

Unreliable energy drags down private sector: DCCI

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Bangladesh's private sector is lagging behind in production due to the lack of uninterrupted quality energy and power supply, which is hampering the country's competitiveness in the international export market, Dhaka Chamber President Taskeen Ahmed said yesterday.

Regular implementation of energy audits in industrial units is now a must, and academia should be involved in sector-wise industry research and necessary 'industry mapping', he added.

Considering the current geopolitical situation, Bangladesh's private sector is under considerable pressure, he said.

Ahmed made the remarks at a discussion jointly organised by the Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry (DCCI) and the South Asia Network on Economic Modeling (Sanem) on "Energy efficiency in the industrial sector of Bangladesh," held at the Dhaka Chamber auditorium in the capital.

There is still no specific government action plan focused on energy efficiency, even though an Energy Efficiency and Conservation Master Plan was formulated in 2016 and an Integrated Energy and Power Sector Master Plan was developed in 2023, said Selim Raihan, executive director of Sanem.

Therefore, the issue needs to be considered with due diligence, he added.

He noted that definitional and conceptual differences regarding energy efficiency exist across various sectors of the country. Moreover, Raihan pointed out significant barriers in the extraction and supply of the country's energy resources.

It should be investigated whether the planned initiatives on energy efficiency have been implemented, what kinds of incentives have been provided in the industrial sector, and how effective they have been, he said.

He also emphasised the need to achieve technological advancement in this sector.

At the event, Sanem delivered a presentation on energy efficiency in the

industrial sector, highlighting the current state of efficiency, the use of necessary technologies, standardised measurement tools, and how interrupted energy supply is undermining overall performance.

Mohammad Wahid Hossain, chairman of the Bangladesh Energy and Power Research Council, said there is a communication gap in energy-related information, leaving the private sector often unaware of many government services and initiatives.

The financial capacity of Bangladesh's private sector has increased significantly, so it should step forward to finance energy-related research activities, he said.

"Financing these activities will enable them to use new technologies, increase consumer awareness, and above all, formulate a sustainable, business-friendly energy plan," he added.

Asif Ibrahim, former president of DCCI, said industries, especially in the SME sector, are severely affected in their production activities due to energy shortages.

Heavy import reliance

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14 percent to 15 percent compared to 3 to 5 percent in India and China, API ventures in Bangladesh face unsustainable capital costs.

Muktadir also pointed to a shortage of local expertise in process chemistry and chemical engineering, both prerequisites for API manufacturing.

He said some progress has been made through training and hiring foreign consultants, but scaling up will require long-term policy backing.

The post-pandemic shift in global supply chains has opened a window of opportunity, as Western countries seek alternatives to Chinese API suppliers.

"This is our window," Muktadir said. "If we move fast, Bangladesh can become a credible second source."

The Bapi president urged the government to promote import substitution and export of APIs, and to strengthen public-private collaboration in research and development.

"We don't need subsidies," Muktadir said. "We need basic support

such as energy and finance. The government should also recognise that API is a national infrastructure."

Syed Abdul Hamid, professor at the Institute of Health Economics at Dhaka University, said that once Bangladesh loses its LDC patent waiver, the cost and complexity of producing patented APIs will rise manifold.

"Local firms currently depend on flexibility to produce or import APIs without patent barriers. After the graduation, licensing will be mandatory, making it harder and costlier to produce newer, high-priority drugs, especially for drug-resistant or emerging diseases."

Prof Hamid commented that Bangladesh's limited API production capacity leaves it vulnerable to supply shocks and price fluctuations in the global market.

"Without investment in domestic production and technology transfer, access to essential medicines could become unsustainable," he said.

Monjurul Alam Monju, chief executive officer

of Beacon Medicare, said Bangladesh cannot feasibly produce all types of APIs domestically, especially those with limited demand.

He said, "API manufacturing is a long-term investment, especially for innovative molecules like cancer drugs. India and China can afford this due to their massive internal markets. Without access to global markets, such investments are not viable here."

However, Monju said some API products serving the local pharmaceutical industry could be produced profitably with the right policy support.

He also raised concerns about the high cost of setting up effluent treatment plants (ETPs), a mandatory requirement for API manufacturing.

"ETPs require a huge investment. Without government support, it is extremely difficult for local firms to comply," he said.

"If the government provides subsidies for R&D and environmental compliance, API manufacturing can become feasible," he added.

Dhaka stocks fall for second day

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The benchmark index of the Dhaka Stock Exchange closed lower yesterday, extending its decline for the second consecutive day.

The DSEX, the main index of the bourse, lost 22.76 points, or 0.42 percent, to settle at 5,332.06.

The other indices had mixed performance before the end of the day's trading. The Shariah-compliant DSES declined 0.52 percent to 1,158.38.

The DS30, comprising the blue-chip shares, gained 1.51 percent to close at 2,061.74.

Turnover, a key gauge of investor participation, hit Tk 805.39 crore, down from Tk 865.04 crore in the previous session.

A total of 205,037 trades were executed, while block transactions amounted to Tk 21.60 crore across 37 scrips.

Renata to issue convertible preference shares

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Renata PLC has received approval from the Bangladesh Securities and Exchange Commission (BSEC) to issue convertible preference shares, according to a disclosure published on the Dhaka Stock Exchange (DSE) website yesterday.

The consent, granted through a letter dated July 27, 2025, is subject to shareholder approval at an upcoming extraordinary general meeting (EGM).

In response, Renata's board will hold an immediate meeting to finalise and approve the record date for determining shareholder eligibility to attend the EGM and apply for the preference shares.

Once determined, the record date will be announced in two widely circulated newspapers—one in Bengali and one in English—in accordance with regulatory requirements. Renata also stated it will notify the exchange of the outcome of the board meeting and provide all relevant disclosures in a timely manner.

Ctg port operations

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Md Ruhul Amin Sikder, secretary general of Bangladesh Inland Container Depots Association (BICDA), informed that there was no operation of prime mover trailers for transporting containers between the port and the ICDs till the afternoon.

A few depots managed to start the operation partially after 4pm, he said.

On a normal day on average 5000 TEUs (twenty-foot equivalent units) to 6000 TEUs of export, import and empty containers are transported between the port and the ICDs.

ICD operators expressed frustration over the halt, saying workers could have voted and returned to work. "It is really unacceptable to suspend the operation for the whole day," said Md Moazzem Hossain, deputy managing director of Vertex Off-Dock Logistics.

He said they had schedules to send 70 export containers to the port for loading to different ships that would leave the port today.

"Not a single container could be sent till 6pm as the operators were busy in the polling," Hossain told The Daily Star in the evening, adding that these containers would have to be sent overnight.

He, however, expressed regret for the disruption in goods transport for a temporary period.

Robi profit doubles in Apr-Jun

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

The cost-efficiency drive continues to gain momentum with the application of new home-grown digital solutions, he said.

Robi's net foreign exchange loss was Tk 47 crore in the second quarter of 2024, while it saw foreign exchange gains of around Tk 2 crore in the second quarter of the current year.

The second largest telecom company's profit soared by 140 percent year-on-year to Tk 257 crore in the three months, according to its half-yearly financial reports.

At the same time, its revenue dropped by around 2 percent year-on-year to about Tk 2,600 crore.

A 31 percent decline in sales and distribution costs during the period made the highest contribution to the jump in profits, the financial report showed.

Commenting on Robi's financial performance, the company's acting CEO and chief financial officer, M Riyaz Rasheed, said, "We are highly encouraged to see Robi bouncing back to winning ways at the end of the second quarter of 2025."

In a press release, he said the significant addition of new subscribers indicates that Robi's strong focus on service quality is yielding solid results.

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The Daily Star

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Rasheed cautioned that the growing concentration of market power will undermine the opportunities that telecom reform is expected to unlock. Robi's active subscriber base reached 5.74 crore following the addition of 10 lakh new subscribers in the second quarter.

The telecom operator now has 4.41 crore data subscribers, with the addition of 16 lakh new ones in the second quarter.

Meanwhile, with 17 lakh new 4G subscribers added in the same quarter, the company now has 3.85 crore 4G subscribers.

At the end of the second quarter, around 77 percent of total subscribers were data subscribers, and 67 percent were 4G subscribers—by far the highest proportion of data and 4G users in the industry, the operator claimed.

Smart lockers reshaping

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they did not work from a security perspective. Then we improved them by building steel boxes," said Morshedul Alam Chaklader, chairman of DigiBox.

Now, the software and all the infrastructure of the "digital boxes" are locally produced, he said.

"It is just a business idea which delivers logistics services. Our plan is to gradually provide the digital boxes in every district of the country," he said.

He claimed that it was "not possible" to hack or gain unauthorised access to their lockers.

"We usually offer home delivery and delivery from collection points, and the DigiBox service is another method for product delivery," said AHM Hasinul Quddus Rusho, chief corporate affairs officer at Daraz Bangladesh Limited.

Daraz is focusing on customer experience, and so this service has been kept for customer convenience, he added.

"With the DigiBox service, Daraz strongly believes we are all set to rise to another level towards the next era of digitalisation in Bangladesh," he said.

"Moreover, we want to provide DigiBox service across the nation. After building the largest and strongest logistics infrastructure in the country, now Daraz Bangladesh is going to build a smarter one with more environment-friendly initiatives," he added.

1000Fix Services Ltd, one of the largest repair service providers in the world, is being made every day and their plan is to reach 10,000.

Bangladesh eyes 10-20% tariff

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Zaidi Sattar, chairman of the Policy Research Institute of Bangladesh (PRI), said Bangladesh eventually turned into a major garment exporter to the US market over the years, as the latter does not produce its own garments.

But now the exports will depend on whether Bangladesh can sign a good tariff deal with the US, he said.

For Bangladesh, a 20 percent tariff would be better, he said.

In that case, Bangladesh may enjoy a bit of a competitive edge with its 20 percent duty, he said.

"I am hopeful from the optimism of the

negotiators. The tariff rate for Bangladesh may be more than 10 percent and at most 20 percent," the PRI chairman also said.

Masrur Reaz, chairman of Policy Exchange Bangladesh, said a deal could be reached at 15 percent, and it would be a very positive deal for Bangladesh.

"I am hopeful and optimistic after the second round of negotiations, as Bangladesh is now much more prepared and strategic," he said.

Advanced Chemical Industries PLC
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Price Sensitive Information (PSI)

This is for the information of all concerned that the Board of Directors of the Company at its 224th Board meeting held on Monday, 28 July 2025, at 4:00 pm, through Hybrid system, approved the formation of a new subsidiary company under the name of "ACI Biosciences Limited" having an authorized capital of BDT 100 (One Hundred) Crore and a paid up capital of BDT 25 (Twenty Five) Crore wherein Advanced Chemical Industries PLC shall hold 90% shares, at the earliest convenience, subject to the approval of the concerned authority.

By Order of the Board


Mohammad Mostafizur Rahman
Company Secretary