

star BUSINESS



Will Bangladesh benefit from higher US tariffs on China, India?

REFAYET ULLAH MIRDHA

The Trump administration's imposition of higher reciprocal tariffs on India and China, two of Bangladesh's main competitors in the global readymade garments sector, is definitely a boon for Bangladesh, according to local exporters.

They, however, caution that it is not yet time to celebrate as there are many factors that can take away the advantage.

The United States has imposed 50 percent and 30 percent reciprocal tariffs on Indian and Chinese shipments, respectively. In comparison, the rate is 20 percent for Bangladeshi goods, which gives Bangladesh an edge in positioning itself as an alternative sourcing hub for international retailers and brands.

Speaking at an event on Saturday, Zahid Hussain, a former lead economist at the World Bank's Dhaka office, estimated that local exporters, particularly in the readymade garment sector, could secure up to \$2 billion in additional orders, largely redirected from India and China, due to the tariff boon.

Exporters, however, say it is too soon to make any specific estimate, and that Bangladesh is not ready to handle such a big shift.

"It is too early to celebrate because there are many ifs and buts. Moreover, Trump is unpredictable. Negotiations could lower tariffs for India and China at any time," said Fazlul Hoque, managing director of Plummy Fashions.

"Besides, Bangladesh's market is yet to mature to the level where it can attract \$2 billion worth of new orders, particularly shifting orders," he added. **READ MORE ON B3**



Union Bank agrees to merger
EXIM seeks more time

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

The scam-hit Union Bank has agreed to the central bank's plan to merge it with other lenders, while EXIM Bank has asked for more time to revive itself.

Under the Bank Resolution Ordinance 2025, the central bank must consult the five Shariah-based banks slated for consolidation before commencing formal merger procedures.

Yesterday, the Bangladesh Bank (BB) held separate meetings with Union Bank and EXIM Bank regarding the mergers. Governor Ahsan H Mansur joined virtually, citing illness.

The boards of directors and management teams of the two banks, along with the four deputy governors and officials from the Bank Resolution Department of the BB, were present at the meeting.

A day earlier, the BB met with the board of directors and management team of First Security Islami Bank.

The central bank is set to meet with the boards of directors and management teams of Global Islami Bank and Social Islami Bank today.

"Depositors are coming to withdraw their money, but we are unable to pay. The sooner a decision is made regarding these banks, the better. In this case, the banks may undergo merger, restructuring, or some other measure," Fariduddin Ahmed, independent director and chairman of Union Bank, told journalists after yesterday's meeting with the BB.

He mentioned that S

READ MORE ON B3

Govt eyes 1.5 lakh jobs from Moheshkhali industrial hub

Transformation of the island projected to add \$70-75b directly to GDP

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

The government has unveiled an ambitious plan to reshape the coastal economy by turning Moheshkhali island into the country's next industrial and logistics hub.

Over the next 30 years, the project is expected to create 1.5 lakh direct jobs and add \$150 billion directly to the GDP.

The Moheshkhali-Matarbari Integrated Development Initiative (Midi), a flagship state-backed project, will lead the transformation of the island, an upazila under the southeastern district of Cox's Bazar.

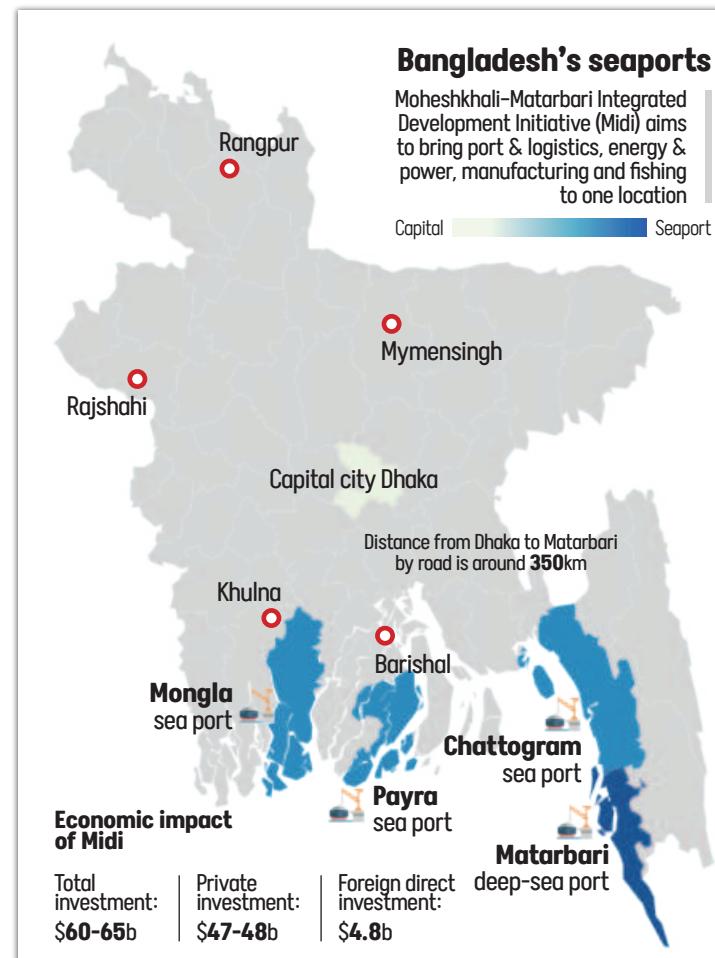
The initiative is backed by \$60 billion in projected investment, including targeted foreign direct investment.

Ashik Chowdhury, executive chairman of Maheshkhali Integrated Development Authority (Mida), yesterday presented a four-month action plan to Chief Adviser Professor Muhammad Yunus at the state guest house Jamuna. He outlined a three-phase roadmap running from 2025 to 2055.

"Mida is not just about a port or a power plant, it is a new economy being built from the coastline inward," Chowdhury told reporters.

He said, "We want to see the Matarbari-Moheshkhali as a township. The world calls Singapore one of the most successful deep sea port townships, and another port that often comes up is Shanghai."

At the heart of the plan is



the Matarbari deep-sea port, designed with a natural depth of 18.5 metres to allow large cargo ships to dock directly without feeder vessels.

Referring to Matarbari, he said,

IPDC ডিপোজিট | ১৬৫১৯

"Imagine if we wanted to build a Singapore in Bangladesh, or a Shanghai port inside Bangladesh. After 30 years, we want to see the Maheshkhali-Matarbari area as something like Singapore or Shanghai."

"This will not be a town for vessels, nor a satellite town. It will be a suburb, another extended port of Chattogram, but one that is reformed and new in nature."

Matarbari deep-sea port is expected to handle a quarter of the country's bulk cargo and nearly half of its container traffic, increasing the country's overall port capacity by 50 percent in the next three decades.

The port will act like the anchor for a wider economic zone, bringing together four sectors.

According to Chowdhury, those sectors are logistics, manufacturing, energy and marine resources. He said that they were identified for their potential to create jobs and attract long-term investment.

The location of Moheshkhali near international shipping routes, combined with its distance from urban congestion and access to deep waters, makes it a strategic site for large scale development, according to Mida's strategic report.

A study by the Japan International Cooperation Agency (Jica) estimated that the Moheshkhali-Matarbari region could attract \$60 billion to \$65 billion in investment over 20 to 30 years, including nearly \$5 billion in FDI. It projected a direct

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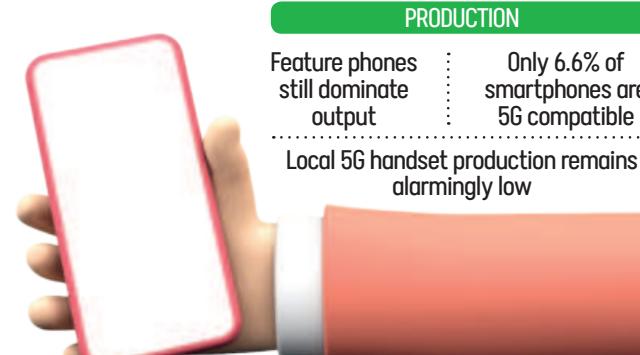
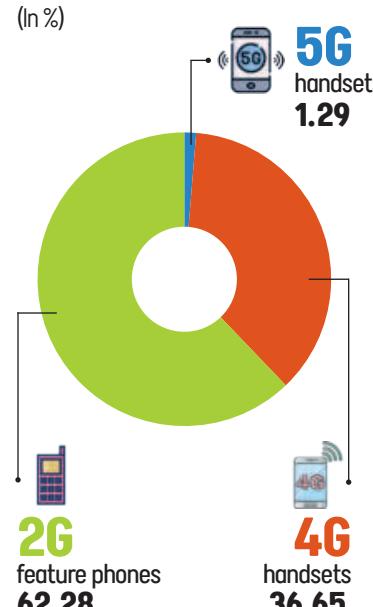
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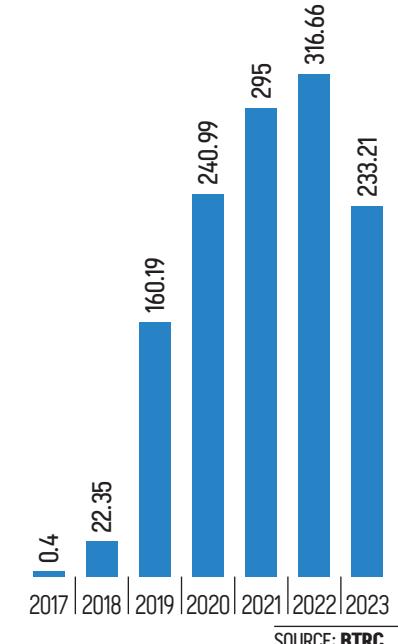
5G goes live, but with few phones to connect

SHARES IN HANDSET PRODUCTION (In %)



MARKET TRENDS
Smartphone penetration is rising but remains 4G-heavy
Operators target areas with stronger 5G device penetration
Grey market imports undermine local manufacturing growth

Handset manufacturing (In lakh units)



percent of devices in use across the country are smartphones, mostly 4G enabled. Only 6.6 percent are capable of connecting to 5G networks, according to industry estimates.

.

Imported and expatriate gifted handsets make up around 40 percent of the smartphone market, many of them high-end and 5G-ready, but a substantial share is refurbished models.

"The supply chain is gradually shifting towards 5G, but the grey market is undermining local production," said Rizwanul Haque, vice-president of Mobile Phone Industry Owners' Association

Robi Axiata, the pioneer in 5G rollout and a leader in the 4G market, says adoption will be gradual.

"In 200 areas, 5G penetration among devices is already 12-15 percent, with 120 areas reaching nearly 20 percent penetration. Our initial focus will be rolling out 5G to these areas. And a positive trend is that users who currently use 4G are most likely to migrate to

5G," said Shahed Alam, Robi's chief corporate and regulatory affairs officer.

"Currently, most imported and gifted handsets from abroad that get registered on our network work well on 5G," Alam said.

According to Robi estimates, it will take five to seven years for 5G adoption to reach current 4G levels, as economic factors and device affordability remain key hurdles.

Local manufacturers are also struggling to catch up. Rizwanul Haque, vice-president of the Mobile Phone Industry Owners' Association of Bangladesh and CEO of Ismartu Technology BD, said only 15 percent of new smartphones in the country are currently 5G-compatible.

He said the share of 5G-enabled phones will increase if compared only to the smartphone segment instead of overall handset production.

"The supply chain is gradually shifting towards 5G, but the grey market is undermining local production," Haque said. "If illicit imports are curtailed, local manufacturers will be better placed to meet the growing demand."

Haque, who is also CEO of Ismartu Technology BD, which manufactures Tecno devices, said Tecno plans to launch three 5G models soon.

City Bank, bKash, TransUnion get primary nod for private credit bureaus

MD MEHEDI HASAN

In a first, the Bangladesh Bank has granted preliminary approval to private entities to establish credit bureaus, a move aimed at improving transparency in the country's lending market.

City Bank, mobile financial service (MFS) provider bKash, and the US-based credit reporting agency TransUnion are among five firms, including ventures with foreign investment, recently cleared to set up private credit bureaus.

The Bangladesh Bank received a total of 22 applications for private credit bureaus and shortlisted 13 before issuing letters of intent (LoIs) to the successful five.

The approved applicants are Credit Info BD Credit Bureau, TransUnion Credit Bureau, bKash Credit Bureau, City Credit Bureau, and First National Credit Bureau. Arief Hossain Khan, executive director of Bangladesh Bank, told The Daily Star.



Some of these applicants involve European, American, and Saudi technology firms entering through joint ventures.

Khan said the approvals followed careful scrutiny. The bureaus will work to determine credit standards by analyzing borrower data before sharing it with banks, which will help financial institutions make informed decisions, according to the central bank's guidelines on the licensing, operation, and regulation of credit bureaus.

Speaking about City Credit Bureau, Masrur Arefin, managing director and CEO of City Bank PLC, told The Daily Star, "We have just received the preliminary approval. It will take about a year to come to the market."

TransUnion, a US-based company, is one of the three largest consumer credit reporting agencies in the world, and has been primarily approved to establish credit bureaus in the country.

READ MORE ON B3



PHOTO: MERCANTILE BANK

Matil Hasan, managing director of Mercantile Bank PLC, and Mohammad Mostafizur Rahman, additional director of Bangladesh Bank, exchange signed documents of the agreement at the BB headquarters in the capital's Motijheel recently.

Mercantile Bank joins Tk 500cr BB startup refinancing fund

STAR BUSINESS DESK

Mercantile Bank PLC has signed a partnership agreement with Bangladesh Bank under a Tk 500-crore startup refinancing fund aimed at fostering innovation and supporting new entrepreneurs across the country.

Through this collaboration, Mercantile Bank will provide financing to eligible startups to stimulate economic growth, generate employment opportunities, and empower the next generation of innovators and business leaders.

Bangladesh Bank Governor Ahsan H Mansur joined the event virtually.

Nurun Nahar, deputy governor of Bangladesh Bank; Husne Ara Shikha, executive director; and Md Mostafidur Reza Chowdhury, head of SME at Mercantile Bank; along with other senior officials from both organisations, were also present.

Mohammad Mostafizur Rahman, additional director of Bangladesh Bank, and Matil Hasan, managing director of Mercantile Bank PLC, signed the agreement at the central bank's headquarters in the capital's Motijheel recently, said a press release.

Prime Bank hosts seminar on financial inclusion, youth empowerment at IUB

STAR BUSINESS DESK

Prime Bank PLC, in collaboration with Independent University, Bangladesh (IUB), its Department of Human Resource Management, and the Independent HR Society, recently organised a seminar titled "Financial Inclusion: Engaging & Inspiring Youth in Banking" at the IUB campus.

The programme, held under the banner of PrimeAcademia – a flagship campus initiative of the bank – serves as a comprehensive one-stop banking platform for academic institutions and their stakeholders across Bangladesh, according to a press release.

More than 200 students from diverse disciplines took part in the seminar, which provided an interactive platform to promote financial literacy, responsible money management, and career opportunities in the banking and financial services sector.



Prof Daniel W Lund, pro-vice-chancellor of Independent University, Bangladesh, and M Nazeem A Choudhury, deputy managing director and head of consumer and SME banking at Prime Bank PLC, pose for group photographs on the university campus recently. PHOTO: PRIME BANK

HSBC Bangladesh wins 'Brandon Hall Group Gold Medal 2025'

STAR BUSINESS DESK

The Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corporation Limited (HSBC) in Bangladesh has been awarded the gold medal in the category of Best Leadership Development for Women at the Brandon Hall Group 2025 HCM Excellence Awards for its F Major Programme.

The programme is a female talent development initiative designed specifically for colleagues in Bangladesh, according to a

press release. Commenting on the achievement, Md Mahbub Ur Rahman, chief executive officer of HSBC Bangladesh, said: "At HSBC Bangladesh, we are committed to creating a culture of continuous learning and development. Our F Major Programme is about empowering talented women to represent Bangladesh and shape the future of our industry."

"This award inspires us to continue working towards a more inclusive and equitable workplace," he added. Nazika Imam, head of

people to drive long-term success."

The Brandon Hall Excellence Awards, often described as the "Academy Awards of Learning and Development", recognise organisations worldwide that deliver innovative and impactful programmes in talent development.

HSBC Bangladesh's F Major Programme was recognised during the 32nd annual edition of the awards for its unique approach to nurturing leadership, measurable business impact, and its role in shaping future-ready female leaders.



human resources and employee relations, said: "This award highlights HSBC Bangladesh's continued focus on investing in our

Idra signs group insurance agreement with Pragati Life Insurance

STAR BUSINESS DESK

The Insurance Development and Regulatory Authority (Idra) has signed a group life and health insurance agreement with Pragati Life Insurance PLC.

M Aslam Alam, chairman of Idra, and Md Jalalul Azim, managing director and CEO of Pragati Life Insurance, signed the agreement in Dhaka recently, according to a press release.

Under the agreement, Pragati Life will provide group life and health insurance coverage to Idra employees.

Md Fazlul Haque, member (administration) of IDRA; Tanzina Ismail, member (law); Mohammad Abu Bakar Siddique, member (non-life); Md Apel Mahmud, member (life); and Md Rafiqul Alam Bhuiyan, additional managing director (group insurance division) of Pragati Life, along with other senior officials from both organisations, were also present.



M Aslam Alam, chairman of Insurance Development and Regulatory Authority, and Md Jalalul Azim, managing director and CEO of Pragati Life Insurance PLC, pose for photographs after signing a group life and health insurance agreement for the former's employees in Dhaka recently.

PHOTO: PRAGATI LIFE INSURANCE

PBIL wins GFM Review awards

STAR BUSINESS DESK

Prime Bank Investment PLC (PBIL) has been recognised in two categories as the "Best Investment Bank, Bangladesh 2025" and "Best Portfolio Management Firm, Bangladesh 2025" by the Global Finance Market (GFM) Review, a leading online financial news portal.

The accolade of "Best Investment Bank, Bangladesh 2025" highlights PBIL's continued leadership in delivering high-impact financial advisory services, equity and debt capital raising, and discretionary portfolio management solutions.

According to a press release, the recognition affirms the firm's leading position in Bangladesh's competitive investment banking sector.

PBIL Prime Bank Investment PLC.

It offers bespoke, client centric portfolio strategies tailored to the evolving needs of both institutional and retail investors.

Commenting on the accolades, Syed M Omar Tayub, managing director and CEO of PBIL, said, "At PBIL, we believe success stems from combining personalised, forward-

thinking solutions with a deep understanding of emerging financial technologies and trends."

"These awards are a testament to our team's hard work and commitment to delivering the highest quality service to our clients. We remain focused on shaping a more resilient and accessible investment landscape for Bangladesh," he added.

The wins come at a time when PBIL is expanding its product offerings and digital capabilities in line with global investment trends.

Its robust track record in portfolio management and capital markets advisory continues to reinforce its reputation as a trusted financial partner in Bangladesh and beyond, the press release added.

Economists back Fed Governor Cook as Trump attempts ouster

AFP, Washington

Nearly 600 economists have signed an open letter expressing support for Federal Reserve Governor Lisa Cook and US central bank independence, as Cook battles President Donald Trump's attempt to fire her.

"Good economic policy requires credible monetary institutions," said the letter, whose 593 signatories as of Tuesday include Nobel laureates and former US government officials.

"Credible monetary institutions, in turn, require the independence of the Federal Reserve," the letter added. The support came after Trump said on his Truth Social platform last week that he was immediately removing Cook over claims of mortgage fraud.

Cook, the first Black woman to serve on the Fed's board, is challenging her ouster in court.

On Tuesday, her lawyers pushed back on Trump's justification in firing her and argued in a filing that she was not given a chance to meaningfully contest allegations against her.

The open letter signed by economists noted that: "Recent public statements about Governor Cook – including threats of removal and a claim that she has been fired -- have arrived alongside unproven accusations."

Sl. No.	Invitation Reference No.	Package description	Tendering method	Tender ID No.	Tender opening date & time
1.	46.06.200 0.000.000. 14.0014.0 9/MODS6	Construction of Boundary Wall & Semi pakha office for MODS Division at Karnaphuli CDA R/A under Chattogram WASA	OTM	1143112	30-Sep-2025 3:15pm

This is an online tender where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted.

To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required. The fees for downloading the e-Tender documents from the National e-GP System Portal have to be deposited online through any registered bank's branches within date mentioned in Tender Notice. Further information & guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).

Md. Golam Kibria Shakil
Executive Engineer
Bhandal Jhuri Water Supply Project
Chattogram WASA, Chattogram
Email: shakil.me07cuet@gmail.com

Ref. No. 46.06.2000.000.000.14.0014.09/11 Date: 01.09.2025

e-Tender Notice

WASA Office Building, Dampara, Chattogram
প্রকল্প পরিচালকের কার্যালয়
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WASA Water Supply & Sewerage Authority
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Stocks edge up for second day

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

The Dhaka Stock Exchange (DSE) ended on a positive note yesterday, with share prices rising for the second consecutive session.

Investor activity also picked up, as total trading turnover – the combined value of shares bought and sold – increased compared with the previous session.

According to DSE data, the bourse's benchmark index, DSE, gained 10.69 points, or 0.19 percent, to close at 5,631.61.

The other two indices also performed positively: the Shariah-based index, DSES, edged up 0.04 percent to 1,233.68, while the blue-chip index, DS30, rose 0.03 percent to 2,195.83.

Turnover stood at Tk 1,397.56 crore, up from Tk 1,278.06 crore in the previous session. The banking sector dominated the turnover chart, accounting for 16.4 percent of the total.

City Bank Ltd was the most-traded share, with a turnover of Tk 69.9 crore. Block trades – high-volume securities transactions privately negotiated and executed outside the open market – also accounted for a notable share, totaling Tk 40.04 crore across several scrips.

Market breadth was mixed, with 184 issues declining against 165 gainers, while 47 remained unchanged. A-category stocks saw more winners than losers, whereas B-category stocks recorded more declines.

By segment, mutual funds posted 28 gainers, corporate bonds saw just two issues advance, and the government bond market recorded two declining issues.

On the day's performance table, Intech surged 9 percent to top the gainers' list, while HR Textile fell 10 percent, making it the worst performer of the session.

Sector-wise, ceramics, mutual funds, and non-bank financial institutions (NBFI) were the top three sectors to close in positive territory, while travel & leisure, services & real estate, and engineering recorded the largest declines, according to UCB Stock Brokerage Ltd's market update.

Sectors with large market capitalizations – the total value of a company's outstanding shares – posted mixed performance, noted BRAC EPL Stock Brokerage Ltd. NBFI experienced the highest gain of 1.85 percent, followed by the banking sector (0.60 percent) and the telecommunications sector (0.12 percent).



BGMEA called on retailers and brands to explore the possibility of reducing tariffs on Bangladeshi apparel.

PHOTO: STAR/FILE

BGMEA urges buyers to source more from Bangladesh

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

The Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA) has called on international clothing retailers and brands to place more orders in Bangladesh, citing the country's relative tariff advantages over competing nations in the United States.

The appeal came at a meeting with representatives of international

buyers who have business in Bangladesh, at the BGMEA office in Dhaka yesterday.

After the meeting, BGMEA President Mahmud Hasan Khan said he urged the buyers to expand their sourcing from Bangladesh and to adopt a unified code of conduct for audits and compliance.

"Suppliers face significant difficulties as different companies follow different compliance standards. It would be better if all

sourcing firms adhered to a uniform code for social, compliance, and other key audits," Khan said.

He also called on US retailers and brands to explore the possibility of reducing tariffs on Bangladeshi apparel. The discussion also covered the diversification of products to attract more business.

Khan said around 42 representatives from European, American, and Asian companies attended the buyers' forum.

Govt eyes 1.5 lakh jobs

FROM PAGE B1

GDP impact of up to \$75 billion, with the overall contribution reaching \$150 billion, according to the report.

Mida expects to create about 1.5 lakh direct jobs and up to 25 lakh when indirect employment is included, spanning sectors such as infrastructure, port operations, manufacturing, logistics, fisheries, food processing, housing, transport, retail and healthcare.

As the port expands, jobs will also be created in customs, warehousing, shipbuilding and transport. Planned rail and highway links connecting Moheshkhali to Dhaka are expected to generate demand for thousands of trained and semi-skilled workers across the supply chain, says the Mida report.

It also says better connectivity is projected to help Moheshkhali emerge as a major manufacturing hub, contributing nearly 10 percent of national industrial output by 2055.

Priority sectors include steel and heavy engineering, agro and food processing, automobiles and auto parts, electronics and semiconductors, pharmaceuticals,

synthetic fibres and garments, and shipbuilding and repair.

The initiative is also expected to save \$6 billion annually on the balance of payments by cutting imports through domestic production.

To meet rising energy demand, which is growing at about 6.7 percent a year, Mida plans to set up a power and fuel import hub featuring LNG and LPG terminals.

These could supply up to 80 percent

and 60 percent of national demand, respectively. A proposed petroleum refinery would meet around 35 percent of the country's needs.

Together, these facilities are projected to save \$3.4 billion in logistics costs while creating jobs in operations, fuel handling, maintenance, construction, safety and environmental services.

In the marine sector, Bangladesh currently uses only a fraction of its Indian Ocean tuna quota.

With the Matarbari port enabling quicker seafood exports to the European Union, USA and Japan, and with approval of 28 new longliner vessels, the region is expected to capture a much larger share.

The scallop industry alone is

projected to generate \$500 million in exports. A strong cold-chain and seafood processing network could create thousands of jobs, especially for women and small-scale entrepreneurs.

To build a skilled workforce, Mida plans to set up training centres focused on marine trades, logistics, automation and industrial maintenance.

Supporting infrastructure such as housing, schools, hospitals, and vocational institutes will also be developed to make Moheshkhali both an industrial hub and a liveable community.

The plan further includes eco-tourism parks, conservation zones and green corridors to preserve the island's natural environment while creating sustainable jobs in tourism and conservation.

Tourism in Cox's Bazar is expected to grow by 1.5 times as new facilities are built, generating more employment in hospitality, food services, transport and tour guiding.

Mida's 120-day work plan is already underway, with the full masterplan scheduled for completion by the end of 2025.

City Bank, bKash, TransUnion get

FROM PAGE B1

The central bank in June of last year introduced guidelines for private credit bureaus.

According to the guidelines, the addition of credit bureaus would reduce information asymmetry about borrowers in the financial market.

It said making client information, which is often kept confidential, available to other lenders would increase competition in the credit market and benefit better credit applicants.

These bureaus will collect information from various sources, including the BB-maintained Credit Information Bureau (CIB), with the permission of borrowers, and share lenders' credit ratings with financial institutions, central bank officials said.

In time, credit bureaus will also help reduce default rates and average interest rates, facilitated by increased credit information, which will lead to higher quality lending.

Industry insiders welcomed the

initiative but urged caution.

Syed Mahbubur Rahman, managing director of Mutual Trust Bank and a former chairman of the Association of Bankers Bangladesh, said, "Credit bureaus exist virtually all over the world. These bureaus will ease banks' assessment of loan eligibility."

However, he cautioned that the BB would have to be very careful in issuing licences for credit bureaus.

The proposed company must be a limited company. Investment from an individual or business entity incorporated outside Bangladesh is also allowed, according to the BB guidelines. The minimum paid-up capital of a credit bureau will be Tk 10 crore.

The central bank guidelines also state that the number of directors will not exceed 11.

They state that at least two directors must have 10 years of experience in the banking industry.

The BB guidelines add that at least two more directors must

have experience and an academic background in technology-related businesses.

A shareholder that owns more than two percent of the total shares of a credit bureau will be eligible to become a director, it said, adding that no individual could be a director at more than one credit bureau at any point in time.

Under the Payment and Settlement System Act, 2024 and related credit bureau guidelines, private credit bureaus will use CIB and other data to assess the creditworthiness of individuals and businesses, said Major General (retd) Sheikh Md Monirul Islam, chief external & corporate affairs officer of bKash.

By providing credit histories and payment information, the bureaus will help lenders evaluate risk, improving access to finance and making credit safer and easier for individuals and small businesses, he added.

which could result in a lower rate for India. In that case, it is unlikely that work orders will shift from India to bulk.

Mahmud Hasan Khan, president of Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA) said it was too early to quantify the potential windfall.

"There is no specific data on how much business may be diverted. The amount could be less than \$2 billion, or could be more, depending on how competing countries and markets behave," he said.

"The opportunity is there, but it is still at a primary stage," he said, adding, "Only after a few months will we see how the new tariff regime with the US plays out."

He, however, said that there is a good possibility for Bangladesh to benefit. "The amount of shifting orders can be even more than the estimated \$2 billion if the situation goes in our favour."

Shovon Islam, managing director of Sparrow Group, which supplies a large share of its output to the US, said orders have already begun to shift. "It is true that American retailers and brands are coming with work orders since the tariffs were finalised."

"But it is unrealistic to assume Bangladesh will bag all the work overnight," he opined.

Pointing to constraints at home, he said, "Currently, Bangladesh's capacity to produce in large volumes

Gold adds to record rally

REUTERS

Gold surged to a fresh record high on Wednesday, consolidating gains above the key \$3,500 level, on growing expectations of a Federal Reserve rate cut this month and lingering political and economic risks.

Spot gold was up 0.1 percent at \$3,534.88 per ounce, as of 1006 GMT, after hitting an all-time high of \$3,546.99 earlier in the session. US gold futures for December delivery gained 0.3 percent to \$3,602.80.

Adding to market uncertainty and potential trade tensions, US President Donald Trump's administration said it will ask the Supreme Court for an expedited ruling on tariffs that a US appeals court found to be illegal last week.

"The tariff issues and roadblock provided by the Supreme Court will be a critical test for Trump, and irrespective of the outcome, gold provides a welcome respite from market turbulence for investors," said independent analyst Ross Norman.

Union Bank

FROM PAGE B1

Alam took Tk 28,000 crore from Union Bank. The borrowers in whose names the loans were taken cannot be traced. As a result, it has become difficult to return depositors' money.

Officials of the central bank said that in the BB-EXIM Bank meeting, EXIM Bank presented its turnaround plan. However, they were asked to review and resubmit it with more specifics.

The central bank

asked EXIM Bank officials to clearly outline how the bank will return depositors' money, present a concrete plan

for recovering defaulted loans, explain how they will repay the Tk 8,500 crore borrowed from the central bank, and address the large capital shortfall, according to meeting sources.

The bank will be considered further only if its revised plan appears realistic, BB officials said.

Officials of EXIM Bank said it would take at least two years to bring the bank back into good shape.

"The question is whether

the central bank will give us that time. But this bank did not suddenly fall into trouble," one EXIM Bank official said on condition of anonymity.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Office of the Upazila Health & Family Planning Officer
Kapasia Upazila Health Complex, Gazipur
Email: kapasia@uhfpo.dghs.gov.bd

Ref No. UHC/KAPA/GAZI/MSR/2025-26/689

Date: 03-09-2025

e-Tender Notice

This is an online tender, where only e-Tenders will be accepted in e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, please register on e-GP System Portal (<https://www.eprocure.gov.bd>). For more details, please contact support desk contract numbers.

e-Tender are invited in e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) by Dr. Md. Habibur Rahman, UH&FPO, Kapasia Upazila Health Complex, Gazipur for the Procurement of;

Tender Id	Name of goods	Scheduled tender/proposal publication date & time	Tender/proposal last selling date & time	Tender/proposal closing/opening date & time
1142430	Procurement of Non-EDCL Medicine for F.Y 2025-26 at Kapasia Upazila Health Complex, Gazipur	03-Sep-2025 10:00	18-Sep-2025 10:00	18-Sep-2025 12:00
1142431	Procurement of Surgical Instrument for F.Y 2025-26 at Kapasia Upazila Health Complex, Gazipur	03-Sep-2025 10:00	18-Sep-2025 10:00	18-Sep-2025 12:00
1142432	Procurement of Gauze, Bandage & Cotton for F.Y 2025-26 at Kapasia Upazila Health Complex, Gazipur	03-Sep-2025 10:00	18-Sep-2025 10:00	18-Sep-2025 12:00
1142433	Procurement of Linen for F.Y 2025-26 at Kapasia Upazila Health Complex, Gazipur	03-Sep-2025 10:00	18-Sep-2025 10:00	18-Sep-2025 12:00
1142434	Procurement of Chemical Reagent for F.Y 2025-26 at Kapasia Upazila Health Complex, Gazipur	03-Sep-2025 10:00	18-Sep-2025 10:00	18-Sep-2025 12:00
1142435	Procurement of Furniture for F.Y 2025-26 at Kapasia Upazila Health Complex, Gazipur	03-Sep-2025 10:00	18-Sep-2025 10:00	18-Sep-2025 12:00
1142436	Procurement of Diet for F.Y 2025-26 at Kapasia Upazila Health Complex, Gazipur	03-Sep-2025 10:00	18-Sep-2025 10:00	18-Sep-2025 12:00
1142437	Procurement of Linen Washing for F.Y 2025-26 at Kapasia Upazila Health Complex, Gazipur	03-Sep-2025 10:00	18-Sep-2025 10:00	18-Sep-2025 12:00
1142438	Procurement of Stationary for F.Y 2025-26 at Kapasia Upazila Health Complex, Gazipur	03-Sep-2025 10:00	18-Sep-2025 10:00	18-Sep-2025 12:00

e-Tender details can be downloaded on e-GP System Portal (<https://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for pursuer. e-Tender will be accepted only as stated in above list; accepted tenders will be opened online immediate as stated in above list.

WZ 03.9.25

Dr. Md. Habibur Rahman
Upazila Health & Family

TARIFF APPEAL

Trump to ask Supreme Court for 'expedited ruling'

AFP, Washington

US President Donald Trump said Tuesday that he plans to seek a swift ruling from the Supreme Court as his administration pushes to overturn a court decision that found many of his tariffs illegal.

"We're going to be going to the Supreme Court, we think tomorrow, because we need an early decision," Trump told reporters.

He added that he would ask for an "expedited ruling," warning that "if you took away tariffs, we could end up being a third-world country."

The US Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit, in a 7-4 ruling on Friday, had affirmed a lower court's finding that Trump exceeded his authority in tapping emergency economic powers to impose wide-ranging duties.

"We're going to be going to the Supreme Court, we think tomorrow, because we need an early decision," Trump told reporters

But the judges allowed these levies to stay in place through mid-October, giving Trump time to take the fight to the Supreme Court. On Tuesday, Trump claimed that the stock market was "down because of that."

"The stock market needs the tariffs. They want the tariffs," he said.

Wall Street's major indexes retreated Tuesday as uncertainty surrounding the fate of Trump's duties dragged on.

Since returning to the presidency, Trump has invoked the International Emergency Economic Powers Act to impose "reciprocal" tariffs on almost all US trading partners, with a 10-percent baseline level and higher rates for dozens of economies including the European Union and Japan.

He tapped similar powers to slap separate tariffs on Mexico, Canada and China over what Trump said was the flow of deadly drugs into the United States.

Friday's ruling did not however impact sector-specific tariffs like those on steel, aluminum and autos, which were rolled out under different authorities.

The decision still marks a blow to the president, who has wielded tariffs as a broad economic policy tool.

US limits TSMC chipmaking tool shipments to China

AFP, Washington

President Donald Trump's administration has revoked Taiwanese semiconductor giant TSMC's authorization to export US chipmaking equipment to China without a license, further restricting access to US technology in the country.

The move comes as the US Commerce Department moved to end the "validated end user" (VEU) program allowing select foreign semiconductor manufacturers to export US-origin goods and tech license free to make chips in China.

"TSMC has received notification from the US Government that our VEU authorization for TSMC Nanjing will be revoked effective December 31, 2025," said a spokesperson for Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Company on Tuesday.

"While we are evaluating the situation and taking appropriate measures, including communicating with the US government, we remain fully committed to ensuring the uninterrupted operation of TSMC Nanjing," TSMC added in a statement.

TSMC is the world's largest contract maker of chips that are used in everything from smartphones to missiles, and counts Nvidia and Apple among its clients.

But the center of its most advanced manufacturing remains in Taiwan, the self-ruled island Beijing claims as part of its territory.

Taiwan's economic ministry said Wednesday that the US move was expected to "affect the predictability of the plant's future operations."



Vegetable terraces blanket a hillside in Bandarban, replacing traditional jhum cultivation for better profits and feasibility.

PHOTO: MONG SING HAI MARMA

From jhum to vegetable farming: A new trend in Bandarban

MONG SING HAI MARMA, Bandarban

Just a few years ago, jhum farming defined the landscape of Chimbuk's hillside areas of Sualok and Tongbati in Bandarban Sadar upazila. Farmers cleared forest patches, burned undergrowth, and planted rice, maize, or spices. After harvest, the land would be left fallow for years to recover its fertility.

That scenery has changed dramatically, with lush green vegetable fields taking over the areas these days.

Farmers from the Mro, Marma, and Tanchangya communities are now planting cucumbers, bitter gourds, yardlong beans, and pumpkins on lands that once yielded only jhum rice. The reason is simple: better returns, quicker harvests, and fewer hassles.

"Vegetable farming is less expensive and gives quicker returns," Patu Mro, a farmer from Tongbati, said, standing beside his thriving cucumber plot.

"Earlier, we had to wait months to harvest jhum rice and then transporting it to the market cost a lot. Now buyers come straight to our fields. We earn more and spend less," he added.

Nearby, in Sualok Majher Para, farmers Swe Kyaw Marma and Bado Marma shared similar experiences.

Cucumbers now sell at Tk 30 per Kilogramme (kg), bitter gourds at Tk 40, and yardlong beans at Tk 40-Tk 50 directly from the fields.

"The money comes in regularly," Swe Kyaw said with a smile. "We can now plan for our children's education and other needs."

For many families, vegetable cultivation has brought a revolutionary change. Jhum required limited cultivation and harvest. But with vegetables, multiple harvests are possible in a single season.

"With jhum, we waited for one harvest a year. Now, we can grow two or even three



crops. It's changing our lives," said Sukumer Tanchangya, a farmer.

Local traders have stepped in to bridge the gap between remote farms and big markets.

"We collect vegetables directly from the fields and deliver them to main dealers in Chattogram's Caramihat," said Md Faruque. "From there, the produce goes to Cox's Bazar Rohingya camps, Chattogram city, Cumilla, and even further afield."

The farmers no longer have to worry about transportation or unsold crops, said Md Bashir, who does similar work to Faruque. "The growing demand for fresh produce means regular cash flow and more financial security."

Mohammad Shah Newaz, deputy director of the Department of Agricultural Extension in Bandarban, told The Daily Star that the shift marks "a new milestone" for hill agriculture.

While more improvements can surely be made, for hillside farmers, the change in cultivation is akin to a fresh start in life.

"We are earning more than before. This year, I used my earnings to repair my home," said Paraw Mro, a farmer in Sualok. "For us, this is hope for a better future."

"Vegetable farming is helping reduce dependence on jhum cultivation, which often leads to forest clearing," he said.

"But we must also focus on soil fertility and water management so that farming does not harm the fragile ecosystem in the long run," he added.

He also warned that excessive use of pesticides in commercial vegetable farming could harm biodiversity, as many hill birds, insects, and animals depend on fruits and crops for survival.

Chatbots and agents are proliferating across the country. Alibaba last week revealed that surging demand for AI services powered triple-digit year-on-year growth in related revenue. And chipmaker Cambricon

from Meta, OpenAI and others in the West.

But there's caution, too. Cambricon's

Shanghai shares had doubled since the end of July. On Friday, hours before

Beijing stated its willingness to intervene in the industry, the \$88 billion company took the unusual step of warning investors that the stock price may have "deviated from the company's current fundamentals", triggering a sell-off.

To be sure, pockets of wasteful investments are bubbling up. It's reminiscent of the mad scramble playing out among US tech giants, which analysts at research outfit IDC forecast, will spend a whopping \$336 billion in 2028 on AI. In the People's Republic, local governments desperate to hit growth targets have embarked on a debt-fuelled spree to hoard chips and build data centres – many of which are sitting idle. And price wars are intensifying in what one tech executive dubbed "a war of a hundred models", even as business models remain hazy.

Yet the authorities now intent on coordinating the country's AI development and resources do not have a strong record of picking winners, particularly in sectors where the technology is rapidly evolving. Semiconductors are a prime example: the government has deployed billions of dollars into state-designated champions, only to see many go bust, including Wuhan Hongxin Semiconductor Manufacturing and Tsinghua Unigroup, whose former chairman was jailed for corruption and embezzlement.

Slow repatriation weakens our investment appeal

MASUD KHAN

Multinational companies in Bangladesh continue to face obstacles in sending funds abroad, whether as dividends, technical service fees or capital repatriation during exit or restructuring. Though permitted by law, these transactions are often delayed by regulatory bottlenecks, excessive paperwork and inconsistent interpretations by the authorities.

Dividend repatriation, while allowed under the law, is frequently bogged down. Each transaction must be approved by the Bangladesh Bank and authorised dealer banks, whose cautious approach causes prolonged processing. Companies are required to submit extensive documentation, including audited accounts, tax clearance certificates and evidence of the original capital inflow, sometimes dating back decades. Even after approval, shortages of foreign exchange at banks can hold up currency conversion. Tax disputes add further delays. Although Bangladesh has Double Taxation Avoidance Agreements (DTAAs), remittances are often stuck due to disagreements over residency documents and varying interpretations of tax rules.

Royalties, technical service charges and management fees face similar hurdles. These payments usually require prior registration with the Bangladesh Investment Development Authority (Bida) and approval from the Bangladesh Bank, particularly if they involve related parties or exceed specified thresholds. Regulators often question whether services were actually delivered, even when backed by intercompany agreements and benchmarks. Transfer pricing rules are frequently cited by the National Board of Revenue (NBR), but without an advance pricing agreement framework, companies are left exposed to disputes and uncertainty.

Repatriating capital during exits or restructurings is the toughest challenge. Even with full documentation, central bank approval can take months. Valuation disputes are common, with the BB discounting internationally certified assessments and approving only a portion of the proposed remittance. Clearance from the revenue board is also required. Without a clean tax assessment and a no objection certificate, payments are typically blocked. Older investments face the additional burden of proving the original capital inflow, records that may no longer exist.

The merger of Lafarge Surma Cement with Holcim Bangladesh is a telling example. An international valuation was commissioned and approval sought from the BB for cross-border payment. The process took more than a year, and only half of the proposed amount was cleared. The group had to absorb the difference internally, showing the unpredictability of cross-border mergers and acquisitions involving foreign capital.

These delays reflect deeper structural issues. Despite formal commitments to current account convertibility, regulatory behaviour remains control oriented. Banks, wary of audits, impose extra compliance layers. In 2023, severe foreign currency shortages delayed even approved remittances, although liquidity has since improved. Sudden rule changes by regulators add to the uncertainty, forcing companies to devote excessive resources to compliance.

The consequences are far-reaching. Investor confidence weakens when capital and profits cannot move freely. Foreign direct investment suffers as Bangladesh looks less competitive than countries with faster and clearer repatriation processes. Business costs rise as firms deploy extra teams to handle paperwork, follow up with regulators and interpret shifting rules.

Targeted reforms could ease the problem. Routine transactions such as dividends should follow a pre-approved protocol. With growing scrutiny by the revenue board, introducing advance pricing agreements would help resolve uncertainty over royalties and service fees. Time-bound approval frameworks must be enforced across the BB and the NBR. A digital, integrated portal linking the central bank, Bida, NBR and Registrar of Joint Stock Companies and Firms would automate approvals, track progress and reduce discretion. International valuations by reputable firms should be accepted unless challenged within a defined period.

Bangladesh has made considerable progress in attracting foreign investment. To unlock its full potential, it must treat capital mobility not as a concession but as a right. In global business, reputation follows repatriation, and the ability to exit with clarity is as important as the freedom to enter.

The writer is chairman of Unilever Consumer Care Ltd

China backseat driving risks sending AI off course

REUTERS, Hong Kong

China's economy is a study in contradictions. Decades of centralised industrial planning in China have led to endemic overcapacity, which in turn has fuelled destructive price wars across an array of sectors. Yet Beijing's approach, for all its flaws, also helped create world-class corporate champions like electric-car maker BYD. Officials now want to curb what they call "disorderly competition" in the booming \$140 billion artificial intelligence sector. There is some logic to intervening, but that will come at a cost.

Unlike with EVs or solar panels, it's not clear what exactly about AI is worrying China's economic planners. On the contrary, optimism is buoying up the sector, which, combined with infrastructure and other related sectors will be worth \$1.4 trillion by 2030, analysts at Morgan Stanley reckon.

Such optimism has pushed the Hang Seng Tech Index in Hong Kong up 30 percent this year, outperforming the mainland benchmarks. There is some justification for the hype. Despite US sanctions and export restrictions, DeepSeek, Alibaba, and peers are still churning out open-source models that are competitive with, if not superior to, those

from Meta, OpenAI and others in the West.

Chatbots and agents are proliferating across the country. Alibaba last week revealed that surging demand for AI services powered triple-digit year-on-year growth in related revenue. And chipmaker Cambricon

Technologies revealed that its first-half revenue rocketed more than 4000 percent from a year ago, albeit from a low base.

But there's caution, too. Cambricon's



People watch a robot performing tasks at an exhibition during the World Artificial Intelligence Conference in Shanghai. An official from China's top economic planner said that the government will prevent excess and disorderly competition in AI.