

star BUSINESS

Businesses blast NBR over harassment

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Business leaders at a hearing at the National Board of Revenue (NBR) headquarters in Dhaka yesterday expressed frustration over irregularities, harassment and alleged extortion by field-level revenue officials.

At the “Meet the Business” programme hosted by the revenue board, representatives from trade bodies across the country also accused the revenue board of obstructing growth.

They complained about the non-adjustment of advance income tax (AIT), high turnover tax on small firms and legal harassment by customs and port officials.

“NBR officials file false cases against exporters and importers,” said Nasir Khan, managing director of Jennys Shoes.

The footwear exporter said that when the High Court clears companies of false cases, no action is taken against the revenue officials responsible.

“Under Bangladesh law, filing a false case is a crime. If someone files a false case, why are they not punished?” he asked.

Criticising the treatment of the leather sector, Khan said the NBR had kept it as a “bonsai tree” without room to grow.

According to a survey by local think tank Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD), more than 72 percent of firms, or three out of four, said bribery and harassment from taxmen were major obstacles to expansion. Another 82 percent said current tax rates were unfair.

Many of the executives interviewed by the CPD complained that taxes were imposed arbitrarily, without explanation or notice. They argued such practices created an invisible cost greater than the tax itself, making the system deeply unfair.

Khan said he has been exporting



shoes for 35 years. Yet he cannot grow due mainly to the flawed revenue structure facing the local businesses.

“Everyone is becoming bank defaulters, and you see why. The main reason is the NBR,” he said.

“Why is the export from Bangladesh growing? Because NBR is cutting from the roots, keeping us as bonsai. Why are you dwarfing our growth?” he asked.

A representative from a leading steel mill accused Chattogram customs of deliberately moving goods to private inland container depots (ICD), adding costs and delays.

“After unloading from vessels, we aim to clear goods within three days of free time, but our goods are sent to inland depots to benefit certain businesses,” he alleged.

Mahbubur Rashid Jewel, general secretary of the Bangladesh Re-Rolling Mills Association, said the biggest challenge for their sector was the Loan-Deposit Ratio business law.

He noted that while turnover is usually high in heavy industries, profitability fluctuates.

“The increase in turnover tax is burdening us even when we are not making profits,” he said.

Md Abdul Wahed, president of the Chapainawabganj Chamber

of Commerce and Industry, said businesses were struggling to secure refund payments.

Imran Hassan, secretary general of the Bangladesh Restaurant Owners Association, complained about repeated changes to value-added tax (VAT) rules.

“If so many experiments are carried out, we will not survive,” he said, calling for decisions to be made in consultation with stakeholders.

Addressing the NBR chairman, Hassan said, “Your [NBR] officials extort money.

Of the total VAT and tax that is supposed to be collected, only 20 percent goes to the state treasury. The rest is lost to corruption through collusion between NBR officials and certain businesses.”

Despite their criticism, business leaders thanked the NBR for recent initiatives meant to ease operations, including more flexible rules on HS code complexities.

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Islamic banks’ deposits rise, but market share falls

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Deposits in Islamic banks saw a moderate increase in June 2025, but their share in the banking sector fell by 1.17 percentage points year-on-year, according to Bangladesh Bank data.

Deposits in the Shariah-based banks grew by 2.67 percent year-on-year, reaching Tk 4.52 lakh crore in June 2025, according to the central bank’s Islamic Banking and Finance Statistics (IBFS) report for June 2025 released on Tuesday. “This indicates a slower pace of growth compared to the conventional banking sector.”

Besides their share of total banking deposits dropped from 23.54 percent in June 2024 to 22.37 percent in June 2025, while for conventional banks this figure recorded contrarily, the BB noted.

The total banking system deposits increased by 8.04 percent to Tk 20.22 lakh crore during the period.

The BB report said governance issues in some Islamic banks, which came to light after the July uprising, eroded public confidence and prompted depositors to shift funds away from these lenders to conventional ones.

Conventional banks posted stronger gains, with deposits rising from Tk 14.31 lakh crore to Tk 15.69 lakh crore over the same period, a jump of 9.69 percent.

The conventional lenders are capturing a larger share of new deposits thanks to stronger governance, wider branch networks, and more attractive deposit products compared to Islamic banks, the BB report noted.

A similar trend, though on a smaller scale, was observed in the non-bank financial institution (NBFI) sector. Total deposits there stood at around Tk 51.8 thousand crore in June 2025, nearly 1 percent higher than in May 2025.

Islamic NBFIs, however, logged 2.45

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Islami Bank’s provision shortfall nears record Tk 70,000cr

AHSAN HABIB

Islami Bank Bangladesh PLC ended last year with a provision shortfall of nearly Tk 70,000 crore, audit reports show, exposing cracks in the financial health of the country’s largest Shariah-based commercial lender for the first time in its four-decade history.

Weak asset quality in loans and investments, along with the bank’s failure to set aside adequate funds to cover potential losses from defaults or bad debts, overshadowed its reported Tk 100 crore profit for 2024.

After the fall of the previous government, several banks, especially those linked to the controversial conglomerate S Alam Group, faced severe liquidity stress as their actual financial condition came to light.

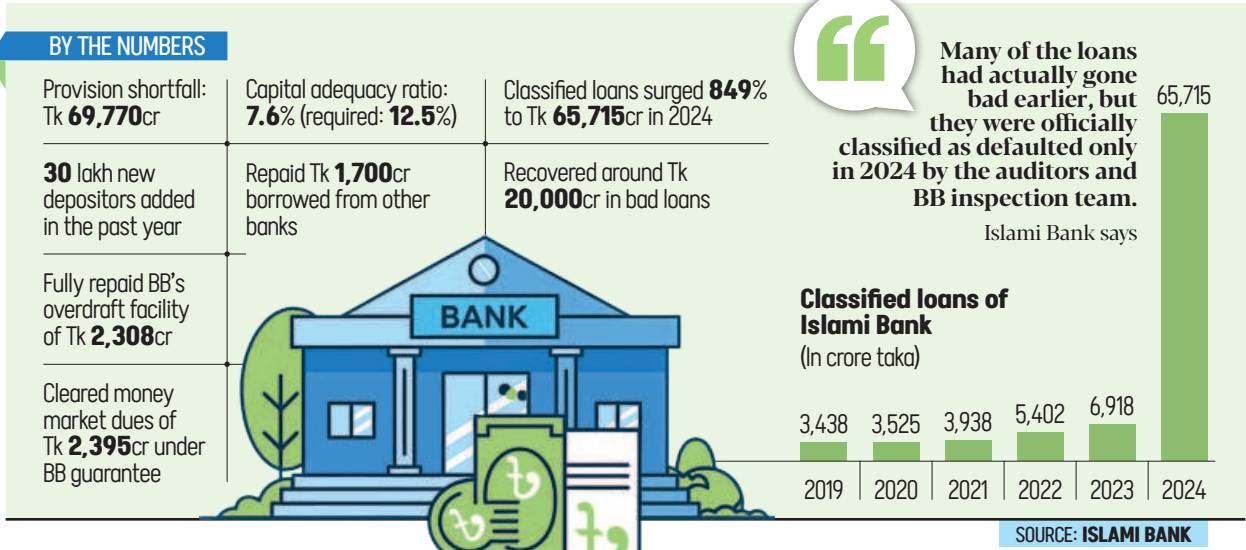
Islami Bank also came under pressure from rising default loans, exposing it to heavy losses. However, it avoided slipping into the red last year largely because provisions were not fully maintained, and depositors chose not to withdraw their funds.

Concerns about the bank’s financial health are not new. Rather, Islami Bank has been in the headlines for years over lending anomalies and irregularities. But this is the first time an audit has shown, with hard numbers, how deep the problems run.

The bank says the audit findings reflect “long buried bad loans” uncovered after the political changeover in August last year. It claims to be in recovery mode, with the Bangladesh Bank (BB) indicating the lender is turning around.

Islami Bank said it welcomed 30 lakh new depositors in the past one year till August 2025, and saw deposits grow by Tk 18,200 crore in the first eight months of this year even amid a turbulent banking time.

The central bank has also kept the bank outside its merger plan, saying



depositors are still showing their faith in the bank.

MASSIVE SHORTFALL OVERSHADOWS PROFIT

Last year, Islami Bank was required to keep provisions of Tk 76,715 crore for classified loans and deposits parked with troubled non-bank financial institutions, according to auditors Mahfel Huq & Co Chartered Accountants and A. Wahab & Co Chartered Accountants.

Against this, the bank maintained only Tk 6,945 crore, leaving a gap of Tk 69,770 crore, according to the auditors.

At the end of 2024, provision shortfalls across the entire banking sector surged more than sixfold year-on-year to Tk 170,655 crore.

Auditors said that by failing to make full provisions, Islami Bank overstated assets, net profit and equity while understating liabilities.

Despite the massive shortfall, Islami Bank still posted a profit of Tk 108 crore in 2024, down from Tk 635 crore the year before.

On defaulted loans, the bank said in a written response to The Daily Star that defaults had risen sharply.

“Many of these loans had actually gone bad earlier, but they were officially classified as defaulted only in 2024 by the auditors and Bangladesh Bank inspection team,” the bank said.

It acknowledged that because the full provision had not been set aside, the profit figure “looks higher than it would have been otherwise.”

The BB allowed some flexibility under forbearance facilities, giving the bank time to gradually adjust its provision shortfall.

“As per directives of the central bank, we are preparing a time-bound action plan to gradually overcome the provision shortfall,” the bank said.

It said the plan will include “specific steps, targets, and timelines to ensure that the shortfall is covered in an orderly manner.”

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Spectrum price cut may add \$45b to economy by 2035: study

MAHMUDUL HASAN

Adjusting spectrum prices could unlock up to \$45 billion of economic growth for Bangladesh by 2035, according to a new GSMA study, which warns that the current pricing model risks holding back its digital ambitions.

The report, The Impact of Spectrum Pricing in Bangladesh, links high spectrum and tax burdens to underinvestment in networks, slower internet speeds, and delayed 5G adoption.

While Bangladesh has achieved near universal 4G coverage and some of the lowest data prices in the Asia-Pacific region, only 46 percent of citizens are mobile internet users, according to the study released yesterday.

It notes that the country’s average monthly data usage, at 5 GB per connection, lags well behind regional peers.

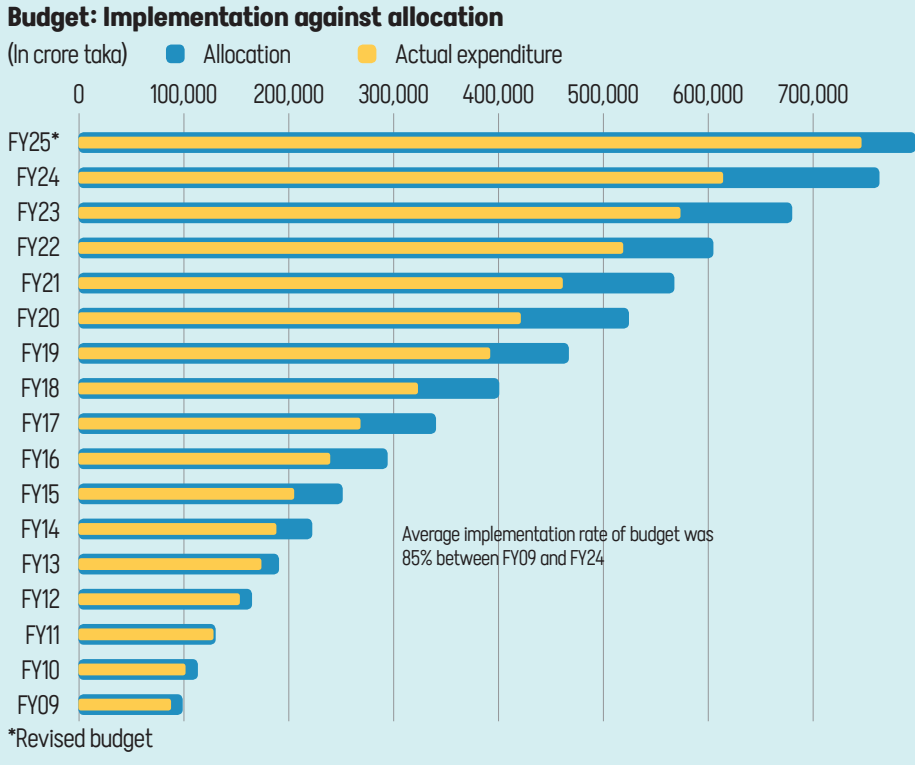
With demand for mobile connectivity rising as users switch to 4G and 5G smartphones, the GSMA states that spectrum pricing must be modernised to enable operators to keep pace.

It warns that spectrum fees already consume 16 percent of operator revenues, double the

READ MORE ON B3

Spend 60% of budget by Q3, or no money in next quarter

Finance Division warns govt agencies



REJAUL KARIM BYRON

Ministries and divisions will get no money for the fourth quarter of this fiscal year if budget spending remains below 60 percent in the first three quarters, the Finance Division warned in a directive yesterday.

The strict measure has been adopted to prevent the last-minute rush in budget spending at the end of the fiscal year, which often leads to misuse of government funds, according to a circular issued by the Finance Division.

If the agencies fail to meet the set quota by the third quarter, the release of the fourth instalment will be automatically withheld, the circular warned.

The Finance Division stated that past experience shows budget implementation by ministries and divisions tends to be sluggish in the early part of the fiscal year, while spending surges in the final quarter.

In some cases, it noted that allocated funds are disbursed and spent hastily near the end of the fiscal year without aligning with actual needs. Such spending, often done without following proper procedures, leads to misuse, wastage, and irregularities in the management of limited government resources while compromising the quality of public expenditure.

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StanChart suspends Add Money from MFS apps

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

The Standard Chartered Bangladesh (SCB) yesterday suspended the “Add Money” option from mobile financial services (MFS) apps due to security concerns amid users on social media platforms reporting alleged fraud using the feature recently.

“Dear valued client, you may transfer funds to MFS bKash via the SC Mobile app at any time. Please note, the Add Money option from MFS apps is temporarily unavailable to ensure secure transactions,” the foreign lender informed customers through text message.

The move comes as various users alleged that they were victims of fraud attacks which used the said option to transfer money from credit cards issued by the banks.

“It has come to our attention that cardholders of several banks are falling prey to fraudsters who are initiating fund transfer from MFS channels (e.g. bKash, Nagad) and transferring funds from credit card,” Luthful Habib, head of Wealth and Retail Banking at the bank, told The Daily Star yesterday.

“A few of our cardholders were also impacted, and we have spoken to each one of them and assured them that Standard Chartered Bank systems, including our internet banking platforms, and security protocols have not been compromised in any way,” he added.

The StanChart official continued that these reported fraud cases have been reported to regulators and law enforcement authorities for further investigation. “We will stand by our clients and

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Dhaka Bank joins Tk 500cr BB startup refinancing scheme

STAR BUSINESS DESK

Dhaka Bank PLC has recently signed a participation agreement with Bangladesh Bank (BB) under the Tk 500 crore Startup Fund Refinancing Scheme. Muhammad Mustafizur Rahman, additional director of Bangladesh Bank, and AKM Shah Nawaj, managing director (current charge) of Dhaka Bank PLC, signed the agreement at the BB headquarters in the capital's Motijheel, according to a press release.

Bangladesh Bank Governor Ahsan H Mansur joined the programme virtually.

According to the central bank's master circular issued on July 9 this year, eligible startup entrepreneurs can now access refinance loans at a 4 percent interest



AKM Shah Nawaj, managing director (current charge) of Dhaka Bank PLC, and Muhammad Mustafizur Rahman, additional director of Bangladesh Bank, exchange signed documents of the agreement at the BB headquarters in the capital's Motijheel recently.

PHOTO: DHAKA BANK

Textile Series of Exhibitions kicks off in Purbachal

STAR BUSINESS DESK

The 24th Bangladesh edition of the Textile Series of Exhibitions began yesterday at the Bangladesh-China Friendship Exhibition Centre in the capital's Purbachal.

Organised by CEMS-Global USA, the event unites three major fairs under one roof: the 24th Textech Bangladesh 2025 International Expo, the 24th Dhaka International Yarn and Fabric Show 2025 (Summer Edition), and the 48th DyeChem Bangladesh 2025 International Expo.

The fairs will remain open daily

from 10am to 7pm until September 13, according to a press release.

Meherun N Islam, president and group managing director of CEMS-Global and Asia-Pacific, presided over the inauguration ceremony.

Running until September 13, the exhibitions present the full textile value chain, from advanced machinery and automation to sustainable dyestuffs and chemical innovations.

This year's edition has attracted exhibitors from more than 30 countries, underscoring Bangladesh's growing stature as a global sourcing hub.



Uttara Bank appoints Hasan as AMD

STAR BUSINESS DESK

Maksudul Hasan has recently been appointed additional managing director (AMD) of Uttara Bank PLC.

Prior to this appointment, Hasan was serving as deputy managing director of the bank, according to a press release.

He began his professional banking career at Uttara Bank PLC as a probationary officer in 1989.

After joining the head office, he worked in various capacities before being promoted to the position of AMD.

He also served as the bank's chief risk officer and played an important role as chairman of several committees.

Al-Arafah Islami Bank signs partnership deal with TAP



SM Akram, chief executive officer of Trust And Pay Limited, and SM Abu Jafar, deputy managing director of Al-Arafah Islami Bank PLC, exchange signed documents of the agreement at the bank's head office in the capital on Tuesday.

PHOTO: AL-ARAFAH ISLAMI BANK

STAR BUSINESS DESK

Al-Arafah Islami Bank PLC has signed a strategic partnership agreement with Trust And Pay Limited (TAP), the mobile financial services provider wholly owned by Trust Bank PLC, aimed at enhancing digital financial services and delivering greater convenience to customers.

SM Abu Jafar, deputy managing director of Al-Arafah Islami Bank PLC, and SM Akram, chief executive

officer of Trust And Pay Limited, signed the agreement at the bank's head office in the capital on Tuesday, according to a press release.

Md Soheb Ahmed, executive vice-president and chief technology officer (current charge) of the bank; Jalal Ahmed, executive vice-president and head of brand communication and marketing; and Mohammad Shahadat Hossain, head of MFS and digital banking, attended the event.

The strategic alliance reflects Al-Arafah Islami Bank's continued commitment to introducing innovative Shariah-compliant digital solutions and promoting financial inclusion across Bangladesh, the release added.

Md Alamgir Hossain, head of regulatory and partnership business of TAP, and Md Ahmed Ullah Chowdhury, senior manager, along with other senior officials from both organisations, were also present.

Tropical Homes partners with Shatotto for Bashundhara Lakefront project

STAR BUSINESS DESK

Tropical Homes Limited, a Dhaka-based real estate developer, has signed an agreement with Shatotto, an architectural firm specialising in green living in Bangladesh, for the signature project, named "Tropical Lakefront Residence", at Bashundhara Residential Area in Dhaka.

Sheikh Rabiul Haque, chief executive officer of Tropical Homes Limited, and Md Rafiq Azam, principal architect of Shatotto, signed the agreement in the capital recently, according to a press release.

Following the signing, Azam and his team of architects from Shatotto visited the Lakefront Residence site to gain firsthand insights into the landscape and environment.

The interactive session allowed him to share initial concepts and ideas with landowners and the Tropical Homes management team, laying the groundwork for a design that is not only architecturally distinctive but also rooted in practical considerations.

"We are excited about this partnership and look forward to unveiling a landmark residential development that will redefine modern urban living in Dhaka," said Azam.



Md Rafiq Azam, principal architect of Shatotto, and Sheikh Rabiul Haque, chief executive officer of Tropical Homes Limited, pose for photographs after signing the agreement in Bashundhara Residential Area in Dhaka recently.

PHOTO: TROPICAL HOMES

Tourists cancel Nepal trips Dollar firm

FROM PAGE B4

Himalaya Airlines, a Nepalese airline operating from Tribhuvan International Airport in Kathmandu, cancelled its scheduled flight following the unrest.

Fakhru Hassan Bhuiyan, a tour operator, said Bangladeshi travellers now mostly visit Nepal, Bhutan, Sri Lanka and Thailand, as many other destinations impose strict visa restrictions.

"On average, about 2,000 Bangladeshis fly abroad every day, and 6 to 7 percent of them choose Nepal," he said. "But just yesterday, one of our guests couldn't even land and had to return."

Bhuiyan also said Nepal's popularity surged after India closed its borders. "Earlier, we sold maybe five or six Nepal packages a month. Recently, that number rose to 35-40. Naturally, the unrest has had a major impact."

Communication with Nepalese partners has also broken down.

"They mostly deal B2B with us, not directly with Bangladeshi travellers. WhatsApp was their main channel, and its shutdown has made things even harder," he said.

"Just last week, we were about to finalise a corporate deal with a renowned company to send 88 guests to Nepal, but that too has been put on hold," Bhuiyan added.

However, industry insiders expect the situation not to prolong as Nepal is also dependent on Bangladeshi tourists.

In 2024 alone, nearly 49,000 Bangladeshi tourists visited Nepal, up from over 36,000 the year before, cementing Bangladesh's position as one of Nepal's key source markets.

"Nepal's economy is heavily reliant on tourism, and the people are generally very welcoming. So far, there are no reports of protesters targeting foreign tourists. The situation will likely stabilise soon," said ex-TOAB chief Ahmed.


REUTERS, London

The dollar held steady on Wednesday ahead of US inflation data this week that could help shape the outlook for Federal Reserve policy, while a fraught geopolitical backdrop underpinned the likes of the Swiss franc.

Employment data in the last week has shown the US economy created far fewer jobs in the last year than expected, which has made a rate cut from the Fed next week look like a certainty.

Yet it has not dented confidence in the equities market, where stocks trade at record highs, nor has it had much immediate impact on the dollar itself, even as investors weigh up the chances of a jumbo half-point cut from the Fed next week.

"The market has made up its mind, and probably quite rightly, that the Fed is going to be cutting interest rates," said Jane Foley, head FX strategist at Rabobank.



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০৯ সেপ্টেম্বর ২০২৫ খ্রিস্টাব্দ



নিয়োগ বিজ্ঞপ্তি

জাতীয় বিজ্ঞান ও প্রযুক্তি জাদুঘরের রাজস্বখাতের আওতায় নিম্নোক্ত শূন্য পদসমূহে অস্থায়ীভাবে নিয়োগের জন্য বাংলাদেশের স্থায়ী নাগরিকদের নিকট থেকে অনলাইনে (<http://nmst.teletalk.com.bd>) অথবা QR code স্ক্যান এর মাধ্যমে ওয়েবসাইটে সরাসরি প্রবেশ করেও এ বিজ্ঞপ্তির বিস্তারিত তথ্য পাওয়া যাবে।

ক্রমিক	পদের নাম	পদ সংখ্যা	বেতন স্কেল	শিক্ষাগত যোগ্যতা	যে সকল জেলার প্রার্থী আবেদন করতে পারবেন
১।	জুনিয়র টেকনিশিয়ান	১	৯,৩০০-২২,৪৯০/- (গ্রেড-১৬)	বাংলাদেশ কারিগরি শিক্ষা বোর্ড হতে ইলেকট্রিক্যাল/ইলেকট্রনিক্স/মেকানিক্যাল এইসএসসি বা সমমানের পরীক্ষায় উত্তীর্ণ	সকল জেলা
২।	মিউজিয়াম এ্যাটেনডেন্ট	১	৮,৮০০-২১,৩১০/- (গ্রেড-১৮)	কোন স্বীকৃত বোর্ড হতে বিজ্ঞানে দ্বিতীয় বিভাগে মাধ্যমিক স্কুল সার্টিফিকেট বা সমমানের পরীক্ষায় উত্তীর্ণ	

২. জাতীয় বিজ্ঞান ও প্রযুক্তি জাদুঘরের ওয়েবসাইটে (www.nmst.gov.bd) এবং টেলিটক বাংলাদেশ লিমিটেড এর ওয়েবসাইটে (<http://nmst.teletalk.com.bd>) অথবা QR code স্ক্যান এর মাধ্যমে ওয়েবসাইটে সরাসরি প্রবেশ করেও এ বিজ্ঞপ্তির বিস্তারিত তথ্য পাওয়া যাবে।

৩. উল্লেখ্য, আবেদনপত্র পূরণ ও পরীক্ষার ফি জমাদান করার তারিখ ও সময়ঃ ১৫ সেপ্টেম্বর ২০২৫ তারিখ সকাল ১০.০০ ঘটিকা এবং আবেদনপত্র জমাদানের শেষ তারিখ ৫ অক্টোবর ২০২৫ তারিখ বিকাল ৫.০০ ঘটিকা।



জিডি-১৯৭৭

মোঃ হৌহিদুল হাসান
কিউরেটর (বিজ্ঞান)



Trading Corporation of Bangladesh (TCB)
TCB Bhaban, Kawran Bazar, Dhaka-1215
www.tcb.gov.bd
Commercial Section
Invitation For Tender (International) for Purchase of

(a) 1,20,00,000 (One Crore Twenty Lac) Liter Refined Soyabean Oil and (b) 12,500 (Twelve Thousand Five Hundred) M.Ton White Refined Sugar

1	Ministry/Division	Ministry of Commerce.
2	Agency	Trading Corporation of Bangladesh (TCB)
3	Procuring Entity Name	Additional Director (Commercial), TCB, Dhaka.
4	Procuring Entity Code	Not applicable.
5	Procuring Entity District	Dhaka.
6	Invitation for	a) Refined Soyabean Oil, b) White Refined Sugar
7	Invitation Ref. No.	a) 26.05.0000.016.08.576.25.2407, b) 26.05.0000.016.08.576.25.2408
8	Date	10-09-2025

KEY INFORMATION

9	Procurement Method	Open Tendering Method (OTM) (International)
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FUNDING INFORMATION

10	Budget and Source of Funds	TCB's Own Fund.
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PARTICULAR INFORMATION

11	Package No.	a) TCB/Imp-06/Soyabean Oil/2025-26, b) TCB/Imp-06/Sugar/2025-26
12	Package Name	a) Refined Soyabean Oil, b) White Refined Sugar
13	Tender Invitation/Publication Date	11-09-2025
14	Tender Documents Last Selling Date and Time	07-10-2025 17:00 P.M
15	Tender Closing Date and Time	08-10-2025 12:00 P.M
16	Tender Opening Date and Time	08-10-2025 12:15 P.M
17	Name & Address of the office(s)	Address - Selling Tender Document of each item can be purchased from the banks & offices as mentioned in right column. (1) Sonali Bank Ltd. Kawran Bazar Branch, TCB Bhaban, Dhaka. (2) Trust Bank Ltd. Kawran Bazar Branch, and (3) Accounts & Finance Division, TCB's Principal Office at Dhaka. -Receiving Tender Document - Opening Tender Document In front of TCB's reception (2 nd floor), TCB Bhaban, 1, Kawran Bazar, Dhaka. Board Room, TCB.

INFORMATION FOR TENDERER

18	Eligibility of Tenderer	Bonafide Suppliers. Details conditions will be mentioned in the Tender documents.
19	Brief Description of goods	Import of a) 1,20,00,000 (One Crore Twenty Lac) Liter Refined Soyabean Oil Packed in 02 (Two) Liter Food Grade PET Bottle [Tender of partial Quantity is acceptable but not less than 60,00,000 liter]. b) 12,500 (Twelve Thousand Five Hundred) M. Tons White Refined Sugar packed in 50 (Fifty) kg bag [Tender of partial Quantity is acceptable but not less than 6,000 M. Ton.]
20	Price of Tender Document	Price of (a) Refined Soyabean Oil tender document is Taka 5,000 (Five Thousand), (b) White Refined Sugar tender document is Taka 5,000 (Five Thousand)
21	Identification of Lot	Location Tender Security Amount (USD/BDT) Shipment Schedule

21	a) Refined Soyabean Oil	Offers are to be made on CFR (C) Chattogram / Mongla Port by Sea or CPT Benapole/ Bangladesh / Dhaka / Sonamasjid/ Bhoma/ Teknaf by rail/ truck.	Tender is to be submitted along with Tender Security amounting to: a) USD 360,000 (US Dollar Three Lac Sixty Thousand) or BDT 4,39,20,000/- (BDT Four Crore Thirty Nine Lac Twenty Thousand) Only. b) USD 160,000 (US Dollar One Lac Sixty Thousand) or BDT 1,95,20,000 (BDT One Crore Ninety Five Lac Twenty Thousand) Only. in the form of Pay-Order/ Bank Draft must be issued from any scheduled Bank of Bangladesh or Bank Guarantee from a foreign Bank must be endorsed by any local scheduled Bank. The Successful Tenderer is to submit 5% (Five Percent) Performance Security in the form of Bank Guarantee. [N, B: In case of partial quantity, tender security will be fixed proportionate to the offered quantity.]	Entire quantity of Goods is to be shipped within (a) 10.01.2026 (b) 10.01.2026
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PROCURING ENTITY DETAILS

22	Name of Official Inviting Tender	Md. Golam Khorshed
23	Designation of Official Inviting Tender	Additional Director (Commercial), TCB Kawran Bazar, Dhaka.
24	Address of Official Inviting Tender	Principal Office, Trading Corporation of Bangladesh (TCB) 1, Kawran Bazar, Dhaka.
25	Contact details of Official Inviting Tender	Telephone No. 02-8180060 Fax No. 880-2-8180057 E-mail: tcb@tcb.gov.bd , tcbingp@tcb.gov.bd
26	Special Instructions:	a. All terms and conditions related to the tender and product details are mentioned in the tender document. b. The authority reserves the right to accept or reject any tender in whole/ in part without assigning any reason.

GD-1986



(Md. Golam Khorshed)
Additional Director (Commercial)
Trading Corporation of Bangladesh

Frontier tech institute to be set up at Buet

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

The Bangladesh Hi-Tech Park Authority has signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (Buet) to establish the Institute of Frontier Technology (IFT) on the Buet campus.

The agreement is part of the project, titled "Bangladesh Institute of Frontier Technology Preliminary Infrastructure Development (1st Revision)".

Abu Borhan Mohammad Badruzzaman, vice-chancellor of Buet, and AKM Amirul Islam, managing director of the Bangladesh Hi-Tech Park Authority, signed the MoU at the InterContinental Dhaka in the capital yesterday.

Speaking as chief guest, Faiz Ahmad Taiyeb, special assistant to the chief adviser for telecom and ICT, said the institute seeks to bridge the long-standing

gap between industry and academia.

"Our experienceshows that both academia and industry suffer from significant research gaps and lag behind international standards. The solution lies in the Institute of Frontier Technology," he said.

Taiyeb explained that relocating the project from a remote char area to Buet was essential, as mobilising teachers, students, and resources in such locations would have been nearly impossible.

Highlighting Buet's legacy, he added: "We believe that under Buet's supervision, the IFT will succeed in resource mobilisation and in bridging the skills gap."

The institute will not require new land acquisition or additional architectural design, making it cost-efficient.

Taiyeb also announced a four-year roadmap: two years to complete physical infrastructure and a further two years to achieve academic excellence.

Businesses blast

FROM PAGE B1
NBR Chairman Md Abdur Rahman Khan said the new generation expected fair treatment.

"Businesses pay a portion of their hard-earned income, but they often feel they are not receiving proper services or benefits in return," said the revenue board chief.

He stressed that the revenue authority sought greater collaboration with commercial banks to help taxpayers. He said this would not involve monitoring individual bank accounts but would instead streamline tax compliance processes.

According to him, the NBR plans to allow non-bonded exporters to release raw materials under bank guarantees and is considering bringing frozen fish exporters

under bond facilities. Bond automation will also be introduced to cut the frequency of annual audits.

Corporate tax return submissions are also set to move online later this year, while income tax practitioners will be able to submit clients' returns online from next week.

The NBR has also introduced a Grievance Redress System to handle taxpayer complaints and urged businesses to use the platform.

Responding to the concerns raised by the business leaders, Khan said regulatory reforms were needed.

"We must amend certain rules to make day-to-day business operations easier," he said, adding that plans were underway to monitor field officers' performance to ensure accountability.

StanChart suspends

FROM PAGE B1
support them if any additional information on the issue surfaces."

Meanwhile, he said, "The 'Add Money' feature originating from other platforms has been suspended temporarily, to ensure that all our customers' transactions are processed through the most secure and trusted channels. Our state of the art SC Mobile app and iBanking remain as the most secure encrypted platform to transfer funds."

"At Standard Chartered, safeguarding our customers' trust and financial security is our topmost priority. Our customers can continue to transfer funds to their BKash wallet by using the SCMobile app or iBanking platforms," Habib added.

Over the last few days, several other StanChart users have reported to

being victims of fraud attacks on Facebook and LinkedIn.

"A few days ago, 50,000 taka suddenly disappeared from my Standard Chartered Visa credit card. How? On August 26, at 7:43 pm, two OTP messages arrived on the phone. Immediately after that, [I received a] message that 50,000 taka [was] added to bKash from my card," one user wrote in a Facebook status on September 4.

"From the time the OTP arrived, this transaction took a maximum of 20 seconds or less. No one asked me for the OTP. My phone was in front of me, my computer in front of me. Just the OTP arrived, and then the money transfer was done," the user added.

Several other users made similar allegations.

Following the emergence of such

allegations, StanChart alerted customers through text messages regarding attempted fraud attempts.

"Stay Alert! Be mindful of security measures, including your personal credentials, OTP, CVV, devices, and protection against malware, to safeguard your online transactions. Your caution is the best protection," yesterday's text message read.

It went on to state that "the 2 Factor Authentication is in place to ensure security and validation for all online transactions."

"All the systems and processes of StanChart Bangladesh are functioning seamlessly to safeguard your finances. To ensure this, please keep your devices and passwords protected from any unknown software or malwares," it added.

Islami Bank's provision

FROM PAGE B1
'DEPENDENT ON REGULATORY SUPPORT'

Auditors said Islami Bank's stability now depends on regulatory backing. They also noted that its cash reserve ratio (CRR) and statutory liquidity ratio (SLR) were below regulatory thresholds throughout the year, indicating persistent liquidity stress.

CRR is the percentage of a bank's deposits held as cash with the central bank, while SLR is the share maintained as liquid assets such as cash, gold or approved government securities.

Under Basel III rules, a set of global banking regulations, a capital

adequacy ratio of 12.5 percent is required. Islami Bank reported only 7.6 percent.

Besides, the spike in bad loans has been dramatic.

Classified loans ballooned 849 percent to Tk 65,715 crore, while provisions against these toxic assets rose 68 percent to Tk 1,045 crore from Tk 621 crore the year before.

The bank told The Daily Star that the auditors' comment about its going-concern status was based on previous-year reports.

It said it has met most regulatory requirements, including the CRR, SLR, liquidity coverage ratio (LCR) and maximum cumulative outflow (MCO). It has also repaid BB's

Tk 2,308 crore overdraft facility ahead of schedule, cleared Tk 2,395 crore in money market dues under BB guarantees, and repaid Tk 1,700 crore borrowed from other banks without central bank support.

Islami Bank said it had recovered about Tk 20,000 crore of bad loans.

"Therefore, we do not currently face any threat to the bank's going concern," the statement added.

TRUST IS THE KEY

Despite its vulnerabilities, Islami Bank grew deposits by Tk 6,162 crore, or 4 percent, year-on-year in 2024, at a time when many banks saw erosion.

In the first eight months this year, deposits rose by

Tk 18,200 crore.

The bank says it serves "mass people" with a base of 2.5 crore clients, with 90 percent of deposits coming from retail customers and less than 2 percent from corporates, showing the breadth of its deposit base.

"This growth reaffirms the continued loyalty of our customers and our stable financial standing in the market," it said.

Foreign exchange gains provided another cushion, with net exchange earnings surging to Tk 1,298 crore from Tk 265 crore a year earlier.


The bank said the gain mainly came from the increase in the value of the bank's foreign currency assets. "Since we held more

foreign currency assets in 2024 than in 2023, the revaluation created higher profits."

It added that the profit also reflected favourable currency fluctuations and gains on its foreign currency-denominated asset gap.

Following the July uprising, restoring customer confidence became its top priority, said the bank.

It said a three-phase restructuring plan was launched. The first phase focused on resolving the liquidity crisis, while foreign audit firms were brought in to review past activities, and their recommendations were implemented.



Janata Bank PLC.
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IT Procurement, Security, Compliance and Maintenance Department
110, Motijheel C/A, Dhaka-1000
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
Invitation for e-Tender


e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP System Portal (<https://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for the procurement of following goods:

Tender ID	Invitation Reference No.	Tender Description	Tender Publish Date & Time	Tender Closing Date & Time
1131895	JB/IT-Proc-29/OTM/Digital Display/2025	Tender for Procurement of Interactive Digital Display with Trolley (Supply, Installation & Commissioning) for Janata Bank PLC. following Open Tendering Method.	09/09/2025 02:30 PM	29/09/2025 12:30 PM


This is an online Tender, where only e-Tenders 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 (<https://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required. Further information and guidelines are available in the national e-GP portal and e-GP Help Desk (Email: helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).

GD-1984


(Mohammad Shakhawat Hossain)
Deputy General Manager



গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার
বাংলাদেশ পুলিশ
অধিনায়কের কার্যালয়
র‍্যাপিড অ্যাকশন ব্যাটালিয়ন-৯
বরায়া উত্তরভাগ, যেতিমগঞ্জ (শাহপরান সেক্টর টোল প্লাজা সংলগ্ন বাইপাস সড়ক)
গোলাপগঞ্জ, সিলেট



স্মারক নং-৮৬৩৬/নিলাম/এমটি

তারিখঃ ০৯ সেপ্টেম্বর ২০২৫খ্রিঃ


নিলাম বিজ্ঞপ্তি (যানবাহন)

এতদ্বারা যোগ্য ও অভিজ্ঞতাসম্পন্ন ব্যক্তি ও/প্রতিষ্ঠানের নিকট হইতে সিডিউলে উল্লিখিত শর্তানুযায়ী রেটে সীলমোহরকৃত নামে র‍্যাপিড অ্যাকশন ব্যাটালিয়ন-৯, সিলেট এর নিম্নে বর্ণিত অকেজো যেমিহ ১৬ (ষোল)টি গাড়ি র‍্যাব ফোর্সেস সদর দপ্তর স্মারক নং-৩৩০/৪১/অকেজো/যানবাহন/অপারেশন/৫৭ তারিখ ০৪ সেপ্টেম্বর ২০২৫ এর মূলে আগামী ৩০ সেপ্টেম্বর ২০২৫ তারিখ ১৪০০ ঘটিকায় প্রকাশ্য নিলামের মাধ্যমে বিক্রয় করা হবে। নিলামের শর্তসমূহ নিম্নরূপঃ

১।	মন্ত্রণালয়/বিভাগ	স্বরাষ্ট্র মন্ত্রণালয়, বাংলাদেশ পুলিশ।
২।	সংস্থা	র‍্যাপিড অ্যাকশন ব্যাটালিয়ন-৯, সিলেট।
৩।	নিলাম আহ্বানকারী	অধিনায়ক, র‍্যাপিড অ্যাকশন ব্যাটালিয়ন-৯, সিলেট।
৪।	দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি স্মারক নং ও তারিখ	স্মারক নং-৮৬৩৬/নিলাম/এমটি তারিখঃ ০৯ সেপ্টেম্বর ২০২৫খ্রিঃ।
৫।	নিলাম পদ্ধতি	উন্মুক্ত নিলাম।
৭।	দরপত্র (সিডিউল) মূল্য	তফসিলের (সিডিউল) মূল্য প্রতিটি গাড়ির জন্য ৫০০/- (পাঁচশত) টাকা মাত্র। (অফেরতযোগ্য)
৮।	দরপত্রের নিরাপত্তা জামানত	অধিনায়ক, র‍্যাপিড অ্যাকশন ব্যাটালিয়ন-৯, সিলেট বরাবর ১০,০০০/- (দশ হাজার) টাকা মাত্র ব্যাংক ড্রাফট/পে অর্ডার (অফেরতযোগ্য)।
৯।	দরপত্র (সিডিউল) বিক্রয়ের শেষ, তারিখ ও সময়	২৯ সেপ্টেম্বর ২০২৫ তারিখ ১৫০০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত।
১০।	দরপত্র দাখিলের শেষ তারিখ ও সময়	৩০ সেপ্টেম্বর ২০২৫ তারিখ ১২০০ ঘটিকা।
১১।	দরপত্র খোলার তারিখ ও সময়	৩০ সেপ্টেম্বর ২০২৫ তারিখ ১৪০০ ঘটিকা।
১২।	নিলামযোগ্য যানবাহন প্রদর্শন	নিলামযোগ্য যানবাহনসমূহ ২৫ সেপ্টেম্বর ২০২৫ তারিখ অফিস চলাকালীন সময় (০৯০০ হতে ১৬০০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত) র‍্যাব-৯, সিলেট এর এমটি গ্যারেজে প্রদর্শনের জন্য বন্ধিত থাকবে।
১৩।	নিলাম মূল্য	বিজারটিং কর্তৃক নির্ধারিত মূল্যের অধিক মূল্য ব্যতীত যানবাহন নিলামযোগ্য হবে না।
১৪।	নিলামের বিবরণ	ক। ০১টি মিস্‌সুবিশি পাজেরো জীপ ২০০৫। খ। ০১টি কার, নিশানসানি ২০০৫। গ। ০৩টি ভাবল কেবিন পিকআপ মিস্‌সুবিশি ২০০৫, ২০০৬। ঘ। ১১টি মোটরসাইকেল হোন্ডাসিলি ১২৫ সিগি ২০০৬, ২০০৯, ২০১১, ২০১২।

অন্যান্য শর্তসমূহঃ

ক। দি পাবলিক প্রক্টিউরমেন্ট অ্যাক্ট-২০০৬ এবং রুলস-২০০৮ সর্বশেষ সংশোধন মোতাবেক নিলাম কার্য পরিচালিত হবে।
খ। জাতীয় পরিচয়পত্র/বাংলাদেশের নাগরিকত্ব সম্পদপত্র।
গ। ডিআইএন নম্বর উল্লেখসহ হালসনের আয়কর পরিশোধ এবং ভ্যাট রেজিস্ট্রেশন প্রমাণপত্র।
ঘ। সর্বোচ্চ দরদাতার নিকট নিলামকৃত যানবাহন হস্তান্তর করা হবে। সরকারী বিধি মোতাবেক ড্রেজা ১৫% ভ্যাট এবং ১০% আয়কর পরিশোধকরতঃ নিলামযোগ্য যানবাহন সজ্জহ করতে পারবেন।
ঙ। নিলামের দিন হতে সর্বোচ্চ ০৭ (সাত) দিনের মধ্যে নিলামকৃত যানবাহন সজ্জহ করতে হবে। সর্বোচ্চ দরদাতা নির্দিষ্ট সময়ের মধ্যে নিলামকৃত যানবাহন সজ্জহ করতে ব্যর্থ হলে তার জামানত বাজেয়াপ্ত হবে এবং পরবর্তী দরদাতাকে নিলামে প্রাপ্তির যোগ্য বিবেচনা করা হবে।
চ। কর্তৃপক্ষ কোন কারণ দর্শানো ব্যতিরেকে নিলামের সকল কার্যক্রম বাতিল করার ক্ষমতা সংরক্ষণ করেন।


মোঃ আজমুদুর রহমান চৌধুরী
উইং কমান্ডার
অধিনায়ক

টেলিফোনঃ ০২-৯৯৬৬৪১৭৯১

GD-1976

Spectrum price

FROM PAGE B1
global median, and could rise to 21 percent by 2035 if current pricing continues.

Such high costs, combined with a fiscal burden equal to 55 percent of operators' revenue when taxes and levies are added, threaten to constrain investment, it also states.

In extreme cases, operators may even return spectrum or forgo new bands, undermining network quality, it adds.

The report proposes four key reforms: resetting spectrum pricing to reflect current market fundamentals, prioritising timely 700 MHz and 3.5 GHz awards to boost rural and urban coverage, streamlining taxes and fees to encourage smartphone adoption, and guaranteeing long-term licences with more flexible payment structures.

Economic modelling shows the stakes. If spectrum prices align with the Asia-Pacific median, average download speeds could rise by 17 percent and 5G coverage reach 99 percent of citizens by 2035, unlocking \$34 billion in GDP.

Aligning with the global median, which would see a 75 percent price cut, could push 4G speeds up 22 percent and generate \$45 billion in economic value, alongside job creation and social benefits, according to the study.

Crucially, the GSMA notes that lower spectrum prices need not harm public finances. Broader connectivity and economic growth could more than offset reduced direct spectrum revenues.

Julian Gorman, Head of Asia Pacific, GSMA, said, "Mobile connectivity is the oxygen of Bangladesh's digital ambition. Yet operators here face one of the highest burdens globally on spectrum and sector-specific taxes.

"Affordable, predictable pricing and modernised licence terms are essential to expand affordable coverage and power the trillion-dollar economic vision."

The study positions spectrum reform as a decisive step toward realising Bangladesh's goal of becoming a trillion-dollar digital economy and an upper-middle-income country by 2031.

Islamic banks'

FROM PAGE B1
percent growth during the same period, taking their deposits to Tk 3,800 crore.


The Shari'al-compliant NBFIs accounted for 7.23 percent of total NBF1 deposits in June 2025, a relatively small portion compared to their conventional counterparts.

Among them, full-fledged Islamic NBFIs captured only 33 percent of

the share, while the rest was held by Islamic branches or windows of conventional NBFIs.

Mudaraba deposits dominated the Islamic NBF1 segment, making up about 99.22 percent of all deposits.

The private sector contributed the largest share to these deposits in June 2025, the report added.



বাংলাদেশ বিদ্যুৎ উন্নয়ন বোর্ড
Bangladesh Power Development Board

ব্যবস্থাপক (তত্ত্বাঃ প্রকৌঃ) এর দপ্তর
শাহজিবাজার ৬০ মেঃ৪ঃ বিদ্যুৎ কেন্দ্র
বিউবো, শাহজিবাজার, হবিগঞ্জ
Email: managershbt@yahoo.com

সূত্র নং-২৭.১১.৩৬৭১.৪০৪.০৭.০৬১.২৫.০৯০


তারিখঃ ০৮/০৯/২০২৫খ্রিঃ

দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি

এতদ্বারা সংশ্লিষ্ট সকলের অবগতির জন্য জানানো যাচ্ছে যে, নিম্নবর্ণিত পণ্য ক্রয়ের জন্য e-GP Web Portal এর মাধ্যমে দর আহ্বান করা হয়েছে। e-GP Web Portal এ নিবন্ধিত যেকোনো আগ্রহী ব্যক্তি/প্রতিকাদারি প্রতিষ্ঠানকে বিস্তারিত জানার জন্য উক্ত পোর্টাল www.eprocure.gov.bd ভিজিট করার জন্য অনুরোধ করা হল।

Tender ID & Invitation Reference No.	Tender Package No.	Description	Nature, type, method	Scheduled tender publication date & time	Tender document last selling date & time	Tender opening date and time
1148591 & 27.11.3671.4, 04.07.060. 25.089, Date: 08/09/2025	SBPS/L OCAL/ GR- 5/25-26	Procurement of Different types of Cables (4x15m, 4x25rm, 4x50rm etc.) for Shahjibazar Power Station (60MW), BPDB, Habiganj.	Goods NCT, OTM	09-Sept-2025 10:00am	29-Sep-2025 02:00pm	29-Sep-2025 04:00pm

বিদ্যুৎ/জন-২০(২২)/২০/০৯/২৫


মোঃ আবদুল হান্নান
আইডি নংঃ ১-০১৩৮৩
ব্যবস্থাপক (তত্ত্বাঃ প্রকৌঃ)
শাহজিবাজার ৬০ মেঃ৪ঃ বিদ্যুৎ কেন্দ্র
বিউবো, হবিগঞ্জ

GD-1980

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Office of the Agency Program Director
Program on Agricultural and Rural Transformation for Nutrition, Entrepreneurship and Resilience in Bangladesh (PARTNER) APCU-BARC
Bangladesh Agricultural Research Council (BARC)
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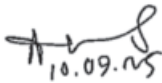
Date: 10/09/2025

e-Tender Notice

Program on Agricultural and Rural Transformation for Nutrition, Entrepreneurship and Resilience in Bangladesh (PARTNER), APCU-BARC invited e-Tender in the National e-GP Portal (www.eprocure.gov.bd) for the following package.

Tender ID	Package No. and description of goods	Tender publication date & time	Tender document last selling date and time	Tender closing and opening date and time
1149625	Supplies and stationaries (APCU-BARC, GAP Protocol development, farming system, agroforestry technology expansion etc.) under Package No. GD/PARTNER/BARC-23.	11-09-2025 at 11:00am	24-09-2025 at 04:00pm	25-09-2025 at 1:30pm

This is an online tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copy will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required. Further information and guidelines are available in the national e-GP System Portal and from e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).


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GD-1985

TOURISTS CANCEL NEPAL TRIPS

amid unrest, leaving operators distressed

JAGARAN CHAKMA and
SUKANTA HALDER

Bangladeshi tourists are cancelling planned trips to Nepal en masse out of safety concerns amid violent unrest in the neighbouring country, which has seen at least 25 deaths, its premier resign and flee, the military take over, and curfews imposed.

Renowned for its cultural sites and scenic landscapes, Nepal has become one of the prominent tourism destinations in recent years, with the number of tourists increasing by 34 percent last year. Its visa-on-arrival facility for Bangladeshis has further boosted demand, particularly as many other destinations, including India and Western countries, have tightened entry restrictions.

Now, industry insiders fear that the current chaos in the Himalayan country could result in a setback for growth.

The interim government has advised Bangladeshis to avoid trips to the country until the situation subsides.

Besides, the Tour Operators Association of Bangladesh (TOAB) has already instructed all of its member operators to advise their clients currently in Nepal to stay inside hotels as a precaution, the association's President Md Rafeuzjaman told The Daily Star.

"There's no concrete data on how many Bangladeshi tourists are presently in Nepal, since most tour operators do

not maintain or share client-specific records," he said.

However, others say that even without any intervention from TOAB, tourists are taking action on their own.

"No tourists will be travelling from Bangladesh to Nepal in the next two weeks," said Taufiq Uddin Ahmed, a former TOAB president.

"The uncertainty has led to voluntary cancellations. Most are postponing or dropping their plans due to safety concerns," he added.

The unrest in Nepal comes at a time

and adventure sports, Chitwan National Park for wildlife, and Nagarkot, which offers stunning Himalayan views, as well as the Everest Base Camp trek for serious trekkers.

"We are monitoring the situation closely. While inquiries and bookings are still trickling in, we have put all departures on hold until the situation improves," Rahman said.

No untoward incidents involving the tourists have been reported so far.

"But if the unrest prolongs, it will be detrimental for both the Bangladeshi

Others echo similar concerns.

Mainul Islam Razu, owner of Digonto Travel Freak, said on average, 35 to 40 people travel to Nepal through his agency each year.

"Our standard Nepal tour packages start at Tk 1 lakh, including airfare and accommodation. With only a 7 to 8 percent profit margin, even a slight decline in travellers leads to significant losses," he explained.

Apart from affordability and easy entry, Razu pointed out that people visit Nepal seeking peace and nature. "If that sense of safety disappears, they will look for alternative destinations."

But alternatives can be costly. For instance, the airfare for Malaysia or Sri Lanka alone can be up to Tk 70,000 during peak seasons like Durga Puja, which might reduce trips to those places as well.

The strain on tour operators comes at a time when they are also struggling domestically.

"Saint Martin's has just reopened, but Tanguar Haor has been a complete flop since last month, especially in September. Overall, it's been a very tough year for the travel industry," said Razu.

Meanwhile, airlines have also taken precautionary measures. Biman Bangladesh Airlines, with 114 passengers, diverted its Kathmandu-bound flight back to Dhaka amid the volatile situation.

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Tour Operators Association of Bangladesh (TOAB) has already instructed all of its member operators to advise their clients currently in Nepal to stay inside hotels as a precaution

when trips to the country usually begin to surge as the clear autumn sky, mild temperatures, and low rainfall provide a pleasant experience. This is also the best season for trekking since the mountain views are sharp and unobstructed. Major festivals like Dashain and Tihar also take place.

Mohammad Ashiqur Rahman, senior tour counsellor executive at leading tour company Obokash, confirmed that several Bangladeshi tourists are still in popular destinations like Pokhara, which offers scenic lakes

and Nepali tourism industries," Imranul Alam, managing director of Tour Group Bangladesh, said.

He added that, on average, around 200 people travel to Nepal each year through his agency, and the current situation is already impacting his business.

"I am currently in discussions with a corporate client to arrange a trip to Nepal in the upcoming October. However, due to the ongoing situation, the client has already expressed considerable hesitation," he said.

Renowned for its cultural sites and scenic landscapes, Nepal has become one of the prominent tourism destinations in recent years for Bangladeshis.

PHOTO: MAINUL ISLAM RAZU



Trump urges EU to impose 100% tariffs on China, India to pressure Putin

REUTERS, Washington

US President Donald Trump urged EU officials on Tuesday to hit China with tariffs of up to 100 percent as part of a strategy to pressure Russian President Vladimir Putin, according to a US official and an EU diplomat.

Trump also encouraged the European Union to slap India with similarly expansive tariffs, said the official, who requested anonymity to discuss private conversations.

China and India are major purchasers of Russian oil and, as such, they play a vital role in keeping Russia's economy afloat as it continues to pursue its expanded invasion of Ukraine, which began in 2022.

Trump made the request, which was conveyed via conference call, to EU sanctions envoy David O'Sullivan and other EU officials. The EU delegation is currently in Washington to discuss sanctions coordination.

The EU diplomat said the US had indicated it was willing to impose similar tariffs if the European Union heeded the US request. "They are basically saying: We'll do this, but you need to do it with us," the diplomat said.

The US request, if heeded, would result in a change of strategy for the EU,

which has preferred to isolate Russia with sanctions rather than tariffs.

China firmly opposes the US applying such so-called economic pressure, its foreign ministry said at a regular press briefing on Wednesday, adding that it also opposed the use of China in discussions on Russia.

Trump, whose request was first reported by the Financial Times, has frequently threatened to impose tariffs on India and China as punishment for their purchases of Russian crude.

While Trump did hike tariffs on India over the summer by 25 percentage points in part due to its economic relationship with the Kremlin, Trump has yet to pull the trigger on the more punishing options he has floated.

At times, he has complained that Europe itself has not fully decoupled from Russia, which supplied about 19 percent of EU gas imports last year, although the bloc says it is committed to fully ending its dependency on Russian energy.

Later on Tuesday, Trump suggested that the US could, in fact boost trade with India, writing in an evening social media post that the US and India are working to address trade barriers between the nations. He added that he was looking forward to speaking with Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Apple holds down new iPhone prices amid tariff threats

REUTERS, Cupertino

Apple on Tuesday introduced an upgraded line of new iPhones, including a slimmer iPhone Air, and held prices steady amid US President Donald Trump's tariffs that have hurt the company's profit.

The iPhone Air comes with a high-density

battery and a brand new processor, and will be priced starting at \$999. Wall Street had been watching to see whether the company would increase the price of iPhones, or seek alternative routes to make up for tariff costs, such as increasing the cost of iPhone versions with more storage.

The model was the star of the company's

annual product launch event, with CEO Tim Cook saying "we're taking the biggest leap ever for iPhone." Apple called it the most durable iPhone yet. It will use the A19 Pro, a processor chip that it said it had tweaked for better energy efficiency and performance to match the device's thinner battery. Rivals including Samsung already sell phones marketed for their extremely thin profile.

The iPhone Air's price is slotted in between the company's other models, as analysts had predicted. Apple also launched the iPhone 17 and iPhone 17 Pro, the latest upgrade to its flagship smartphone, as well as a new version of its AirPods Pro wireless headphones and a blood pressure monitor in its latest Apple Watch.

A 256 gigabyte version of the iPhone 17 base model will start at \$799, the same as the previous iPhone 16 model with half the storage space. The iPhone 17 Pro will start at \$1,099 for a 256-gigabyte model, the same as the previous year's model with the same storage size, but without the option of a smaller-capacity phone at a lower \$999 like the iPhone 16 Pro.

Apple did not raise the price on watch models or the new AirPods Pro 3 either.

The prices were an indication that Apple was ready to swallow the cost of tariffs to ward off competition from Samsung, Alphabet's Google and domestic rivals in China, even as it has predicted that the levies would cost it more than \$1 billion in the current fiscal quarter.



Apple CEO Tim Cook (centre) poses with new products during Apple's "Awe-Dropping" event at the Steve Jobs Theater on the Apple Park campus in Cupertino, California on September 9.

Bridging the startup gap

MAMUNUR RAHMAN

In recent years, many Bangladeshi teenagers have won gold medals on international platforms for their innovative business ideas. But the question remains: can we create an environment where they can truly grow and thrive? This is a crucial challenge for our nation. While our young people are globally competitive, the current system often fails to support them beyond the initial award ceremony. We must bridge the gap between potential and reality.

My experiences as a country representative for two US-based start-up programmes, LaunchX and Students for the Advancement of Global Entrepreneurship (SAGE), have given me a unique vantage point. I have worked closely with young people across the country who develop globally competitive ideas, from sustainable energy solutions to AI-driven health technology. They are our nation's raw, untapped potential. Yet, as I reflected on a recent global innovation and commercialisation summit in Ontario, Canada, I was left with a disquieting question: where do all these brilliant ideas go?

This is a crossroads for Bangladesh. We have a vibrant, digitally native youth population, but our system is a leaky pipeline. We are good at producing raw talent but fail to capture and nurture it. At the summit, I was struck by the overwhelming presence of Israeli representatives. Many of their impressive projects came directly from universities. This is no accident. Israel, as I observed, consistently spends the largest percentage of its GDP on research and development worldwide.

This reality stands in stark contrast to our own. Our talented teenagers often hit a wall as they move from school to higher education. The dream of building a start-up is quickly replaced by intense societal pressure to secure a "safe" job, leading to what is commonly called "BCS mania", the single-minded pursuit of a government position. This risk-averse culture discourages the kind of experimentation that fuels a start-up ecosystem.

Our current support system for start-ups is well-intentioned but fragmented.

The government's vision to foster a start-up culture is commendable, and the allocation of a Tk 100 crore start-up fund is an encouraging step. However, the real challenge lies in connecting this fund effectively to universities and innovative private-sector service providers. There is a severe lack of early-stage funding for young founders, a

shortage of accessible mentors, and a policy landscape that is more labyrinth than launchpad.

To foster entrepreneurship, our universities must become more than just degree-granting institutions. Students, whether they are studying engineering, fine arts or social sciences, should be encouraged to present and develop business ideas. This would democratise entrepreneurship, allowing innovators from diverse backgrounds to emerge and thrive. Universities should also offer a minor in entrepreneurship, giving students foundational business skills and a structured pathway to turn their passions into viable ventures. During my Humphrey fellowship in the US, I saw the enthusiasm among students from non-business disciplines pursuing such minors at MIT and Michigan State University in particular.

The enormous opportunity of an AI-driven surge in entrepreneurship to harness our demographic dividend is something we must seize, even embracing the idea of founderless start-ups hinted at by publications such as The Economist.

Some might argue that we will catch up in time, pointing to the success of a few unicorns such as bKash and Pathao. But these are the exceptions, not the rule. The vast majority of our young innovators struggle to get off the ground, not because their ideas lack merit but because the foundational support system is missing. We need a shift in mindset, moving from celebrating individual success stories to building a sustainable ecosystem. The talent is here. What our youth lack is a system that believes in them and supports their journey from a brilliant idea to a solution that can tackle our nation's most pressing problems. The time to build that future is now.

The writer is coordinator of Ella Alliance and founder of Ella Pad

