



Thousands of people make a living through the stone crushing trade near the Burimari land port in Lalmonirhat and Sonahat land port in Kurigram. With little alternative employment opportunities in the localities, they toil for around eight hours for a daily wage of Tk 400 to Tk 500, despite the risk of silicosis, a lung disease resulting from the deposit of crystalline silica dust in the respiratory tract. There are more than 1,000 stone mobile stone crushing machines running near the two land ports, with each engaging around 15 to 25 workers. The photo was taken near the Burimari land port recently.

PHOTO: S DILIP ROY

Municipalities hold key to investment outside Dhaka: Bida chief

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Bangladesh's towns and cities are stepping into the spotlight as new places to invest, thanks to the launch of the Municipal Competitiveness Index (MCI) 2024, a tool that shows where local economies have room to grow outside Dhaka and Chattogram.

Unveiled at a workshop, organised by the Bangladesh Investment Development Authority (Bida) in partnership with Swisscontact's PRABRIDDIHI project, the MCI is positioned as a strategic instrument to transform subnational investment landscapes.

It assesses and ranks the competitiveness of seven pilot municipalities based on business-friendliness, regulatory efficiency, and infrastructure readiness.

"This index helps spotlight the potential of municipalities as viable investment destinations," said Chowdhury Ashiq Mahmud Bin Harun, executive chairman of Bida and the Bangladesh Economic Zones Authority.

"If we can strengthen local capacities and improve inter-agency coordination at the grassroots level, these areas will become significantly more attractive to investors."

Govt should stop treating

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 who prospered in the 16 years of the Awami League government is viewed with suspicion. That is not only unjust, it is damaging."

Rahman also pointed to governance issues, policy missteps, and a lack of direction, mentioning how the past year has affected the private sector and what needs to change urgently.

He said, "Yes, there have been some attempts at economic stabilisation. Reserves have slightly improved, exchange rate volatility has calmed, and inflation was temporarily managed during Ramadan. But these are cosmetic. The real issues lie deeper. Banking remains fragile, investor confidence has not returned, and the private sector feels alienated."

Rahman compared the current government to the 2007-08 caretaker government, which was formed to take care of state affairs for an interim period until the next regular government.

He said the key difference he finds is "collaboration". "The last caretaker regime had its flaws, but they actively engaged with

the private sector. They formed the Better Business Forum, met monthly with stakeholders, and ensured implementation tracking. This time? There is a complete disconnect."

The entrepreneur was critical of unilateral policymaking, which he said had become the norm. "Whether it is the new insurance laws, capital market reforms, or digitalisation rules, these were drafted without consulting the industry. The results? Regulatory overlaps, legal ambiguities, and serious friction between the state and businesses," he commented.

Rahman also talked about the state of the banking sector. "While known defaulters remain untouched, genuine entrepreneurs are forced to repay loans at 14 to 15 percent interest. Why are those who stayed, who continue to pay taxes, being penalised for others' wrongdoing?"

He noted that profits of listed companies had dropped sharply, with many reporting losses.

"How can you expect

revenue growth when the business climate is so uncertain, policies keep changing, and lending conditions are stifling?" he asked.

He said foreign investors, too, were reluctant to enter the market.

"We are reporting inter-company loans as FDI. That is misleading. The reality is FDI is not coming in because they are seeing what we are seeing: inconsistency, opacity, and uncertainty."

Rahman said one of the government's gravest failures was the erosion of institutional justice.

"Selective law enforcement, politically motivated arrests, even threats to businesspeople who speak out, this climate is not conducive to entrepreneurship. If investors do not trust the system, they would not invest; it is very simple."

He criticised the government's tendency to host investment summits abroad while ignoring business leaders at home. "We organise flashy investment summits for foreign investors, yet we cannot invite our own

business leaders properly."

Rahman believes the government could have gained broader support if it had been clearer about its objectives from the beginning.

"Had Muhammad Yunus clearly stated from the outset that he required two years to stabilise the country before holding elections, he likely would have secured broader public support. Instead, the absence of clarity and inconsistent messaging gradually eroded public trust," he commented.

"This government did not come to power through an electoral mandate, but through public expectation. With the promise to remain neutral, restore order, and ensure a smooth transition," Rahman said.

But with political pressure rising, he said that the time for meaningful reform was running out.

"If this government truly wants to regain public and business confidence, it must listen, include, and commit to an inclusive democratic process. That is the only way forward," he added.

GP facing predatory pricing scrutiny

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 intention is to take over the market.

He also mentioned that Banglalink has recently filed a similar complaint against Grameenphone.

ROBI'S CLAIMS
 According to Robi, Grameenphone earned Tk 3,310 crore in 2023 -- over ten times more than Robi's Tk 321 crore profit.

With this high profit margin, Robi claims, Grameenphone can afford to subsidise operational costs aggressively and offer services at a rate unsustainable for its competitors.

Grameenphone holds around 45 percent of the country's mobile subscriber base, a number Robi says demonstrates its dominance and ability to "negatively influence the entire market".

Robi claims the most serious violation involves SIM card pricing.

"Grameenphone is manipulating SIM card pricing by selling SIMs below production cost through abuse of its dominant position. This forces Robi and other operators to follow suit. Grameenphone

is clearly violating the Competition Act and thereby undermining market competition," it said.

In the national budget for fiscal year 2024-25, the VAT per SIM was set at Tk 300. Operators must pay this tax whether or not they collect it from customers, making subsidies almost inevitable. But not all operators can afford to do so at the same level.

Robi alleges that Grameenphone, with its profitability, sells SIMs for free or at deep discounts, bundling them with incentives, which distorts market competition.

"In contrast, smaller operators like Robi struggle to match this, which harms fair competition, limits consumer choices, and threatens long-term innovation, sustainability, and telecom sector stability," it added.

Robi says this strategy of predatory pricing, excessive subsidies, and influence over retailers effectively blocks new players from entering and pressures existing ones out.

The complaint calls for "exemplary penalties" and

regulatory measures to prevent further violations and safeguard consumer welfare.

"We have conveyed our position to the competition commission. We hope the commission will take appropriate action in this regard," said Shahed Alam, chief corporate and regulatory officer at Robi Axiata PLC.

GP BINS ALLEGATIONS
 In response, Grameenphone told The Daily Star that it has a publicly declared maximum retail price (MRP) of Tk 350 per SIM card, available on its website.

"Grameenphone never sells the SIM cards below cost price." However, it noted that "retailers of all the telecommunication operators sometimes on their own give discounts."

On the allegation of excessive commissions, Grameenphone stated, "Incentives are provided to drive performance and strengthen product visibility," adding that it incurs higher investment and regulatory costs than competitors, which are reflected in its commission

structure.

When asked whether its pricing or distribution practices may hinder competition or block market entry, the company "categorically denied" the claim. Grameenphone said it operates fully within the bounds of the law and that its practices "have led to innovation and increased consumer choice."

"The allegations against Grameenphone are baseless and reflect a negative competitive intent," the company said, pointing out that the telecom industry is already tightly regulated by the Bangladesh Telecommunication Commission (BTRC).

GP further mentioned that it is already subject to SMP-specific restrictions, including asymmetric mobile number portability (MNP) lock-in, marketing campaign approvals, and regulated interconnection charges.

The last hearing in the case took place on May 5, 2025, during which GP submitted a formal application to the commission, which is still pending.

Ctg port overburdened

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 stakeholders to remove empties by August 7 or face quadrupled storage charges.

Bangladesh Shipping Agents Association (BSAA) in a letter to the CPA on Wednesday said the responsibility of removal of empty containers from the port yards are under full

jurisdiction of CPA. The association urged the CPA to drop the higher rent plan and instead facilitate more empty container loading slots on outbound ships.

"Since the ICDs are also over occupied by empty containers they are unable to take in new ones," said BSAA leader Muntasir

Rubayat. Mentioning that almost 40 percent of empties are now at the overflow yard of NCT, and many are lying there for 20 to 30 days, Rubayat said, "Transfer of empties from overflow yard to the port yards for loading onto ships is not frequently done by the berth operators."

He said BSAA has

repeatedly raised concerns regarding the prolonged dwelling of empties at the overflow yard.

As per current port regulations, store rent for empty containers is charged at \$6 per TEU for the first 7 days, \$12 per TEU from the 8th to the 20th day, and \$24 per TEU per day thereafter.

সামরিক চিকিৎসা সার্ভিস মহাপরিদপ্তর
প্রতিরক্ষা মন্ত্রণালয়, ঢাকা সেনানিবাস

টেলার নং-২৩১/২০২৫-২০২৬ তাং ২২-০৭-২০২৫

জরুরী মেরামত বিজ্ঞপ্তি

১। এতদ্বারা প্রকৃত ইলেকট্রিক মেডিক্যাল যন্ত্রপাতি মেরামতকারী ব্যবসায়ী/প্রকৃতকারী/সরবরাহকারীগণকে (যারা প্রতিরক্ষা স্রয় মহাপরিদপ্তরের তালিকাভুক্ত) জানানো যাচ্ছে যে, নিম্নলিখিত ইউনিটের নামের পার্শ্বে বর্ণিত ইলেকট্রিক মেডিক্যাল যন্ত্রটি অকেজো হওয়ায় মেরামত করা প্রয়োজনঃ

Ser	PVMS No.	Name Eqpt	Faults/Requirement
১.	161008/B	INTEGRATED POWER CONSOLE (IPC) ELECTRIC DRILL SYETEM WITH MICROBEDER, MODEL: IPC, SER: NTC-68206, MADE IN USA & BRAZIL	a. IPC Power Console is not Working b. Internal Functional Problem (Error Code 1, 2 & 5)

২। উল্লিখিত মেশিনটি পরিদর্শনপূর্বক প্রয়োজনীয় যুটরা যন্ত্রাংশের প্রস্তুতকারক দেশ এবং মেরামতের নির্দিষ্ট যুটরা যন্ত্রাংশ উল্লেখকরতঃ ইঞ্জিনিয়ার সার্ভে রিপোর্টসহ দরপত্র আগ্রহী দরদাতা কর্তৃক সীলমোহরকৃত খামে **আগামী ০৫ আগস্ট ২০২৫** তারিখের মধ্যে এই মহাপরিদপ্তর এর মেডিক্যাল স্টোর শাখায় রক্ষিত স্টোর বাসে জমা দিতে হবে এবং একই তারিখ বেলা ১৩০০ ঘটিকায় দরদাতাদের উপস্থিতিতে (যদি কেহ উপস্থিত থাকেন) খোলা হবে।

৩। উল্লেখ্য যে, বিশ্বায়োপ্তিগত মেশিনের মেরামতকৃত অথবা মেরামতের জন্য প্রদানকৃত যুটরা যন্ত্রাংশের কমপক্ষে ০১ (এক) বছরের ওয়ারেন্টি (Warranty) প্রদান করতে হবে।

৪। কর্তৃপক্ষ কারণ ছাড়াই যে কোন দরপত্র বাতিল করার ক্ষমতা রাখেন।

আইএসপিআর/বিবিধ/২৫৪

মোঃ তাজজির হাসান
মেজর
মহাপরিচালকের পক্ষে

ফিট-১৯৪

Govt food grain

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 "Besides, from December this year to March 2026, the estimated demand for rice distribution is about 8.83 lakh tonnes, and it is necessary to maintain a safe stock of 13.50 lakh tonnes of food grains," he said.

Total public sector demand for rice in the current fiscal year stands at 26.52 lakh tonnes. Even with a good domestic procurement, the government anticipates a shortfall of 4.03 lakh tonnes, which the initial import plan aims to bridge, according to Imam.

DISTRIBUTION DROP IN JULY
 Total distribution in July dropped to 1.15 lakh tonnes, down from 1.65 lakh tonnes during the same period last year, earlier, according to the Directorate General of Food. Distribution under the open market sale (OMS) programme also declined significantly.

The Trading Corporation of Bangladesh saw its rice distribution under OMS fall by 27,000 tonnes compared

to July last year, due to a reduction in the number of beneficiaries from 1 crore to 55 lakh following reported irregularities.

Additionally, as the market price of flour was lower in July this year compared to the same month last year, the distribution of flour through the Directorate General of Food's OMS programme also decreased.

Last fiscal year, the Directorate General of Food distributed 27.80 lakh tonnes of subsidised food grains. In the current fiscal year, this amount has increased to 30.41 lakh tonnes.

"This is also a historic record in terms of distribution," said Md Abul Hasanath Humayun Kabir, director general of the Directorate General of Food.

He explained that previously, food grains were distributed over five months each year, but the duration has now increased to six months. Additionally, the number of beneficiaries has risen from 50 lakh to 55 lakh.

বাংলাদেশ বিদ্যুৎ উন্নয়ন বোর্ড
Bangladesh Power Development Board

স্মারক নং-২৭.১১.৫৬৭৮.৫০৮.০০৩.২৫-৬৮

তারিখঃ ০৬/০৮/২০২৫ইং

e-GP পুনঃ দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি (OTM)

এতদ্বারা সংশ্লিষ্ট সকলের অবগতির জন্য জানানো যাইতেছে যে, অত্র দপ্তরের আওতাধীন নিম্নবর্ণিত কাজের দরপত্র গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকারের e-GP এর মাধ্যমে আহ্বান করা হইয়াছে, যাহা e-GP Portal-এ পাওয়া যাবে। e-GP Portal-এ নিবন্ধিত যে কোন আগ্রহী ব্যক্তি/ঠিকাদারী প্রতিষ্ঠানকে বিস্তারিত জানার জন্য উক্ত ওয়েবসাইট www.eprocure.gov.bd ভিজিট করার জন্য অনুরোধ করা হইল।

Tender ID	Name of work	Date of publication	Last selling date and time	Opening date and time
1137404	Supply of Cement. Ref No. 27.11.5678.508.03.00 3.25-01(25-26)	07.08.2025 10.00am	20.08.2025 16.00pm	21.08.2025 12.00pm

This is the online tenders, where only e-Tenders will be accepted in the National e-GP System Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted.

বিদ্যুৎ-জর-৪৪(২)/০৭/০৮/২৫

জুনাইদ রুশদি
আইডি নং-১-০২০৯৯
নির্বাহী প্রকৌশলী (ভারপ্রাপ্ত)
পিসি পোল নির্মাণ প্রকট
বিউবো, আরিচা, মানিকগঞ্জ

জিটি-১৭৪৫