking facilities on favourable terms should be provided to encourage investment by the diaspora. To achieve this, more effective and thoughtful measures must be undertaken, keeping the well-being of the diaspora at the forefront.

China’s bold move to bypass Western tech dominance



Dr Sayeed Ahmed is a consulting engineer and the CEO of Bayside Analytix, a technology focused strategy and management consulting organisation.

SAYEED AHMED

Washington’s continued restrictions on exporting chip technology to Beijing may soon prove futile because the silicon-based semiconductor industry faces a potent adversary taking shape in China. After decades of silicon dominance, carbon nanotubes are emerging as a promising alternative to transform computing power while dramatically reducing energy consumption. This technological shift may also fundamentally alter the global tech competition, with China charting its innovative path rather than following in Western footsteps.

Traditional silicon chips have improved steadily for decades, following Moore’s Law by doubling transistor density roughly every two years. But we’re approaching physical barriers that silicon cannot overcome. Modern chips leak electricity and generate excessive heat as transistors shrink to atomic scales, creating serious efficiency problems.

This limitation is particularly problematic for artificial intelligence applications. *The New York Times* reported that training a single advanced AI model can consume as much electricity as 100 American households use annually.

Carbon nanotubes (CNT)—microscopic cylinders of carbon atoms—offer a compelling alternative

with remarkable advantages. First, they conduct electricity far better than silicon. Second, they manage heat more efficiently. Third, they can operate with up to 90 percent less energy. Fourth, they function at smaller scales than silicon can achieve.

According to a recent analysis by *The Wall Street Journal*, CNT represents not just an improvement in chip technology but potentially a fundamentally different approach to computing architecture.

The emergence of CNT coincides with escalating US-China technology tensions. As *Foreign Policy* magazine detailed, since 2018, Washington has implemented increasingly stricter controls on selling advanced semiconductors and related technologies to China. But rather than simply attempting to catch up in these areas, China appears to be charting an entirely different course—one focused on leapfrogging current technology. Researchers at Peking University demonstrated carbon nanotube transistors that rival advanced silicon chips while using significantly less power. Besides, the Chinese Academy of Sciences has achieved breakthroughs in solving critical manufacturing challenges.

This approach mirrors China’s mobile technology strategy of the early 2000s. It leapfrogged to mobile

networks rather than building extensive landline infrastructure as Western countries once did. This technological leap allowed China to bypass decades of development and emerge as a mobile technology leader.

Japan followed a similar path in the 1970s and 1980s. Instead of copying American manufacturing methods, its automakers pioneered lean production techniques that revolutionised the industry. *The Harvard Business Review* documented how this independent approach transformed Japan from a technological follower to a leader in just one generation. History shows that the most successful technological challengers didn’t follow the established path—they found a new one. China’s focus on CNT without replicating silicon manufacturing follows this historical pattern.

However, despite promising developments, bringing CNT chips to market presents formidable challenges. First, manufacturing consistency at the industrial scale remains difficult. Second, integration with existing computing architectures requires significant adaptation. Third, building an entirely new supply chain takes time and massive investment. Continued American investment in research and innovation also poses challenges. *MIT Technology Review* reports that IBM and Intel are pursuing CNT research, while venture capital firms fund several startups focusing on this area.

All these suggest that Washington’s restrictions may have inadvertently accelerated Beijing’s investment in alternative technologies that could eventually surpass the very technologies being withheld. Any technological divergence

could reshape global computing architectures and standards. Devices and systems might develop along increasingly separate paths with different optimisation priorities and capabilities. This potential bifurcation raises important strategic questions about technology adoption, compatibility, and long-term planning for businesses and governments worldwide.

China’s CNT gambit represents more than just a response to export controls—it reflects a maturing approach to innovation. Rather than following the established technological roadmap, China is increasingly willing to chart its course. One such example is the launch of DeepSeek, which shook American stock markets to the core.

As we’ve seen throughout industrial history, technological leapfrogging often succeeds precisely because legacy approaches don’t constrain it. From Japan’s manufacturing revolution to South Korea’s semiconductor rise, countries that find alternative paths frequently move faster than established leaders expect. The most effective technological strategies rarely involve simply catching up—they must find a different way forward, including developing newer technologies and charting different trajectories. China’s focus on post-silicon computing suggests it has internalised this lesson.

Whether CNT fulfils its promise or other alternatives emerge, one thing is clear: the future of computing will be shaped not by who can build the best chips under prevailing paradigms but who can pioneer entirely new ones. More DeepSeek moments could be just around the corner.