



# Fast fashion, fat margins

## How retailers cash in on low-cost RMG

REFAYET ULLAH MIRDHA

Global fashion brands are reaping triple-digit profits on Bangladeshi garments, buying at \$3 and selling for three to four times more. Yet, they continue to pressure factories to cut prices further.

A shirt manufactured in Bangladesh at a free on board (FoB) price of \$5 often retails for as much as \$28 in Europe or North America. Once shipping, warehousing, duties, and other operational costs are added, bringing the total to around \$16, retailers may still earn a profit of about \$12 per item.

Western retailers and brands often justify their pricing strategies by pointing to the high costs associated with global operations, including freight charges, currency hedging, warehousing, demurrage, markdowns, and advertising.

"There are overheads, of course, but let's not pretend they're not making money," said Fazle Shamim Ehsan, proprietor of Fatullah Apparels. "Especially in the mid to high-end market, many brands earn huge profits from goods made in Bangladesh."

Still, many Western buyers continue to pressure Bangladeshi factories to reduce the prices further.

A 2020 study by the European non-profit Fair Wear Foundation found that nearly 39 percent of garment manufacturers in the country had sold products at a loss.

The practice, exporters say, is mainly to preserve long-standing relationships with global retailers and to secure future contracts.

Meanwhile, data from the Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD), a Dhaka-based think tank, suggests that Bangladesh consistently receives lower prices than its Asian competitors for similar products.

In 2020, Bangladeshi cotton T-shirts exported to the European Union (EU) fetched €1,091.5 per 100 kilogrammes, a 1 percent decline from the previous year, while Vietnam's equivalent product saw a 3 percent price increase, rising to €2,157.9.

The contrast was even sharper in pullovers. Bangladesh's average price fell 7 percent to €1,329.5, whereas Vietnamese pullovers held

### A 'MADE IN BANGLADESH' SHIRT RETAILING \$28 INCLUDES

\$5 FoB price, shipping cost, warehousing charge and duties

Still it fetches a whopping \$12 profit

### WHY BANGLADESH GETS LOWER PRICES

Cotton-heavy exports, limited value addition

Price undercutting among local exporters

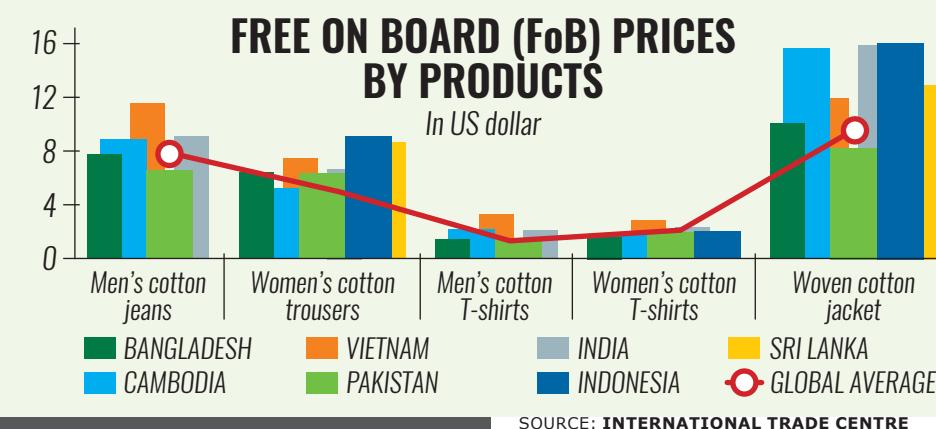
Accepting lower rates to secure orders

### RETAILERS' JUSTIFICATIONS

High costs of shipping, warehousing and retailing

Discounted sales for unsold stocks after each season

Higher wages for retail staff in Europe and US



steady at €2,157.8.

For garments made from man-made fibres, Bangladeshi exports declined 6 percent to €1,319.4, while Vietnam's fell by just 3 percent to €1,906.2.

The United States market reflected similar patterns, as shown in the CPD data.

The average price for a dozen Bangladeshi

made cotton T-shirts dropped from \$22.43 in 2019 to \$17.99 in 2020, a 20 percent fall, while Vietnamese suppliers experienced a slightly smaller decline, with prices falling from \$38.2 to \$31.9.

Bangladeshi sweaters and pullovers also saw a 2 percent price drop to \$39.31 per dozen, whereas Vietnamese equivalents remained largely unchanged, with prices hovering around \$47.

For trousers, the gap was wider still. A dozen cotton-fibre trousers for women and girls exported from Bangladesh earned \$64.17 in 2020, down 12 percent from the

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## Import activities hampered as taxmen extend strike

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Protesting officials and employees of the National Board of Revenue (NBR) yesterday vowed to continue their pen-down strike today to press home their three-point demand, including the repeal of a new ordinance on restructuring the revenue administration.

The other demands are for the public disclosure of a state advisory committee's report on reforms required for the NBR, which was submitted to the finance ministry, and inclusive, consultative and sustainable reforms for the revenue administration.

The strike, led by "NBR Reform Unity Council", a platform of cadre and non-cadre officials, is in protest of a recently-issued ordinance for the dissolution of the NBR's existing structure.

Amid the ongoing strike, revenue activities—including import and

export—have been disrupted nationwide, posing a serious risk to overall revenue collection and causing significant setbacks for regular business operations.

For example, customs clearance of imported consignments at Chattogram Custom House on Wednesday dropped by nearly half of that on the day before, according to data from the customs authority.

On Tuesday, 3,460 import bills of entry were processed, whereas the number fell to 1,874 on Wednesday—the first day of the strike. It stood at 1,897 on Thursday.

On Saturday, customs activities remained suspended until 3:00pm due to the ongoing strike, officials said.

A visit to Chattogram Custom House on Saturday revealed near-complete inactivity at the customs assessment sections. Most desks were found empty,

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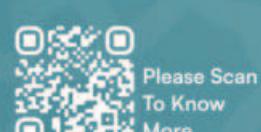
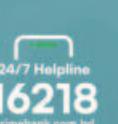
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# PBIL, WeGro team up to expand opportunities for agri investors

STAR BUSINESS DESK

Prime Bank Investment Limited (PBIL), a subsidiary of Prime Bank PLC, has entered into a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with WeGro Technologies Limited, a digital platform facilitating investment in agricultural ventures.

Syed M Omar Tayub, managing director and CEO of PBIL, and Md Mahmudur Rahman, chief executive and co-founder of WeGro, signed the MoU in Dhaka recently, according to a press release. Tayub commented, "This collaboration enables WeGro's investors to diversify beyond agricultural projects into capital markets."

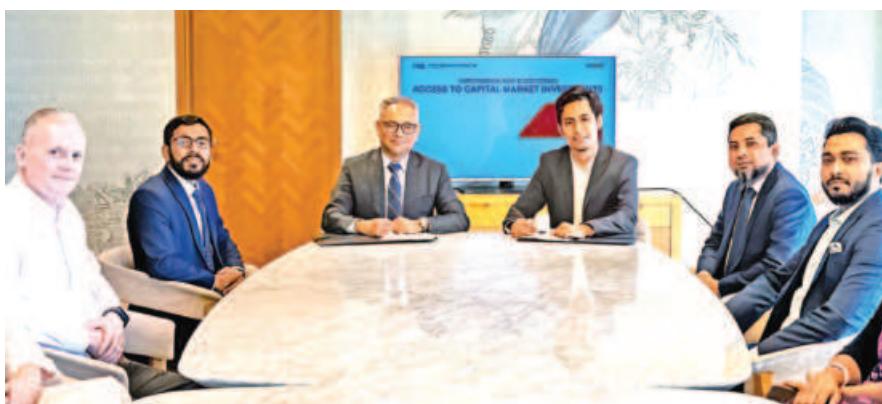
He added, "It represents a mutually beneficial opportunity for portfolio expansion and the promotion of economic inclusivity."

Rahman noted, "Our users can now support farmers while gaining access to regulated financial instruments, effectively bridging impact investing with mainstream wealth generation."

Under this partnership, investors engaging with the WeGro platform whether via the app or website who fund agricultural initiatives such as livestock and crop projects, will now be able to seamlessly access regulated financial markets through PBIL's PrimeInvest Discretionary Product Suite, a professionally managed investment scheme.

This initiative aligns with PBIL's AccessToInvestment programme, aimed at expanding wealth-building opportunities for both retail and institutional investors.

Senior officials from both organisations were also present.



Md Mahmudur Rahman, chief executive and co-founder of WeGro Technologies Limited, and Syed M Omar Tayub, managing director and CEO of Prime Bank Investment Limited, pose for photographs during the signing of the memorandum of understanding in Dhaka recently.

PHOTO: PRIME BANK INVESTMENT LIMITED



Md Abdul Latif, deputy managing director of Citizens Bank PLC, inaugurates the ATM booth of the bank at the Bangladesh Small and Cottage Industries Corporation in Narayanganj recently.

PHOTO: CITIZENS BANK

## Electro Mart unveils Gree's four new AC series

STAR BUSINESS DESK

Electro Mart Limited, a manufacturer and marketer of electronics and home appliances in the country, has recently introduced four new series under the renowned air conditioner brand Gree -- Cosmo, Shimo, Zeno, and Clivia -- to the Bangladeshi market.

The newly launched series are equipped with cutting edge technologies developed by Gree, embodying sophistication and modernity.

The full range is now available at all retail and partner outlets of the Electro Mart Group across the country.

Each series features advanced nano-technology, artificial intelligence capabilities, and both indoor and outdoor units enhanced with environmentally responsible innovations.

A notable highlight of these models is their enhanced indoor unit purification system, comprising three distinctive tricolour filters:

a biological sterilisation filter, a catechin filter, and a silver ion filter.

The biological sterilisation filter contains active antibacterial agents that precipitate bacterial proteins, delivering a highly effective antibacterial outcome.

The catechin filter inhibits bacterial proliferation, ensuring a superior sanitising effect.

Meanwhile, the silver ion filter interacts with microbial organisms, disrupting their cellular integrity and rendering them inactive.

Ryan Cheung, assistant general manager of Gree Global, inaugurated the new series during a ceremony held at the company's corporate office in the capital's Gulshan, according to a press release.



Ryan Cheung, assistant general manager of Gree Global, inaugurates the new AC series of Gree during a ceremony at Electro Mart's corporate office in the capital's Gulshan recently.

PHOTO: ELECTRO MART



Shaikh Md Salim

## NRB Bank gets new chair of risk management committee

STAR BUSINESS DESK

NRB Bank PLC has recently elected Shaikh Md Salim, former executive director of Bangladesh Bank, as the chairman of its Risk Management Committee.

The appointment was confirmed during a meeting of the bank's board of directors, according to a press release.

Salim commenced his professional banking career in 1993 as an assistant director at Bangladesh Bank, eventually rising to the position of executive director.

With over three decades of experience at the central bank, he has cultivated expertise in financial analysis, project management, data-driven decision-making, credit appraisal, and the evaluation of banks and non-bank financial institutions.

## Mercantile Bank, Mastercard launch new range of cards

STAR BUSINESS DESK

Mercantile Bank PLC, in collaboration with Mastercard, has launched a portfolio of new cards, offering exceptional convenience, benefits, and financial flexibility to cardholders in Bangladesh.

The portfolio comprises the Mastercard Titanium Credit Card, World Mastercard Credit Card, Mastercard Debit Card, Mastercard Platinum Global Debit Card, and a Mastercard Prepaid Card.

These cards are equipped with contactless technology, dual currency support, and are secured by robust two-factor authentication, ensuring a seamless and secure payment experience for both domestic and international transactions.

Cardholders can enjoy privileges

across travel, lifestyle, and dining categories, along with attractive discounts and exclusive deals at over 9,000 partner merchant outlets of Mastercard and Mercantile Bank PLC throughout the country.

Additionally, they have the facility to withdraw cash at any time from both domestic and international ATMs, ensuring uninterrupted access to funds.

Salehuddin Ahmed, adviser to Ministry of Finance and Ministry of Science and Technology, unveiled the cards as the chief guest at the Radisson Blu Water Garden Hotel in Dhaka yesterday, said a press release.

Salehuddin Ahmed stated, "We are committed to encouraging digital transactions as much as possible, as they ensure greater transparency and traceability, especially through platforms like Mastercard."



Salehuddin Ahmed, adviser to the Ministry of Finance and Ministry of Science and Technology, unveils the new range of feature-rich cards by Mercantile Bank PLC at the Radisson Blu Water Garden Hotel in Dhaka yesterday.

## Yamaha Riders Club launches 'Safe Road, Safe Ride' campaign

STAR BUSINESS DESK

The Yamaha Riders Club, a community of motorcycle enthusiasts dedicated not only to biking activities but also to promoting social awareness, has recently launched a nationwide campaign entitled "Safe Road, Safe Ride" in observance of UN Global Road Safety Week.

As part of the initiative, the club has undertaken a range of activities across approximately 55 districts. These include repainting speed breakers and zebra crossings, repairing damaged road signs, displaying awareness placards, and implementing various road safety measures.

In addition to promoting road safety, the club has also planted around 25,000 trees across the country, according to a press release.

The UN Global Road Safety Week is a biennial global observance held under the auspices of the United Nations, aimed at raising awareness and promoting actions to improve road safety worldwide.

## Oil posts weekly gain

REUTERS, Houston

Oil settled higher on Friday, notching a second straight week of gains on easing US-China trade tensions, although prices were held back by expectations of higher supply from Iran and Opec+.

Brent crude futures settled up 88 cents, or 1.4 percent, at \$65.41 per barrel, while US West Texas Intermediate crude futures closed 87 cents, or 1.4 percent higher at \$62.49.



BANGLADESH RURAL ELECTRIFICATION BOARD  
POWER DIVISION, MINISTRY OF POWER, ENERGY AND MINERAL RESOURCES  
GOVERNMENT OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF BANGLADESH

Memo No-27.12.6152.118.07.011.25.666

Date: 13-05-2025

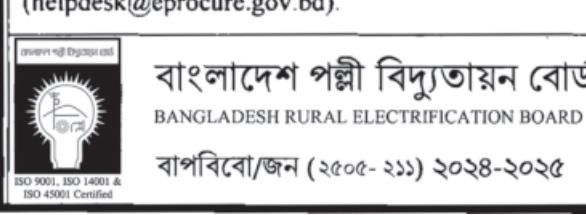
## e-Tender Notice (LTM)

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) & Construction (New/Upgradation) 11 KV OHD line under the geographical area of Mymensingh PBS-3 & Sherpur 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	Closing Date	Closing Time
W-377-1-Ins-LT-HT-HT 1PH-3PH	Installation of 20.883 KM Insulated conductor, Conversion of LT to HT & HT (1Ph to 3Ph) Line under the geographical area of Sherpur PBS against MCEP (DMD). Tender ID N0-1108075	04-06-25	10:30
W-377-2-Ins-LT-HT-HT 1PH-3PH	Installation of 20.000 KM Insulated conductor, Conversion of LT to HT & HT (1Ph to 3Ph) Line under the geographical area of Sherpur PBS against MCEP (DMD). Tender ID N0-1108076	04-06-25	10:45
W-377-4-Ins-LT-HT-HT 1PH-3PH	Installation of 20.955 KM Insulated conductor, Conversion of LT to HT & HT (1Ph to 3Ph) Line under the geographical area of Sherpur PBS against MCEP (DMD). Tender ID N0-1108077	04-06-25	11:00
W-367-1-Ins-LT-HT-HT 1PH-3PH	Installation of 10.289 KM Insulated conductor, Conversion of LT to HT & HT (1Ph to 3Ph) Line under the geographical area of Mymensingh PBS-3 against MCEP (DMD). Tender ID N0-1108078	04-06-25	11:15
W-367-2-Ins-LT-HT-HT 1PH-3PH	Installation of 10.005 KM Insulated conductor, Conversion of LT to HT & HT (1Ph to 3Ph) Line under the geographical area of Mymensingh PBS-3 against MCEP (DMD). Tender ID N0-1108079	04-06-25	11:30
W-367-3-Ins-I-T-HT-HT 1PH-3PH	Installation of 10.249 KM Insulated conductor, Conversion of LT to HT & HT (1Ph to 3Ph) Line under the geographical area of Mymensingh PBS-3 against MCEP (DMD). Tender ID N0-1108080	04-06-25	11:45
W-367-4-Ins-LT-HT-HT 1PH-3PH	Installation of 10.598 KM Insulated conductor, Conversion of LT to HT & HT (1Ph to 3Ph) Line under the geographical area of Mymensingh PBS-3 against MCEP (DMD). Tender ID N0-1108082	04-06-25	12:00
W-367-5-Ins-LT-HT-HT 1PH-3PH	Installation of 9.747 KM Insulated conductor, Conversion of LT to HT & HT (1Ph to 3Ph) Line under the geographical area of Mymensingh PBS-3 against MCEP (DMD). Tender ID N0-1108084	04-06-25	12:15
W-149-1-11KV(N&UP)	Construction (New/Upgradation) of 14.400 Km 11 KV OHD line under the geographical area of Mymensingh PBS-3 against MCEP (DMD). Tender ID N0-1108085	04-06-25	12:30
W-149-2-11KV(N&UP)	Construction (New/Upgradation) of 14.765 Km 11 KV OHD line under the geographical area of Mymensingh PBS-3 against MCEP (DMD). Tender ID N0-1108087	04-06-25	12:45
W-149-3-11KV(N&UP)	Construction (New/Upgradation) of 14.906 Km 11 KV OHD line under the geographical area of Mymensingh PBS-3 against MCEP (DMD). Tender ID N0-1108088	04-06-25	13:00
W-149-4-11KV(N&UP)	Construction (New/Upgradation) of 15.428 Km 11 KV OHD line under the geographical area of Mymensingh PBS-3 against MCEP (DMD). Tender ID N0-1108090	04-06-25	13:15
W-149-5-11KV(N&UP)	Construction (New/Upgradation) of 14.406 Km 11 KV OHD line under the geographical area of Mymensingh PBS-3 against MCEP (DMD). Tender ID N0-1108091	04-06-25	13:30

This is an online Tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no off line/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 03-06-2025 at 17:00 PM. Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP helpdesk ([helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd](mailto:helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd)).



বাংলাদেশ পল্লী বিদ্যুতায়ন বোর্ড

BANGLADESH RURAL ELECTRIFICATION BOARD

বাপৰিবো/জন (১৫০৫-১১১) ২০২৮-২০২৫

(Md. Altaf Hossain Chowdhury)

Superintending Engineer  
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GD-1182

## Fast fashion, fat margins

FROM PAGE B1

year before. Vietnam, by comparison, received \$84.6 for the same product after a smaller price adjustment of just 6 percent.

### SYSTEMIC UNDERVALUATION

A 2022 report by the International Trade Centre (ITC) underscored the pattern of systemic undervaluation of Bangladeshi garments.

Men's woven cotton trousers exported from Bangladesh earned an FoB price of \$7.01 per piece, which was 9.2 percent below the global average of \$7.72. Vietnam received \$10.76 for the same item, while Sri Lanka and India fetched \$8 and \$8.41.

Similarly, men's cotton jeans made in Bangladesh were sold at \$7.81 per piece, 7.2 percent below the global average of \$8.41, while Vietnamese jeans sold for \$11.55.

Even in niche categories like man-made fibre bras, Bangladesh was paid considerably less, with exporters earning \$3.19 per unit compared to Vietnam's \$6.06.

Only two Bangladeshi products -- women's cotton trousers and men's cotton T-shirts -- were sold at slightly above the global average.

Women's cotton trousers earned \$6.43 apiece, exceeding the world average of \$5.22 by 23.3 percent, while men's T-shirts fetched \$1.47, roughly 23.1 percent higher than the

global benchmark.

Still, these figures were dwarfed by the earnings of countries like Turkey and Peru, which received up to four times more for similar items.

According to the ITC, which has a joint mandate with the World Trade Organization and the United Nations, these pricing gaps represent an entrenched imbalance in the global supply chain.

Industry insiders say Bangladesh's quality has improved, but its bargaining power remains weak.

### RETAILERS CITE HIGH OPERATIONAL COSTS

Ehsan, owner of Fatullah Apparels, said jackets and outerwear produced in Bangladesh, often sold to retailers at FoB prices ranging from \$20 to \$25, regularly appear in stores for \$100 to \$110.

He added that some of the world's richest individuals have built their fortunes in fashion retail, with Bangladesh as a key production hub.

The profit chain often stretches beyond the retailers themselves.

Md Fazlul Hoque, managing director of Plummy Fashions Ltd, pointed out that a significant share of Bangladesh's garment exports is managed by intermediaries or third-party importers, who also take a cut before the goods reach retail shelves.

"Sometimes we sell a T-shirt at \$3.50, and it ends up in a branded

store for \$39," Hoque said. "Of course, it doesn't stay at that price forever -- discounting comes in later, but the markup is still substantial."

He added that while pricing can vary across seasons and product categories, the general rule of thumb remains: most garments are sold at three to four times their FoB value.

However, a European retailer, on condition of anonymity, disputed the claims of excessive markups. "Those suggesting a substantial markup on Bangladeshi garment items are gravely mistaken," he said.

In the garment supply chain, a European retailer must rent large warehouses to store goods, which is quite costly," he said, adding that transportation expenses also factor in.

"Renting retail space is another major expense, and ultimately, retailers and brands can sell, at best, 70 percent of the goods from a single consignment," he said. "Once the season ends, unsold items can no longer be offered to customers."

The retailer said that European companies pay higher wages than their Asian counterparts, which also affects profit margins. "Ultimately, European retailers earn less than 10 percent profit annually. The claims of high markups are exaggerated."

**CALL FOR FAIR PRICING**  
Apparel industry advocates

and multilateral organisations are increasingly urging retailers to adopt more equitable pricing models.

The ITC noted in its report that while apparel manufacturing has grown more complex, involving design, logistics, and branding, the actual cut-and-sew operations, which remain concentrated in countries like Bangladesh, continue to be the least rewarded.

Khondaker Golam Moazzem, research director at CPD, said that China and Vietnam are getting higher prices for their garments by utilising diverse fabrics and innovative product designs, despite sharing the same HS codes as Bangladesh.

In contrast, Bangladesh's garment exports are heavily reliant on just five or six products, accounting for 70 percent of its total exports. This concentration creates unhealthy competition, tempting local exporters to undercut prices, said Moazzem.

He also pointed out that the industry's heavy dependence on cotton and limited use of man-made fibres are also obstructing better prices.

Bringing in more foreign investment could be a viable solution, as foreign investors usually have access to upmarket buyers and advanced technologies," said the CPD research director.

## Seize opportunity

FROM PAGE B1

"Following the US tariff imposition, we have responded quickly and responsibly."

On facilitating cotton imports from the US, Rahman said a warehouse could be established in Bangladesh to streamline delivery. He also highlighted a long term LNG import deal with the US that is expected to boost bilateral trade by nearly \$1 billion.

"Imports of US origin goods via third countries should be recognised as direct imports in trade discussions," he added.

Mahbubur Rahman, president of the International Chamber of Commerce-Bangladesh (ICCB), urged the government to continue negotiations and criticised the US for unilaterally imposing tariffs. "This contradicts WTO norms."

He also expressed concern over weak public private dialogue and suggested diversifying exports beyond traditional markets by focusing on Asia, the Middle East, and Africa.

Abul Kasem Khan, chairperson of Business Initiative Leading Development (BUILD), called for exploring a free trade agreement (FTA) with the US. "Policy support is essential for export diversification," he said, also urging the formulation of a strategic roadmap for tapping new markets.

Md Mezbui Haque, executive director of the Bangladesh Bank, said the recent US tariffs could spark a price war, forcing local industries to increase efficiency. "Our competitiveness is already under pressure due to high financing and energy costs," he said.

To support exporters, the central bank is offering Export Facilitation (EF) funds at a subsidised 5 percent interest rate, Haque added.

On the other hand, as almost all members of the Executive Committee of the BCS Customs and VAT Association have resigned, it has also become ineffective.

In a statement, BCS Taxation Association said all activities of the organisation have been suspended indefinitely.

As before, international passenger services, export activities, and preparations for the national budget will remain out of the purview of today's strike.

Protesting officials are expected to announce fresh programmes at a press conference scheduled to be held at 3pm.

"Our import demand for US origin cotton, soybean, and LNG is growing -- these must be included in bilateral talks," he said. Reaz also underlined the need to improve logistics, noting that Bangladesh's costs are significantly higher than those of regional peers.

Shams Mahmud, a former DCCI president, cautioned that higher US tariffs could reduce demand for Bangladeshi products, intensifying competition for export orders.

He reiterated the need to count

US-origin goods imported via third countries as direct imports during trade negotiations. Mahmud also called for urgent improvement in the business environment, particularly in ensuring uninterrupted power supply to industrial zones.

Razeen Haider, director of the Bangladesh Textile Mills Association, said textile production has dropped nearly 45 percent due to declining gas pressure in factories. He added that while US cotton is of premium quality, it is costly and takes over three months to arrive, which deters importers.

"If the US establishes warehouse facilities here, our cotton imports could increase fourfold," Haider suggested.

Taskeen Ahmed, president of the DCCI, described Bangladesh as standing at a "critical crossroads" shaped by shifting global trade dynamics. He called for urgent reforms, including trade facilitation improvements, exploring FTAs, boosting digital competitiveness, and enhancing skills development.

"To navigate this uncertain landscape, we need immediate and long term actions," Ahmed said. "Most importantly, a well-coordinated public-private partnership is essential to tackle tariff challenges without delay."

## Must proceed

FROM PAGE B1

launch event of five new card services by Mercantile Bank, in association with Mastercard, in the capital.

"We are committed to encouraging digital transactions as much as possible, as they ensure greater transparency and traceability," Ahmed said.

He added that although digital adoption is growing, it is important to address the concerns people face, such as excessive questioning by banks, which often hinders broader participation.

Credit cards, in particular, play a crucial role in facilitating remittances and driving financial inclusion.

"I extend my best wishes to both Mercantile Bank and Mastercard for their continued efforts in advancing private sector development and promoting digital transformation in the financial ecosystem."

Mati Ul Hasan, managing director of Mercantile Bank PLC, stated that the initiative aligns with their broader goal of supporting Bangladesh's transition toward a cashless, digitally empowered society.

## Import activities hampered

FROM PAGE B1

and representatives of importers were seen standing with files in hand, waiting for officers who were absent.

As per regulations, no consignment can be cleared without assessment and examination by customs officials.

The strike has also brought operations at the Chattogram VAT office, export processing zone customs, and the customs bond commissionerate to a halt.

"Assessment and examination activities at the custom house have remained suspended due to the pending strike. No official is carrying out these duties," said Mohammad Saidul Islam, deputy commissioner of Chattogram Custom House.

However, export services and airport operations remain unaffected, he added.

reflect the views of all stakeholders, and properly value the expertise and experience of NBR officials and employees," he said.

At the briefing, NBR Reform Unity Council sincerely apologised for the temporary inconvenience caused to taxpayers and service seekers.

"We believe that this temporary sacrifice will play an active role in serving the greater interest of the country and its people, as well as in ensuring sustainable reform of the revenue system," said the platform's representatives.

"Additionally, we want to make it clear that, if our demands are met, we will work beyond regular office hours to complete any pending tasks," they said.

Based on the opinions of the general members, the unelected

executive committee of the BCS Taxation Association has been declared illegal and dissolved, according to the platform.

On the other hand, as almost all members of the Executive Committee of the BCS Customs and VAT Association have resigned, it has also become ineffective.

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He reiterated the need to count

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার			
সমাজসেবা অধিদপ্তর			
উপ-তত্ত্বাবধায়কের কার্যালয়			
সরকারি শিশু পরিবার (বালিকা), মানিকগঞ্জ।			
দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি			
১. মন্ত্রনালয়/ বিভাগ	সমাজসেবা অধিদপ্তর	মন্ত্রনালয় মন্ত্রিসভা	
২. এজেন্সি	সমাজসেবা অধিদপ্তর, ঢাকা।		
৩. সংগ্রহক স্বাক্ষর নাম	১। উপ-তত্ত্বাবধায়ক, সরকারি শিশু পরিবার (বালিকা), মানিকগঞ্জ।		
৪. সংগ্রহক স্বাক্ষর জেলা	মানিকগঞ্জ।		
৫. যে কাজের জন্য দরপত্র	২০২৫-২০২৬ অর্থবছরে সমাজসেবা অধিদপ্তর পরিচালিত সরকারি শিশু পরিবার (বালিকা), মানিকগঞ্জ এবং নিবাসীদের বাস্তু ও খাদ্যানুষাঙ্গিক, শিক্ষা, স্বাস্থ্য প্রসারণী এবং বিশ্ব আলামী সরবরাহ।		
৬. দরপত্র নথি ও তারিখ	৮১,০১,৫,৬০০,০৩৭,০৭,০০৮,২৫-২৬	তারিখ: ১৫/০৫/২০২৫ খ্রি।	
৭. দরপত্র প্রকারের তারিখ	১৮/০৫/২০২৫ খ্রি।		
৮. সংগ্রহ পক্ষতি	উপ-তত্ত্ব দরপত্র পক্ষতি।		
৯. বাস্তু ও তহবিলের উৎস	বাস্তু বাস্তু (বিভিন্ন)		
১০. দরপত্রের প্রাক্কেজ নথি	০৩টি/ ২০২৫-২০২৬।		
১১. দরপত্রের প্রাক্কেজের নাম	২০২৫-২০২৬ অর্থবছরে সমাজসেবা অধিদপ্তর পরিচালিত সরকারি শিশু পরিবার (বালিকা), মানিকগঞ্জ ('ক' পুরুষ- বাস্তু- খাদ্যানুষাঙ্গিক প্রক্রিয়ান ও সমন্বীল, 'খ' পুরুষ- শিক্ষা, স্বাস্থ্য, প্রসারণী এবং অন্যান্য সরবরাহ এবং 'গ' পুরুষ- বিশ্ব আলামী সরবরাহ।		
১২. দরপত্র সিডিউল বিক্রয়ের শেষ তারিখ ও সময়	০২/০৬/২০২৫ খ্রি। বিক্রয় ৫,০০ ঘটক পর্যন্ত।		
১৩. দরপত্র দাখিলের তারিখ ও সময়	০৩/০৬/২০২৫ খ্রি। সকাল ৯,০০ ঘটক হতে দুপুর ১২,০০ ঘটক পর্যন্ত।		
১৪. দরপত্র দাখিলের তারিখ ও সময়	০৩/০৬/২০২৫ খ্রি। বেলা ১০,০০ ঘটক দরবারাত বা তার মনোনীত প্রাতিনিধিত্বে বেলা হতে দুপুর পর্যন্ত থাকেন।		
১৫. কার্যালয়ের নাম ও ঠিকানা	১. উপ-তত্ত্বাবধায়কের কার্যালয়, সরকারি শিশু পরিবার (বালিকা), মানিকগঞ্জ। ২. উপ-তত্ত্বাবধায়কের কার্যালয়, সরকারি শিশু পরিবার (বালিকা), মানিকগঞ্জ।		
১৬. দরপত্র দাখিল করিব থানা	১. কার		



Anwar-Ul-Alam Chowdhury

JAGARAN CHAKMA

Bangladesh is dealing with one of its most challenging political and economic shifts, and the US tariff hike to 37 percent on its exports could worsen the situation.

This could turn out to be a big problem for the economy, especially for the readymade garment (RMG) industry, which is Bangladesh's primary export item.

If this tariff rate ends up being imposed, it could badly hurt the industry and cause foreign investors to lose interest in the country.

"This tariff is not just a policy shift—it is a crisis," said Anwar-Ul-Alam Chowdhury (Parvez), president of the Bangladesh Chamber of Industries (BCI), in an interview with The Daily Star.

"It could trigger factory closures, massive job losses, and long-term damage to our export base," he said.

In his assessment, Chowdhury warned that unless six critical fault lines were urgently addressed, Bangladesh risks slipping into a cycle of stagnation—while regional competitors surge ahead.

Four of the six issues are the deterioration of law and order, growing challenges in compliance and labour regulation reforms, inadequate gas and power supplies, and vulnerabilities in the financial and banking sectors.

The remaining two are burdensome and inconsistent taxation policies and the need to safeguard the future of exports and manufacturing.

Chowdhury commented that rising crime and violence—often linked to elements of the past regime—along with politicised and demotivated law enforcement agencies and bureaucratic

inefficiencies, were undermining law and order.

This is also weakening governance and eroding public and investor confidence. "We are at a crossroads. Bangladesh must act boldly and decisively—or risk losing relevance," he said.

According to Chowdhury, the shifting geopolitical landscape—triggered by US-China trade tensions, war induced supply chain realignments, and evolving Indo-Pacific strategies—has opened a rare window for Bangladesh.

He warned that delays in reform would divert investment flows to better-prepared neighbours like Vietnam, India, and Indonesia. Industries in Bangladesh are under immense pressure, he said.

The RMG sector, which generates more than 80 percent of the country's export earnings, has reported over \$400 million in production losses due to factory shutdowns caused by labour unrest and compliance uncertainties, said the BCI president.

The textiles, ceramics, and leather sectors are also facing a severe energy crisis, with frequent power cuts and gas shortages forcing operations to be scaled down, he said.

Many manufacturers are struggling to stay afloat amid surging costs of imported liquefied natural gas (LNG) and delayed government response, he said.

"We are paying the price for years of underinvestment in energy and infrastructure. Insufficient energy supply is the single biggest threat to our industrial backbone," he added.

Rolling blackouts and erratic gas supply have disrupted production across sectors. The reliance on costly LNG imports has proven unsustainable. "If we don't secure energy, we can't grow. It's

that simple," he said.

In spite of recommendations made by policy experts for years, Bangladesh continues to rank poorly in the ease of doing business, bogged down by delays in tax refunds, customs clearance, and factory registration processes, he said.

Although Bangladesh has a young and growing labour force, employers struggle to find job ready graduates. "We are producing degrees, not skills," said Chowdhury.

He advocated for stronger links between universities and industries, reforms in technical education, and private sector-led training programmes. "Our demographic dividend is becoming a liability. That must change," he said.

The BCI president highlighted that overdependence on garments for foreign currency earnings is a critical vulnerability, especially in the post-least developed country (LDC) era when duty-free market access will be phased out.

He said Bangladesh's LDC graduation would revoke critical trade benefits, including waivers and preferential tariffs enabled by the Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) agreement, which establishes minimum standards for intellectual property protection.

"Graduation is irreversible. Without preparation, we will lose markets," he said.

The pharmaceutical industry remains heavily reliant on imported active pharmaceutical ingredients (APIs) and policy exemptions. Post-graduation, production costs will rise, and registering products in overseas markets will be more difficult, he said.

"If we do not prepare the sector, we risk being overtaken by Indian and Chinese

firms—both locally and globally," he cautioned.

Chowdhury also emphasised how Bangladesh was losing ground to regional peers.

He drew comparisons with India, where states like Gujarat, Maharashtra, and Andhra Pradesh were offering subsidies of 30 percent to 45 percent on capital machinery, power rebates, and low-interest loan support to exporters.

"Vietnam delivers a container to the US at \$1,100. We pay \$1,800 from Chattogram. It's a logistics nightmare—and disastrous for competitiveness," he added.

He called for deregulation in the energy sector, negotiations for free trade agreements (FTAs), digitalised customs processes, and incentives for new export sectors.

"The delay is costing us billions in lost orders, jobs, and reputation. You can't expect investors to commit when the political future is uncertain," added Chowdhury. The flow of foreign direct investment (FDI) has slowed as investors express concern over institutional unpredictability, contract enforcement, and rising political risk, he said.

"We need rule-based governance, timely justice, and a clear anti-corruption framework. Only then will capital flow back," he stressed.

The BCI president warned that the current uncoordinated approach was pushing global buyers to opt for other countries having smoother compliance regimes.

Urgent government action is needed to negotiate relief, expand into new markets, and restore investor confidence. "Reform is no longer optional—it's our only way forward," said Chowdhury.

## Bangladesh's go-to app: Why millions rely on bKash

Samia Huda

In a country like Bangladesh, where time, access, and trust often define the difference between using financial services and avoiding them altogether, the bKash app has become more than just a mobile application—it's an essential tool in daily life for millions of Bangladeshis. With 80 million verified users, bKash serves roughly 1 percent of the global population—a staggering statistic that raises an important question: How did a single app become such an indispensable part of everyday transactions in Bangladesh?

The answer lies in how thoughtfully every feature is built—functionality that speaks to real needs, user-friendliness that requires no tech expertise, and trust earned through consistency.

### A user interface built for everyday life

The success of the bKash app perhaps lies in how easily anyone can use it, whether it's a grandmother in a village or a university student managing tuition fees in Dhaka. From the start, the user interface (UI) has been built for maximum clarity and minimum confusion. Big icons, intuitive placement of key features, and Bangla language support make it usable even for those who aren't tech-savvy.

Then there's the mobile recharge feature, used daily by millions. Beyond topping up balance, users can now activate internet packs, bundles or special offers for themselves or their family—all within seconds. In short, bKash isn't just designed for smartphone users. It's designed for real-life users with varying needs, skills, and routines.

### Uncompromising security

The most notable hurdle for digital finance is fear. What if I send money to the wrong number? What if someone hacks my phone? These are not rare concerns. The bKash app is designed to respond to this anxiety by embedding multiple layers of security, without making users feel overwhelmed.

PIN-based access, one-time password (OTP) verification,

## Address banking, energy issues to restore BUSINESS CONFIDENCE

BCI President Anwar-Ul-Alam Chowdhury recommends focusing on six key issues amidst probable US tariff hike

## Mutual Trust Bank's Q1 profit rises 11%

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Mutual Trust Bank PLC reported higher profits in the first quarter of 2025 as its operating profit rose.

The private commercial lender made a profit of Tk 85 crore in the January-March quarter, up 11 percent year-on-year, according to its financial statement.

The increase follows a 10 percent year-on-year growth in consolidated profit in 2024, when the bank made Tk 569.84 crore.

Its earnings per share (EPS) rose to Tk 0.87 in the January-March quarter, up from Tk 0.78 in the same period a year ago.

The bank said that its EPS increased compared to the same period last year due to an increase in profit before provision (operating profit).

However, the bank's net interest income, or profit on investments, dropped 71 percent year-on-year to Tk 51.40 crore, mainly due to a 61 percent rise in interest paid or profit shared on deposits and borrowings, which stood at Tk 659.77 crore.

## Jamuna Bank's profit goes up 9% in Q1

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Jamuna Bank PLC reported higher profits in the first quarter of the 2025 financial year.

The private lender posted a consolidated profit of Tk 191.62 crore, up 9 percent year-on-year.

The bank's profit grew 18 percent year-on-year to Tk 279.59 crore in 2024.

For the January-March quarter of 2025, the bank's consolidated earnings per share (EPS) stood at Tk 2.04, up from Tk 1.86 (restated) in the same period a year earlier, according to a recent disclosure on the Dhaka Stock Exchange (DSE) website.

Its consolidated net operating cash flow per share (NOCFPS) rose to Tk 35.47 from Tk 28.87 (restated).

Jamuna Bank attributed the rise in NOCFPS to increased income from interest, fees, commission, and investments.

It also noted an increase in net asset value due to higher retained earnings and a revaluation reserve.

and real-time alerts keep the platform secure. At the same time, bKash constantly educates users through pop-up tips and in-app reminders never to share their PIN or OTP with anyone. In the background, state-of-the-art systems monitor transactions across millions of accounts without latency, ensuring real-time protection at scale.

### One app, countless solutions

bKash began its journey with simple services like sending money, cashing in and cashing out. Now, the bKash app has transformed into a one-stop financial solution for everyday life.

Take bill payments, for example. Whether you live in an apartment in Dhaka or a remote village in Sylhet, paying your electricity, gas, or water bill used to mean hours lost in queues or finding the right payment centre. Now, these tasks can be completed within minutes, directly through the bKash app, at any time of day. The app even allows you to save account numbers or enable auto-pay, so bills are cleared on time every month without needing reminders or physical trips.

bKash app makes retail shopping smarter and faster. Whether you're at a major brand outlet or a neighbourhood grocery store, payment can be done through bKash.

Just scan the merchant's QR code, and the payment is completed instantly. For small businesses, this reduces the need to manage large sums of cash. For shoppers, it eliminates the worry of carrying physical money and often brings access to exclusive discounts. Beyond commerce, bKash facilitates donations and service payments that once required long errands or physical forms.

Another powerful feature is the ability to save and

borrow money. Users can open DPS (Deposit Pension Schemes) with partnered banks and financial institutions directly from the bKash app, without needing to visit a branch. These services, once restricted to banked and urban populations, are now available to millions, including garment workers, freelancers, and informal sector earners.

Through "Bank to bKash" or "Card to bKash" features, users can pull funds into their mobile wallet anytime. Likewise, they can send money from their bKash balance to any commercial bank account, giving users control across financial platforms.

These features are not thrown in for the sake of variety. Each service on the bKash app addresses a real problem or routine task—whether it's paying school fees on time, avoiding overdue bills, transferring rent money, or saving for a future goal. The real win lies in how seamlessly the features are available in a single, lightweight, mobile-first interface.

### Solving small problems with smart tools

What sets the bKash app apart isn't just its range of services, but how it solves small, everyday issues that users face. For instance, if you accidentally try to send money to a number that isn't registered with bKash, the app instantly alerts you and gives you the option to cancel the transaction right away. This simple feature makes many things easy.

Another thoughtful feature is the option to automatically add cash-out charges when sending money. If you're sending money to someone who will withdraw it as cash, you can include that extra fee upfront so the recipient gets the full amount they need. Customer support has also been made easier. Instead of visiting service points or calling hotlines, users can simply start a live chat from the app to resolve issues. It's a huge time-saver and comfortable steps for people who prefer not to wait in line.

Lastly, the in-app search option helps users quickly find services without digging through menus. These features may seem small, but they're built around real behaviour, making the bKash app practical, efficient, and accessible for users of all ages and tech skill levels.

### Why is the bKash app part of everyday life?

The real strength of the bKash app lies in its purposeful design. Every feature exists to solve a real-life problem, every update removes friction and every interaction is crafted to build trust. This is why perhaps people now say "bKash me" instead of "send me money." Because it's not just an app—it's part of how Bangladesh works today.

In a landscape where digital fatigue is growing, the bKash app stays relevant because it respects users' time, understands their habits, and keeps them at the centre of every update. That's not just user-friendliness. That's user-first thinking. And that's what makes bKash an everyday habit for millions.

