

Star BUSINESS



Idra puts 32 insurers in 'high-risk' category

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

The insurance regulator has placed 32 companies in "high-risk" category, just days after finalising a draft ordinance that would allow for the restructuring, merger and change in ownership, or even liquidation of troubled insurers.

The Insurance Development and Regulatory Authority (Idra) placed these firms in the category, citing their poor governance and fragile finances.

At a press conference at Idra's headquarters yesterday, Idra Chairman M Aslam Alam announced the classification, though he did not disclose the names of the companies or provide a detailed breakdown of the risks.

He said 15 of the high-risk firms are life insurers, while the remaining 17 operate in the non-life segment.

Of the companies labelled as "high-risk", 15 are in an "unviable" state, while issues facing the "medium-risk" group are seen as "solvable".

However, Alam did not share a similar risk assessment for the non-life firms.

"We have an internal grading system based on specific criteria, on which this classification is based," said the Idra chairman.

The regulator has recently finalised the Insurance Resolution Ordinance 2025, which would give Idra sweeping powers to declare insolvent insurers bankrupt.

Industry insiders say this signals the regulator's own recognition of the sector's deepening vulnerabilities.

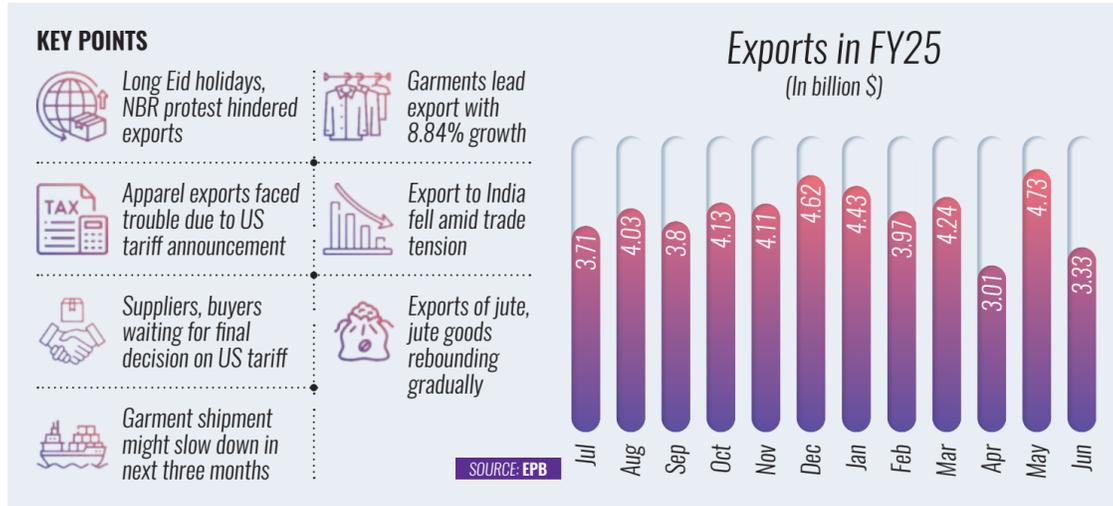
At the press briefing, Alam admitted the insurance industry is facing a crisis.

"The failure to settle claims on time has eroded public trust in the industry. Without transparency and accountability, confidence will not return."

He also acknowledged that Idra itself shares some of the blame for the current fragile credibility.

READ MORE ON B3

Exports rose 8% to \$48b in FY25 despite economic headwinds



REFAYET ULLAH MRIDHA

Bangladesh's merchandise exports grew by 8.58 percent in the just-concluded fiscal year (FY) 2024-25, reaching \$48.28 billion, defying a global economic slowdown, ongoing geopolitical tensions, and domestic instability, according to data released by the Export Promotion Bureau (EPB) yesterday.

"The export could have been much more had there not been long Eid holidays in June during Eid-ul-Azha when production in factories did not take place," EPB Vice-Chairman Md Anwar Hossain told The Daily Star over the phone.

Apart from Eid holidays, he said exports also faced disruptions due to protests by officials of the National Board of Revenue (NBR), which brought customs operations to a standstill for a significant stretch in May and June.

These disruptions, coupled with other hurdles, likely contributed to the 7.55 percent drop in exports in June, which fell to \$3.33 billion compared with the same month last year. Moreover, exports to India fell because of trade tensions between the two neighbours, Hossain also said.

The garment industry, which accounts for nearly 84 percent of national export earnings, drove much of the growth in FY25, despite frequent unrest and factory closures.

Garment exports rose by 8.84 percent year-on-year to \$39.34 billion, with knitwear alone earning \$21.15 billion, marking a 9.73 percent increase. Woven garments brought in \$18.18 billion, up 7.82 percent from the previous

year, EPB data show.

Apart from factory closures and long Eid holidays, the 37 percent reciprocal tariffs announced by the United States on April 2 also spelled trouble for the garments sector.

"The tariff announcement by the Donald Trump administration affected overall merchandise shipments from Bangladesh in the last fiscal year, as exporters, mainly apparel exporters, faced trouble from the sudden tariff blow," said EPB Vice-Chairman Hossain.

Faruque Hassan, former president of the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA), echoed similar concerns.

He warned that shipments are likely to slow over the next three months—July, August, and September—as US retailers and brands remain hesitant to confirm new orders. READ MORE ON B3



Lack of bank support stifles SME growth

Salehuddin says

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Bangladesh's small and medium enterprises (SMEs) are failing to realise their vast potential amid severe funding challenges, as banks remain unwilling to engage with the sector, Finance Adviser Salehuddin Ahmed said yesterday.

"Bankers don't think about SMEs. They prefer giving large loans of Tk 10 crore or more and don't care whether it's recovered. Bankers and policymakers must change this mindset," he said while speaking at the SME Foundation-ERF Media Award ceremony at the Economic Reporters' Forum (ERF) office in Purana Paltan.

The adviser noted that Bangladesh's economic growth still largely depends on the SME sector, which also generates the highest employment. "SMEs are the real backbone of our economy. There are many narratives about Bangladesh's growth, but the foundation is still SMEs."

He also pointed out that the sector's contribution to GDP remains low compared to global peers.

"SMEs contribute only 26 percent to our GDP, whereas in many countries it is as high as 60 percent. People say industries in developed countries are all big, but that's not true. Japan's SMEs are world-famous and even produce luxury items like Rolex watches," Salehuddin said.

Underscoring the need for technological advancement in the sector, he added, "The days of hammer and chisel are over. Though some SMEs have already embraced technology, this needs to grow much further."

He also highlighted the SME sector's potential in empowering women. "SMEs play a major role in creating opportunities for women. Increasing women's participation means not just talking about it but ensuring they have real work opportunities. That is happening through SMEs."

READ MORE ON B3

High interest rates threaten SME jobs, stability

JAGARAN CHAKMA

Small and medium enterprises (SMEs), usually located in rural districts, continue to pay more for bank loans than large corporates, although the authorities often claim to prioritise easy and affordable credit access for these businesses.

Finance Adviser Salehuddin Ahmed said yesterday that SMEs continue to be the "backbone" of the Bangladesh economy and employment.

Official estimates support the

head of small, microfinance and agent banking and deputy managing director at City Bank Limited.

He said SME clients are scattered across regions outside Dhaka, which raises management costs.

According to him, processing charges are also proportionately higher, as smaller loans cannot absorb fees the way large corporate loans can.

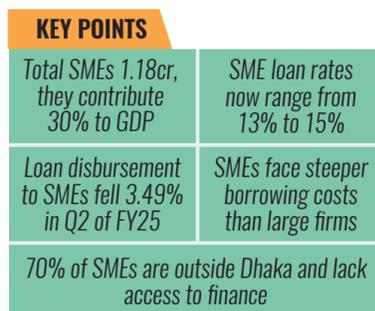
He added that many SMEs avoid visiting branches, creating a need for more personalised service and increasing costs further.

He used to repay Tk 9 lakh per crore each year. With the interest rate rising to 14 percent in the last year, his annual repayment rose to Tk 14 lakh.

"It abruptly increased my quarterly repayment pressure. Now I am struggling with the rising interest rates," said the small manufacturer.

His business has slowed over the past year, and he now fears he may have to lay off workers.

Ajit Kumar Das, who owns a jute textile mill in Narsingdi, said strong demand for eco-friendly jute bags



adviser. More than 1.18 crore SMEs run across the country and contribute about 30 percent to the gross domestic product. These businesses employ around 2.40 crore people, and 70 percent of them are located outside the capital.

Despite this, banks charge SMEs interest rates ranging between 13 and 15 percent, among the highest across all sectors except services.

According to the Bangladesh Bank, the weighted average interest rate for SMEs was 12.49 percent in April this year. In comparison, agriculture faced a rate of 11.98 percent, large industry 12.45 percent, and services 12.75 percent.

Bankers say commercial lenders impose higher rates on SMEs because of increased operational costs.

"SME loan interest rates are usually 1.5 to 2.5 percentage points higher than corporate loans due to higher operational costs," said Kamrul Mehedi,

Arief Hossain Khan, spokesperson of the Bangladesh Bank, acknowledged that SME loans carry higher interest rates than other term loans because of the operational expenses.

Still, he said the central bank encourages commercial banks to bring down these rates.

Kazi Iqbal, senior research fellow at the Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS), said SME loans are costlier to handle and come with more risk, leading to higher charges.

BURDEN OF RISING RATES
Md Oli Ullah, who runs an agricultural machinery workshop in the southwestern district of Chuadanga, employs 100 workers at his Janata Engineering factory. The factory makes corn threshers and mustard oil extraction machines.

Ullah took a Tk 5 crore cash credit (CC) loan from Agrani Bank in 2020 at 9 percent interest.

has helped him sustain his business. However, he said higher interest rates have eroded his profit margins.

Both entrepreneurs said that higher borrowing costs amid economic uncertainty threaten jobs and business stability.

Official data support this concern.

The disbursement of loans to cottage, micro, small and medium enterprises (CMSMEs) declined by 3.49 percent year-on-year in the October to December quarter of FY2024-25.

Banks disbursed Tk 62,581 crore during the quarter, down from Tk 64,842 crore in the same period of the previous fiscal year, according to the Bangladesh Bank.

CHALLENGES IN LENDING
Bankers say loan recovery rates from SMEs are as high as 99 percent. Despite that, many commercial lenders are reluctant to lend to them.

READ MORE ON B3

Taskforce proposes semiconductor fund for design and testing

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

The national semiconductor taskforce has recommended creating a dedicated "semiconductor fund" under the ICT Division or the Bangladesh Bank to support new ventures through venture capital or term financing.

The recommendation was part of a series of short-term (2025-26) proposals submitted to the chief adviser on July 1 by Chowdhury Ashik Mahmud Bin Harun, executive chairman of the Bangladesh Investment Development Authority and Bangladesh Economic Zones Authority, according to a press release.

Among the short-term priorities, the taskforce proposed launching a virtual knowledge portal offering tiered certification aligned with global standards, setting up industry-grade training labs in at least five institutions by 2027, and creating shared cleanrooms for chip packaging and testing.

It also called for practical training for engineers through rotation-based on-site programmes, rolling out certification through select universities, and implementing targeted tax and import policy measures with clear policy guardrails.

The taskforce also called for practical training for engineers through rotation-based on-site programmes

Formed on January 1, 2025, the 13-member taskforce includes representatives from the government, private sector, academia, and the non-resident Bangladeshi community.

It was tasked with identifying capability gaps and outlining a phased roadmap for Bangladesh's entry into the semiconductor sector.

In its findings, the taskforce recommended prioritising chip design, testing, and packaging in the short and medium terms, citing the capital-intensive nature of fabrication.

The roadmap focuses on three pillars: skills development, business and policy support, and global partnerships. Long-term strategies include engaging NRIs in investment and training, and forming strategic G2G partnerships for technical cooperation and knowledge transfer.

"The roadmap offers Bangladesh a clear, feasible route to join the global chip design and testing scene," said Chowdhury.

"With focused interventions, this could be a turning point in transforming Bangladesh into a technology-driven economy," he added.

Professor Yunus lauded the taskforce's efforts and stressed the need for international collaboration and talent development to implement the roadmap effectively.

The Chief Adviser's Office will form dedicated working groups to oversee implementation, as Bangladesh eyes a competitive role in the evolving global semiconductor supply chain.

NRB Bank surpasses Tk 400cr credit card outstanding milestone

STAR BUSINESS DESK

NRB Bank PLC has achieved a significant milestone in its credit card portfolio, with outstanding dues exceeding Tk 400 crore.

To date, the bank has issued 67,000 active credit cards. In celebration of this achievement, the bank recently organised a commemorative event at its corporate head office in Dhaka, according to a press release.

Md Quamrul Islam Chowdhury, chairman of the executive committee of the bank, inaugurated the event as the chief guest.

Shaikh Md Salim, chairman of the risk management committee; Ferdous Ara Begum and SK Matiuur Rahman, directors; and Tarek Reaz Khan, managing director and CEO; along with senior management team and other senior officials, were also present.



Md Quamrul Islam Chowdhury, chairman of the executive committee of NRB Bank PLC, inaugurates the event celebrating the achievement of a Tk 400 crore milestone in the bank's credit card portfolio at its corporate head office in Dhaka recently.

PHOTO: NRB BANK

Pubali Bank donates ambulance to Noakhali Science and Technology University



Prof Mohammad Ismail, vice-chancellor of Noakhali Science and Technology University, receives the dummy key from Mohammad Ali, managing director and chief executive officer of Pubali Bank Limited, at an event held recently at the bank's head office in Dhaka.

PHOTO: PUBALI BANK

STAR BUSINESS DESK

Pubali Bank PLC has donated an ambulance to Noakhali Science and Technology University as part of its corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiative.

Mohammad Ali, managing director and chief executive officer of the bank, handed over a symbolic key to Prof Mohammad Ismail, vice-chancellor of the university, at an event held recently at the bank's head office in Dhaka, according to a press release.

In his address, Ali remarked that Pubali Bank is not solely driven by profit, but is also deeply committed to fulfilling its social responsibilities. As a continuation of this ethos, the bank has

donated the ambulance to support the university community.

He added that this gesture would foster a relationship of friendship and mutual cooperation between the two institutions in the days ahead.

Prof Mohammad Razuanul Hoque, pro-vice chancellor, and Prof Muhammad Hanif (Murad), treasurer of the university, attended the ceremony as special guests.

The event was presided over by Mohammad Hafizur Rahman Sardar, deputy general manager and head of the Noakhali Region at Pubali Bank.

Faculty members, administrative officials, and students of the university, alongside senior officials of the bank, were also present.

Reaz Uddin made MD of Summit Meghnaghat I and II power companies

STAR BUSINESS DESK

Summit Group has appointed Md Reaz Uddin as the managing director (MD) and chief executive officer (CEO) of both Summit Meghnaghat I Power Company Limited and Summit Meghnaghat II Power Company Limited, according to a press release.

Prior to this appointment, Reaz served as the CEO of Summit Meghnaghat II Power Company Limited and concurrently held the position of chief operating officer at both Summit



Meghnaghat I Power Company Limited and Summit Bibiyana Power Company Limited.

He has been affiliated with Summit Group since 2011. He brings with him over 32 years of comprehensive experience in the power generation sector, having led high-level negotiations, implemented large-scale infrastructure projects, and overseen plant operations and maintenance teams.

He has also contributed to securing foreign project financing surpassing US\$ 1.1 billion for Bangladesh.

He commenced his professional journey at Karnaphuli Fertiliser Company Limited (KAFCO), a multinational fertiliser enterprise in the country.

He later joined AES, a United States-based power company that developed Bangladesh's first two combined cycle power plants under the Independent Power Producer (IPP) model.

Reaz has also held various leadership roles at Powertek Berhad, CDC Globeleq, AES Corporation, and KAFCO throughout his career.

He obtained his bachelor's degree in chemical engineering from the Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET), and an MBA from Victoria University, Australia.

Dutch-Bangla Bank arranges workshop on agricultural research projects

STAR BUSINESS DESK

Dutch-Bangla Bank PLC recently organised a workshop on agricultural research projects titled "DBBL-CSR Grant for Technology Incubation in Agriculture" at a hotel in the capital.

Abul Kashem Md Shirin, managing director and CEO of the bank, presided over the inaugural session of the event, according to a press release.

In his address, Shirin stated, "With the support of Dutch-Bangla Bank, research projects have been successfully implemented in various regions across the country, focusing on crops, fisheries, poultry, irrigation, and food processing and storage."

Expressing optimism, he added, "Although the scheduled activities of the project have been concluded, the project partners and researchers will continue to

carry forward these initiatives."

Prof Md Manjurul Alam, chairman of the bank's Special CSR Committee, delivered a presentation highlighting the key outcomes and successes of the projects.

A total of seven technology innovation projects were implemented at the farmer level across different regions of the country during the period 2023-2025, funded by Dutch-Bangla Bank.



Abul Kashem Md Shirin, managing director and CEO of Dutch-Bangla Bank PLC, poses for group photographs with participants of the workshop on agricultural research projects titled "DBBL-CSR Grant for Technology Incubation in Agriculture" at a hotel in Dhaka recently.

PHOTO: DUTCH-BANGLA BANK



Md Abdul Latif, deputy managing director of Citizens Bank PLC, poses for group photographs with participants of the training session on "Integrated Supervision System (ISS) Reporting" at its training academy in the capital recently.

PHOTO: CITIZENS BANK

Citizens Bank organises training on integrated supervision system reporting

STAR BUSINESS DESK

Citizens Bank PLC recently organised a daylong training session on "Integrated Supervision System (ISS) Reporting" at its training academy in the capital.

Md Abdul Latif, deputy managing director of the bank, inaugurated the programme as the chief guest, according to a press release.

Md Dewan Siraj, director of the Integrated Supervision Management Department

(ISMD) at the Bangladesh Bank, conducted the sessions as the resource person.

Senior officials from both the bank's head office and various branches actively participated in the training programme.

Al-Arafah Islami Bank honours 'remittance campaign' winners

STAR BUSINESS DESK

Al-Arafah Islami Bank PLC has recognised the winners of its "Eid-ul-Azha Remittance Campaign 2025", an initiative aimed at encouraging remittance inflow through legal and official channels.

Mohd Rafat Ullah Khan, managing director (current charge) of the bank, presented awards to the winners at a ceremony held yesterday at the bank's head office in Dhaka, according to a press release.

Congratulating the awardees, Khan stated, "Al-Arafah Islami Bank has always placed great importance on the contributions of expatriates to the national economy. Our expatriate brothers and sisters are the driving force behind our economic progress."

He added, "Their remittances not only bolster our foreign currency reserves but also play a vital role

in the overall development of the country. We believe that such initiatives will further encourage expatriates to remit funds through official channels."

The award recipients included Md Abdullah (Nabinagar branch);

Amena Akter Sultana (Feni branch); Md Masukur Rahman (Jatrabari branch); Md Fayzul Islam Khan (Bulla Bazar agent outlet); Md Kayser Khan, manager (Ambarkhana branch); Md Ashraf Alam (Noapara Bazar agent outlet).

PRIZE GIVING CEREMONY EID-UL-AZHA REMITTANCE CAMPAIGN-2025

02 July, 2025



Mohd Rafat Ullah Khan, managing director (current charge) of Al-Arafah Islami Bank PLC, poses for group photographs with award recipients of the campaign, titled "Eid-ul-Azha Remittance Campaign 2025" at the bank's head office in Dhaka yesterday.

PHOTO: AL-ARAFAH ISLAMI BANK

GOVERNMENT OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF BANGLADESH

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Munshiganj PWD Division, Munshiganj

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Invitation for Tender (IFT)

Tender No. Munsi/Outsourcing/2025-26/2 (OTM)

Memo No- 25.36.5900.460.14.01.20-02

Dated:- 01-07-2025

| | | |
|---------------------------------|---|---|
| 1 | Ministry/Division | Ministry of Housing & Public Works. |
| 2 | Executing Agency | Jashore PWD Division. |
| 3 | Name of Procuring Entity | Executive Engineer, Munshiganj PWD Division, Munshiganj |
| 4 | Procuring Entity Code | - |
| 5 | Procuring Entity District | Munshiganj |
| 6 | Invitation for | Procurement of Non-Consulting Service. (Outsourcing of Driver) |
| 7 | Invitation Reference No | Munsi/Outsourcing/2025-26/2 |
| 8 | Date | 01/07/2025 |
| KEY INFORMATION | | |
| 9 | Procurement Method | Open Tendering Method (OTM) |
| FUNDING INFORMATION | | |
| 10 | Budget and Source of fund | Revenue Budget (GoB) |
| 11 | Development Partners (if applicable) | None |
| PARTICULAR INFORMATION | | |
| 12 | Project/ Programme Code (if applicable) | N/A |
| 13 | Project/ Programme Name (if applicable) | N/A |
| 14 | Tender Package No. | N/A |
| 15 | Tender Package Name | Supplying of 03 (three) outsourced personnel for daily civil and sanitary maintenance, cleaning and hygiene work at the Office of the Public Works Department, Munshiganj for the Fiscal Year 2025-2026 (July 2025 - June 2026). |
| 16 | Tender No | Munsi/Outsourcing/2025-26/2 |
| 17 | Tender Publication Date | 01/07/2025 |
| 18 | Tender Last Selling Date | 15-07-2025 up to 17:00 PM |
| 19 | Tender Closing Date and Time | 16-07-2025 Time 12:00 PM |
| 20 | Tender Opening Date and Time | 16-07-2025 Time 12:30 PM |
| 21 | Name & Address of the office (s) | Office of the Executive Engineer, Munshiganj PWD Division, Munshiganj. |
| | Selling Tender Document (Principal) | Office of the Executive Engineer i) PWD Division, Narayanganj, ii) Azimpur PWD Division iii) Resource PWD Division, iv) Narsingdi PWD Division v) Motijheel PWD Division |
| | Selling Tender Document (Others) | Office of the Executive Engineer, PWD Division, Munshiganj. |
| | Receiving Tender Document | Office of the Executive Engineer, PWD Division, Munshiganj. |
| | Opening Tender Document | Office of the Executive Engineer, PWD Division, Munshiganj. |
| 22 | Place/Date/Time of Pre-Tender meeting | N/A |
| INFORMATION FOR TENDERER | | |
| 23 | Brief Eligibility and Qualification of Tenderer | This Invitation for Tenders is open to all eligible Tenderers as mentioned below: a. The minimum number of years of general experience of the Tenderer in contracting industries in public sector as Prime Contractor/ Sub Contractor/ Management Contractor shall be 3 (Three) years. b. The minimum specific experience as a Prime Contractor completing a work of similar nature, complexity and method of manpower over a period of 3 (three) years with a value of at least of BDT 6.5 (Six Point Five) Lac shall be required. c. The required average annual turnover of the Tenderer shall be at least of the amount of BDT 3.00 (Three) Lac over the last three years. d. The minimum amount of liquid assets i.e. working capital or credit line(s) of the Tenderer shall be BDT 5.00 (Five) Lac. Unconditional Letter of commitment for Bank's undertaking for line of credit as per Form PSN-5 of tender and contract forms section must be submitted for this purpose only. Failing to submit in form PSN-5 will make the tenderer non-responsive. e. Tenderer must submit the following documents: i) Up-dated income Tax clearance certificate. ii) Vat Registration Certificate. iii) Updated Trade License. iv) Attested copy of documents mentioned in sl. no. (i), (ii), (iii) shall have to be submitted. v) Original money receipt shall be enclosed with the tender. vi) Other required eligibility and conditions of the tenderer are shown in Tender Data Sheet of Tender documents. vii) Must be submitted update License/registration document as manpower provider firm issued by Department of Inspection for Factories and Establishments (DIFE) in compliance of Section 3ka(1) of Bangladesh Labor Act 2006. Failure in submitting of such document shall lead to the non-responsiveness of the 24 |
| 24 | Price of Tender Document (BDT) | BDT 1000 (One Thousand) only. |
| | Lot No. | Identification of lot |
| 25 | 1 | Supplying of 03 (three) outsourced personnel for daily civil and sanitary maintenance, cleaning and hygiene work at the Office of the Public Works Department, Munshiganj for the Fiscal Year 2025-2026 (July 2025 - June 2026). |
| | | Location |
| | | Tender Security amount (BDT) |
| | | Completion time |
| | | Tk.23,000.00 (Twenty Three Thousand) |
| | | 30/06/2026 |
| PROCURING ENTITY DETAILS | | |
| 26 | Name of official inviting tender | Boron Kumar Biswas |
| 27 | Designation of official inviting tender | Executive Engineer |
| 28 | Address of official inviting tender | Office of the Executive Engineer, Munshiganj PWD Division, Munshiganj. |
| 29 | Contact details of official inviting tender | Tel: 02-997731677, Email: ee_munsi@pwd.gov.bd |
| 30 | The Procuring Entity reserves the right to reject all the Tenders or amend Tender proceedings. | |
| 31 | This tender notice can be seen and download from the official web site of PWD (www.pwd.munshiganj.gov.bd) | |

GD-1515

(Boron Kumar Biswas)
Executive Engineer

FBCCI election deadline extended by 45 days

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

The commerce ministry has extended the deadline for the election of the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI) by 45 days.

As a result, the FBCCI election board will announce a fresh schedule soon, according to a statement issued by its Secretary General Md Alamgir yesterday.

The announcement comes nearly two weeks after the FBCCI had set September 7 as the date for the polls for the 2025-2027 term.

The interim government appointed Md Hafizur Rahman, a member of the Bangladesh Competition Commission and a former additional secretary, as the administrator of the FBCCI in September last year, following the fall of the Awami League government in August 2024.

Bank booths, hotels can now get limited money changer licence

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Bank branches, booths, hotels, and gift shops are now formally allowed to apply to the central bank for a limited money changer licence by paying a Tk 50,000 fee.

In detailed guidelines on the matter issued yesterday, the central bank stated that it has permitted certain entities to operate as Limited Money Changers (LMCs) under the Foreign Exchange Regulation Act, 1947 (as amended in 2015).

This initiative allows the aforementioned organisations to deal with the buying and selling of foreign currency in a limited capacity for certain defined purposes with a valid licence.

As per the Bangladesh Bank guidelines, the eligible organisations must operate via designated hotel counters, airports,

or specific exchange booths approved by the central bank.

The concerned organisations must also meet institutional legal requirements, demonstrate financial soundness, and have strong internal control and compliance systems to get the licence.

The organisations will be allowed to deal with the buying and selling of foreign currency in a limited capacity for certain defined purposes

Eligible non-financial institutions in this regard may include entities such as travel agencies, hajj/Umrah service providers, and international ticketing or logistics companies.

The entities must apply using

prescribed formats available at the Foreign Exchange Policy Department (FEPD) of the Bangladesh Bank, state the guidelines, adding that the applications must be supported by relevant legal and registration documents, proof of business operations, etc.

The application fee will be Tk 50,000, and the renewal fee every two years will be Tk 10,000, the guidelines further state.

The entities must maintain foreign exchange transaction records, comply with AML/CFT obligations, submit periodic reports to the Bangladesh Bank, and keep updated KYC for all customers.

The BB licence is non-transferable and cannot be sublicensed; entities cannot operate beyond approved premises or engage in unauthorised forex trading or investment services.

BB relaxes lending limit for foreign companies

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Bangladesh Bank (BB) has relaxed lending rules for foreign companies that have been operating in the country for at least three years, as part of efforts to ease their access to term loans from the domestic market.

In a circular issued yesterday, the banking watchdog said local banks can now lend up to 60 percent of the project cost to foreign firms in local currency, while the companies must provide the remaining 40 percent as equity.

Previously, the debt-equity ratio for such firms was capped at 50:50.

The BB said foreign companies engaged in manufacturing or service activities for three years or longer are allowed to borrow from local banks and financial institutions for capacity expansion or BMRE (balancing, modernisation, rehabilitation, and expansion).

These borrowings remain subject to applicable credit norms and prudential parameters, including the single borrower exposure limit and the revised debt-equity ratio.

Exports rose 8% to \$48b

FROM PAGE B1

"Because both local suppliers and American buyers are waiting for the Trump administration's final reciprocal tariff rate," he said.

Hassan, however, expects that garment shipments to the USA will start to grow again from October onwards, as buyers will have the confirmed tariff rates and the lean season will be over. Furthermore, October will mark the beginning of the peak sales season in the USA, which will further contribute to increased shipments.

The decision on the looming US tariff is expected to come by July 9, when the announced 90-day pause on the reciprocal tariff imposition is set to end. In the meantime, US customs agents began collecting Trump's unilateral 10 percent tariff on all imports from many countries shortly after the April announcement. This is also expected to affect exports.

As of now, US buyers have offered to bear a portion of the 10 percent baseline tariff and have asked local suppliers to bear the remaining portion with the help of fabric suppliers, retailers, and brands. Usually, the tax burden is borne by the importing companies.

Speaking on the issue, BGMEA President Mahmud Hasan Khan Babu said, "The future trend of garment exports should maintain this rate as the global supply chain is recovering gradually."

"If the current 10 percent baseline tariff also continues for other competitive countries, Bangladesh's garment exports are likely to continue growing by at least 10 percent."

Apart from garment items, the shipment of leather and leather goods performed well and grew by 10.19 percent to reach \$1.14 billion, as per EPB data.

Besides, the export of home textiles grew by 2.42

percent to reach \$871.57 million, reflecting increasing confidence of international buyers in Bangladesh.

Frozen food exports grew by 17.23 percent to \$41.58 million, EPB data also show.

Plastic goods exports grew by 16.21 percent to \$284.05 million, and ceramic exports grew by 6.44 percent to \$35.22 million, according to the data.

Pharmaceutical exports grew by 3.74 percent to \$213.16 million.

Headgear exports grew by 11.26 percent to \$364.46 million, and non-leather footwear exports grew by 25.37 percent to \$522.59 million. Wigs and human hair rose by 20.92 percent to \$142.85 million, the data also said.

However, some promising goods such as jute and jute goods, cotton and cotton goods including yarn, vegetables, cement, and terry towels could not perform well last fiscal year, according to EPB data.

Md Abul Hossain,

chairman of the Bangladesh Jute Mills Association, said, "The demand for jute and jute goods has been rising all over the world as consumers are abandoning plastic goods to save the environment."

"The days of jute and jute goods are coming back again in Bangladesh," he stated.

Idra puts

FROM PAGE B1

He revealed that around 45 percent of the claims in the life insurance segment and 47 percent in the non-life segment remained unsettled at the end of 2024.

As of December 2024, some 13 lakh life insurance policyholders had pending claims worth Tk 4,414 crore, he said.

Over the past 14 years, the sector has seen 54 lakh policies lapse.

Currently, there are 71 lakh active policies, the Idra chairman said.

High interest rates threaten

FROM PAGE B1

Trade leaders point to flaws in the credit assessment system. They also highlight several structural issues, such as banking concentration in Dhaka, limited outreach to rural areas, a lack of expertise in assessing SME borrowers, and disproportionately high loan processing fees.

"High operational costs and risk make it difficult to keep SME interest rates low," said Ashraf Ahmed, former president of the Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry (DCCI).

For example, he said processing a Tk 1 lakh loan for a small business can cost a bank Tk 10,000, or 10 percent of the loan value. In contrast, processing a Tk 100 crore corporate loan costs just 0.004 percent.

SME lending requires extensive branch networks and higher monitoring

expenses, unlike corporate loans that are managed centrally. "These factors push banks to shy away from SMEs and charge them with higher rates," he said.

Abdul Momen, additional managing director and head of SME banking at BRAC Bank, said they charge between 13 and 15 percent under the market-based interest system, which is still lower than many other banks.

"We aim for affordability despite higher costs from our relationship-based model," said Momen.

BRAC Bank is one of the country's leading SME financiers, with a loan portfolio exceeding Tk 32,000 crore and nearly 2.5 lakh clients. According to

Momen, about 90 percent of its SME loans go to micro and small entrepreneurs who are usually ignored by traditional banks.

"It is because our founder envisioned a financial system for these underserved groups."

Still, BRAC Bank usually lends between Tk 15 lakh and Tk 50 lakh, while the Bangladesh Bank policy allows loans up to Tk 10 crore for SMEs.

'GOVT NEEDS TO DO MORE'

Mushfiqur Rahman, chairperson of the SME Foundation, said micro and small businesses struggle to access affordable loans due to high interest rates, strict collateral requirements, and cautious lending by

banks.

To ease this, the foundation launched a credit wholesaling programme in 2009 that offers 9 percent loans, and also channelled stimulus funds during the Covid pandemic.

Women entrepreneurs now receive between 25 and 30 percent of the loans disbursed.

However, Rahman said outreach remains limited due to inadequate funding, despite a loan recovery rate of nearly 100 percent.

"With 70 percent of 1.18 crore entrepreneurs located outside Dhaka, broader coverage is essential," he said, calling for more government support.

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার
নির্বাহী প্রকৌশলী (সওজ) এর কার্যালয়
সড়ক বিভাগ, শেরপুর
টেলিফোন নম্বর-০৯৩১-৬১১৫১; ফ্যাক্স-০৯৩১-৬১৮২১
E-mail: eeshed@rhd.gov.bd

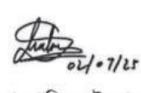
স্মারক নং-৩৫.০১.৮৯০০.৪৭০.০৬.৪০৯.২৫-৯১২ তারিখঃ ০২/০৭/২০২৫ইং

সীমিত দরপত্র পদ্ধতিতে (LTM) ঠিকাদার তালিকাভুক্তি লাইসেন্স নবায়ন সংক্রান্ত বিজ্ঞপ্তি
এতদ্বারা সংশ্লিষ্ট সকলের অবগতির জন্য জানানো যাচ্ছে যে, সড়ক বিভাগ, শেরপুর কর্তৃক পাবলিক প্রকিউরমেন্ট বিধিমালা-২০০৮ এর আলোকে সড়ক ও জনপথ অধিদপ্তরের পরিচালনা (রাজস্ব) বাজেটের আওতায় সীমিত দরপত্র পদ্ধতি (LTM) প্রয়োগের মাধ্যমে ক্রয়কার্য সম্পাদনের লক্ষ্যে ২০২৫-২০২৬ অর্থবছরের জন্য ঠিকাদার তালিকাভুক্তি/নবায়ন করা হবে। ঠিকাদার তালিকাভুক্তির জন্য সিপিটিইউ কর্তৃক নির্ধারিত আবেদন ফরম নির্বাহী প্রকৌশলী, সওজ, সড়ক বিভাগ, শেরপুর হতে নিম্নোক্ত সময়সূচি মোতাবেক অফিস চলাকালীন সংগ্রহ করা যাবে।

| ছক-১ | | | | |
|-----------------|-----------|-----------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| বিবরণ | নবায়ন ফি | ভ্যাট ১৫% | বিনা জরিমানায় নবায়নের সময়সীমা | ৫০% জরিমানায় নবায়নের সময়সীমা |
| লাইসেন্স নবায়ন | ২০০০.০০ | ৩০০.০০ | ০৭/০৭/২০২৫ হতে ১৩/০৯/২০২৫ পর্যন্ত | ১৪/০৯/২০২৫ হতে ১৪/১০/২০২৫ পর্যন্ত |

| ছক-২ | | | | |
|-----------------------|-------------|---------------------|-----------|-----------------------------------|
| বিবরণ | ফরমের মূল্য | তালিকাভুক্তি ফি ১৫% | ভ্যাট ১৫% | ফরম সংগ্রহ ও জমাদানের সময়সীমা |
| ঠিকাদারী তালিকাভুক্তি | ১০০০.০০ | ৫০০০.০০ | ৭৫০.০০ | ০৭/০৭/২০২৫ হতে ১৩/০৯/২০২৫ পর্যন্ত |

শর্তাবলীঃ
১। ২০২৫-২৬ অর্থবছরের লাইসেন্স নবায়নের জন্য অফিসের হিসাব শাখায় লাইসেন্স নবায়ন ফি জমাপূর্বক মনি রশিদ সংগ্রহ করতে হবে।
২। তালিকাভুক্তির জন্য ১০০০ (এক হাজার) টাকা মূল্যের ফরম সংগ্রহপূর্বক ফরমে উল্লিখিত শর্তাবলী পূরণ করে দাখিল করতে হবে।
৩। নির্ধারিত তারিখের পরে কোনক্রমেই লাইসেন্স নবায়ন/তালিকাভুক্তি ফি গ্রহণ করা হবে না।
৪। লাইসেন্স নবায়নের ক্ষেত্রে ২০২৪-২৫ অর্থবছরের নবায়নকৃত লাইসেন্স বহিঃ ২০২৫-২৬ অর্থবছরে নবায়ন করা হবে।
৫। ঠিকাদারী লাইসেন্স নবায়ন/তালিকাভুক্তির ক্ষেত্রে কর্তৃপক্ষের সিদ্ধান্তই চূড়ান্ত বলে গণ্য হবে।


মোঃ শাকিরুল ইসলাম
পরিচিতি নং-৬০২২৭২
নির্বাহী প্রকৌশলী, সওজ
সড়ক বিভাগ, শেরপুর

ক্রিডি-১৫১৭

Lack of bank support

FROM PAGE B1

The finance adviser mentioned that Bangladesh Bank has refinance schemes for SMEs, which could be expanded with ministry support.

"The finance ministry will support it. We are giving Tk 60,000-Tk 62,000 crore in subsidies for fuel. Why not provide some subsidies for SMEs as well?" he questioned.

He also recommended developing a digital database for the SME sector, which is now being demanded by foreign investors. "If necessary, the finance ministry is ready to finance the creation of a digital SME information hub."

Salehuddin suggested strengthening the SME Foundation's financing capacity, similar to the Palli Karma Sahayak Foundation (PKSF).

"Take good projects, recruit capable people. PKSF gets funding from the World Bank, IFAD, and others. PKSF is now a world-class institution because of its transparency and sound financial management. There must be no compromise in financial governance," he said.

Emphasising the importance of connecting SMEs to international markets, he added, "We must integrate the SME sector with both domestic and global markets to diversify exports. We can't rely on just one product anymore."

The adviser also announced that further reforms will be introduced in the banking sector by December.

"Some financial sector reforms will begin by December under the current interim government. I don't know about political reforms, but there will be changes in the banking sector. Depositors' money will be protected,

and budget allocations have been made for this. We will start the process and hope the next government continues it," he said.

Meanwhile, presiding over the event, Md Mushfiqur Rahman, chairperson of SME Foundation, said the foundation struggles with limited capacity and resources.

"Although there are around 1.18 crore SME entrepreneurs in Bangladesh, the foundation has been able to finance only 11,000 so far. Yet, the loan recovery rate in the SME sector exceeds 99 percent," he said, urging the finance adviser to help increase the foundation's funds.

Anwar Hossain Chowdhury, managing director of SME Foundation, said the foundation started in 2006 with an initial fund of Tk 200 crore, which was later raised to Tk 500 crore.

"So far, we have disbursed loans to 11,000 entrepreneurs under various refinancing schemes.

Without advancing the SME sector, the country's economic growth targets will be difficult to achieve," he said.

Chowdhury stressed the need for a permanent office, incubation centre, training facilities, and an exhibition centre for the foundation.

"A dedicated space would greatly benefit the SME Foundation," he said, seeking support from the former central bank governor.

ERF President Doulot Akter Mala, Md Jahangir Hossain, general manager of SME Foundation, and Abul Kashem, general secretary of ERF, also spoke at the event, which concluded with awards to 21 journalists for outstanding reporting on the SME sector.

GOVERNMENT OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF BANGLADESH
National Pension Authority (NPA)
Finance Division
Ministry of Finance
www.npa.gov.bd

No: 07.04.0000.001.26.001.23- 521 Date: 02/07/2025

Invitation for Tenders (IFT): Hiring of Six Vehicles for National Pension Authority

| | | |
|---------------------------------|--|--|
| 1 | Ministry/Division | Finance Division, Ministry of Finance |
| 2 | Agency | National Pension Authority (NPA) |
| 3 | Procuring Entity Name | National Pension Authority (NPA) |
| 4 | Procuring Entity Code | N/A |
| 5 | Procuring Entity District | Dhaka |
| 6 | Invitation for | Procurement of physical service: Hiring Six Vehicles (03 Sedan Car, 2015 model or updated, engine 1500 cc; 03 Microbuses, 2017 model or updated, Engine minimum 2000cc) for NPA through outsourcing |
| 7 | Invitation Ref No | Ref. No: 07.04.0000.001.26.001.23-521 |
| 8 | Date | 02.07.2025 |
| KEY INFORMATION | | |
| 9 | Procurement Method | Open Tendering (National) for non-consulting services |
| FUNDING INFORMATION | | |
| 10 | Budget and Source of Funds | The Government of Bangladesh and the NPA |
| 11 | Development Partners (if applicable) | N/A |
| PARTICULAR INFORMATION | | |
| 12 | Tender Package No | GR1 |
| 13 | Tender Package Name | Hiring Six Vehicles (03 Sedan Car, 2015 model or updated, engine 1500 cc; 03 Microbuses, 2017 model or updated, Engine minimum 2000cc) for NPA through outsourcing |
| 14 | Tender Publication Date | 02.07.2025 |
| 15 | Tender Last Selling Date | Date: 20.07.2025 up to 3.00 pm |
| 16 | Tender Closing Date and Time | 20.07.2025 4:00 p.m. |
| 17 | Tender Opening Date and Time | 20.07.2025 4:30 p.m. |
| 18 | Name & Address of the office(s) | Address: National Pension Authority (NPA), 43, Kakrail, Dhaka-1000. |
| 19 | Selling Tender Document | Agent's/office Name: Alamgir Hossain, Accounts Officer, Address: National Pension Authority (NPA) (2nd floor) 43, Kakrail, Dhaka-1000. Telephone no: +880226663316 E-mail address: accountant@npa.gov.bd |
| 20 | NO CONDITIONS APPLY FOR SALE, PURCHASE OR DISTRIBUTION OF TENDER DOCUMENTS | |
| 21 | Receiving Tender Document | A Tender Box will be kept at NPA Premises |
| 22 | Opening Tender Document | NPA Conference Room, 43 Kakrail, Dhaka-1000. |
| INFORMATION FOR TENDERER | | |
| 23 | Eligibility of Tenderer | Mentioned in the Tender Documents |
| 24 | Brief Description of Services | Supply of 3 Sedan car and 3 Microbus including driver, maintenance, oil and fuel (Please see detail in Activity Schedule) |
| 25 | Brief Description of services | Hiring Six Vehicles (03 Sedan Car, 2015 model or updated, engine 1500 cc; 03 Microbuses, 2017 model or updated, Engine minimum 2000cc) for NPA through outsourcing |
| 26 | Price of Tender Document (Taka) | 1000.00 (One thousand) Taka only (non refundable) |
| 27 | Package No | Identification of item |
| | GR1 | Hiring Six Vehicles (03 Sedan Car, 2015 model or updated, engine 1500 cc; 03 Microbuses, 2017 model or updated, Engine 2000cc) for NPA through outsourcing |
| | | Location |
| | | Mainly Dhaka City and occasionally outside of Dhaka. |
| | | Tender Security Amount (Tk) |
| | | BDT 1,80,000.00 |
| | | Completion Time in Weeks / Months/Days |
| | | Within 12 months from the date of contract signing |
| PROCURING ENTITY DETAILS | | |
| 28 | Name of Official Inviting Tender | Md. Mahiuddin Khan |
| 29 | Designation of Official Inviting Tender | Executive Chairman, National Pension Authority |
| 30 | Address of Official Inviting Tender | National Pension Authority, 43, Kakrail, Dhaka-1000 |
| 31 | Contact details of Official Inviting Tender | +880226665743, chairman@npa.gov.bd |
| 32 | The Procuring Entity reserves the right to accept or reject any or all the Tender(s) without assigning any reason. | |


Executive Chairman
National Pension Authority (NPA)
Finance Division.

GD-1514



CITIZENS BANK targets rural unbanked in growth push

Says its chairman in interview with The Daily Star

Chowdhury Mohammed Hanif Shoeb

AHSAN HABIB

In Bangladesh's saturated banking market, rural customers are often overlooked. Citizens Bank PLC, a new entrant to the troubled sector, aims to tap into this underserved segment to grow its customer base, with a focus on strong and independent governance.

"Although there are many banks in the country, they have failed to reach a large portion of the population. Citizens Bank's goal is to serve those who remain unbanked," said Chowdhury Mohammed Hanif Shoeb, chairman of the bank, in an interview with The Daily Star marking its third anniversary.

The bank is expanding its branches, sub-branches, and digital presence in villages to that end, he stated.

Launched in July 2022, Citizens Bank has spread its presence across the country through its 20 branches – 10 in cities and 10 in rural areas – and three sub-branches so far.

"We have a target to open around 100 branches in the country. Once we reach that number, our main focus will be reaching rural people through sub-branches and digital channels," said Chowdhury.

"We want to launch branches in rural areas so that people gain confidence in us. That way, we can attract deposits from them and remittances from abroad. We aim to see our deposits grow based on core deposits from individual savers, which can help boost the bank's sustainable deposit base," he noted.

The banker also pointed out that deposits from concentrated groups may create risks. "Our goal is to keep our loan ticket size small so that the default of any single loan cannot significantly harm the bank."

Initially, Citizens Bank plans to grow by catering to small and medium enterprises instead of large borrowers. "Once the bank grows, we will target large corporations."

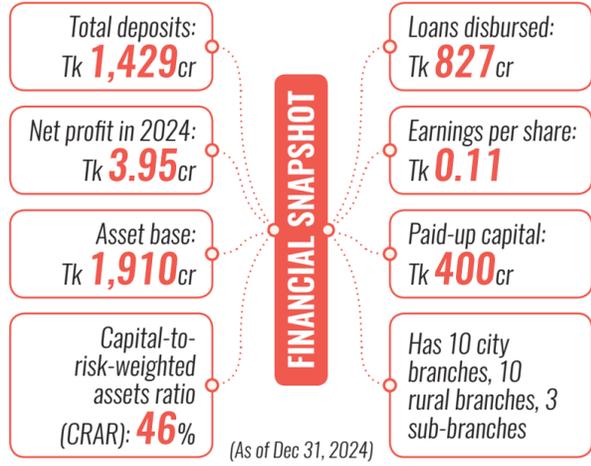
The bank's chairman further noted that catering to SMEs is costly, but the bank aims "not only to make a profit but to serve the nation".

Citizens Bank was incorporated as a public limited company in December 2020. But due to a number of domestic and global challenges, including the aftermath of the Covid-19 pandemic,

MAIN GOALS TO SERVE UNBANKED RURAL CUSTOMERS



Plans **100** branches nationwide
Focuses on sub-branches and digital banking for rural inclusion



the Russian invasion of Ukraine, and a lack of confidence among depositors, its launch was delayed by two years.

"While several banks faced difficulties in returning depositors' money, Citizens Bank did not face any such problem as its advance-to-deposit ratio is very healthy and its investments are also very prudent," its chairman stated.

The bank also did not face any challenges during the period when

the central bank fixed the interest rate in the banking sector, as it was not aggressive in collecting deposits during its initial phase.

"No loan on board influence" Chowdhury believes that customers will choose his bank among a myriad of others as it provides "better services, prioritises strong corporate governance, and has a deep connection with people".

"We are not here merely to make profits but to provide better services

to the people – profits will come naturally," he said.

"From the beginning, the sponsors of this organisation had a firm commitment to transforming it into the most acceptable and trustworthy financial institution, and all our efforts have been directed toward that goal since inception," he further stated.

After three years of operation, Citizens Bank's total asset base stands at Tk 1,910 crore. It has 274 employees working across its branches and sub-branches. During this time, it has attracted a total of 16,176 depositors.

The bank has set up 16 ATM and CRM points. It also allows card transactions across all ATMs under the NPSB, Q-Cash, and Visa networks, said Chowdhury, who is also the CEO and managing director of Salma Group.

As of December 31, 2024, the bank's paid up capital stood at Tk 400 crore, and its capital-to-risk weighted-assets ratio was 46 percent – far above the required rate of 12.5 percent.

Its total deposits amounted to Tk 1,429 crore, and the disbursed loan amount stood at Tk 827 crore. Its net profit was Tk 3.95 crore, translating to earnings per share of Tk 0.11.

Although it was required to go public within three years, the board now plans to enlist the bank on the stock exchanges in 2027.

Chowdhury noted that he is aware of how a lack of governance has ruined many banks.

"We do not interfere in management decisions. We only monitor whether the management is running the bank properly," he said regarding governance in the bank.

"We have created a mindset that no loan will be sanctioned based on connections or board members' requests. We have realised that the banking sector faces difficulties mainly due to such practices."

"When corporate governance breaks down in a bank, it can be severely harmed. That's why we are giving management the independence to operate," he said.

Outlining the bank's next two-year target, the chairman said the deposit size is planned to be raised to Tk 5,000 crore while maintaining an advance-to-deposit ratio of 70 percent.

China: From copycat to innovator

MD TAJDIN HASSAN

I have just wrapped up an extraordinary week in Shenzhen and Guangzhou as part of the study tour to China, organised by the Stars Foundation, Switzerland. This dynamic programme brought together a vibrant group of global leaders and offered an amazing opportunity to learn directly from international champions, unicorns, and start-ups.

From autonomous vehicles to AI-powered cityscapes and sustainable technology, the tour provided on-the-ground insights into the state of China's economy and the opportunities it presents for foreign businesses.

Beyond the technological marvels, what stood out to me was China's structured, intentional approach to encouraging innovation. As I return inspired, I would like to share a few key learnings from this journey that may be useful not only for businesses but also for policymakers, educators, and entrepreneurs.

The days when China was merely replicating Western technology are over. Today, homegrown giants are setting global benchmarks in AI, electric vehicles, and quantum computing. This shift from imitation to invention is no accident; it is the result of strategic investment in research and development, education, and talent cultivation.

China's evolution offers a model for any country aiming for long-term competitiveness. Moving from dependency to originality demands deep investment in STEM education and high-tech research.

The innovation boom in China is not only market-driven but also policy-led. Government support through subsidies, tax benefits, R&D incentives, and infrastructure development has played a vital role in transforming ideas into scalable businesses.

Programmes such as "Made in China 2025" and state-backed venture capital funds ensure breakthroughs in AI, 5G, and green energy lead to commercial success. Effective innovation requires public-private synergy, and governments must create enabling environments through funding, regulatory sandboxes, and research grants to drive technological progress.

Cities such as Shenzhen, Shanghai, and Beijing have become innovation hubs by concentrating talent, capital, and infrastructure in one place. Shenzhen's transformation from a fishing village into a global tech powerhouse is an example of how geography-based strategy and urban clustering can catalyse innovation.

Entrepreneurs in China are moving fast, experimenting boldly, and scaling globally. A lack of fear around failure, coupled with a massive domestic market to test ideas, allows companies to iterate rapidly. This bold, risk-taking mindset is valuable for anyone navigating fast-changing business environments or aiming to use local markets as testing grounds before international expansion.

To encourage this culture, companies must invest in the right talent. China is placing strong emphasis on producing experts in AI, engineering, science, and R&D.

Chinese firms are no longer only competing globally; they are collaborating as well, partnering with Western companies, co-investing, and sharing knowledge. This shift from zero-sum rivalry to shared innovation is reshaping the idea of globalisation. Large companies are now engaged in joint research, co-developing products, and investing in global ventures.

The future belongs to cross-border alliances. Nations and businesses alike can learn from China the value of seeking strategic partnerships over adversarial competition.

One of China's greatest advantages is its ability to deploy innovation at scale and speed. Whether it is electric vehicle adoption, AI integration, or smart city infrastructure, execution velocity sets Chinese firms apart.

From Chinese companies, I have learnt that innovation is not just about ideas. It is about how quickly and efficiently they are executed. That means streamlining regulatory processes, supply chains, and market strategies to stay ahead.

The writer is the chief business officer at The Daily Star.

Stocks rebound from losses

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Indices on the Dhaka Stock Exchange (DSE) ended the day in positive territory yesterday, recovering from the losses of the previous session.

The DSEX, the benchmark index of the premier bourse, gained 26.94 points, or 0.55 percent, to close at 4,865.33.

The Shariah-compliant DSES index rose 0.47 percent to 1,065.78, while the DS30, which represents blue-chip stocks, gained 0.09 percent to 1,817.69.

Turnover, a key indicator of market activity, hit Tk 479.52 crore, up from Tk 464.53 crore in the previous session.

A total of 158,466 trades were executed during the session, with block transactions amounting to Tk 7.56 crore across 23 scrips.

Market breadth was positive, with 277 issues advancing, 69 declining, and 51 remaining unchanged.

Among the A-category shares, 155 advanced, 41 declined, and 21 remained unchanged.

In the B category, 60 scrips gained and 16 declined, while the N category had one issue unchanged.

Performance across other segments was mixed. In mutual funds, 18 issues advanced and 4 declined. In corporate bonds, two issues advanced.

Government securities saw one issue decline. Islamic Finance & Investment posted the highest gain of the day, surging 10 percent, while Central Insurance Company was the worst performer, shedding 6 percent.

Berger Paints recommends 525% dividend, highest in 8 years

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Berger Paints Bangladesh Ltd saw its profit rise for the year ended March 31, 2025, as the company recommended its highest dividend in eight years.

The leading paint producer has recommended a 525 percent cash dividend for its financial year, the highest payout by the company since 2017, when it paid a 600 percent dividend.

The board's decision was disclosed in a price sensitive information (PSI) notice published recently.

The company reported a net profit of Tk 336.97 crore for FY25, reflecting a 4 percent year-on-year growth.

Berger's consolidated earnings per share stood at Tk 72.66, up from Tk 69.92 in the previous year.

However, its consolidated net operating cash flow per share dropped to Tk 58.94 from Tk 139.64 a year earlier.

The company also announced a new investment plan involving the formation of a subsidiary named Jenson & Nicholson Packaging Ltd (JNPL), which will manufacture packaging products at the National Special Economic Zone.

Berger will hold a 51 percent equity stake in JNPL through an investment of Tk 5.1 crore, while its wholly owned subsidiary, Jenson & Nicholson (Bangladesh) Ltd, will contribute Tk 4.9 crore for the remaining 49 percent stake.

Additionally, the board has approved an amendment to its land lease agreement with the Bangladesh Economic Zones Authority (BEZA) to bifurcate the use of 39.41 acres of land.

Under the revised agreement, Berger will retain 38.25 acres, while JNPL will use 1.16 acres for setting up its plant.

As of May 31, 2025, sponsor directors held 95 percent of Berger shares, while institutional investors owned 4.07 percent, foreign investors 0.20 percent, and the public 0.73 percent, according to Dhaka Stock Exchange data.

Berger Paints is a leading name in the paint industry, with a legacy spanning over 250 years. The company began its operations in the region in 1950, importing paints from Berger UK and later from Berger Pakistan.

By 1970, it had established its factory in Chatogram under Jenson & Nicholson (Bangladesh) Ltd, which was rebranded as Berger Paints Bangladesh Ltd on January 1, 1980, according to the company's website.

Deal or no deal: What happens with Trump's July tariff deadline?

AFP, Washington

A week before US President Donald Trump reimposes steep tariffs on dozens of economies, including the EU and Japan, many are still scrambling to reach a deal that would protect them from the worst.

The tariffs taking effect July 9 are part of a package Trump imposed in April citing a lack of "reciprocity" in trading ties.

He slapped a 10 percent levy on most partners, with higher customized rates to kick in later in countries the United States has major trade deficits with.

But these were halted until July to allow room for negotiations.

Analysts expect countries will encounter one of three outcomes: They could reach a framework for an agreement; receive an extended pause on higher tariffs; or see levies surge.

"There will be a group of deals that we will land before July 9," said Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent last Friday on CNBC.

Policymakers have not named countries in this group, although Bessent maintains that Washington has been focused on striking deals with about 18 key partners.

"Vietnam, India and Taiwan remain promising candidates for a deal," Asia Society Policy Institute (ASPI) vice president Wendy Cutler told AFP.

Without a deal, Vietnam's "reciprocal tariff" rises from the baseline of 10 percent to 46 percent, India's to 26 percent and Taiwan's to 32 percent.

Josh Lipsky, international economics chair at the Atlantic Council, cited Indian negotiators' extension of their US trip recently

in noting that it "seems like a frontrunner."

"Japan was in that category, but things have set back a little," Lipsky said, referring to Trump's criticism Monday over what the president called Japan's reluctance to accept US rice exports.

The deals, however, will unlikely be full-fledged trade pacts, analysts said, citing complexities in negotiating such agreements.

Since April, Washington has

extended halt on higher tariffs that could last until Labor Day, which falls on September 1.

Bessent earlier said that Washington could wrap up its agenda for trade deals by Labor Day, a signal that more agreements could be concluded but with talks likely to extend past July.

For countries that the United States finds "recalcitrant," however, tariffs could spring back to the higher levels Trump previously announced, Bessent has warned.



PHOTO: AFP/FILE

and a deal to temporarily lower tariff duties with China.

Bessent has also said that countries "negotiating in good faith" can have their tariffs remain at the 10 percent baseline.

But extensions of the pause on higher rates would depend on Trump, he added. "With a new government, (South) Korea looks well positioned to secure an extension," Cutler of ASPI said.

Lipsky expects many countries to fall into this bucket, receiving an

extended halt on higher tariffs that could last until Labor Day, which falls on September 1.

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