

# COP30 must deliver tangible outcomes for the vulnerable



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The 30th Conference of the Parties (COP30) of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) will take place from November 10 to November 21 this year in Belém, Brazil. This will be the first time the summit is held in the Amazon region—a symbolic decision representing the dual crises of climate change and socio-economic inequality. While its geographical proximity puts climate-vulnerable communities and ecosystems under a harsh spotlight, the conference risks replaying the disappointments of COP29 unless it addresses deep-rooted inequalities in finance, representation, and implementation.

For developing countries like Bangladesh—where every cyclone, flood, and lost crop is a human catastrophe—COP30 is not a photo opportunity; it is a test. The question is whether the summit will provide the legally binding climate finance, mutually beneficial solutions, and inclusive governance that frontline nations desperately require, or continue the practice of promising much while delivering little.

Belém's selection is no mere geographic novelty. Hosting COP30, there is a deliberate show of solidarity with vulnerable communities, Indigenous peoples, and frontline ecosystems. However, this symbolism is being tested by conflicts of interest—Brazil's own oil exploration around the Amazon threatens global calls for fossil fuel phase-out and forest conservation.

Adding to the tensions is the infrastructure built for the summit. A newly paved four-lane highway through the protected rainforest, the Avenida Liberdade, poses another challenge, as it contributes to deforestation in a critical carbon sink. This

contradiction, emphasising vulnerability while simultaneously undermining it, mirrors broader COP30 dynamics.

At the Bonn climate talks in June 2025, key obstacles were revealed: few countries have submitted updated Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), and those submitted appear insufficient to safeguard the 1.5 degree Celsius target. Logistical constraints are another concern. Belém faces accommodation shortages, further raising cost barriers for lower-income delegations. There have been calls for UN-subsidised lodging, but Brazil has declined.

#### Finance: The continuing fracture

COP29 in Baku pledged only \$300 billion per year by 2035 in climate finance—far short of the \$1 trillion-plus target demanded by developing countries. Article 9.1 of the Paris Agreement remains unrealised and is expected to dominate the COP30 agenda. Developing nations are demanding the restoration of a binding public finance commitment rather than reliance on the opaque regime of private funding.

The 'Baku to Belém Roadmap' aims to bridge this gap by mobilising \$1.3 trillion

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annually by 2035, yet scepticism abounds regarding its enforceability without guaranteed public finance.

#### Implementation over negotiation

Amid institutional frustration, Brazil is calling for a new narrative: COP30 should focus less on stalled negotiations and more on implementation. This "twin mantra" of concrete climate action over endless

on secured adaptation finance. However, without clear commitments under Article 9.1 and an effective finance roadmap, Bangladesh risks being left increasingly exposed to devastating climate shocks in the coming years. Without equitable burden-sharing and predictable supplies of public finance, the credibility of the global climate regime will be on the line.

Another pressing concern, in the

gaps in access and representation. Limited capacity to utilise improved NDC submission platforms, inadequate representation in side events, and prohibitive participation costs restrict Bangladesh's ability to campaign effectively on the global stage. The logistical realities of COP30 being in Belém make access easier for wealthier delegations, further marginalising those from developing countries.

The Amazon setting also resonates deeply with Bangladesh's own ecological systems—especially the Sundarbans, which are increasingly threatened by rising sea levels and industrial exploitation. If the preservation of the Amazon holds global significance, so too does the protection of Bangladesh's mangrove forests and delta systems. The struggles are interconnected, underscoring that climate justice is a shared responsibility beyond regions.

COP30 carries enormous symbolic weight. Hosting the summit in the Amazon is a strong statement, but symbolism alone cannot replace the real commitments and actions that vulnerable nations urgently need.

For Bangladesh and its peers, COP30 must be more than stagecraft; it must be a summit of substance. That requires enforcing public grants—not loans—ensuring equitable access and representation, and embedding accountability into climate finance mechanisms. If Brazil's COP presidency prioritises implementation over rhetoric, safeguards ecosystems rather than fragmenting them, and centres climate equity instead of marginalising it, COP30 could be a moment of promise. Otherwise, Amazon's symbolic significance will be squandered, and vulnerable countries like Bangladesh will remain stranded and climate-resilient in rhetoric, but not in reality.

COP30 has a duty to move beyond tokenism. It should deliver action, mobilisation, and transparency through accountable, enforceable climate finance, equitable participation, and concrete adaptation measures. Only by securing these outcomes can COP30 be remembered as the summit of substance rather than another missed opportunity.



The 'Baku to Belém Roadmap' aims to mobilise \$1.3 trillion annually by 2035, but scepticism remains over its enforceability. This photo was taken during COP29 last year.

diplomacy sounds promising. However, it is easier said than done.

Civil society and experts warn that the summit must deliver tangible outcomes on fossil fuel phase-out, curbing deforestation, adaptation, and finance, not merely words.

As one of the most climate-vulnerable countries in the world, Bangladesh views COP30 through several intersecting prisms. The country's urgent needs—protection from floods, resilience against cyclones, and climate-smart agriculture—will rely heavily

absence of adequate public finance, is dependence on private capital—either as loans or investments—which could leave Bangladesh burdened with additional debt rather than receiving grants. This has long-term implications for economic stability and may impede genuine adaptation efforts. For a country already grappling with fiscal constraints, the shift from public to privatised financing mechanisms is not enough and may even prove damaging.

These challenges are compounded by

# How to keep cancer drugs affordable after LDC graduation



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As Bangladesh prepares to graduate from Least Developed Country (LDC) status in 2026, pride in this achievement comes with deep concern. Graduation will end many privileges that have kept essential medicines affordable, particularly for cancer patients. Without urgent action, thousands may find lifesaving drugs suddenly priced out of reach.

Cancer is already a formidable challenge. A *Prothom Alo* report, citing a landmark study by Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University (BSMMU) this year, revealed that cancer accounts for 12 percent of total deaths in one area of Kishoreganj. The study, covering over two lakh people, found that among men, lung, throat, and stomach cancers dominate, while breast and cervical cancers lead among women.

The outlook is grim. The World Health Organization (WHO) and the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) project that by 2050, new cancer cases in Bangladesh could more than double from 167,256 in 2022. This surge threatens to overwhelm a health system already stretched thin.

So far, cancer drugs have remained relatively affordable due to a pharmaceutical patent waiver under the TRIPS (Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights) agreement of the World Trade Organization (WTO). This lifeline has turned Bangladesh into a hub for affordable generic cancer drugs. For instance, Beacon Pharmaceuticals produces Tagrix, a version of osimertinib used to treat a specific type of lung cancer, selling for Tk 9,900 to Tk 16,500 per month. Compare this to AstraZeneca's branded version, Tagrisso, which costs over Tk 700,000 per month

in Canada and more than 100,000 rupees in India. For Bangladeshi patients, these local alternatives have meant the difference between life and death.

**What happens after graduation?** Once Bangladesh graduates from LDC status, the TRIPS waiver will no longer apply. The consequences could be devastating. Local companies will have to pay royalties and meet stricter compliance

a modest rise in costs can push families into ruin.

Under WTO rules, all member countries must follow TRIPS, which protects patents on medicines, usually for 20 years or more. Article 66.1 allows least developed countries to delay full TRIPS compliance until July 1, 2034, but only while they remain LDCs. Bangladesh's graduation will end this benefit in 2026. The WTO's pharmaceutical waiver, which lets LDCs avoid enforcing patents on medicines until 2033, will also no longer apply.

After graduation, Bangladesh will have to enforce pharmaceutical patents unless it uses compulsory licensing or negotiates voluntary licences with patent holders. Article 31 of TRIPS allows local production of patented drugs without the patent holder's consent, provided royalties are paid. Article 31(b) permits

cancer drug, slashing the price by 97 percent—from 280,000 rupees to 8,800 rupees per month.

China took a different route. After joining the WTO in 2001, it negotiated directly with pharmaceutical companies. Through its National Reimbursement Drug List and procurement programmes, it cut cancer drug prices by 50 to 70 percent nationwide, making lifesaving medicines accessible to millions.

The lesson is clear: robust legal measures and strategic negotiations can keep medicines affordable even

under strict patent rules.

Bangladesh must act now to avoid a healthcare catastrophe after 2026. It needs to invest in local innovation so scientists can develop medicines at lower costs using original models as blueprints. Clear rules for compulsory licensing must be finalised to ensure local production of essential drugs during emergencies. The government should also negotiate voluntary licences with multinational firms to secure fair prices.

Expanding domestic production of active pharmaceutical ingredients

is crucial to reducing dependence on imports. National subsidy programmes for cancer treatment are needed to shield low-income families from financial collapse. Avoiding trade deals that impose stricter intellectual property rules than the WTO requires will also be vital.

Finally, Bangladesh should join forces with other graduating LDCs to lobby at the WTO for an extension of the pharmaceutical waiver, framing it as a public health necessity.

**Once Bangladesh graduates from LDC status, the TRIPS waiver will no longer apply. The consequences could be devastating. Local companies will have to pay royalties and meet stricter compliance requirements, raising the cost of these drugs by 20 to 50 percent. For lung cancer patients, monthly treatment with Tagrix could rise from Tk 10,000 to 35,000, or even Tk 50,000.**

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Without special licences, some drugs may vanish from the local market. Patients might then be forced to import patented drugs at global prices. According to the Directorate General of Health Services, around 69 percent of all medical expenses in Bangladesh were paid out-of-pocket in 2020—among the highest rates in Asia during that period. Research shows that half of cancer affected families face catastrophic health spending, often selling property, taking loans, or abandoning treatment. Even

countries with production capacity, like Bangladesh, to make generics for export to poorer nations. However, this requires clear legal frameworks and strong political will.

#### What is the way forward?

The loss of the waiver can be managed with bold policies. India, for example, adopted WTO patent rules in 2005 but added safeguards. Section 3(d) of India's Patents Act (1970) prevents "evergreening"—extending patents through minor modifications. In 2013, India's Supreme Court used this clause to reject Novartis's patent on the leukaemia drug imatinib, ensuring generics continued. In 2012, India issued a licence to a local company to produce sorafenib, a liver

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SL No.	Tender ID & Package No	Name of Scheme	Tender Proposal last date & Submission Date and Time
01	1145305 e-GP/ZPM/2025-26/02/REV/W-01	(a)Improvement of road from Abdul Khalek's house to Manik house in Chor Mokimpur Village under Krisnapur union, Upazila Manikganj Sadar upazila, Dist.- Manikganj. (b) Rehabilitation of Joira Liton house Mour to Dulal house road (Ch. 00-281m) by Uniblock under Manikganj Sadar upazila, Dist.- Manikganj.	17 September-2025 16.00 & 18 September-2025 14.00
02	1145312 e-GP/ZPM/2025-26/02/REV/W-02	Improvement of road from Bainya Prossad Koser house to Bainya Purbopara Mosque (Ch. 106-300m) road by R.C.C under Ghior upazila, Dist.- Manikganj.	
03	1145313 e-GP/ZPM/2025-26/02/REV/W-03	Improvement of road from Kodalia Govt Pry. School to Late Afajuddin Chairman by BFS under ulail union, upazila Shivalaya, Dist.- Manikganj.	
04	1145314 e-GP/ZPM/2025-26/02/REV/W-04	Construciton of Indoor Play ground at officers Club Singair upazila Complex under Singair Upazila, Dist.- Manikganj.	
05	1145315 e-GP/ZPM/2025-26/02/REV/W-05	Improvement of road from Dhalla Union Ishaq Member house to Ford Nagar Nodir Par Pacca road (Ch. 00-722m) by BFS under Singair upazila, Dist.- Manikganj.	
06	1145316 e-GP/ZPM/2025-26/02/REV/W-06	Construction of Islamic Ideologic Monument in Saturia upazila, Dist.- Manikganj.	
07	1145318 e-GP/ZPM/2025-26/02/REV/W-07	(a)Improvement of road from Main Road to Khaja Rohomot Ali College under Harirampur upazila, Dist.- Manikganj. (b)Improvement of road from Bijoynagar road to Bijoynagar Govt. Pry. School road (Ch. 00-70m) by BFS under Glala union, upazila Harirampur, Dist.- Manikganj.	

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