

DITF to be renamed to Dhaka Trade Fair: EPB

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

The government has decided to rename the Dhaka International Trade Fair (DITF) to the Dhaka Trade Fair (DTF) to better organise and promote trade events in Bangladesh.

At the same time, the Export Promotion Bureau (EPB) is set to launch a new international business-to-business event, titled "Sourcing Bangladesh 2025", to attract foreign buyers and promote exports, according to a press release.

The EPB took the decision in a board meeting yesterday at the bureau's conference room in Dhaka's Karwan Bazar, chaired by Commerce Adviser Sk Bashir Uddin.

Mahbubur Rahman, secretary of the Ministry of Commerce; Md Anwar Hossain, vice-chairman of EPB; Abdur Rahim Khan, additional secretary (export); Mahmud Hasan Khan, president of the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association; and Kamran Tanvir Rahman, president of the Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry; were also present.

The renaming comes in response to criticism that the DITF lacks true

international character, the EPB vice-chairman told The Daily Star.

"We've seen that international businesses find it impractical to attend a month-long fair. Moreover, many so-called foreign participants attend through local agents, not as official brand representatives," he said.

"This has led to worry about concerns, brand misrepresentation, and a weakened global image for the fair."

To fill this gap, the EPB is launching a new, truly international "Sourcing Bangladesh 2025" fair, scheduled for November.

"Unlike the DTF, which will remain a month-long, consumer-focused local event, the Sourcing Fair will be a 3-4 day B2B event targeting global buyers, with a focus on business matchmaking, export promotion, and sourcing," Hossain added.

The move is part of the government's broader market diversification strategy and export-led growth efforts, according to a press release.

The commerce secretary emphasised the importance of global exposure and said: "Without organising sourcing fairs, we can't expand the global presence of Bangladeshi products or build the capacity of our exporters."

Stocks rise for third day

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The benchmark index of the Dhaka Stock Exchange continued its upward momentum yesterday for the third consecutive session, while turnover also rose, signalling increased trading activity.

The DSEX, the main index of the bourse, increased 18.42 points, or 0.34 percent, to settle at 5,419.90.

The other indices also posted positive performances before the end of the day's trading. The Shariah-compliant DSES increased 1.01 percent to 1,184.53, while the DS30, comprising blue chip shares, inched up 0.28 percent to close at 2,101.84.

Turnover, a key gauge of investor participation, hit Tk 975.85 crore, up from Tk 801.71 crore in the previous session. A total of 266,930 trades were executed, while block transactions amounted to Tk 13.87 crore across 41 scrips.

Market breadth was positive, with 242 stocks advancing, 94 declining and 64 remaining unchanged.

Among A-category scrips, 131 gained, 62 lost and 28 remained unchanged.

In the B-category, 60 stocks rose and 18 fell, while there was no trading activity in the N-category.

Segment-wise performance was mixed. In mutual funds, 11 issues advanced and 7 declined.

Corporate bonds saw just one issue decline, while the government bond market saw four issues decline.

Among individual performers, National Tea Company topped the gainers' list with a 9 percent surge, while First Security Islami Bank was the worst performer, dropping 5 percent.

Biman flies high

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flies to 21 international and seven domestic destinations.

Biman said its in-house maintenance capacity, from routine checks to major overhauls, as a key strength that cuts costs, reduces delays and ensures international standard safety.

In FY 2024-25, the airline carried 34 lakh passengers and nearly 44,000 tonnes of cargo, achieving a cabin factor of 82 percent, an improvement on the previous year.

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if Biman clarified about its liabilities and debt and how much it owed to CAAB and BPC," he said.

However, Rooshan said that such concerns were misplaced.

"It is clearly mentioned in the balance sheet about the amount of assets and liabilities. For example, if Biman owed to CAAB or BPC, it would be shown in the liability portion," he told The Daily Star.

"Suppose Biman owes Tk 100 crore to any organisation. I pay the organisation on a monthly basis, which is our expenditure. Biman deducted all its expenditure, including those instalments, from its income. The rest of the amount is Biman's net profit," explained the Biman official.

Biman credits its new management appointed by the interim government for the record profit, pointing to tighter financial controls, better use of resources and quick decision-making.

Meanwhile, ATM Nazrul Islam, an aviation expert, called for more clarity about the FY25 profit.

"It would have been better

figure.

He said the airline plans to expand routes, strengthen cargo operations and push digital transformation in passenger services.

"With the goal of upholding national pride, Biman aspires to become a leading airline in South Asia by ensuring world-class service, reliability, and the safety and security of its valued passengers," he added.

NBR suspends

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taken against NBR officials since the end of the protest.

The interim government, on May 12, issued an ordinance splitting the NBR into two divisions: Revenue Policy and Revenue Management.

In protest, NBR officials from all sections formed the NBR Reform Unity Council, demanding the cancellation of the ordinance.

On July 15, another 14 officials were suspended for publicly tearing up and disobeying a government transfer order.

Govt's ambitious rooftop solar target

plant larger than 0.7MW, regardless of available rooftop space.

"This restriction prevents many industries and commercial buildings from setting up larger plants and maximising savings," the briefing said.

Access to finance is another hurdle. EPC companies struggle to secure loans under the OPEX model, while industries face similar challenges under the CAPEX model. Confusion also persists over whether EPC firms qualify for low-cost central bank green funds.

"Borrowing at commercial rates raises project costs and cuts profits," IEEFA noted.

While rooftop solar offers an attractive return on investment and is often described as a "low-hanging fruit" for Bangladesh's energy transition, IEEFA cautioned that unless quality and monitoring issues are urgently addressed, the sector will continue to fall short of its potential.

ADP spending

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The situation has since stabilised.

Yet progress remains sluggish, partly because many contractors have not been appointed and several project directors have either been replaced or transferred, Mahmud explained.

Economists, however, see deeper problems.

"Bangladesh's ADP suffers not from a lack of money, but from weak planning and a shortage of skilled bureaucrats. Without professional capacity, projects stall even in times of political stability," said Mohammad Lutfor Rahman, professor of economics at Jahangirnagar University.

He added that the absence of an elected government has also played a role.

The lack of a political government means bureaucrats no longer feel pressured to push projects forward. In the past, political commitments created urgency. Today, that push is missing," said the professor.

The slowdown has serious implications, he warned. "When

Potato paradox

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EXPORTS RISE, BUT ON LOW PRICES

Bangladesh exported over 100,000 tonnes in fiscal year 2013-14 but has failed to sustain that momentum. However, in recent years, exports are gaining.

Potato exports climbed to a three-year high of 62,135 tonnes in the fiscal year 2024-2025 (FY25), the Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE) data show.

The surge was driven less by variety breakthroughs than by a collapse in domestic prices, which fell as low as Tk 7-Tk 10 per kilogramme (kg).

"Last season, I was able to buy potatoes at Tk 7-Tk 10 per kg, whereas the year before it was Tk 30," said exporter Tawhidul Islam, who shipped 30,000 tonnes in FY25, up sharply from 1,400 tonnes the year before.

Farmers, however, often sold at losses. At the field level, potatoes fetched as little as Tk 11 per kg, below the DAE's estimated average production cost of Tk 14.

Besides, the varieties produced in Bangladesh are not price competitive in the global market, he said.

"This year, exports were viable only because local prices were low (Tk 12-Tk 13 per kg), allowing for profit at the export price of about \$0.20 per kg," he noted.

"However, processed potato products such as French fries and flakes can bring nearly \$2 per kg. That makes value-added exports far more attractive," added Ansary.

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Beyond prices, exporters cite structural challenges. Older varieties are vulnerable to "Hollow Heart," a disorder that hollows out tubers,

while high freight charges make Bangladeshi potatoes uncompetitive outside nearby markets.

Potatoes are typically exported only to neighboring or nearby countries where freight costs are relatively low. Beyond these regions, exports are minimal or nonexistent, presenting a significant challenge," said FH Ansary, managing director of ACI Agribusinesses.

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According to Towhidul, Bangladeshi exporters will be able to compete in the global market if potato prices drop to Tk 10-Tk 15 per kg in the local market.

POLICY LACKINGS

The government drafted a potato export roadmap

in 2022, but exporters and farmers said it failed to reflect on-the-ground realities because stakeholders were not consulted.

"The government's plan was developed without consulting farmers or industry stakeholders and, as a result, may not reflect ground realities," noted Ansary.

Ashraf Sarker, a farmer in Munshiganj, who cultivates potatoes on six bighas of land, said the knowledge and market connections necessary to try new varieties are not available to him. "That's why I stick to the local market."

"I do not have sufficient policy support from the government to explore new pro-export potatoes. I have no idea about the kind of help I will get from the government," he said.

Agriculture Secretary Mohammad Emdad Ullah Mian, however, told The Daily Star that Dhaka has since taken policy steps, including reducing port waiting times and offering transport at reduced fees, that helped lift exports in FY25.

Still, only about 15 potato varieties are popular among Bangladeshi farmers.

"A large portion of the varieties produced in the country have no demand internationally. Unless production focuses on global demand, exports will not persist."

IEEFA pointed out that negative perceptions about rooftop solar persist. Limited regulatory oversight has allowed small vendors to supply low-quality panels and accessories, undermining confidence in the technology. Bangladesh also lacks clear guidelines to regulate vendors and EPC companies for both project implementation and long-term maintenance.

HIGH IMPORT DUTIES AND CAPACITY CAP

IEEFA pointed out that high import duties continue to slow down progress. While customs duty on inverters was reduced from 10 percent to 1 percent in June, other essential items such as FRP walkways, mounting structures, and DC cables remain heavily taxed.

Additionally, rooftop solar capacity is capped at 70 percent of an industry's sanctioned load. For example, a factory with a sanctioned load of 1MW cannot install a rooftop

DW & CE (Navy) Lalasorai Nabik Residential Area Mirpur-14, Dhaka-1206

Invitation for

Military Engineer Services

Dated: 07 August 2025

Notice No. 605/BN/2/E-6/115



01	Ministry/Division	Ministry of Defence
02	Agency	Military Engineer Services
03	Procuring entity name	DW & CE (Navy)
04	Procuring entity district	Dhaka
05	Procurement method	Open Tendering Method (OTM)
06	Budget and source of funds	GOB
07	Development partners (if applicable)	None
08	Project/programme name (if applicable)	a. Construction of 04-storied Building for yard service (Electrical) & yard service (Mechanical) workshop including utility vehicle shed at BN Dockyard, Chattogram (Last Phase) b. Construction of 1x Multipurpose Shed at BNS Shaheed Moazzam, Kapta (Last Phase of 3 Phases)
09	Selling of tender will commence from	19 August 2025 (during office hours)
10	Selling of tender will close on	01 September 2025 (during office hours)
11	Last date and time of submission of tender	02 September 2025 at 1200 hours.
12	Date and time of opening of tender	02 September 2025 at 1230 hours.
13	Name & address of the office(s)	(1) Selling tender document DW & CE (Navy) Dhaka (2) Receiving tender document -Do- (3) Opening tender document -Do-
14	Eligibility of tenderer	Contractors enlisted with other govt/semi-govt/autonomous body or organization in similar category having security clearance from DGFI may apply.
15	Brief description of works	
	Lot No.	Identification of lot
		Location
		Price of tender document (Taka)
		Contractors class
		Tender security amount in the form of Pay Order/Bank Draft/Bank Guarantee in favour of DW & CE (Navy) Dhaka (Taka)
		Completion time in months
a		Construction of Surface Drain & Sewerage line for under Construction of 04-storied Building for yard service (Electrical) & yard service (Mechanical) workshop including utility vehicle shed at BN Dockyard, Chattogram (Last Phase)
b		Construction of Surface Drain & Sewerage line for under Construction of 1x Multipurpose Shed at BNS Shaheed Moazzam, Kapta (Last Phase of 3 Phases)
c		Construction of