

# STAR BUSINESS

## After ICDs, Ctg port hikes service charges by 41%

Businesses cry over higher trade costs, eroding competitiveness

MOHAMMAD SUMAN, *Chattogram*

In the first major tariff review in almost four decades, the Chittagong Port Authority (CPA) has raised service charges at Chattogram port by 41 percent.

The increase took effect yesterday following a gazette notification issued on Sunday night.

Business leaders fear the hike will push up the cost of foreign trade and erode competitiveness just as Bangladesh prepares to graduate from least developed country status in November next year, when it will lose preferential market access.

The move follows increases at private inland container depots (ICDs), which from this month have begun charging up to 60 percent more for handling export cargoes and empty containers.

CPA collects fixed tariffs for services provided from the moment a ship enters Bangladeshi waters.

Officials say no other port in the world offers shipping services as cheaply as Chattogram and that



the previous tariff structure no longer matched current costs or demand.

After discussions with stakeholders, they say, the authority introduced a more realistic schedule.

Business leaders, however, have criticised the rise for being imposed all at once rather than gradually.

They argue that a phased

imposition would have eased the pressure, and question the hike without improvements in handling times, clearance procedures or congestion at the port.

At Chattogram port, a series of activities takes place from piloting a ship from the outer anchorage to the jetty, to tugboat services, water

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## BB buys \$353m more, total hits \$1.74b

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Bangladesh Bank (BB) has gone for another round of US dollar purchases from commercial banks, and this time the amount is \$353 million.

The banking regulator bought the greenback from 26 commercial banks through an auction yesterday, reacting to the sharp drop in the US dollar rate.

As a result, the total US dollars purchased through auctions hit \$1.74 billion in the current fiscal year, according to BB data.

In yesterday's auction, the cut-off rate was Tk 121.75 per dollar.

On the same day, the interbank exchange rate ranged from Tk 121.70 to Tk 121.75 per US dollar.

Stronger remittances and exports, together with the central bank's buying spree, have helped lift the country's foreign exchange reserves, which stood at \$25.67 billion as of September 11 this year, according to the International Monetary Fund's calculation.

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## Unified instant payment system in the offing: BB governor

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

The Bangladesh Bank (BB) will soon launch a unified instant payment system to curb the growing demand for cash, Governor Ahsan H Mansur said yesterday.

"The demand for cash has been rising at an annual rate of 10 percent, a trend that has persisted in recent years. To reverse this pattern and bring greater transparency to economic activities, the central bank is preparing to introduce a unified instant payment system," he said.

The BB governor made the remarks at a discussion titled "Stakeholder Discussion on Interoperable Payment in Bangladesh," organised by the Policy Research Institute with support from the Gates Foundation

in Dhaka.

All financial institutions, including banks, mobile financial service (MFS) providers, microfinance institutions, and digital banks, will be linked to this single platform, he added.

The increasing demand for cash has also pushed up costs for banks. The banking sector now spends around Tk 20,000 crore annually on cash handling, according to the governor.

Mansur said the government is losing an estimated Tk 1.53 lakh crore in revenue due to the rising reliance on cash.

He noted that the process of introducing digital banks in Bangladesh is underway. At the same time, support from the Gates Foundation is being utilised to launch an interoperable instant

payment system.

He also said authorities intend to implement an effective system by drawing on proven international experience, unlike the Bimimoy project, which was suspended amid reports of irregularities, low response rates, and implementation problems.

The central bank governor stated that Bangladesh has made significant progress in financial inclusion.

"Around 64 percent of the country's population is now under the financial sector, although 35 to 40 percent still remain outside. It is not enough to only expand coverage; rather, the rural population must be deeply integrated into the financial sector," he said.

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## Speed up labour law reforms for further tariff cuts

US urges Bangladesh also to reduce trade deficit

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

The Dhaka-visiting US trade delegation has called on the government to accelerate labour law reforms and narrow the trade deficit to help further reduce retaliatory tariffs on Bangladeshi exports to the American market.

The delegation made the call during a meeting with leaders of the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA) at the US ambassador's residence in Dhaka yesterday.

Brendan Lynch, assistant US trade representative for South and Central Asia, led the three-member team.

BGMEA leaders urged the US side to consider deeper tariff cuts to sustain the steady flow of garment exports to the American market, which is the largest source of private-sector employment in Bangladesh.



Bangladesh is the third largest garment exporter to the US, after China and Vietnam, with a 9.3 percent share of the \$81 billion American apparel import.

PHOTO: STAR/FILE

BGMEA President Mahmud Hasan Khan said cotton imports from the US have already begun and that the process of importing more wheat, liquefied natural gas (LNG) and other goods is underway.

He said these imports would help narrow the trade deficit.

"We have learned that if at least 20 percent of the total value of a product exported to the United States is used in the production of that product, then the countervailing duty will not be applicable on that 20 percent," said the BGMEA president.

"Therefore, we have requested the US delegation to clarify that. They said they are working on the issue. They will inform you soon."

On labour law reforms, Khan said that consensus had been reached on 122 out of 124 proposed amendments through

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## Yunus, IMF chief to discuss further support for Bangladesh today

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus is set to hold discussions today with Kristalina Georgieva, managing director of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), on how the multilateral lender can provide additional support to Bangladesh and the potential structure of such assistance.

The discussion follows an exchange of letters between the two in May. On May 1, the CA wrote to Georgieva, thanking the IMF for its \$4.7 billion loan programme and highlighting the successful implementation of reform measures under the programme.



In response, Georgieva expressed her interest in discussing further support in a letter dated May 19, reaffirming the IMF's commitment to continue supporting Bangladesh, according to the Ministry of Finance officials.

Under the \$4.7 billion programme, Bangladesh received \$3.3 billion through the Extended Credit Facility (ECF) and Extended Fund Facility (EFF), and \$1.4 billion under the Resilience and Sustainability Facility (RSF).

The programme has since been extended to \$5.3 billion, with the final two tranches scheduled for disbursement within the next year. Bangladesh has already received \$3.3 billion in five tranches.

Finance ministry officials, on condition of anonymity, said the CA might seek additional funds from the IMF to mitigate climate-related risks.

Finance Adviser Salehuddin Ahmed recently estimated that the country requires around \$30 billion to effectively tackle climate-induced disasters.

According to an IMF programme document released last June, Bangladesh is among the countries most

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## Taskforce proposes new name, leadership model for BBS

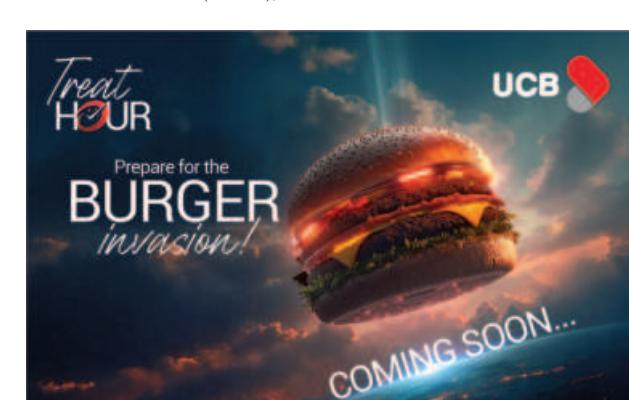
STAR BUSINESS REPORT

An independent taskforce on strengthening the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS) has recommended a new name, leadership, and oversight model for the state agency to safeguard the independence of its statistical activities.

The taskforce's report, submitted to Planning Adviser Wahiduddin Mahmud yesterday, proposed renaming the BBS as Statistics Bangladesh (StatBD) and redesignating the head of the agency from director general to Chief Statistician, a special scale post.

Currently, only government officials are eligible to head the BBS. Under the taskforce's proposal, people from outside the government can also apply for it.

The taskforce, chaired by Hossain Zillur Rahman, executive chairman of the Power and Participation Research Centre (PPRC), also recommended the formation



of a seven-member Trust and Transparency Council of Statistics (TTCS).

According to the proposal, the council will work to ensure the integrity and oversight of BBS operations, which includes overseeing annual performance audits, expenditure reviews, and the selection of the Chief Statistician.

"We have proposed a bold, timely, and realistic reform package," Rahman told reporters after a meeting at the planning ministry chaired by the planning adviser.

"The taskforce was formed to make Bangladesh's statistics more visible in terms of quality and transparency. Our report outlines how essential institutional processes can be clearly structured," he added.

However, the taskforce did not recommend the formation of an independent Statistical Commission, a long-standing demand from stakeholders, including government officials and experts.

Responding to a question on this, Rahman said, "It is challenging to answer such a one-dimensional question. That was not part of our initial mandate."

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# GPH Ispat, Buet's RISE forge deal on intellectual property management

## STAR BUSINESS DESK

GPH Ispat Limited has signed a strategic partnership agreement with the Research and Innovation Centre for Science and Engineering (RISE) at the Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (Buet), with the objective of strengthening intellectual property (IP) management and fostering innovation across academia and industry.

Mohammed Jahangir Alam, chairman of GPH Group and managing director of GPH Ispat Limited, and Prof Mohammad Shariful Islam, director of RISE, signed the agreement on the university campus in Dhaka yesterday, according to a press release.

Addressing the event as chief guest, Prof ABM Badruzzaman, vice-chancellor of Buet, remarked: "GPH Ispat's initiative is truly commendable, as it accords the highest importance to intellectual property. Through this endeavour, we shall be able to safeguard the ownership of our innovations and research outcomes."

He further observed: "In the past, many intellectual assets were lost due to a lack of prioritisation. I am hopeful this initiative will open new avenues of opportunity."

Prof Islam stated: "The vision of RISE is to align research and innovation with the needs of industry and society, thereby transforming Bangladesh into a knowledge-driven economy. I firmly believe this agreement marks a significant step towards realising that vision."

Alam commented: "This initiative represents a concerted effort to preserve and harness research outcomes through patents. In doing so, we shall be able to mitigate brain drain and connect the knowledge and expertise of talented students and researchers for the nation's advancement."

Under the memorandum of agreement on Intellectual Property Management at Buet, GPH Ispat will support RISE in organising workshops and seminars to raise awareness of the importance, benefits, and procedures of patent registration.



Prof Mohammad Shariful Islam, director of the Research and Innovation Centre for Science and Engineering at the Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology, and Mohammed Jahangir Alam, chairman of GPH Group and managing director of GPH Ispat Limited, pose for a photograph during the agreement-signing ceremony on the university campus in Dhaka yesterday.

PHOTO: GPH ISPAT

# Toyota opens new distributor in Bangladesh

## STAR BUSINESS DESK

Toyota, a Japanese multinational automotive manufacturer, has entered a new era in Bangladesh with the launch of Toyota Bangladesh Limited, ushering in a landmark chapter for the brand and its customers.

The new entity will serve as the sole official distributor of Toyota vehicles, genuine parts, and aftersales services across the country, underscoring the automaker's long term commitment to Bangladesh, according to a press release.



With the conclusion of its partnership with Navana Limited, Toyota customers can now access services through authorised "T Center" workshops – Continental Works in Dhaka and Carboy Private Limited in Chattogram – for expert maintenance, repairs and warranty support.

Toyota Bangladesh Limited is also building a nationwide network, including a new flagship showroom, to deliver genuine Toyota care and world-class service in line with global standards.

# BTTHA-2025 launched to honour excellence in tourism, hospitality

## STAR BUSINESS DESK

## STAR BUSINESS DESK

Bangladesh Krishi Bank yesterday organised a business conference on the performance of its Sylhet division for the fiscal year 2024-2025.

All executives and branch managers of the division took part in the daylong event.

Sanchia Binte Ali, managing director of Bangladesh Krishi Bank, inaugurated the conference as chief guest at a local hotel in Sylhet, according to a press release.

In her remarks, Binte Ali said the bank has been making steady progress in supporting agriculture and small entrepreneurs, mobilising deposits, and disbursing loans.

She urged officials to achieve 100 percent of their business targets through collective efforts to build momentum in the current fiscal year 2025-2026.

During the conference, presentations were made on business performance and achievements against targets up to June 30 this year.

Md Khurshed Alam, general manager (in charge) of Sylhet division, presided over the conference.



Sanchia Binte Ali, managing director of Bangladesh Krishi Bank, attends the bank's business conference at a local hotel in Sylhet yesterday.

PHOTO: BANGLADESH KRISHI BANK

# Mutual Trust Bank launches digital bancassurance onboarding

## STAR BUSINESS DESK

Mutual Trust Bank PLC, in partnership with Green Delta Insurance PLC, has launched digital onboarding for non-life insurance through its branch network under the bancassurance framework.

The initiative underscores the bank's commitment to harnessing technology to streamline processes

and enhance client convenience, enabling customers to access insurance services seamlessly within a digitised branch environment.

Md Shafquat Hossain, deputy managing director and head of retail banking at Mutual Trust Bank PLC, and Syed Moinuddin Ahmed, additional managing director of Green Delta Insurance PLC, inaugurated the digital onboarding

platform at a ceremony in Dhaka recently, according to a press release.

Abdul Mannan, deputy managing director and head of branch banking division at the bank, and Wafiq Shafique Menhaz Khan, managing director and CEO of Green Delta Securities Limited, along with teams from bancassurance, digital, information technology, and brand divisions of both institutions, were also present.



Syed Moinuddin Ahmed, additional managing director of Green Delta Insurance PLC, and Md Shafquat Hossain, deputy managing director and head of retail banking at Mutual Trust Bank PLC, inaugurate the digital onboarding platform at a ceremony in Dhaka recently.

PHOTO: MUTUAL TRUST BANK

# Pragati Life Insurance announces 15% cash dividend

## STAR BUSINESS DESK

Pragati Life Insurance PLC has announced a 15 percent cash dividend for the fiscal year 2024.

The declaration was made at the life insurer's 25th annual general meeting (AGM), held virtually on Sunday, according to a press release.

Khalilur Rahman, chairman of Pragati Life Insurance PLC, presided

over the meeting as chief guest.

A large number of shareholders from across the country joined the proceedings virtually.

Jagdish Kumar Bhanja, company secretary, conducted the meeting.

Directors Abdul Awal Mintoo, former chairman of the insurer; Syed M Altaf Hussain; Md Shafiqur Rahman; Tafsiur M Awal; Mohammed Abdul Hamid; Tajwar M Awal; Suhel

Ahmed Choudhury; Sayed Quamrul Hossain; and Anwar Faruque attended the event.

Md Jalalul Azim, chief executive officer; Chandra Shekhar Das, chief financial officer; Mohammad Sohrab Uddin, external auditor from Anil Salam Idris & Co, Chartered Accountants; the company's actuary; and other senior officials, were also present.



Khalilur Rahman, chairman of Pragati Life Insurance, presides over the life insurer's 25th annual general meeting on Sunday. At the meeting, the company announced 15 percent cash dividend for 2024.

## Government of The Peoples Republic Of Bangladesh

Department of Public Library  
1, Mintu Road, BSL Building, Ramna, Dhaka-1000

Date: 15/09/2025  
No. 43.26.0000.001.07.904.24- 1204

## Request for Expression of Interest

1. Ministry/Division/Department	Ministry of Cultural Affairs	
2. Agency	Department of Public Library	
3. Procuring Entity Name	Director General	
4. Procuring Entity District	Dhaka	
5. Expression of Interest	Annual Maintenance of Hardware and Software	
6. Expression of Interest Ref No.	1204	
7. EOI Approved Date	15/09/2025	
8. Procurement Method	Quality and Cost Based Selection (QCBS)	
9. Budget and Source of Funds	GOB	
10. Development Partners	Not Applicable	
11. EOI Package No.	Lot-01: Annual Maintenance of Micro data Centre (MDC), SAN Storage, Servers, Central and remote networking devices with Firewalls, ICT equipment's and other equipment's etc. with Security. Lot-02: Annual Maintenance of RFID Instruments, LMS & ILS software and etc.	
12. EOI Last Selling Date	15/10/2025; Time- 12.00 am	
13. EOI Closing Date and Time	Date	Time
	16/10/2025	2:00 pm
14. EOI Opening Date and Time	16/10/2025	3:30 pm
15. Name & Address of the office (s)	Selling EOI Document	Department of Public Library, 1, Mintu Road, BSL Building, Ramna, Dhaka-1000.
	Receiving EOI Document	Department of Public Library, 1, Mintu Road, BSL Building, Ramna, Dhaka-1000.
	Opening EOI Document	Conference Room, Department of Public Library, 1, Mintu Road, BSL Building, Ramna, Dhaka-1000
16. Brief Description of the Assignment	Lot-1: Annual Maintenance of Surveillance Systems (POE Camera and NVR), NMS, Server & Network Infrastructure (Application/Database Servers, SAN Storage & Switches, Backup Solution (Central), Micro Data Centers, Internet Routers, WAN Routers, NG Firewalls, Database, Security Fabric Agents, NMS, Cloud Security, Virtual Machines etc.) Lot-2: Annual Maintenance of ILS (deployed at Central location), LMS (deployed at 68 locations), E-book management system (Central location), Public web application for patrons, Public mobile app for patrons (Android & iOS), RFID devices integration for library, automation (deployed at 7 locations and Head office with Hardwar & Software), Others Library Integrated Software's that is used in DPL, Koha Software etc.	
17. Experience, Resources & Delivery Capacity Required and Other Details	Lot-1: Bidders have at least 05(Five) years' experience of related Services; 2.Bidders have experience of completed at least three contracts in Government/Autonomous/organizations involving related service within those a single contract of Tk 2 (Two) crore within last four years; 3. Must have service support facilities in 64 districts of Bangladesh, and 4. The terms and conditions mentioned in TDS & PCC. Lot-2: 1. Bidders have at least 05(Five) years' experience of related Services; 2.Bidders have experience of completed at least three contracts in Government/Autonomous/organizations involving related service within those a single contract of Tk. 1 (One) crore within last four years; 3. Must have service support facilities in 64 districts of Bangladesh, and 4. The terms and conditions mentioned in TDS & PCC.	
18. Price of EOI Document (Tk.)	Lot-1: 2000.00 (Two Thousand Tk. Only), Lot-2: 1000.00 (One Thousand Tk. Only)	
19. EOI Security Money	Lot-1: 2,00,000.00 (Two Lac), Lot-2: 50,000.00 (Fifty Thousand Tk. Only)	
20. Designation of Official Inviting EOI	Director (Admin and Finance), Department of Public Library	
21. Address of Official Inviting EOI	Department of Public Library, 1, Mintu Road, BSL Building, Ramna, Dhaka-1000, Dhaka-1000.	
22. The procuring entity reserves the right to accept any or reject all EOIs		

15.09.2025  
Director General  
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GD-2013

# ADP spending in Jul-Aug lowest in 16 years

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Implementation of the Annual Development Programme (ADP) in the first two months of the current fiscal year has reached its lowest point in at least 16 years, with about Tk 5,715 crore being spent during the period.

This means just 2.36 percent of the total outlay for FY26 has been used during the July-August period, according to data from the Implementation Monitoring and Evaluation Division (IMED),

published yesterday.

During this period, the utilisation of both state funds and foreign loans declined.

Of these, spending from foreign funds fell to about Tk 2,501 crore, while government funds amounted to Tk 2,747 crore, down from Tk 3,241 crore a year earlier.

The slowdown comes despite the government rolling out a reduced, austerity-focused ADP for the current fiscal year.

Planning Adviser Wahiduddin Mahmud, speaking after a meeting

of the Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (Ecenec) in August, expressed concern over the implementation rate.

"I reviewed the July figures. Implementation stood at less than 1 percent, lower than last year. This is a worrying sign," he said.

Nearly 27 ministries and divisions could not cross 1 percent in the first two months of the current fiscal year.

Of these, around five entities did not open their expenditure

books.

Among the top 15 recipients of allocations, the Ministry of Science and Technology secured the top position, utilising 10.75 percent of its allocation, followed by the Energy and Mineral Resources Division with 5.94 percent.

On the other hand, health-related sectors lagged significantly, with the Medical Education and Family Welfare Division reporting an implementation rate of merely 0.005 percent, and the Health Services Division 0.50 percent.

## After ICDs, Ctg port hikes

FROM PAGE BI  
supply, crane charges, berthing, loading and unloading containers and delivering goods.

CPA charges a fee for each of these services, which together make up the port's tariff.

This is the first large-scale revision of CPA charges since 1986. In 2007-08, the port authority increased fees for five major services, including tugboats, water supply, wharf rent, container storage and container stuffing and unstuffing.

### THE NEW RATES

According to the gazette, container transport fees have risen the most.

The average charge per twenty-foot equivalent unit has jumped from Tk 11,849 to Tk 16,243, an increase of Tk 4,395 per container.

Fees on imported containers have gone up by Tk 5,720, while export containers cost an extra Tk 3,045.

The largest single increase is for loading and unloading containers from ships, which has risen from \$43.40 (about Tk 5,282) to \$68, an increase of \$24.60 (nearly Tk 3,000).

As the tariffs are calculated in US dollars, charges could climb further if the dollar strengthens.

Spread across the weight of goods, the average fee per kilogramme for containerised cargo has increased from Tk 1.28 to Tk 1.75, an increase of nearly 37 percent.

Around 60 percent of imports at Chattogram port are handled at the outer anchorage. These cargoes will face smaller rises as they are not loaded or unloaded at the port jetties.

### BUSINESSSES WORRY OVER COSTS, COMPETITIVENESS

A n w a r - u l - A l a m Parvez, president of the Bangladesh Chamber of Industries (BCI), said the rise in charges has imposed an extra burden on businesses.

"The new port tariff structure will increase the cost of doing business and raise production expenses for domestic manufacturers," he said.

"At the same time, exporters will lose competitiveness against their peers in the global market," Parvez told The Daily Star.

He said the hike comes at a particularly difficult moment as the country prepares to graduate from LDC status and lose trade benefits.

"Entrepreneurs are now forced to bear unexpected expenses because of inefficiency in port operations, which already cause significant delays in releasing goods," he said, urging the authorities to review the decision.

Nasir Uddin Chowdhury, former vice president of the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA), said they had requested the government to defer the tariff hike for a year, but this was rejected.

He accused the government of being "intent on transferring most port jetties to foreign operators."

The tariff hike may have been designed to make port operations look more profitable for them [foreign operators], as they stand to gain the bulk of the additional revenue," he added.

CPA Secretary Omar

Faruk said that although traders had requested a suspension of the increased tariff, it was ultimately not possible to accommodate that request.

Reiterating the port's position, he argued that charges at Chattogram Port are still much lower compared to ports in neighbouring countries. "The government has likely taken this into consideration."

He added that while the new rates came into effect yesterday, it could take a few more days for full implementation.

On July 24, the finance ministry approved the tariff hike, prompting objections from port users and a meeting at the Ministry of Shipping on August 25.

At the meeting chaired by Shipping Adviser Brig Gen (Retd) M Sakkhawat Hussain, businesses again pressed for gradual increases to protect the country's competitiveness.

There, CPA Deputy Chief Finance and Accounts Officer Qazi Meraz Uddin Arif defended the adjustment, saying duties were still lower than those at other major global ports even after the hike.

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He added that the taskforce's focus was on raising the quality and transparency of Bangladesh's statistics to global standards, rather than forming a commission.

The report instead sets out specific measures to protect the independence of statistical work, from preparation and analysis to publication, through institutional and legal safeguards.

Planning Adviser Mahmud made a similar comment, stating, "There are many definitions of independence, and that needs to be understood. Simply forming a commission does not solve everything. We already have commissions such as the Anti-Corruption Commission and the Human Rights Commission."

He added, "The real issue is not the commission itself, but transparency and accountability in its work."

"Do those leading

## Yunus, IMF chief

FROM PAGE BI

exposed to natural disasters, with projected damage from tropical cyclones expected to reach between 1.5 and 6 percent of GDP by 2050.

Such events could disrupt economic activity, weaken the currency, strain reserves, and increase public debt, disproportionately affecting the poor and vulnerable.

The Bangladesh Climate Development Platform (BCDP), established to scale up climate finance, is currently in its inception phase as of early 2025.

The existing RSF arrangements play a crucial role in helping Bangladesh reduce long term risks associated with climate change, and they acted as a catalyst for additional climate finance, according to the IMF document.

The successful

implementation of RSF reform measures also plays an important role in this context, while reform measures remain critical to closing the climate financing gap, it said.

The current annual government spending stands below 1 percent of GDP compared to the need of 3.4 percent of GDP over the next 15 years, according to World Bank data.

Alongside financial support, the IMF will continue providing technical assistance for reforms in the National Board of Revenue (NBR) and banking sectors.

In line with the IMF's guidance, Bangladesh Bank has initiated the merger of five banks: First Security Islami Bank, Social Islami Bank, Union Bank, Global Islami Bank, and EXIM Bank.

## Taskforce proposes

FROM PAGE BI

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"Do those leading

## Unified instant

FROM PAGE BI

The BB has already made it mandatory for all licensed businesses to display QR codes at their shops, adding that people will be encouraged to use digital payments directly instead of withdrawing cash.

"Our goal is to reduce cash usage at both ends, and we want to promote digital QR payments in shops, restaurants, and marketplaces," said Mansur.

Delivering the keynote address at the discussion, Arief Hossain Khan, executive director of the payment systems department of BB, said three major players – banks, MFS providers, and microfinance institutions – play a key role in financial inclusion.

Khan said a robust, government-backed, unified platform with a

simplified user experience is vital for an interoperable payment system.

Jason Lamb, deputy director of the Gates Foundation, and Snigdha Ali, Bangladesh country lead of the interoperable payment system of the Gates Foundation, also spoke at the discussion.

In the second session of the programme, panellists discussed the opportunities, challenges, and priorities for inclusive instant payment systems (IIPS) in Bangladesh.

In the panel discussion, Mohammad Muslim Chowdhury, chairman of Sonali Bank; Maj Gen (retd) Sheikh Md Monirul Islam, chief external and corporate affairs officer of bKash; Shah Zia Ul Haque, additional director of the Bangladesh Bank; and others spoke.

## Speed up labour law

FROM PAGE BI

tripartite talks and that the remaining issues were expected to be resolved through further dialogue.

He added there were no objections to supporting International Labour Organization (ILO) conventions. Bangladesh exports goods worth more than \$8 billion to the US each year and imports about \$2 billion, leaving a

## Gold pauses for breath

REUTERS

for future policy decisions," said Ricardo Evangelista, senior analyst at ActivTrades.

Last week, data showed US consumer prices increased by the most in seven months in August amid higher costs for housing and food, though a surge in first-time applications for jobless benefits last week kept the Federal Reserve on track to cut rates on Wednesday.

Traders are pricing in a near-certain 25 basis point (bps) cut to the Fed's key interest rate at the conclusion of the two-day policy meeting on September 17, with a small chance of a 50 bps reduction, according to CME FedWatch tool, opens new tab.

Non-yielding bullion, often considered a safe-haven asset during broader uncertainty, tends to perform well in a low-interest-rate environment.



**Bangladesh Power Development Board**

Central Secretariat

WAPDA Building (1st Floor), Motijheel, Dhaka

[www.bpdb.gov.bd](http://www.bpdb.gov.bd)

Memo No. 27.11.0000.101.14.079.25-2337

Date: 14/09/2025

### Request for Bids (RFB)

#### For Electrification at Bhashanchar of Noakhali District (Without Prequalification) (Single Stage Two Envelope Bidding Process)

**Employer:** Bangladesh Power Development Board

**Project:** Electrification at Bhashanchar of Noakhali District

**Contract title:** Electrification at Bhashanchar of Noakhali District Project  
(Solar power plant with Battery Back-up and associated distribution system) on Turn-key Basis

**Country:** Bangladesh

**Loan No. / Credit No. / Grant No.:** IDA Grant No. E325-30

**RFB No:** 27.11.0000.101.14.079.25-2337

**Issued on:** 14/09/2025

1. The Bangladesh Power Development Board has received financing from the World Bank towards the cost of the Host and Rohingya Enhancement of Lives Project (HELP), and intends to apply part of the proceeds toward payments under the Contract for Electrification at Bhashanchar of Noakhali District, Bangladesh. For this contract the Borrower shall process the payments using the Direct Payment Disbursement method, as defined in the World Bank's Disbursement Guidelines for Investment Project Financing.

2. The Bangladesh Power Development Board now invites sealed Bids from eligible Bidders for Electrification at Bhashanchar of Noakhali District, Bangladesh ("the Facilities").

3. Bidding will be conducted through international competitive procurement using a Request for Bids (RFB) as specified in the World Bank's Procurement Regulations for IPF Borrowers", fifth edition, September, 2023 ("Procurement Regulations") and is open to all eligible Bidders defined in the Procurement Regulations.

4. Interested eligible Bidders may obtain further information from the office of the Project Director, Electrification at Bhashanchar of Noakhali District, Level-4, Bidut Bhaban, Dhaka, Bangladesh and inspect the Bidding document during office hours [i.e. 09:00am to 17:00pm] at the address given below. Bidding Document is also available at IPDB website i.e. <http://www.bpdb.gov.bd>. However, the web version of the bidding document is for information purpose only.

5. The Bidding document in English may be purchased by interested eligible Bidders upon the submission of a written application to the address below and upon payment of a non-refundable fee of BDT 12,000.00 or US\$ 100.00 from the office of the Project Director, Electrification at Bhashanchar of Noakhali District, Level-4, Bidut Bhaban, Dhaka, Bangladesh. The method of payment will be Pay Order or Demand Draft in favor of Project Director, Electrification at Bhashanchar of Noakhali District.

6. Bids must be delivered to the address below (as mentioned in the Data Sheet of the Bidding Document) on or before **11:00am on 30/10/2025**. Electronic bidding will not be permitted. Late bids will be rejected. The outer Bid envelopes marked "**ORIGINAL BID**", and the inner envelopes marked "**TECHNICAL PART**" will be publicly opened in the presence of the Bidders' designated representatives and anyone who chooses to attend at the address below on **30/10/2025 at 11:30am** in the BPDB's Board Room, WAPDA Bhaban, Motijheel C/A Area, Dhaka. All envelopes marked "**FINANCIAL PART**" shall remain unopened and will be held in safe custody of the Employer until the second public Bid opening.

7. All Bids must be accompanied by a Bid Security. The amount of Bid Security will be BDT 30.00 million or US\$ 0.25 million or an equivalent amount in any freely convertible foreign currency.

8. Attention is drawn to the Procurement Regulations requiring the Borrower to disclose information on the successful bidder's beneficial ownership, as part of the Contract Award Notice, using the Beneficial Ownership Disclosure Form as included in the bidding document.

9. The address referred to above is:

Project Director  
Electrification at Bhashanchar of Noakhali District  
Bangladesh Power Development Board  
Level-4, 1, Abdul Gani Road, Bidut Bhaban  
Email: [pd.eob.bpdb@gmail.com](mailto:pd.eob.bpdb@gmail.com)

14.9.25

**Md. Rashedul Hoque Prodhan**

Secretary

Bangladesh Power Development Board

WAPDA Building (1st Floor)

Motijheel C/A Area, Dhaka-1000, Bangladesh

Tel: 880-2-223351695

E-mail: [secretary@bpdb.gov.bd](mailto:secretary@bpdb.gov.bd)

## Chinese factory, consumer activities slow

AFP, Beijing

China's economy showed further signs of weakness last month, with key data Monday revealing factory output and consumption rising at their weakest pace for around a year.

Beijing has struggled to fully reignite the world's number two economy since the end of the Covid-19 pandemic, with the once-booming property sector mired in a debt crisis and exports facing mounting headwinds.

The trends have contributed to a slump in consumer confidence, dragging on activity and threatening leaders' official growth target for this year of around five percent.

Industrial production edged up 5.2 percent year-on-year in August, according to data from the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), the slowest pace since the same month last year.

**"The activity data point to a further loss of momentum last month,"**  
**Zichun Huang, China economist at Capital Economics, wrote in a note**

The figure missed the 5.6 percent growth forecast in a Bloomberg survey of economists.

"The activity data point to a further loss of momentum last month," Zichun Huang, China economist at Capital Economics, wrote in a note.

"While some of this reflects temporary weather-related disruptions, underlying growth is clearly sliding, raising pressure on policymakers to step in with additional support," she said.

The NBS also said retail sales climbed 3.4 percent last month -- the slowest since November and falling short of the 3.8 percent estimated in the Bloomberg survey.

The figure is another sign of China's protracted spending slump, which has also raised fears of a deflationary spiral weighing down growth.

China's vast real estate sector once served as a key driver of economic growth, fuelled by decades of rapid urbanisation and improved living standards.

But the industry entered its current downturn in 2020 as the debt of several leading firms soared and major projects stalled.



Manufacturers say removing the barriers could transform the Barishal BSCIC Industrial Estate into a model industrial hub for the south, creating jobs for at least 50,000 people.

PHOTO: TITU DAS

## Barishal BSCIC estate limping amid gas, infrastructure crises

SUSANTA GHOSH and MOHAMMED JAMIL KHAN

Barishal BSCIC Industrial Estate still does not have full factory infrastructure and services more than six decades after its establishment.

Despite the Padma Bridge opening several years ago, which improved links with the capital, the estate has no industrial gas supply.

Besides, regulatory issues have also weakened its business climate, leaving at least two thirds of the plots idle.

Factories have shut down on many of the plots that were allocated, while some others have yet to start production.

A number of entrepreneurs told The Daily Star that the estate offers little support to businesses. They cited uncertainty over gas supply, an inactive owners' association following the political changeover last year and continuing red tape.

Currently, only a few factories are running at the estate under the Bangladesh Small and Cottage Industries Corporation (BSCIC). Some firms have succeeded mainly through their own efforts, but most are struggling just to stay afloat.

Manufacturers say removing the barriers could transform the estate into a model industrial hub for the south, creating jobs for at least 50,000 people.

The 131-acre industrial site in Ward-1 of Barishal City Corporation was established in 1960. Official records show that of 97 acres of industrial plots, 60 acres hold 115 active plots, with about 20 more producing intermittently. At least 38 plots have never gone into production.

Khan Sons Textile Ltd holds 27 acres but runs only a few plots at limited capacity.

Another 93 plots developed over 20 acres

between 2017 and 2021 at a cost of Tk 71 crore remain vacant. Four factories built between 1994 and 2000 have been shut for nearly three decades.

Across the estate, stretches of empty land overgrown with grass sit alongside completed roads, drains, streetlights and boundary walls.

Abdur Rahman, manager of Bengal Biscuit, said production costs in the estate are higher than in Narayanganj due to the lack of industrial clustering. "The absence of gas supply is another major obstacle," he added.

Factories have shut down on many of the plots that were allocated, while some others have yet to start production.

Some firms at the BSCIC estate have succeeded mainly through their own efforts, but most are struggling just to stay afloat

Touhidul Islam of Nimmak Fashion Ltd said he moved part of a garment factory from Narayanganj five years ago, but had to halt production for want of gas. "I took the plot 12 years ago, but still cannot go into production," he said.

The estate hosts a handful of successful ventures, notably Fortune Shoes Factory, a 100 percent export-oriented unit. Fortune Group runs nine shoe and packaging factories here, employing more than 5,000 workers with investments exceeding Tk 500 crore.

ASM Jahangir Kabir, general manager of Fortune Group, said foreign buyers prefer visiting clusters of industries.

"We invested Tk 2,000 crore in five factories in Dhaka, employing 10,000 people. The same could have been done in Barishal if the environment were supportive," he said.

Other successful businesses in the estate include biscuit makers, bakeries, printing presses,

furniture workshops, bottled water plants and aluminium crockery producers. In total, more than 7,000 people work at the estate.

Total investments in the estate crossed Tk 817 crore last year, while the government collected about Tk 1 crore in taxes.

Entrepreneurs said lease rates, previously Tk 2 lakh per acre for 99 years, are being revised upwards, discouraging new investment.

Business leaders also pointed to the divisional VAT office still being in Khulna, past licensing harassment and poor air links as barriers. Barishal Airport currently has only one flight to Dhaka a week.

Alamgir Hossain, president of the Industrial Owners' Association, acknowledged that more plots are closed than active.

He urged the authorities to convene the land allocation committee, chaired by the deputy commissioner, to decide on new allocations.

Md Nazrul Islam, deputy general manager of BSCIC Barishal, admitted vacant plots remain a major issue. "Although the environment has improved, problems like gas connections must be resolved before investors feel encouraged," he said.

Golam Rasul, BSCIC industrial estate officer in Barishal, said the authority is working to create an industry-friendly environment and holds regular meetings with entrepreneurs.

"First, gas has to come to Barishal. Once that happens, BSCIC will take steps to ensure supply to the industrial estate," he said.

At a press conference at the Barishal Circuit House on Saturday, Shipping, Labour and Employment Adviser Brig Gen (retd) M Sakhiawat Hussain said that they were making serious efforts so that gas could come from Bholi to Barishal.

"Hopefully, we will be able to make some progress on this matter," he added.

## Stocks edge up on banking gains

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Trading on the Dhaka Stock Exchange (DSE) ended slightly higher yesterday, reversing the losses of the previous session, buoyed by gains in banking sector shares.

The DSEX, the benchmark index of the bourse, rose 6.36 points, or 0.11 percent, to close at 5,474.71, according to DSE data.

Other indices also performed positively. The Sharjah-based DSES increased 0.08 percent to 1,186.36, while the blue-chip DS30 went up 0.28 percent to 2,135.04.

Turnover, a key indicator of investor activity, stood at Tk 706.32 crore, down from Tk 732.56 crore in the previous session.

The market closed in the green, while large-cap sectors posted mixed performance, said BRAC EPL Stock Brokerage Ltd in its daily market update.

Block trades, high-volume transactions involving large numbers of securities, contributed 6.2 percent of the overall market turnover.

Market breadth was mixed, with 117 issues advancing against 199 declining, while 86 remained unchanged.

Among the major sectors, banking booked the highest gain of 1.07 percent, followed by engineering (0.53 percent), telecommunication (0.32 percent), and fuel & power (0.10 percent), BRAC EPL said.

Techno Drugs was the most traded share with a turnover of Tk 24 crore.

On the day's performance table, Rupali Bank surged 9.95 percent to top the gainers' list, while Prime Finance & Investment dropped 7.14 percent, becoming the worst performer of the session.

## Democrats press Trump for a trade deal that curbs China's production

REUTERS

US Democrats have asked the Trump administration to press China to curb "structural overproduction", essentially overhauling Beijing's economic model, as Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent holds talks with Chinese officials in Spain.

Democratic members of a House of Representatives committee on China said any bilateral trade deal should include "binding requirements" on Beijing to reduce industrial overcapacity, according to a letter they sent to Bessent and other top trade officials on Friday and seen by Reuters.

China produces far more manufactured goods than can be consumed domestically, fuelling huge shipments abroad and price wars at home. While Chinese officials have repeatedly rejected US assertions about overcapacity, Beijing has launched a campaign against deflation and price wars in some sectors.

Bessent and Trade Representative Jamieson Greer, addressed in the letter along with Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick, began talks in Madrid on Sunday with a Chinese team led by Vice Premier He Lifeng. The departments of the Treasury and Commerce did not respond to questions about the letter.

"We have repeatedly stated that hyping up the so-called overcapacity in China, which deviates from objective facts and economic laws, is providing an excuse for protectionism," said Lin Jian, spokesman at Chinese foreign ministry.

"It's true purpose is to curb China's high-quality development. We firmly oppose this."

The letter from members of the House Select Committee on China, repeating arguments made by the Biden administration, especially former Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen, is unlikely to move Donald Trump's Republican administration. However, it underlines the depth of concern about China in Washington, where bipartisan agreement is rare.

"The PRC's historic and destructive use of structural overproduction to drive economic growth comes at an indisputable cost to US industry, employment, and the stability of international markets," says the letter, referring to China's official name, the People's Republic of China.

## Russia revives barter trade to dodge Western sanctions

REUTERS, Moscow

the central bank now shows to be technically in recession and which suffers high inflation.

Some punitive measures - particularly the disconnection of Russian banks from the SWIFT payments system in 2022 and Washington's warnings to Chinese banks last year against supporting Russia's war effort - have stoked fears of secondary sanctions.

"Chinese banks are afraid of being placed on sanctions lists, under secondary sanctions, so they do not accept money from Russia," a source in the payment market told Reuters.

Those concerns appear to be behind the emergence of barter transactions, which are much harder to trace. In 2024, Russia's economy ministry issued a 14-page "Guide to Foreign Barter Transactions," advising businesses on how to use the method to skirt sanctions. It even proposed the creation of a trading platform that would work as a barter exchange.

Foreign trade barter transactions allow the exchange of goods and services with foreign companies without the need for international transactions," the ministry document said, citing "conditions of sanctions restrictions."

Global markets are holding their breath, with three crucial central bank decisions in one week.

Until recently, there was little

evidence of commercial interest in such transactions. However, last month, Reuters reported that China's Hainan Longpan Oilfield Technology Co. was seeking to trade steel and aluminium alloys in exchange for marine engines.

The company did not respond to a request for comment.

For this story, Reuters was able to identify eight such transactions of goods-in-kind based on trade

sources, public statements from customs services and company statements. The transactions have not been previously reported.

While the news agency could not establish the overall value or volume of barter in the Russian economy due to the opacity of the transactions, three trade sources said the practice was becoming more frequent.

"The growth of barter is a symptom of de-dollarisation, sanctions

pressure and liquidity problems among partners," Maxim Spassky, Secretary of the General Council of the Russian-Asian Union of Industrialists and Entrepreneurs, an industry body, told Reuters. Spassky said barter volumes were likely to grow further.

One of the trade sources - who spoke on condition of anonymity due to the sensitivity of the information - said the system helped circumvent sanctions that disconnect Russian banks from dollar and euro transactions.

Three analysts said a possible indication of the scale of barter was a widening divergence between the foreign trade statistics of the central bank and the customs service's own data, which reached \$7 billion in the first half of this year.

In response to a request for comment, Russia's customs service confirmed barter was carried out with different countries "for a wide range of goods." It said, however, the number of barter transactions was insignificant compared to overall foreign trade contract volumes.

Russia's foreign trade surplus in January-July decreased by 14 percent compared to a year earlier, to \$77.2 billion, according to published data from the Federal Customs Service. Exports during this period decreased by \$11.5 billion to \$232.6 billion, while

imports increased by \$1.2 billion to \$155.4 billion.

The government and central bank declined to discuss barter with Reuters beyond saying that there was no data available on such transactions as they would be included in the overall figures if reported lawfully.

One source close to the government said that the data divergence could be due to differences in methodology.

In one transaction identified by Reuters from two trade sources, Chinese cars were traded for Russian wheat. According to one of the sources, the Chinese partners in the deal asked their Russian counterparts to pay in grain. The Chinese partners bought the cars in China for yuan. The Russian partner bought grain with roubles. Then the wheat was exchanged for cars.

Reuters could not establish the volumes traded, nor the mechanism by which the traders decided by the grain or the cars.

In two other transactions, flax seeds were exchanged for goods including household appliances and building materials from China, customs statements show. Experts with knowledge of Russia's external trading said one of the flax deals, registered in a 2024 statement by Russia's customs service of the Urals region, was estimated to be worth in the region of \$100,000.



Agricultural workers operate combines and trucks in a field during wheat harvesting in the Omsk region, Russia. In one transaction identified by Reuters from two trade sources, Chinese cars were traded for Russian wheat.

PHOTO: REUTERS/FILE