



# NBR officials call off shutdown as govt softens stance

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Officials of the National Board of Revenue (NBR) called off their planned shutdown yesterday evening, following a government pledge to transform the board into a “specialised and autonomous agency” rather than dissolving it.

The officials, protesting under the banner of the “NBR Reform Unity Council”, had earlier threatened a complete suspension of operations from today unless their four-point demand was met.

In a statement yesterday evening, they welcomed the government’s latest commitment, which came after more than a week of demonstrations that paralysed revenue activities across the country.

With the withdrawal of the shutdown, now revenue officials will return to work. In the media statement, the officials mentioned that they would do work outside the scheduled office hours to clear the pending activities accumulated during their demonstration since May 14.

Faced with mounting pressure, the finance ministry yesterday announced that the government would move to establish a specialised

NBR strike: latest developments

NBR officials withdraw complete shutdown programme

But they will continue non-cooperation with NBR chairman

Finance ministry to make NBR a specialised and separate agency

Revenue ordinance to be amended by July 31, 2025

Ordinance won't be enforced until amendments are finalised

Reform plan to be shaped through talks with NBR, advisory body, and stakeholders

STRIKE DISRUPTED

Import activities

Tax-related work

Revenue collection

revenue agency while protecting the interests of officials from the customs, excise, and taxation departments.

The move marks a further shift in the government’s stance, coming just days after the ministry first indicated willingness to amend the Revenue Policy and Revenue Management Ordinance.

The protesters, who began their demonstrations on May 14, have been arguing that the ordinance enacted on May 12 would effectively dissolve the NBR and compromise their job security.

Their dissatisfaction had already led to major service disruptions, including customs clearance delays

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# Gas crisis still choking textile mills

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Textile and garment industry owners yesterday expressed grave concerns over the inadequate supply of gas to industrial units, which has been severely hampering their operations for almost three years.

Many textile mills are on the verge of shutting down as they are unable to operate even at minimum

capacity, said Showkat Aziz Russell, president of the Bangladesh Textile Mills Association (BTMA).

He was speaking at a joint press conference of different trade bodies at the Gulshan Club in Dhaka.

“We need a roadmap for gas supply as we cannot run our mills,” he added, insisting that the government focus on increasing energy supply to industrial units in the budget for the

next fiscal year.

The textile millers lobbied the previous government against increasing gas prices, but the rate was increased regardless.

He also urged the government to engage Chinese investors to supply gas from Bhola to Dhaka and adjacent areas, arguing that they could get the job done quickly.

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BUDGET FOR FY26

# Helicopter rides may cost more

MOHAMMAD SUMAN

From horse-drawn carriages to helicopters, weddings in Bangladesh have taken flight – literally. What was once a luxury reserved for the ultra-rich has become an aspirational trend among the middle class in recent years.

But those lofty dreams could soon be grounded, as the government plans to raise import duties on helicopters in the upcoming national budget.

The finance ministry has proposed a hike in helicopter import duty, from the current 10 percent to a combined 37 percent, for the fiscal year (FY) 2025-26.

This includes 10 percent customs duty, 15 percent value-added tax (VAT), 5 percent advance tax, and 5 percent advance income tax, according to finance ministry officials.

Local aviation operators say this import duty increase will push up rental prices, making helicopter rides far less accessible.

In recent years, more middle-income families have been opting for helicopters, especially for weddings and other social occasions, according to the Aviation Operators Association of Bangladesh (AOAB).

The starting fare, they say, runs into several lakh taka. It is still expensive, but not completely out of reach for many.

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# Customs duty for buses may halve to 5%

SUKANTA HALDER

In a move to develop an effective public transport system in the country’s major cities, the interim government may reduce customs duties on the import of public buses.

A finance ministry official, on condition of anonymity, told The Daily Star that the existing 10 percent customs duty on the import of 16- to 40-seat buses could be reduced to 5 percent in line with an initiative aimed at modernising the fleet and improving passenger comfort nationwide.

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