

Chinese drone maker plans \$3.5m factory at Bepza EZ

STAR BUSINESS DESK

AeroSynth Limited, a company based in China, has announced plans to invest \$3.5 million to set up a drone manufacturing factory in the Bepza Economic Zone at Mirsharai, Chattogram.

The company plans to produce around 150,000 drones annually, including those meant to be children's toys, for fishing, and for lightweight product delivery. The project will create employment opportunities for 70 people, according to a press release.

Md Ashraful Kabir, member (investment promotion) of the Bangladesh Export Processing Zones Authority (Bepza), and Hu Dandan, an authorised representative of AeroSynth Limited, signed an agreement in this regard at the Bepza Complex in Dhaka yesterday.

Maj Gen Mohammad Moazzem Hossain, executive chairman of Bepza, thanked AeroSynth Limited for

choosing the Bepza Economic Zone to make the investment in the high-tech venture.

He reaffirmed Bepza's commitment to provide round-the-clock support to ensure smooth business operations.

This will be the second drone manufacturing project at the Bepza Economic Zone.

The first project, which is already under implementation, focuses on producing drones for spraying agricultural pesticides, firefighting, emergency rescue, product delivery, cinematography, and mapping.

As of September, six companies have started manufacturing and exporting goods from the Bepza Economic Zone.

These operational industries have created jobs for nearly 4,000 workers and exported goods worth around \$19.92 million.

Several more companies are preparing to initiate production processes soon, the press release added.

New system to block illegal phones won't trouble users

NEIR will protect consumers and legitimate businesses, industry owners say

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

The implementation of the National Equipment Identity Register (NEIR) will prevent illegally imported or unregistered mobile phones from being used in the country, industry representatives said yesterday.

The new system, slated to be rolled out on December 16, will protect consumers and legitimate businesses rather than inconvenience them, members of the Mobile Phone Industry Owners' Association of Bangladesh (MIOB) said at a press briefing.

The launch of NEIR by the Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (BTRC) will finally bring order to a market long plagued by the dominance of illegal or "gray" handsets, which MIOB said account for nearly 60 percent of all phones in use.

By blocking illegal or unregistered devices from functioning on local networks, NEIR will help secure investments of over Tk 2,500 crore made by 17 local and foreign handset manufacturers and protect more than 1 lakh jobs

across the industry, the association also said.

They added that curbing gray phones will also ensure billions of taka in government revenue and restore fair competition for both importers and local manufacturers.

MIOB leaders dismissed what they described as "attempts by unscrupulous business groups" or "luggage parties" to spread confusion about the new system.

"These groups have built a parallel business of stolen, counterfeit, and refurbished handsets that evade taxes and cheat customers," the association said, adding that the BTRC has taken steps to make NEIR user-friendly and ensure that no consumer faces harassment.

The association further noted that VAT and tax exemptions given to domestic producers are standard industrial incentives seen in developing economies to encourage local manufacturing.

However, they urged the government to consider a more balanced tax structure to sustain both importers and local manufacturers.

Locally produced handsets remain more

affordable despite rising dollar and component prices, the association said, crediting manufacturers' efficiency and cost-control measures. In contrast, gray phones appear cheaper only because they evade taxes and lack warranty, software support, and safety assurances.

MIOB emphasised that NEIR will empower consumers by enabling them to verify a phone's legality, receive proper warranty and after-sales support, and enjoy enhanced data security.

"Doing business legally is not just a legal duty; it's a moral responsibility," the association said, calling on all stakeholders to reject rumour-mongering and support NEIR for the sake of fair competition and national interest.

Jakaria Shahid, president of MIOB; Rezwonul Haque, vice-president; Syfuddin Tipu, executive director of Excel Telecom; Mohammad Zahirul Islam, managing director of Smart Hi Tech Industries Ltd; Imam Uddin, representative of Vivo; and Rahul Kapuria, organising secretary of the Bangladesh Mobile Phone Distributor Association, were present at the event.

Make stock market efficient to cut reliance on bank funds: experts



Participants at a discussion titled "Bridging the Gap - Transitioning from Bank Finance to Capital Market Finance" organised jointly by The Daily Star and IDLC Investments at the newspaper's office yesterday.

BGMEA urges govt to sign trade deals

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industrial growth and diversification into value-added products, and the possible effects of the evolving global economic landscape.

The BGMEA leaders highlighted the industry's contribution to the national economy and shared insights into various aspects of the sector, according to a statement from the association.

They outlined the industry's strategic vision, noting that it is transitioning from a labour-intensive model to a higher-value model driven by innovation, value addition, and technological advancement.

As part of this transformation, the industry is focusing on expanding its capacity in man-made fibre and technical textile-based apparel, as well as improving workers' skills.

Both parties also discussed measures to reduce the cost of doing business and improve the ease of doing business in Bangladesh, the BGMEA statement added.

US factory activity shrinks in October

AFP, Washington

Economic activity in the US manufacturing sector contracted at a faster rate in October, survey data showed Monday, as demand and output both remained weak.

The Institute for Supply Management's (ISM) manufacturing index came in at 48.7 percent, down slightly from September's 49.1 percent reading.

This figure has been below the 50-percent reading that would indicate growth in the sector for eight straight months now.

"In October, US manufacturing activity contracted at a faster rate, with contractions in production and inventories leading to the 0.4 percentage point decrease," said ISM survey chair Susan Spence in a statement.

She noted that while all four of the demand indicators - new orders, new export orders, backlog and customers' inventories - showed improvements, they remained in contraction territory overall.

Meanwhile, "production

deteriorated and employment contracted at a slower pace," she added. A majority of panelists indicated that managing headcount is still the norm at companies, rather than hiring.

Spence also noted that 58 percent of the manufacturing economy's gross domestic product (GDP) contracted in October.

While this was a smaller proportion than in September, the percent of GDP in "strong contraction" was significantly higher, said Spence.

"Business continues to remain difficult, as customers are cancelling and reducing orders due to uncertainty in the global economic environment and regarding the ever-changing tariff landscape," said a respondent in the chemical products sector.

Another respondent, in the machinery industry, added: "Tariffs continue to be a large impact to our business. The products we import are not readily manufactured in the US, so attempts to reshore have been unsuccessful."

PHOTO: STAR

to poor valuation and lengthy IPO processes.

"To bridge this financing gap, Bangladesh must energise its capital market through high-quality listings from large private and public enterprises, simplified processes and credible incentives for new issuances, a vibrant corporate bond market, and restored investor confidence with enhanced transparency and governance," he added.

Mazeda Khatun, president of the Bangladesh Merchant Bankers Association, noted that the market has not seen a single IPO in the last year, meaning nearly 60 merchant banks are now hungry for work.

She suggested using these entities for advisory services, such as ongoing mergers and acquisitions of banks.

She also said, "The government should plan in the national budget how to raise funds through the issuance of bonds and state-run firms' equity."

Meanwhile, Reza Uddin Ahmed, executive director of City Group, announced that the conglomerate is preparing to get listed on the stock market.

"We are reorganising our board, preparing quarterly reports, and ensuring proper auditing and other things needed to meet regulatory requirements," he said.

Shahidul Islam, former president of CFA Society Bangladesh, warned that the stock market has only 25-30 investable companies, while the rest cannot even borrow from banks because of their poor balance sheets.

"How can investors invest in these companies? Reliability in financial reports and proper enforcement must be ensured," he said.

Sabbir Ahmed, FCA and partner at Hoda Vasi Chowdhury & Co, stated that some companies occasionally fabricate financial reports, and that the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Bangladesh is taking action against auditors involved in such fabrication.

He also highlighted that compliant companies often face high effective tax rates, which should be addressed.

He questioned the state of enforcement, asking how Beximco Ltd was allowed to issue a Tk 3,000 crore sukuk despite having defaulted on a debenture in the 1990s.

October also marked the 45th consecutive month in which wage growth has failed to keep pace with price increases. Wage growth has declined for three months in a row, reaching 8.01 percent last month.

Prof Rahman said the government needs to monitor these areas closely, especially as wages fall despite rising costs.

"It is quite alarming. Most private investors are following a 'wait-and-see' policy amid political uncertainty. They are not ready to take new investment risks until the situation becomes clearer," he said.

"As investment slows, the labour force keeps expanding, but demand for labour has not increased. Naturally, wages remain flat," he added.

"When wages do not rise, low-income workers struggle to meet even their basic nutritional needs," Prof Rahman said, adding that this could have longer-term consequences for productivity.

"If daily wage earners cannot afford proper nutrition now, their productivity will fall, and even when the economy recovers, it may not return to the desired level," he said.

Hussain said non-food inflation tells a similar story, but in reverse.

It stood at 9.34 percent in October 2024 and 9.13 percent this year. Because last year's base was relatively

Inflation eases slightly

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Hussain said the key reason for the decline is the unusually high base from October last year. Food inflation then stood at 12.66 percent due to floods and political disruptions that destabilised supply chains.

"When this year's prices are compared with that elevated benchmark, the year-on-year rate appears lower even though prices are still rising," said the economist.

According to him, the base effect is evident in the data.

Food prices rose 2.7 percent between September and October 2025, yet the annual inflation rate fell. "That looks like a paradox," Hussain said.

Despite a sharp monthly increase, the annual figure appears subdued because last year's index was so high. The same dynamic applies to the overall price level, which rose 1.89 percent in October. If this pace continued, the annual inflation rate would exceed 25 percent, he said.

Hussain said non-food inflation

tells a similar story, but in reverse.

It stood at 9.34 percent in October 2024 and 9.13 percent this year. Because last year's base was relatively

low, even small monthly increases now look larger in annual terms, he commented.

In rural areas, non-food inflation remained steady, while urban areas saw a slight rise.

Both food and non-food

components recorded strong month-on-month growth, reinforcing the view that price pressures remain high. "This is not to say the data is wrong; the numbers are accurate. The trick lies in how we interpret them," Hussain said.

Meanwhile, Mohammad Lutfur Rahman, an economics professor at Jahangirnagar University, said the rise in non-food inflation is largely driven by higher transport and housing costs.

"Commuting expenses from regular school trips to office travel have gone up as rickshaw pullers and CNG drivers adjust fares immediately to keep pace with rising living costs," he added.

"House rent has also increased across the country, especially in urban areas like Dhaka. Transport and rent are the major contributors to the surge in non-food inflation," said Prof Rahman.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA) New Airport Road, Banani, Dhaka-1212 Invitation for Tender (IFT)	
1 Ministry/Division	Road Transport and Highways Division
2 Agency	Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA)
3 Procuring Entity Name	Director (Operation)
4 Invitation for	Procurement of Nineteen (19) number of rental microbus services for BRTA Mobile Court.
5 Invitation Ref No and date	35.03.0000.001.07.041.23-2379 Date: 05.11.2025
KEY INFORMATION	
6 Procurement Method	OTM (National)
FUNDING INFORMATION	
7 Budget and Source of Funds	Operational/ GOB
PARTICULAR INFORMATION	
8 Tender Package No.	BRTA(A)-S-01
9 Tender Package Name	Procurement of Nineteen (19) Number of rental Microbus Services including driver, fuel & Others for 01 (One) Year.
10 Tender Publication Date	06 November 2025
11 Tender Last Selling Date	19 November 2025 Up to 4:00PM
12 Tender Closing Date and Time	20 November 2025 14:00 BST
13 Tender Opening Date and Time	20 November 2025 14:30 BST
14 Name & Address of the office(s)	-Selling Tender Document (Principal) Accounts Officer, Account Section, BRTA HQ, BRTA Bhaban, 6 th Floor, North Block, Banani, Dhaka-1212 Address
NO CONDITIONS APPLY FOR SALE, PURCHASE OR DISTRIBUTION OF TENDER DOCUMENTS	
-Receiving Tender Document	Director (Administration), BRTA HQ, BRTA Bhaban, 6 th Floor (Room-701), South Block, Banani, Dhaka-1212
-Opening Tender Document	Deputy Director (Administration), BRTA HQ, BRTA Bhaban, 6 th Floor (Room-702), North Block, Banani, Dhaka-1212
INFORMATION FOR TENDERER	
15 Eligibility of Tenderer	a) The minimum number of years of general experience of the Tenderer in contracting industries in public sector as Prime Contractor/Sub Contractor/Management Contractor shall be Five (05) years. Years counting backward from the date of publication of IFT in the newspaper. b) The minimum specific experience as a Prime Contractor for public sector in providing non-Consultant Service of at least TWO (02) contracts of similar nature, complexity and methods/technology completed over a period of Five (05) years, sum of these contracts with a value of at least of Tk 2.5 Crore (two crore fifty lac) shall be required. Contract for providing Service will be treated as similar nature. c) Others are as described in tender document.
16 Brief Description of Services	Procurement of Nineteen (19) Number of rental Microbus Services including driver, fuel & Others for 01 (One) Year at B RTA HQ (10), BRTA Chittagong (03), Rajshahi(01), Khulna(01), Sylhet(01), Barishal(01), Rangpur(01) and Mymensingh(01) Divisional offices.
17 Price of Tender Document (Tk)	Tk. 2,000/- (Two Thousand) only to be deposited in favor of Chairman, BRTA in Bangladesh Bank through Treasury chalan in the code: 1500301132187-1422328
18 Tender Security Amount (Tk)	Tk. 95,000/- (Ninety five thousand) only
PROCURING ENTITY DETAILS	
19 Name of Official Inviting Tender	Najnin Hossain
20 Designation of Official Inviting Tender	Director (Administration),A.C
21 Address of Official Inviting Tender	BRTA HQ, BRTA Bhaban, 6 th Floor (Room-701), South Block, Banani, Dhaka-1212
22 Contact details of Official Inviting Tender	Tel. No. +88041082996, e-mail: da@bta.gov.bd
23 The Purchaser reserves the right to reject all tenders or annul the Tender proceedings at any time.	

GD-2347

Director (Administration)
Phone: +88-02-41082996