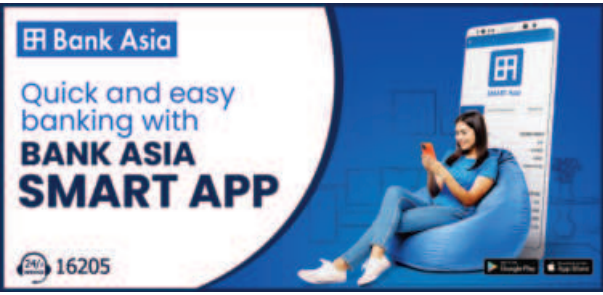


Star

BUSINESS



Govt to consider NBR officials' concerns

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

The government will duly consider demands from protesting officials of the National Board of Revenue (NBR), who have been observing a pen-down strike since the interim government passed an ordinance aimed at dissolving the revenue board on May 12.

The assurance came following a meeting at the Secretariat between NBR officials and three government advisers, after which the finance ministry issued a statement.

The dialogue took place in the wake of five days of pen-down strikes observed by NBR officials across the country under the banner of the "NBR Reform Unity Council" to stop the government from splitting the NBR into two separate entities: the Revenue Policy Division and the Revenue Administration Division.

Speaking to reporters after the meeting, Finance Adviser Salehuddin Ahmed said the separation of functions within the NBR would remain unchanged.

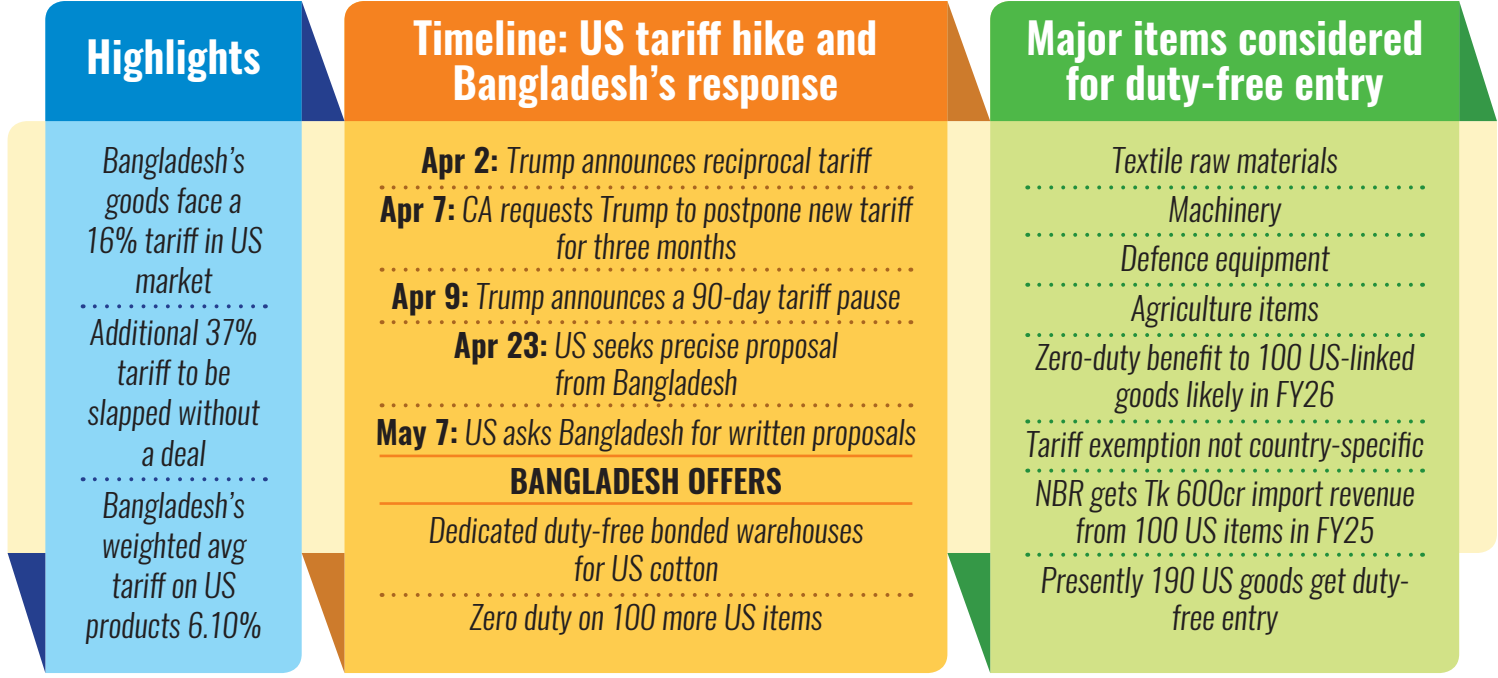
However, he noted that the concerns raised by officials would be taken into account when the government issues the notification under the new ordinance.

He also announced there would be no further formal meetings with NBR officials on this issue. "NBR officials can raise their concerns through the advisory committee, which has been formed earlier to reform the NBR," he said.

However, the NBR officials were 'unhappy',

READ MORE ON B3

To appease US, NBR to offer zero-duty for 100 more goods



MOHAMMAD SUMAN, Chattogram

The National Board of Revenue (NBR) is set to propose zero import duties on an additional 100 goods in the upcoming national budget, aiming to boost bilateral trade with the United States and cushion higher tariffs on Bangladeshi products entering the American market.

The move received policy-level approval from Chief Adviser Professor Muhammad Yunus during a meeting with National Board of Revenue (NBR) officials on Monday, where Finance Adviser Salehuddin Ahmed was also present.

According to NBR sources, while tariff exemptions cannot legally be granted based on the country of origin, the curated list that was proposed features 161 items that are predominantly imported from the US.

Officials say the selection was made carefully to minimise any significant impact on government revenue.

The items on the list include raw materials and capital machinery used in the textile and garments sector, such as garnetted stock of cotton, cotton waste, raw or retted

flax, textured polyester yarn, synthetic yarn, artificial filament tow, synthetic staple fibres, and textile machinery.

The list also covers military and law enforcement equipment, including turbojets, turbo propellers, weapons such as guns, howitzers, mortars, rocket launchers, grenade launchers, standard-issue military arms, muzzle-loading firearms and target-shooting shotguns and rifles, as well as other firearms imported by or on behalf of the government of Bangladesh.

Additionally, various machinery for the energy, medical, agriculture, and poultry sectors have been included.

The initiative comes in response to the Donald Trump administration's decision to impose a 37 percent tariff on imports from Bangladesh, announced on April 2, under his sweeping "reciprocal tariffs" policy.

The announcement triggered a global market crash and sparked widespread diplomatic and economic uncertainty. However, a 90-day pause was declared within a week.

Bangladeshi exports to the US already face a 15 percent tariff, meaning the imposition of

an additional 37 percent supplementary duty would raise the effective tariff to 52 percent – posing a serious threat to the country's access to the US market.

In light of these developments, Chief Adviser Yunus formally requested a three-month deferral of the new US tariffs on Bangladeshi exports to allow time for bilateral engagement and review.

To help address the emerging trade imbalance and mitigate the impact of the new US tariff regime, Bangladesh decided to expand its list of zero-duty items for US-origin imports.

A letter from Commerce Adviser Sheikh Bashir Uddin to US Trade Representative Jamieson Greer confirmed that 100 more products would be added to the existing list of 190 items that already enjoy duty-free access.

As per the NBR data, until April of FY25, Bangladesh imported 4.5 lakh tonnes of goods from the United States, valued at Tk 27,245 crore, under the product categories proposed for duty exemptions.

The government collected Tk 595 crore in duties from these imports, which currently

READ MORE ON B3

Trump's remittance tax plan poses threat to Bangladesh

AHSAN HABIB

The US House Budget Committee voted late on Sunday to move forward with President Donald Trump's "One Big Beautiful Bill Act", a proposal that could make sending money back home more expensive for three lakh Bangladeshis currently living in the United States.

The bill proposes a 5 percent tax on all international money transfers made by non-US citizens, including holders of non-immigrant visas such as the H-1B and green card holders.

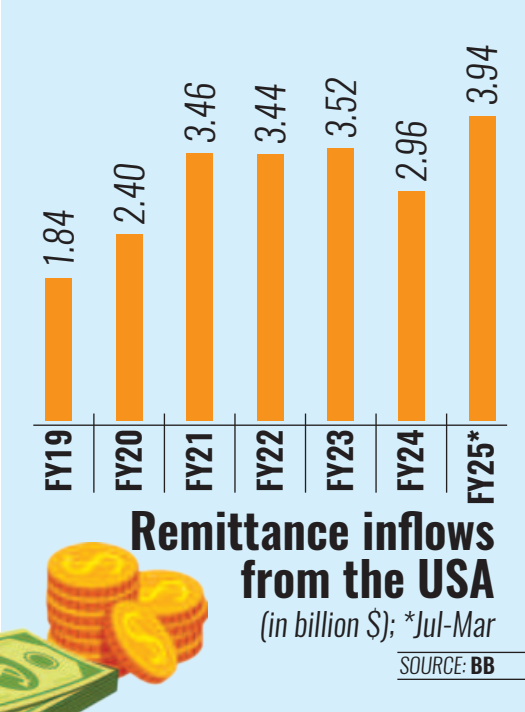
During the January-March quarter of this year, Bangladesh received the highest amount of remittances from the US – which was more than 18 percent of the total inflow.

"This is a matter of concern for Bangladesh. It would deal a massive blow to our increasing remittance inflow," said Birupaksha Paul, a professor of economics at the State University of New York in Cortland.

In the first nine months of the 2024-25 fiscal year, Bangladesh received \$3.94 billion in remittances from the US, according to the Bangladesh Bank.

If enacted, the US law would deduct 5 percent from the transferred amount at the point of transfer. No minimum exemption has been proposed, meaning even

READ MORE ON B3



Farmers are the main risk-takers in value chain

BB study finds

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Shortfalls in supply are the primary cause of price increases of major essential commodities such as rice, potatoes, onions, and eggs, while farmers are the main risk-takers, a central bank study found.

The study, titled "A Study on Value Chain Efficiency of the Agricultural Products in Bangladesh", was released by the banking regulator on Tuesday.

It found that supply shortages typically occur during off peak seasons and are also associated with decreased cultivation areas replaced by other profitable products, production being hampered by floods, and increased pest attacks.

The findings indicate that farmers or producers are the main risk-takers as they might earn a reasonable profit or face losses depending on supply, demand, competition, and production costs.

Other players, such as intermediaries, typically add cost and profit margins before selling products to the next actor, as per the findings.

"During our survey, we saw that farmers and producers are the main risk-takers. They make profits sometimes, but sometimes they face losses," Md Salim Al Mamun, director (research) of the chief economist's unit at the central bank, told The Daily Star

The study also said imports can help stabilise prices of the select agricultural products during the off-peak months, when supply is naturally low.

To ensure price stability without hurting local producers, the government can lower or eliminate import duties before certain months when there are shortages in the supply of respective commodities, it added.

The survey was conducted jointly by the Chief Economist's Unit and the Governor's Office of the central bank. The team surveyed 14 districts on five essential agricultural products: rice, potatoes, onions, eggs, and broiler chicken.

The study found that a significant amount of profit is earned by the farmers while intermediaries and wholesalers gain small margins in the case of rice and paddy production during the survey period.

Rice millers in the supply chain play a crucial role, setting prices based on milling costs and market demand and supply conditions for paddy and rice, and making profits both from rice sales and byproduct income, as per the study.

The study finds that big wholesalers, colloquially known as aratdars, and retail sellers for rice, both in local and urban markets, set prices

READ MORE ON B3

Only 5 of 28 locally developed tea varieties popular

SUKANTA HALDER

Out of the 28 varieties of tea plants developed by state-run Bangladesh Tea Research Institute (BTRI), only five are widely cultivated in the country, based on their high yield, quality, and climate resilience.

These varieties are also called tea clones – plants produced through vegetative propagation like cuttings or grafting from a single, selected parent plant, rather than from seeds.

This method allows for the creation of genetically identical plants with specific desirable traits, like high yield or disease resistance.

The five clones, named BT-1 (developed in 1966), BT-2 (1975), BT-4 (1981), BTS-1 (1985), and TV-1 (1949), yield around 3,000 to 4,000 kilogrammes (kg) of tea per hectare on average, said BTRI Director Md Ismail Hossain.

BT-2 is the most popular due to its drought tolerance and flavour resembling Darjeeling tea, which is appreciated for its delicate taste, floral aroma, and wine-like notes reminiscent of muscat grapes, he added.

Speaking to The Daily Star yesterday, Hossain said BT-2 can be used to produce premium-quality black tea and green tea.

However, he added that, given the size of the country's tea industry, the number of clones developed so far is not sufficient and research is ongoing for new ones.

Traditionally, people tend to trust what is old and proven – and the same holds true in the tea sector, he said. Tea garden owners

prefer cultivating older, tried-and-tested clones, while adoption of newer ones remains limited, the researcher also added.

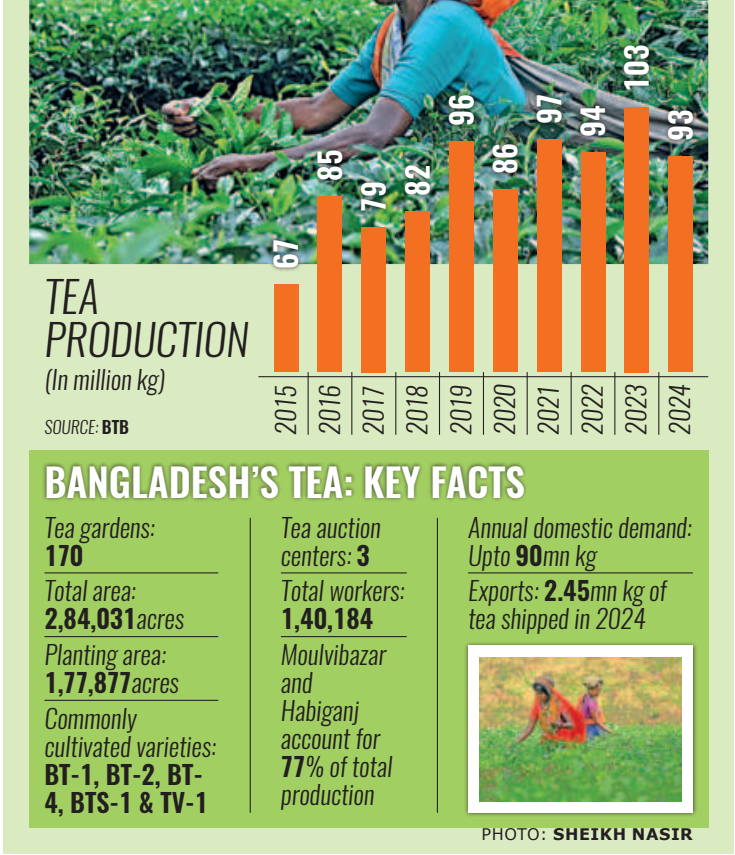
As such, garden owners usually cultivate three to five select clones to ensure that their operations are not commercially affected in any way, he added.

He informed that developing a high-quality clone takes around 13 years and its economic lifespan is around 50 years.

However, industry insiders said this has led to a lack of product diversification.

Tea garden owners said the BTRI needs to develop more clones focusing on climate resilience and high quality to boost tea production and sales.

Bangladesh's tea industry dates back 184 years. There are currently 170 tea gardens, mostly in the northeast. In 2024, 93.04 million kg of tea was



Walton expands to Singapore

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Walton Hi Tech Industries PLC entered into a global distributorship agreement with Singapore-based Flair M&E Pte Ltd, appointing the company as its authorised distributor in Singapore for the next five years.

According to a disclosure posted on the Dhaka Stock Exchange (DSE) website yesterday, Flair M&E – a private company incorporated in Singapore – will be responsible for selling, distributing, and marketing Walton products in the country.

An agreement was signed between Walton Hi-Tech Industries PLC and Flair M&E Pte Ltd in this regard on Monday. The agreement came into effect on the date of signing, according to the disclosure.

Following the announcement, Walton's share prices rose 0.47 percent, closing at Tk 407.

Abdur Rouf, head of global business at Walton, said the partnership is part of the company's broader strategy to strengthen its global presence.

Walton currently exports electronics and appliances to 67 countries, including the US, UK, Australia, Germany, India, and Nigeria.

The company sells products under its own brand in 41 markets such as India, Mexico, Nigeria, Sri Lanka, and Vietnam, offering a full range that includes refrigerators, televisions, air conditioners, and home appliances.

READ MORE ON B3



PHOTO: BANK ASIA

Ziaul Hasan, deputy managing director, CAMLCO and head of channel banking at Bank Asia PLC, poses for group photographs with participants of a training programme on “Prevention of Money Laundering & Combating the Financing of Terrorism” at the Bank Asia Institute for Training and Development in the capital’s Lalmatia recently.

Prime Bank pens deal with ShareTrip

STAR BUSINESS DESK

Prime Bank PLC has entered into a strategic partnership agreement with ShareTrip, a leading travel-tech company in Bangladesh.

Md Nazeem A Choudhury, deputy managing director of the bank, and Sadia Haque, co-founder and CEO of the travel-tech company, signed the agreement at the bank’s corporate office in the capital’s Gulshan recently, according to a press release.

Through this collaboration, Prime Bank customers will enjoy benefits when availing themselves of services offered by ShareTrip.

Joarder Tanvir Faisal, executive vice-president and head of cards and retail asset at the bank; Md Nafiz Chowdhury, assistant general manager for marketing; and Md Tousif Uddin, deputy manager for marketing of ShareTrip, along with other senior officials from both organisations, were also present.



Sadia Haque, co-founder and CEO of ShareTrip; and Md Nazeem A Choudhury, deputy managing director of Prime Bank PLC, pose for photographs after signing the agreement at the bank’s corporate office in the capital’s Gulshan recently.

PHOTO: PRIME BANK

EXIM Bank opens relocated branch in Madhabdi

STAR BUSINESS DESK

Export Import Bank of Bangladesh PLC, known as EXIM Bank PLC, has recently inaugurated a relocated branch at Madhabdi Bazar in Madhabdi upazila of Narsingdi.

M Akhter Hossain, managing director (current charge) of the bank, inaugurated the branch as the chief guest, according to a press release.

In his speech, Hossain stated that EXIM Bank always prioritises the needs of its customers. It is for this reason that the Madhabdi branch has been relocated to this site on a larger scale.



M Akhter Hossain, managing director (current charge) of EXIM Bank PLC, inaugurates a relocated branch of the bank at Madhabdi Bazar in Mashabdi upazila of Narsingdi recently. Sanjib Chatterjee, head of corporate affairs and branding division of the bank, and Mohammad Ali Ashraf Khan, manager of Madhabdi branch, were also present.

PHOTO: EXIM BANK

United Commercial Bank signs MoU with CCC



Mohammad Mamdudur Rashid, managing director and CEO of United Commercial Bank PLC, and Sheikh Muhammad Tauhidul Islam, chief executive officer of Chattogram City Corporation, shake hands and exchange signed documents of the memorandum of understanding at the bank’s head office in Dhaka recently.

PHOTO: UNITED COMMERCIAL BANK

STAR BUSINESS DESK

United Commercial Bank PLC (UCB) and Chattogram City Corporation (CCC) have entered into a memorandum of understanding (MoU), marking the commencement of a series of collaborative initiatives

aimed at fostering a greener Chattogram.

In accordance with the MoU, the long-abandoned playground adjacent to Karnaphuli Shishu Park in Agrabad is set to be transformed into a modern, child-friendly recreational centre, equipped with

contemporary facilities to serve the community.

Sheikh Muhammad Tauhidul Islam, chief executive officer of CCC, and Mohammad Mamdudur Rashid, managing director and CEO of UCB, signed the MoU at the bank’s head office in Dhaka recently, according to a press release.

During the event, Rashid reiterated UCB’s steadfast commitment to impactful corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives, underscoring the bank’s role in supporting sustainable community development.

Sahadat Hossain, mayor of the CCC, and Sharif Zahir, chairman of UCB, also attended the ceremony.

The CCC mayor praised UCB’s sustained engagement in promoting an environmentally conscious and greener Chattogram, describing the bank’s efforts as truly laudable.

In a city of nearly seven million inhabitants, access to playgrounds and recreational areas is vital for the physical and mental development of children and adolescents.

Social Islami Bank inks deal with Bangladesh Specialised Hospital

STAR BUSINESS DESK

Social Islami Bank PLC has entered into a corporate agreement with Bangladesh Specialised Hospital PLC.

Under this agreement, the bank’s cardholders, officials, employees, and their family members will be entitled to a range of benefits, including a discount of 10 to 20 percent on various services provided by the hospital.

Ahmed Zahid Hossain, managing director of the hospital, and Mohammad Wahiduzzaman, head of the card division of the bank, signed the agreement in Dhaka recently, according to a press release issued by the bank.



Ahmed Zahid Hossain, managing director of Bangladesh Specialised Hospital PLC, and Mohammad Wahiduzzaman, head of the card division of Social Islami Bank PLC, shake hands and exchange signed documents of the agreement in Dhaka recently.

PHOTO: SOCIAL ISLAMI BANK

Bank Asia arranges training on prevention of money laundering

STAR BUSINESS DESK

Bank Asia PLC recently organised a daylong training programme on “Prevention of Money Laundering & Combating the Financing of Terrorism” at the Bank Asia Institute for Training and Development, located in the capital’s Lalmatia.

Ziaul Hasan, deputy managing director, CAMLCO and head of

channel banking at the bank, inaugurated the programme, according to a press release.

The training was designed to enhance knowledge and awareness of anti-money laundering (AML) and combating the financing of terrorism (CFT) among employees, with the objective of fostering a robust culture of compliance throughout the organisation.

Management trainees and officials

from various divisions, branches, centres, and Islamic windows within the bank’s Dhaka zone participated in the session.

Sharif Ahmed, Md Hashibul Alam, and Md Samiul Karim from the AML and CFT division of the bank, conducted the training.

Among others, Md Rezaul Islam, head of AML and CFT division of the bank, and Mahbub A Alam, chief digital officer, were also present.

Midland Bank strikes MoU with NPA to facilitate pension scheme

STAR BUSINESS DESK

Midland Bank PLC has signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the National Pension Authority (NPA) to support the government’s implementation of the Universal Pension Scheme (UPS).

Md Mahiuddin Khan, executive chairman of the NPA, and Md Ahsan-uz Zaman, managing director and CEO of the bank, signed the MoU at the conference room of the Finance Division at the Ministry of Finance in the capital recently, according to a press release.

Md Khairuzzaman Mozumder, secretary to the finance ministry, attended the ceremony as the chief guest.

Under the agreement, Midland Bank will facilitate customer registration and the collection of contributions for all active pension schemes such as Progoti, Surakkha, Somota, and Probash.



PHOTO: MIDLAND BANK

Md Ahsan-uz Zaman, managing director and CEO of Midland Bank PLC, and Md Mahiuddin Khan, executive chairman of the National Pension Authority, shake hands and exchange signed documents of the memorandum of understanding at the conference room of the Finance Division at the Ministry of Finance in the capital recently.

IFIC Bank donates bus to Patuakhali Science and Technology University

STAR BUSINESS DESK

IFIC Bank PLC has generously donated a bus to Patuakhali Science and Technology University (PSTU) to enhance student transportation facilities.

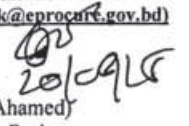
Md Mehmood Husain, chairman of the bank, ceremonially handed over a symbolic vice key to Prof Kazi Rafiqul Islam, vice chancellor of PSTU, at a recent event held at the TSC Conference Hall of the university in Patuakhali, according to a press release.

During the handover ceremony, Husain stated that IFIC Bank is not merely a financial institution but one that is steadfast in its commitment to fulfilling its social responsibilities.



Prof Kazi Rafiqul Islam, vice-chancellor of the Patuakhali Science and Technology University, receives a symbolic bus key from Md Mehmood Husain, chairman of IFIC Bank PLC, at the TSC conference hall of the university in Patuakhali recently.

PHOTO: IFIC BANK

Government of The Peoples Republic of Bangladesh Local Government Engineering Department Office of the Executive Engineer District: Naogaon. www.lged.gov.bd						
Memo No.: 46.02.6400.07.000.001.24-1370				Date: 20/05/2025 খ্রীষ্টাব্দ ০৬/০২/১৪৩২ বঙ্গাব্দ		
e-Tender Notice No :72/2024-25 Tendering Method (OTM)						
e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP System Portal (http://www.eprocure.gov.bd) for the procurement of following Packages :						
Sl No	Description of Work & Package No.	Tender Last Selling (Date & Time)	Tender Closing (Date & Time)	Tender Opening (Date & Time)	Tendering Method	
01	Improvement of Deluabari Pacca Road -Sofapur-Shohid Bazar Road from Ch:00-500m & Construction of 01 No U-drain (6.00x0.625x0.600m) Ch: 233m on the same Road under Manda Upazila, District:Naogaon.Salvage Cost TK=9,71,662.00Tk Road ID:164474127 (Package No. NDRIDP/W-209). (Tender ID-1111805).	23-Jun-2025 17:00	24-Jun-2025 12:00	24-Jun-2025 12:00	OTM	
02	Improvement of Moha sorak-Baddapur Chairman Yeasin Ali (Raza) House - Moinom GPS Road from Ch:00-500m & Construction of 02 Nos U-drain (6.00x0.625x0.600m) Ch: 122m & 180m on the same Road under Manda Upazila, District:Naogaon.Salvage Cost TK=5,48,909.00 Road ID:164474107 (Package No. NDRIDP/W-198). (Tender ID-1111804).	23-Jun-2025 17:00	24-Jun-2025 12:00	24-Jun-2025 12:00	OTM	
03	(A) Improvement of (Uni-Block) on Gandhosail- Volkipur Road from Ch:00-1000m. (B) Construction of 02 Nos 0.60x0.60m Culvert 07m Long at Ch:210m & 510m on the same Road under Niamatpur Upazila, District: Naogaon. Road ID:164695022. (Package No. NDRIDP/UNI/30). (Tender ID-1111803).	23-Jun-2025 17:00	24-Jun-2025 12:00	24-Jun-2025 12:00	OTM	
04	(A) Improvement of Kashunda bazar (via kola moddya boalia) joyshara road from ch:00-1250m (B) construction of 03 nos U-Drain size (.625x.600x7m) long at ch: 500m, 800m & 1135m on the same road under atraai upazila District naogaon Road ID: 164035093 (Package No. NDRIDP/W-557). (Tender ID-1106779).	23-Jun-2025 17:00	24-Jun-2025 12:00	24-Jun-2025 12:00	OTM	
05	Improvement of Bandaikhara GC-Prosadpur GC via jotebazar Road from ch: 500m-2800m under hatkalupara union Atraai Upazila District Naogaon Road ID : 164032013 (Package No. NDRIDP/W-534). (Tender ID-1106778).	23-Jun-2025 17:00	24-Jun-2025 12:00	24-Jun-2025 12:00	OTM	
06	Improvement of kochra bandh-badolghata GPS-shikil more-hazi gobinpur GCCR road from ch: 00m-1730m & construction of 01 no U-Drain size (6.000x.625x.600m) at ch. 315 m under manda upazila District : Naogaon .Salvage cost 1136771.00 Tk. Road ID: 164474084. (Package No. NDRIDP/W-134). (Tender ID- 1106777).	23-Jun-2025 17:00	24-Jun-2025 12:00	24-Jun-2025 12:00	OTM	
07	Improvement of Mithapur Hat-par simla-Fatepur Hat Road from Ch. :3000m-4000m & construction of 02 nos U-drain size (6.000x.625x0.600m) at ch: 3280m & 3720m under manda upazila , District: Naogaon. Road ID: 164474037 (Package No. NDRIDP/W-131). (Tender ID- 1106776).	23-Jun-2025 17:00	24-Jun-2025 12:00	24-Jun-2025 12:00	OTM	
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 Banks Branches up to Last Selling Date & Time as mentioned above. Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP system portal and from e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd)						
 (Tofail Ahamedy) Executive Engineer Ph: 01708-123218 e-mail : xen.naogaon@lged.gov.bd						
GD-1223						

China cuts key rates to aid economy

REUTERS, Beijing/Shanghai

China cut benchmark lending rates for the first time since October on Tuesday, while major state banks lowered deposit rates as authorities work to ease monetary policy to help buffer the economy from the impact of the Sino-US trade war.

The expected rate cuts are aimed at stimulating consumption and loan growth as the world's No. 2 economy softens, while still protecting commercial lenders' shrinking margins.

The People's Bank of China said the one-year loan prime rate had been lowered by 10 basis points to 3.0 percent, while the five-year LPR was reduced by the same margin to 3.5 percent.

ASIFUR RAHMAN

Kerosene and diesel will no longer cost the same, as per a new fuel pricing formula introduced by the Energy and Mineral Resources Division yesterday.

As per the formula, Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation's (BPC) administrative costs and Eastern Refinery's fuel processing costs have been kept "variable", which may slightly increase prices in the future, according to officials concerned.

Earlier, the costs were fixed at Tk 1.06 and Tk 1.53 respectively whereas from now those would be calculated based on the actual cost incurred.

In addition, the government has imposed a 15 percent VAT on the fuel handling commission at jetties and increased the financial charge to 13.25 percent from 9 percent, which may also impact prices of key fuels—octane, petrol, kerosene and diesel.

The ousted Awami League government had introduced an automated pricing formula

in March 2024 and the interim government followed it till this month.

Currently, the price of diesel and kerosene is Tk 104 per litre while octane Tk 125 and petrol Tk 121.

As per the new formula, kerosene would cost Tk 117, if other variables remain the same.

The new VAT and administrative expenses will come into effect next month and the prices will vary by very small margins, a top BPC official told The Daily Star.

The Centre for Policy Dialogue had several times stated fuel prices could be reduced by Tk 10 to Tk 15.

But Fouzul Kabir Khan, the adviser to the Ministry of Power, Energy and Mineral Resources, in August last year said the previous mechanism made it tough to reduce the price of diesel even by Tk 1.

Earlier, the prices of kerosene and diesel were kept the same to prevent adulteration.

The new formula determines the price of

kerosene in the same manner as that of octane and petrol. However, to prevent adulteration, kerosene would be Tk 4 less than the price of petrol.

Use of kerosene has dropped for the non-stop and countrywide availability of electricity and an increase in the use of liquefied petroleum gas, said the Energy and Mineral Resources Division.

As per the previous formula, the fuel handling commission was Tk 100 per tonne. Now the government would take a 15 percent VAT.

However, Hafizur Rahman Chowdhury, joint secretary (operation-1) to the division, said the government was already charging VAT at the new formula's rate.

The bank charge has increased form 9 percent to 13.25, which has been incorporated in the new formula. He asked to contact the BPC for further queries.

The Daily Star tried to contact BPC Chairman Amin Ul Ahsan several times over the phone. He was unavailable.

Kerosene, diesel to no longer cost the same

Trump's remittance tax plan poses threat

FROM PAGE B1

small transfers would be taxed.

The measure could financially hurt around 300,000 Bangladeshis living in the US, according to 2023 estimates from the US Census Bureau.

Describing the proposed levy as "unfair", Paul said, "As people send remittance from their taxed income, it would be unfair to levy tax on remittance again."

He added that the bill might still pass due to the current political landscape in Washington.

"Most of the Congress members are fourth or fifth-generation migrants who no longer send remittances. And there is not much of a voice among economists here."

Paul said that the move comes at a time when the US is grappling with rising public debt and is looking for new revenue sources.

If the bill becomes law, India and several Latin American nations, which also receive large sums in remittances from the US, would feel a sharp impact.

For Bangladesh, Paul recommended allowing the exchange rate to be fully determined fully by the market, rather than offering remittance incentives.

"Better rates may attract remitters more effectively than cash incentives," he said.

Syed Mahbubur Rahman,

managing director and CEO of Mutual Trust Bank, echoed similar concerns of Paul.

"If Bangladesh receives \$1 billion in remittances from the US, a 5 percent tax would mean a \$50 million loss," he said.

"As the US is our top remittance source, the impact would be significantly high," he added. "It would be a scary situation for the country's foreign exchange reserves."

Mohammad Abdur Razzaque, an economist and chairman of the Dhaka-based think tank Research and Policy Integration for Development (RAPID), said the proposed tax could push many back towards using illegal money transfer channels such as hundi, where rates are already more attractive.

"It will particularly affect small remitters," he said. "This is a policy challenge by a foreign country, but it will have serious domestic consequences."

"It is a matter of concern for us as the US is our largest remittance-contributing country."

Razzaque called for a united global response, pointing out that such a tax would undermine international efforts to reduce the cost of sending remittances.

"This is not just about Bangladesh. All affected countries should raise their voices collectively," he said.

Govt to consider

FROM PAGE B1

saying the finance adviser was rigid about not repealing the ordinance.

"Out of 17 participants, only a few officials had the chance to speak. We were almost cornered during the meeting. It was disappointing and unproductive," said one of the protesting officials.

"We haven't finalised our next course of action yet," he added.

The protestors were engaged in a meeting among themselves to plan their next course of action when this

Walton expands

FROM PAGE B1

"As part of our global roadmap, we're focusing on expansion in Asia, Africa, Europe, and North America," Rouf said. "By 2030, Walton aims to establish a direct brand presence in 150 countries, promoting Bangladeshi innovation and branding globally."

He said Walton's international growth reflects a broader shift in Bangladesh's export model, moving beyond traditional sectors like readymade garments.

Despite these strategic moves, Walton's recent financials revealed signs of pressure. In the January–March quarter of FY25, its net profit fell to Tk 392 crore from Tk 422 crore year-on-year.

Earnings per share (EPS) declined to Tk 12.94 from Tk 13.93 year-on-year. Over the first nine months of the fiscal year, Walton's cumulative net profit stood at Tk 696 crore -- an 8.5 percent year-on-year decrease.

report was filed.

Protesting officials and employees issued a three-point demand, including the repeal of a new ordinance on restructuring the revenue administration. The other demands are 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.

Oil steadies

REUTERS, London

Oil prices steadied on Tuesday due to uncertainty in US-Iran negotiations and Russia-Ukraine peace talks, while new government data delivered a cautious outlook for top crude-importer China's economy.

Brent futures for July slipped 7 cents, or 0.1 percent, to \$64.75 a barrel by 0947 GMT.

June US West Texas Intermediate crude futures , which expire on Tuesday were flat at \$64.8, while the more active July contract was down 5 cents, or around 0.1 percent, at \$62.1 a barrel.

Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei voiced doubts over whether nuclear talks with the US will lead to an agreement, Mehr News reported, as Tehran reviews a proposal to hold a fifth round of negotiations.

To appease US

FROM PAGE B1

face tariff rates ranging between 10 percent and 59 percent.

Experts in the sector welcomed the move to exempt more items, but stressed that the success of the initiative would depend on the selection of products with real demand and import potential.

"The key point is to identify products for which there is actual demand. Duty waivers won't bring meaningful benefits unless imports increase significantly," said Syed M Tanvir, managing director of Pacific Jeans.

Abdullah Hil Rakib, managing director of TEAM Group, told The Daily Star, "The US has imposed similar retaliatory tariffs on competitor countries as well. Our focus now should be to ensure that we gain a relative advantage over our competitors.

"Currently, our garment industry is operating at 52 percent to 54 percent of its capacity. If we want to push that to 65 percent to 70 percent, the European and American markets are crucial. That's where the big orders come from," he said.

Both entrepreneurs expressed optimism that the NBR's initiative would have a positive impact on the ready-made garments sector and help it secure a stronger footing in global markets.

NBR data shows that Bangladesh imported \$2.91 billion worth of goods from the US last year.

The customs value of these imports stood at Tk 35,189 crore, generating

Banks can now pay fees for correspondence courses abroad

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Banks can now pay fees for correspondence courses abroad without prior approval from Bangladesh Bank.

A correspondence course is a class in which students receive lessons and assignments by mail or e-mail and then return completed assignments to receive a grade. The central bank gave the go-ahead through a notice on Tuesday.

To facilitate the development of professional skills, it has been decided that banks may remit fees for correspondence courses to be paid by students to foreign professional or educational institutions for appearing in professional examinations, the notice read.

Previously, students had to seek approval from the Bangladesh Bank to remit fees for correspondence courses.

The remittances must be sent to the foreign institutions abroad, after deducting any applicable taxes, according to the notice.

Tk 2,166 crore in duties and taxes -- an average effective duty rate of 6.15 percent.

In contrast, Bangladesh exported goods worth \$8.4 billion to the US during the same period, highlighting a significant trade imbalance.

To address this, Bangladesh had previously allowed zero-duty benefits on 190 US-origin products. The Ministry of Commerce has now sent a letter to the US administration pledging to add 100 more items to that list.

The budget for FY26 is scheduled to be unveiled by Finance Adviser Salehuddin Ahmed on June 2 via a televised address. The budget will be implemented through an ordinance, with VAT and tariff measures taking immediate effect.

Farmers


FROM PAGE B1

based on supply, demand, and competition.

When there are rice and paddy supply shortages, implementing a reliable and transparent price range, particularly for millers and aratards, is critical, and close monitoring of stocks is also needed, it added.

Floods and excessive pest attacks, higher prices of fertilisers and pesticides, electricity, wages, and labor contribute to higher production costs at the farmer level, said the study, adding that increased transportation and labor costs at the intermediary levels also lead to an increase in rice prices.

কৃষি গবেষণা



বাংলাদেশ কৃষি গবেষণা ইনস্টিটিউট

মেশিনারী মেরামত ও রক্ষণাবেক্ষণ বিভাগ

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স্মারক নং : ১২.২১.০০০০.০১২.৯৯.০০১.২৫.৭৯৬

তারিখ: ১৮/০৫/২০২৫ খ্রি:

নিলাম বিজ্ঞপ্তি

বাংলাদেশ কৃষি গবেষণা ইনস্টিটিউটের প্রধান কার্যালয়-এর এফএমপিই বিভাগ ও পরিবহন শাখা এবং সরেজমিন গবেষণা বিভাগ, বারি, মাইজদী বাজার, নোয়াখালী; ফল গবেষণা কেন্দ্র, বারি, বিনোদপুর, রাজশাহী; পাহাড়াক্সল কৃষি গবেষণা কেন্দ্র, রামগড়, খাগড়াছড়ি; আঞ্চলিক কৃষি গবেষণা কেন্দ্র, বারি, আকবরপুর, মৌলভীবাজার-এর পুরাতন অকেজো মালামাল ও মেরামত অযোগ্য যানবাহনসমূহ (জিপ-০১টি, পিক-আপ-০৩টি, মোটরসাইকেল-০৯টি) “**যেখানে যে অবস্থায় আছে সেই অবস্থায়**” নিলামে বিক্রয়ের উদ্দেশ্যে প্রকৃত আগ্রহী নিলাম ক্রেতাদের নিকট হতে নির্ধারিত সিডিউলে গালাবন্ধ খামে নিম্নলিখিত বিবরণ মোতাবেক দরপত্র আশ্রান করা যাচ্ছে।

১	সিডিউল প্রাপ্তিস্থান	ক) বিভাগীয় কমিশনারের কার্যালয়, সেগুনবাগিচা, ঢাকা। খ) বিভাগীয় প্রধানের কার্যালয়, মেশিনারী মেরামত ও রক্ষণাবেক্ষণ বিভাগ, বারি, গাজীপুর। গ) সরেজমিন গবেষণা বিভাগ, বারি, মাইজদী বাজার, নোয়াখালী। ঘ) ফল গবেষণা কেন্দ্র, বিনোদপুর, রাজশাহী। ঙ)পাহাড়াক্সল কৃষি গবেষণা কেন্দ্র, রামগড়, খাগড়াছড়ি। চ) আঞ্চলিক কৃষি গবেষণা কেন্দ্র, আকবরপুর, মৌলভীবাজার।
২	জমাদানের স্থান	ক) বিভাগীয় কমিশনারের কার্যালয়, সেগুনবাগিচা, ঢাকা। খ) বিভাগীয় প্রধানের কার্যালয়, মেশিনারী মেরামত ও রক্ষণাবেক্ষণ বিভাগ, বারি, গাজীপুর।
৩	সিডিউলের মূল্য	১৫০০/- (এক হাজার পাঁচশত টাকা মাত্র) (অফেরতযোগ্য)
৪	সিডিউল বিক্রয়ের তারিখ ও সময়	বিজ্ঞপ্তি প্রকাশের তারিখ হইতে (অফিস চলাকালীন যে কোন সময়) ২৫/০৬/২০২৫ ইং তারিখ রোজ- বুধবার বিকাল ৪:৩০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত।
৫	দরপত্র জমা দেওয়ার তারিখ ও সময়	দরপত্র বিক্রয়ের দিন হইতে (অফিস চলাকালীন যে কোন সময়) ২৬/০৬/২০২৫ ইং তারিখ রোজ- বুধস্পতিবার সকাল ১১:৫৫ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত।
৬	দরপত্র খোলার স্থান ও সময়	বিভাগীয় প্রধানের কার্যালয়, মেশিনারী মেরামত ও রক্ষণাবেক্ষণ বিভাগ, বারি, গাজীপুর ৩০/০৬/২০২৫ ইং তারিখ রোজ সোমবার সকাল ১১:০০ ঘটিকা।
৭	সিডিউলের সহিত জামানতের পরিমাণ	মহাপরিচালক, বাংলাদেশ কৃষি গবেষণা ইনস্টিটিউট, গাজীপুর-এর অনুকূলে যে কোন তফসিলি ব্যাংকের ব্যাংক ড্রাফট/পে-অর্ডার আকারে উদ্ধৃত দরের ১০% টাকা, যা সফল দরপত্রপ্রাপ্তার মোট মূল্যের সাথে সমন্বয় করা হবে এবং অকৃতকার্য দরপত্রপ্রাপ্তাকে নিয়মানুযায়ী জামানত ফেরত প্রধান করা হবে।

আগ্রহী ব্যক্তি বা প্রতিষ্ঠানকে নিম্ন স্বাক্ষরকারী কর্মকর্তার নিকট আবেদনের মাধ্যমে দরপত্র সিডিউল ক্রয় করতে হবে। দরপত্রের যাবতীয় শর্তাবলী দরপত্র সিডিউলে লিপিবদ্ধ আছে। উল্লেখ্য যে, কর্তৃপক্ষ কোন কারণ দর্শানো ব্যতীরেকে যে কোন দরপত্র গ্রহণ বা সকল দরপত্র বাতিল করার অধিকার সংরক্ষণ করেন।

মেহেদী হাসান (BARI0597)

উর্ধ্বতন বৈজ্ঞানিক কর্মকর্তা ও বিভাগীয় প্রধান (অঃ দাঃ)

মেশিনারী মেরামত ও রক্ষণাবেক্ষণ বিভাগ ও

সদস্য সচিব, নিলাম কমিটি

বাংলাদেশ কৃষি গবেষণা ইনস্টিটিউট, গাজীপুর-১৭০১।

টেলিফোনঃ ৪৯২৭০১১২

২৬/০৬/২০২৫

GD-1220

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার

শহীদ তাজউদ্দীন আহমদ মেডিকেল কলেজ

গাজীপুর।

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স্মারক নং-৫৯.১৪.০০০০.১৪৭.০০০.০৭.০২০৫.২৫.৬২৫

তারিখঃ ০৫ জ্যৈষ্ঠ ১৪৩২
১৯মে ২০২৫

পুনঃদরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি (OTM)

শহীদ তাজউদ্দীন আহমদ মেডিকেল কলেজ, গাজীপুর এর ২০২৪-২০২৫ অর্থ বছরের জন্য বইপত্র ও সামগ্রিকী এবং কম্পিউটার সামগ্রী সংগ্রহের পতো বাংলাদেশের প্রকৃত অভিজ্ঞ ঠিকাদারদের নিকট হতে The public procurement Act 2006 ও বিধিমালা ২০০৮, আইন ও বিধিমালা ২০২৩ সংশ্লিষ্ট অনুসারে সীলনাকৃতি খামে দরপত্র আহবান করা যাচ্ছে।

১.	মহাপাশ/বিভাগ	যাত্রা শিকা ও পরিবার কল্যাণ বিভাগ, যাত্রা ও পরিবার কল্যাণ মহাপাশ															
২.	এজেন্সি	যাত্রা শিকা অধিদপ্তর															
৩.	সমগ্রকারী সমূহের নাম	শহীদ তাজউদ্দীন আহমদ মেডিকেল কলেজ, গাজীপুর।															
৪.	দরপত্র পদ্ধতি	উন্মুক্ত দরপত্র পদ্ধতি															
৫.	বাডেট ও অর্থের উৎস	রাজস্ব বাডেট															
৬.	দরপত্র সিডিউল প্রকাশের শেষ তারিখ ও সময়	প্রতিদায় বিজ্ঞপ্তি প্রকাশের পর হতে ২৬/০৫/২০২৫ খ্রি পর্যন্ত। সরকারি ছুটির দিন ব্যতিত সকাল ৮:০০ হতে ২:৩০ ঘটিকা।															
৭.	দরপত্র সিডিউল প্রকাশের স্থান	অত্র দপ্তরের প্রকাশন শাখা হতে সিডিউল সংগ্রহ করতে হবে।															
৮.	দরপত্র দাখিলের স্থান, তারিখ ও সময়	শহীদ তাজউদ্দীন আহমদ মেডিকেল কলেজ, গাজীপুর-এ সংকেদন কক্ষ নং-৩০৫ রক্ষিত দরপত্র বাগে ২৭/০৫/২০২৫ খ্রি সকাল ০৯.০০ ঘটিকা হতে বেলা-১১.০০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত।															
৯.	দরপত্র খোলার স্থান,তারিখ ও সময়	শহীদ তাজউদ্দীন আহমদ মেডিকেল কলেজ, গাজীপুর সংকেদন কক্ষ তারিখ ২৭/০৫/২০২৫ খ্রি বেলা-১২.০০ ঘটিকা। (দরপত্র দাখিলকারী প্রতিষ্ঠানের প্রতিনিধি যদি উপস্থিত থাকেন তাদের উপস্থিতিতে)															
১০.	দরপত্র সম্পাদনকারী অফিসের ঠিকানা	শহীদ তাজউদ্দীন আহমদ মেডিকেল কলেজ, গাজীপুর।															
১১.	দরপত্র কাজের বিবরণী	<table><tr><th>ক্রম নং</th><th>প্যাকেজ</th><th>প্যাকেজের বিবরণ</th><th>দরপত্র জামানতের পরিমাণ</th><th>কার্য সম্পাদন জামানতের পরিমাণ</th></tr><tr><td>০২</td><td>প্যাকেজ নং-GD-10</td><td>বইপত্র ও সামগ্রিকী</td><td>৬০,০০০/-</td><td>মূল্য দুগুণের উপর ১০% হারে কার্য সম্পাদন জামানত প্রদেয়া হবে।</td></tr><tr><td>০৪</td><td>প্যাকেজ নং-GD-19</td><td>কম্পিউটার সামগ্রী</td><td>২০,০০০/-</td><td></td></tr></table>	ক্রম নং	প্যাকেজ	প্যাকেজের বিবরণ	দরপত্র জামানতের পরিমাণ	কার্য সম্পাদন জামানতের পরিমাণ	০২	প্যাকেজ নং-GD-10	বইপত্র ও সামগ্রিকী	৬০,০০০/-	মূল্য দুগুণের উপর ১০% হারে কার্য সম্পাদন জামানত প্রদেয়া হবে।	০৪	প্যাকেজ নং-GD-19	কম্পিউটার সামগ্রী	২০,০০০/-	
ক্রম নং	প্যাকেজ	প্যাকেজের বিবরণ	দরপত্র জামানতের পরিমাণ	কার্য সম্পাদন জামানতের পরিমাণ													
০২	প্যাকেজ নং-GD-10	বইপত্র ও সামগ্রিকী	৬০,০০০/-	মূল্য দুগুণের উপর ১০% হারে কার্য সম্পাদন জামানত প্রদেয়া হবে।													
০৪	প্যাকেজ নং-GD-19	কম্পিউটার সামগ্রী	২০,০০০/-														
১২.	দরপত্র সিডিউল সংগ্রহের পদ্ধতি	(প্রত্যেক প্যাকেজের জন্য আলাদা আলাদাভাবে) প্রতিটি দরপত্র দাখিলের মূল্য বাবদ ১০০০/- (এক হাজার) টাকা (অফেরত যোগ্য) জমা পূর্বক নিম্ন পাঠে আবেদনের মাধ্যমে অত্র দপ্তরের প্রকাশন শাখা হতে সিডিউল সংগ্রহ করা যাবে।															
১৩.	দরপত্র দাতার যোগ্যতা	দরপত্রের সহিত জমা দিতে হবে (প্রত্যেক প্যাকেজের জন্য আলাদা আলাদাভাবে) (১) প্রতিটি খাম সীলনাকৃতি অবস্থায় দরপত্র দাখিল করতে হবে (২) হলনাদান নবায়নকৃত সফটওয়্যার ট্রেন্ড লাইসেন্স এর সত্যায়িত ফটোকপি (২০২৪-২৫) (৩) আবেদন পরিচালকের সনদের সত্যায়িত ফটোকপি (২০২৪-২৫) (৪) আর্থিক যথ্যতার সত্যায়িত ২৭/০৫/২০২৪ হতে ২৬/০৫/২০২৫ পর্যন্ত ব্যাংক স্টেটমেন্টের মূল কপি দাখিল করতে হবে। (৫) সফটওয়্যার জমাদান মূল্য সংযোজন কর সনদ (বাবদার প্রকৃতি পরে) সত্যায়িত ফটোকপি। (৬) সিডিউলের মূল্য বাবদ জমাদান অর্থের (অফেরতযোগ্য) চলানের মূল কপি জমা দিতে হবে। (৭) সফটওয়্যার কাজের কমপক্ষে তিন বছরের বাবদ অভিজ্ঞতার সনদপত্র (প্রমাণ সহ) দাখিল করতে হবে (৮) দরপত্র দাখিল কর্তৃক কাজের প্রকৃতি/পদ্ধতি মোতাবেক দরপত্র দাখিল করতে হবে। (৯) বিজ্ঞপ্তি প্রকাশের পর হতে ২৬/০৫/২০২৫ খ্রি তারিখের মধ্যে টাকা অদায়া-২: ITT-10.1০৫ উল্লেখিত টাকার ব্যাংক ড্রিট থাকতে হবে এবং ড্রিটের সপক্ষে ইহার প্রমাণসি দরপত্রের সাথে দাখিল করতে হবে। ব্যাংক ড্রিট না থাকলে ফরম দিষ্ট ২-৫ প্রদেয়া হবে, তবে ব্যাংক কর্তৃপক্ষ কর্তৃক স্বাক্ষর, নামের সীল ও মোবাইল অথবা টেলিফোন নম্বরের দাখিল করতে হবে। (১০) The required information regarding claims under litigation shall be during the last 03 (Three) years from Notary Public, Bangladesh by bidder in 300 tk non-judicial stamp.(Must be submit original copy.) ইহা স্বাক্ষর দরপত্রে দেয় পদ্ধতি প্রদেয়া হবে।															
১৪.	বিশেষ নির্দেশনা	(ক) নিম্নস্থ পাঠে আবেদনের মাধ্যমে দরপত্র ক্রয় করতে হবে।(খ) দরপত্রের সাথে সংযুক্ত শর্ত ও নিয়মাবলী অনুযায়ী। (গ) সফ্টওয়্যার সফটওয়্যার ২০০৬ ও পিপিআর ২০০৮ এবং সংশ্লিষ্ট ২০২৩ অনুসরণ করা হবে।															
১৫.	সংরক্ষিত কমত্যা	কর্তৃপক্ষ কোন কারণ দর্শানো ব্যতীরেকে যে কোন দরপত্র বা সকল দরপত্র গ্রহণ বা বাতিলের ক্ষমতা সংরক্ষণ করেন।															
১৬.	দরপত্র আহবানকারীর নাম	অধ্যাপক ডাঃ মোবাহদা সুলতানা															
১৭.	দরপত্র আহবানকারীর পদবী ও ঠিকানা	অধ্যাপক, শহীদ তাজউদ্দীন আহমদ মেডিকেল কলেজ, গাজীপুর।															
২০	অন্যভাবে কারণ বশতঃ নির্ধারিত দিনে দরপত্র দাখিল ও খোলা না হলে পরবর্তী কর্মদিবসে উল্লেখিত সময়ে দরপত্র দাখিল ও খোলায় তারিখ হিসেবে গণ্য হবে।																

(অধ্যাপক ডাঃ মোবাহদা সুলতানা)

অধ্যাপক

শহীদ তাজউদ্দীন আহমদ মেডিকেল কলেজ

গাজীপুর।

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Tareq Rafi Bhuiyan Jun

JAGARAN CHAKMA

Japanese investment in Bangladesh has grown steadily over the past decade. But with clearer policies, improved infrastructure and a more predictable regulatory environment, there is room to attract much more.

These were the key observations shared by Tareq Rafi Bhuiyan Jun, president of the Japan-Bangladesh Chamber of Commerce and Industry (JBCCI).

"There are now over 350 Japanese companies running in Bangladesh, which is nearly three times more than a decade ago," Jun said in a recent interview with The Daily Star.

"That is a positive sign, but it is not where it could be. Many Japanese companies are still in a wait-and-see mode because of recurring uncertainties in policy and regulation."

While Japanese firms are interested in Bangladesh's prospects, especially in light engineering, logistics, IT services, infrastructure, human resources and manufacturing, they are also wary of the country's investment climate.

"We are not just competing with ourselves," Jun said. "We are competing with countries like Vietnam, Indonesia, and India. Investors compare policies, timelines, and ease of doing business. In too many of these areas, Bangladesh still lags."

One promising development Jun pointed to is the Bangladesh Special Economic Zone in Araihaazar area of Narayanganj, a joint venture between Japan's Sumitomo Corporation and the Bangladesh Economic Zones Authority (Beza).

Several Japanese and international firms, including Singer, Art Nature, Lion Corporation and IRIS, have already begun setting up operations there.

"The infrastructure of the zone at Araihaazar is truly world-class," Jun said. "It gives Japanese investors confidence that things can be done right here. But one zone is not enough. The pace of such developments must be accelerated and backed by consistent policies."

However, even where infrastructure exists, policy instability often undercuts progress. According to Jun, predictability now matters more to investors than low costs.

"Cost matters, but stability matters more," he said. "Sudden changes to tax laws, customs rules, or investment incentives cause hesitation. Investors plan for decades, not for five-year electoral terms."

Japanese firms often cite political uncertainty, unclear policies, complex tax structures and customs delays as key concerns. These not only increase costs but also create unnecessary confusion for companies operating under tight schedules.

"Many of our member companies have experienced long delays at ports, inconsistent duty assessments, and

with local companies that cut corners on wages, taxes, or workplace safety, it creates an uneven playing field," he said.

He urged the government to reward ethical business conduct by offering incentives and support to both foreign and local firms that play by the rules.

"If compliance becomes a burden, investors will go elsewhere. We must align our systems so that the most responsible companies are also the most competitive."

Jun believes Bangladesh can strengthen its partnership with Japan by investing in its people. With Japan's ageing population, the demand for skilled

he commented. "Whether it is infrastructure for logistics, power stability for manufacturing, or certifications for IT, these need to be mapped out clearly. Investors need visibility."

He also added that public-private consultation must be institutionalised and continuous, citing the Japan-Bangladesh Public-Private Economic Dialogue (PPED) as a platform that identifies and resolves key issues faced by investors.

"Happy investors work as ambassadors to attract further FDI," he added.

"Dialogue must not be ceremonial. It must feed directly into policy decisions, and its outcomes should be measurable."

Several major Japanese-backed infrastructure projects are already under way, including the Matarbari Deep Sea Port, the Dhaka Metro Rail, and the third terminal at Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport.

Jun believes these could be transformative, if completed on schedule.

"These are game changers," he said. "They will reduce logistics costs, boost efficiency, and make the country more attractive to investors."

Jun expressed optimism about the upcoming visit to Tokyo by Chief Adviser Professor Muhammad Yunus, calling it an opportunity to reset and deepen bilateral investment ties.

"This visit can demonstrate that Bangladesh is serious about long-term partnerships. But we must ensure deliverables, such as investment pledges, new agreements or knowledge-transfer initiatives."

He also praised the interim government's efforts to engage with all political parties, saying it had sent a reassuring message to foreign investors.

"Japanese investors want to see unity and continuity. Political alignment on economic goals builds long-term confidence."

"The next five years are make-or-break. If we make our systems more efficient, commit to policy stability, and deliver infrastructure on time, Japanese FDI will not just grow, it will multiply."

"But we cannot take this window for granted," he added. "Vietnam, Thailand, India, they are moving fast. If Bangladesh wants to compete, we must act now."

TAKEAWAYS

- More than 350 Japanese firms are now running in Bangladesh
- Araihaazar SEZ attracts big Japanese investors with better infrastructure
- Policy instability, tax issues, and customs delays slow Japanese FDI growth
- Bangladesh competes with Vietnam, India & Indonesia for Japanese investment
- Investors for long-term policy consistency over short-term cost advantages

overlapping regulations," Jun said. "For firms importing high-precision machinery or perishable components, this can be devastating."

The Japan-Bangladesh chamber president called for urgent reform of customs procedures, including the digitisation of clearance systems and a reduction in the discretionary powers of officials at checkpoints.

He welcomed government initiatives such as the Bangladesh Single Window (BSW) and the Authorised Economic Operator (AEO) schemes, describing them as steps in the right direction.

Jun also raised concern over the disadvantages faced by companies that follow the rules.

"Japanese firms follow global standards in labour, safety, import procedures and environmental compliance. But when they compete

foreign workers is rising and Bangladesh has the demographic advantage.

"If we can align our vocational and technical training systems to Japanese standards, our youth can find employment both at home and in Japan," he said.

Jun also pointed to the growing significance of the IT sector in Japan-Bangladesh ties.

"There is high demand for software development, business process outsourcing, and engineering services. But to meet this demand, we need collaboration between academia and industry, better training and greater exposure to global best practices."

To attract targeted Japanese investment, Jun said Bangladesh should develop sector-specific investment roadmaps.

"Each sector has its own requirements,"

Uneven enforcement undermines our FDI aspirations

MASUD KHAN

Concerns over legal unpredictability and uneven regulatory enforcement continue to cast a shadow over Bangladesh's investment climate. In recent years, several senior executives of multinational firms have been drawn into criminal proceedings over alleged labour law violations -- cases many in the business community view as excessive and disproportionate.

Such developments directly undermine Bangladesh's ambition to position itself as a competitive destination for foreign direct investment (FDI). The Bangladesh Investment Development Authority (Bida) has played a proactive role in promoting the country's potential. But investor confidence depends not just on facilitation, but on the consistent and fair application of laws -- something increasingly in question.

On the ground, many multinational corporations (MNCs), particularly in fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) and cosmetics, report an uneven playing field. They face stricter scrutiny than local firms -- from aggressive audits and VAT refund delays to rigid enforcement of tax and labour laws. Meanwhile, domestic competitors often operate in the informal economy with minimal oversight, distorting competition and discouraging compliance.

Over the years, several global pharmaceutical companies have exited Bangladesh, citing policy inconsistency, bureaucratic red tape, and regulatory unpredictability. These quiet departures are far more telling than rankings alone, and mirror the country's low standing in international ease-of-doing-business indices.

One particularly troubling issue is the enforcement of the Workers' Profit Participation Fund (WPPF). Many local firms and even entire sectors operate without complying with this law, often without consequence.

Yet foreign companies have faced swift and punitive action. In some instances, disputes over whether WPPF applies to seasonal or contractual workers have escalated into criminal charges, rather than being handled through labour courts or regulatory processes. The legal system should protect rights, not serve as a tool of pressure.

The cosmetics sector highlights this imbalance even further. MNCs face unclear and shifting regulations regarding product labelling, classification, and safety testing. Even items widely approved abroad must clear redundant local hurdles. Imported products are regularly delayed at customs due to discretionary value assessments or ambiguous documentation requirements. Local producers, by contrast, often bypass these same standards with little pushback, giving them a clear cost and time advantage.

The core issue is not regulation itself, but its selective and inconsistent application. Some sectors have successfully lobbied for formal exemptions from rules like the WPPF. Others simply ignore them without repercussion. Yet foreign firms are often subject to abrupt enforcement actions, reinforcing the perception that they are held to a different, and higher, standard.

Such signals do lasting damage. Legal compliance is essential, but enforcement must be transparent, proportionate, and uniform. Public threats of punitive action or comments suggesting forced exits do not enhance accountability, they erode trust and deter long-term investment.

Foreign investors exploring Bangladesh often reach out to MNCs already operating in the country. These companies effectively serve as informal ambassadors. When they share concerns about legal unpredictability, surprise inspections, and selective prosecution, it sends a discouraging message -- one that no branding campaign can override.

As Bangladesh moves toward graduating from least-developed country (LDC) status and sets its sights on upper-middle-income classification, attracting high-quality FDI becomes more critical. Incentives alone won't be enough. Investors need to see a rules-based environment where laws are applied fairly and disputes are resolved through proper legal channels.

To build a credible and enabling investment climate, Bangladesh must ensure all businesses, foreign or domestic, are subject to the same standards, protected by the same rights, and held accountable through the same mechanisms. A level playing field is not a branding issue; it is the foundation of investor confidence and long-term economic resilience.

The writer is the chairman of Unilever Consumer Care Limited.



Institutions systematically weakened in past 15 yrs: Adviser

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

The institutional capacity of various organisations in Bangladesh has been systematically weakened over the past 15 years, both in the public and private sectors, said Commerce Adviser Sk Bashir Uddin.

This has significantly hindered the development of local industries and disrupted the natural competitiveness of the market, he said.

He made the remarks yesterday at a seminar titled "Competition Policy

in Bangladesh: Prospects, Challenges, and the Way Forward", held at the InterContinental Dhaka.

The event was jointly organised by the Bangladesh Competition Commission and the United Nations Development Programme.

"Since taking responsibility, I have faced numerous challenges," the adviser said.

However, due to several positive initiatives, improvements are now being seen in remittance inflows and exports, with success gradually extending to other

sectors, he added.

"What we have observed is that the destruction of institutional capacity over the past 15 years has led to the rise of several cronies in our economy," he said.

"This has created an extremely unequal distribution of wealth and empowered certain cronies to block new competitors from entering the market," the commerce adviser added.

He noted that, like many other institutions, the capacity of the Competition Commission had also been dismantled, which is why the public

has yet to see tangible benefits from its work.

"People want to see the benefits of competition reflected in their daily lives. The Commission must be strengthened to deliver on that front," he said.

The adviser also said many dishonest businesses are forming alliances to harm smaller enterprises, at times selling products at loss-making prices to eliminate competition.

"The Competition Commission must take action to penalise such offenders," he added.

Weaker Donald Trump will struggle to keep promises



REUTERS, London

Donald Trump can still cut deals and issue orders. But the US president's power has waned since he imposed sky-high tariffs in April, only to backtrack. In particular, the balance of power between the United States and China, which should be critical to his promise to "Make America Great Again", has shifted in Beijing's favour.

Trump deploys his power in three main ways. The first is by giving commands. He spews out executive orders and makes pronouncements on social media, expecting people to snap to attention. The second is as a card-player. As he told Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy in their infamous meeting in the White House in February: "you don't have the cards right now". The president often seems to think he can cut good deals because he holds the best hand. The third is by taunting opponents. That was the approach Trump took with former Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, mocking him as the country's "governor".

At the apogee of Trump's power, he faced little opposition. A blizzard

of activity, combined with the fact that his Republican Party controls both houses of Congress, gave the impression that his second administration would be all-conquering. There was little point for opponents in resisting either the president or key lieutenants such as Elon Musk, the world's richest man who was given the job of slashing government spending.

The opposition Democratic Party was in disarray. Critics in the Republican Party and business kept quiet for fear that Trump would turn on them. Targets such as Columbia University and law firm Paul Weiss made concessions in an attempt to persuade him to back off.

One of Trump's sources of power is the perception that he is a winner. His trip to Saudi Arabia, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates last week, when he announced deals worth more than \$1 trillion, burnished these credentials. His personal relationships with Gulf leaders also underlined his charisma -- another source of his power.

In recent weeks, however, Trump has also given the impression that he will back off when faced with signs of trouble. He delayed bespoke tariffs on trading partners after financial markets tumbled, suggesting a low threshold for economic pain. He

struck a more emollient tone towards Canada after new Prime Minister Mark Carney hit back with tariffs and tough rhetoric.

The most important retreat, however, was last week's decision to slash US tariffs on Chinese imports for at least 90 days without any significant concessions from Beijing. Trump may have feared that an enduring standoff could fuel stagnation. The US ceasefire with Houthis also suggests

a less belligerent approach. Although the Yemeni fighters agreed to stop attacking US ships in the Red Sea, they continued to launch missiles at Israel, one of Washington's closest allies.

In all these cases, Trump seems to have overestimated his hand and underestimated the cards held by his opponents. Others may draw the lesson that he does not have the stomach for long fights. The president is also facing more resistance at



PHOTO: AFP

US President Donald Trump speaks to the media while signing executive orders in the Oval Office of the White House, in Washington, DC, on May 5, 2025.