

Accelerate export diversification ahead of LDC graduation

Commerce adviser also stresses adopting forward-looking trade policies

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Bangladesh must accelerate export diversification, enhance competitiveness, and adopt forward-looking trade policies to address challenges following its upcoming graduation from the group of least developed countries (LDCs) to a developing nation, Commerce Adviser Sk Bashir Uddin said yesterday.

“To navigate this transition successfully, we must hasten diversification, improve competitiveness, and adopt forward-looking trade policies,” Bashir Uddin said while inaugurating the three-day Global Sourcing Expo 2025 Dhaka at the Bangladesh-China Friendship Exhibition Center in Purbachal, Dhaka.

The adviser emphasised that Bangladesh needs to diversify its export basket, strengthen supply-side capacity, and forge new partnerships with international buyers to remain competitive in a challenging global market.

He noted that while LDC graduation is a major milestone, it will gradually reduce



PHOTO: COLLECTED

Commerce Adviser Sk Bashir Uddin inaugurates the “Global Sourcing Expo 2025 Dhaka” at the Bangladesh-China Friendship Exhibition Center in Purbachal yesterday.

the preferential market access and duty benefits the country currently enjoys.

Policymakers and industry leaders also stressed the urgency of export diversification and deeper engagement with global buyers to sustain trade growth amid shifting global dynamics.

At a seminar on the sidelines of the expo, Mohammad Hatem, president of the

Bangladesh Knitwear Manufacturers and Exporters Association, said improved port operations by foreign companies could enhance efficiency in port management.

He also urged the suspension of the amended labour law until a newly elected government takes office, citing that the current amendment is neither industry-friendly nor worker-friendly.

In another seminar, Inamul Haq Khan, senior vice-president of the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association, highlighted the need for easier access to green financing, brand support through knowledge sharing and technology transfer, targeted interventions from development partners for SMEs, and greater regional inclusion so that areas like North Bengal, Sylhet, and Chattogram can benefit alongside Dhaka-centric clusters.

Khan also called on the government to amplify the industry's success stories through Bangladesh's embassies and high commissions abroad, highlighting the country's achievements on the global stage.

Organised for the first time by the government, the expo aims to highlight Bangladesh's expanding export capabilities and attract new global buyers. Jointly arranged by the Export Promotion Bureau (EPB) and the Ministry of Commerce, the exhibition will continue until December 3.

bKash helps open 50 lakh DPS accounts in banks, FIs

STAR BUSINESS DESK

Customers have opened more than 50 lakh deposit pension scheme (DPS) accounts through the bKash app across four commercial banks and one financial institution (FI) in just four years since the service was launched.

Through the app, customers can start saving with as little as Tk 250 at any time and from anywhere, choosing weekly or monthly DPS schemes of various tenures offered by multiple institutions on a single platform, according to a press release.

The milestone reflects how collaboration among financial service providers can help expand customer reach and promote sustainable financial inclusion. With this goal in mind, bKash introduced DPS services of different banks and financial institutions on its platform, creating a bridge between formal banking channels and marginal customers.

Beginning in 2021 with IDLC Finance's monthly DPS product, bKash gradually added similar services from Dhaka Bank, Mutual Trust Bank, City Bank, and BRAC Bank.

Weekly DPS products were introduced in early 2024, giving further momentum to the service. Customers seeking shariah-compliant options can also open Islamic DPS accounts offered by two partner banks. Around 30 percent of all DPS accounts opened via the bKash app belong to women, while 80 percent of the customers live outside major cities such as Dhaka and Chattogram.

Gold climbs to six-week high

REUTERS

Gold prices steadied after hitting a six-week high on Monday as risk-off sentiment set the tone, with investors focused on a potential US rate cut later this month, while silver scaled a record high.

Spot gold was up 0.1 percent at \$4,235.59 per ounce as of 0645 GMT after touching its highest since October 21.

US gold futures for December delivery gained 0.3 percent to \$4,269.40.

Silver rose 1.1 percent to \$56.99 per ounce after hitting an all-time high of \$57.86 earlier.

The US dollar fell to a two-week low, making greenback-priced bullion cheaper for holders of other currencies.

“There's a risk-off session in S&P futures, which are down 0.8 percent in line with a sell off in major cryptocurrencies.

Nobody wants

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“But the scope for corruption through contracting has likely shrunk, creating hesitation among those who were previously accustomed to exploiting the system. [Contractors] are unsure whether the usual opportunities still exist.”

The adviser also suggested caution when taking foreign-funded projects, particularly due to higher spending on unnecessary components, including foreign consultants.

“We must stop approving projects simply because development partners offer them. Many technical assistance projects have been ineffective – foreign consultants stay in our offices, collect allowances, write reports, and do little meaningful work before leaving,” he said.

“I have seen this repeatedly throughout my career. We want to break free from this reliance on foreign consultant-driven projects,” he added. However, he acknowledged that in some areas, Bangladesh genuinely needs foreign expertise – for example, in upgrading technology in the garments sector, improving export diversification, microchip manufacturing, and large-scale assembly.

“We can learn these skills. We already assemble mobile phones and motorcycles, but we need to move to higher value addition. In these areas, foreign experts are necessary,” he said.

NBFI liquidation sparks

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could spread across the stock market, especially in the NBFI sector,” he told The Daily Star. “I need to safeguard my investment from further erosion.”

Many others took similar action, creating a selling spree across brokerage houses in Motijheel.

A stockbroker, speaking on condition of anonymity, said investors were selling “out of fear that NBFI liquidations could trigger another wave of panic, similar to the turmoil caused by the five bank mergers earlier.”

“Whenever the market starts to recover, fresh negative news pulls it back into the red,” he added.

The DSEX, the benchmark index of the DSE, fell roughly 400 points in the two weeks leading up to mid-November, dropping below 5,000 points for the first time in months, after regulatory announcements that shareholders of the merged banks were unlikely to get anything from their stake.

Though the index briefly rebounded past 5,000 points last week, it tumbled again after the NBFI liquidation news, closing at 4,914 points yesterday.

NO RECOVERY FOR SHAREHOLDERS

Shareholders of the selected NBFIs are also unlikely to recover any value from their shares.

The underlying concern is the net asset value (NAV) of the affected NBFIs – the difference between a company's assets and liabilities. Most of the eight listed firms have deeply negative NAVs, meaning their debts far exceed their assets.

As per the existing laws and rules, when assets are sold to repay creditors, ordinary shareholders are likely to get little or nothing, as they sit at the bottom of the payout hierarchy.

Financial reports show seven of the eight listed NBFIs have an average NAV of negative Tk 95 per share. Only Prime Finance had a marginally positive NAV of Tk 5.31 per share in 2023.

For small investors, it is another chapter in a difficult period. Although Bangladesh Bank has already taken a decision to wind up the listed firms, trading of these stocks remains operational at the stock exchanges.

Shahjahan Mia, an investor, said, “I still don't know if shareholders of the NBFIs will get anything back with the liquidation or not.”

“It is unfair to punish general shareholders for the wrongdoings of sponsors of the companies,” he added.

He called for taking strict action against sponsors of the NBFIs who

were involved in fund embezzlement. For the benefit of stock investors, he urged the government to give some support.

LOST CAUSES

According to BB data, the eight NBFIs accounted for 52 percent of the sector's Tk 25,089 crore in defaulted loans at the end of last year. Twelve institutions alone carried 73.5 percent of all bad loans in the sector.

“This situation had been building for years,” Saiful Islam, president of the DSE Brokers Association of Bangladesh, told The Daily Star recently.

“We warned that a financial crisis was brewing because banks and NBFIs were being drained. Their toxic loans grew so large that they had nothing left to rebuild with. Now, with liquidation coming, small investors are being hit hardest,” he added.

Islam said many investors were misled because financial statements did not reflect the true extent of the problems.

“Auditors and credit rating agencies must be held accountable. Regulators, too, cannot avoid responsibility,” he added.

In January, the central bank classified 20 NBFIs as financially “red category” – meaning they had dangerously high defaulted loans and weak capital positions – and asked them to justify why their licences should not be cancelled.

Nine failed to provide satisfactory answers and have been put on the initial liquidation list.

Remittance

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In fiscal year 2024-25, remittance inflows crossed \$30 billion for the first time, rising by a record \$6.4 billion. Previously, the highest remittance received by Bangladesh was \$24.8 billion in fiscal year 2020-21.

The country's foreign exchange reserves are now stable, supported by factors including high remittance inflows. As of November 27, forex reserves stood at \$26.40 billion, up from \$18.73 billion in the same period last year, according to Bangladesh Bank data.

Bankers said the growing remittance trend has helped boost forex reserves.

In November, Islami Bank Bangladesh received the highest remittance at \$606 million, followed by Agrani Bank with \$241 million, Janata Bank with \$228 million, and Trust Bank with \$147 million, the data showed.

Reserves, remittance

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followed a similar mid-year slowdown before improving later.

Import payments remained unstable, marked by a sharp contraction in June 2025 – the lowest in the series – followed by a rebound in July and renewed fluctuations through September.

These shifts reflected global demand changes, domestic import rules, and commodity price movements.

Despite trade volatility, the report said rising reserves and strong remittances contributed to an improving external position as Bangladesh entered late 2025.

The report noted that the economic outlook is cautiously optimistic as the country approaches its February 2026 general election, with the Asian Development Bank forecasting GDP growth of around 5 percent in FY26, supported by remittances and exports.

However, risks including persistent inflation, weak business confidence, and a fragile banking sector could weigh on demand and investment.

Election-related spending and potential disruptions may also pressure inflation and the foreign exchange market.

Renewable energy reforms

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“The current tariff is based on a dollar rate of Tk 85, while the actual rate is Tk 122.”

Muhammad Fouzul Kabir Khan, adviser to the Ministry of Power, Energy and Mineral Resources, joined virtually and explained that the absence of implementation agreements in new tenders reflects a conscious shift towards direct procurement.

“This is not project finance; it's service procurement,” he said, adding that reliance on competitive tariffs provides a stronger financial safeguard than legacy legal guarantees. “Government liabilities from past IAs reached \$3.2 billion. We're moving away from that.”

He stressed that competitive bidding would ensure affordability. “If tariffs are reasonable, utilities can pay. But no utility can absorb Tk 21 per unit.”

Clinton Pobke, deputy head of mission at the Australian High Commission, praised the repeal of the 2010 Special Act as a vital step.

Noting Australia's ongoing support through think-tank collaboration, policy development with the World Bank and IFC, and private sector engagement, he also said, “Evidence-based policies can lead to higher growth, more jobs, and better environmental outcomes.”

David Hasanat, president of the Bangladesh Independent Power Producers' Association, called for a more realistic, business-friendly procurement approach.

“You can draft perfect policies, but without proper implementation, they'll fail like a banker with no returns,” he said, noting that policy comparisons with countries like Saudi Arabia overlook differences in solar radiation and efficiency.

“Unlike India, where non-farming land acquisition is streamlined, we face legal and bureaucratic delays,” he added.

Han Kun, president of the Chinese Enterprises Association in Bangladesh, stressed the importance of enabling policies, particularly sovereign guarantees, to attract foreign investment.

“In the last 10 years, Chinese investors accounted for 55 percent of 8,000 MW in private power additions. Yet Bangladesh's renewable share remains below 3 percent – far behind Vietnam (6.3 percent) and Cambodia (61 percent),” he said.

Kun warned that without guarantees against currency fluctuations, payment delays, and repatriation risks, investors would remain hesitant. “Government-backed guarantees are crucial to build trust and secure competitive financing in the renewable energy sector,” he added.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

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Ref No. 45.00.0000.10000922.2025.3375

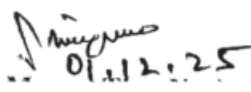
Date: 01-12-2025

Re-Tender Notice

This is an online tender, where only e-Tenders will be accepted in e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, please register on e-GP System Portal (<https://www.eprocure.gov.bd>). For more details, please contact support desk contract numbers. e-Tender are invited in e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) by Dr. Maung Ting Neo, Superintendent, Cox's Bazar 250 Bed District Sadar Hospital, Cox's Bazar for the Procurement of:

Tender Id	Name of goods	Scheduled tender/proposal publication date and time	Tender/proposal last selling date & time	Tender/proposal closing/opening date & time
1180761	Procurement of Medicine (Non-EDCL) FY: 2025-2026 (Group-A)	02-Dec-2025 10:00	30-Dec-2025 11:00	30-Dec-2025 13:00
1180764	Procurement of MSR (Instruments) FY: 2025-2026 (Group-B)	02-Dec-2025 10:00	30-Dec-2025 11:00	30-Dec-2025 13:00
1180765	Procurement of MSR (Chemical Re-agent and X-ray Film) FY: 2025-2026 (Group-C)	02-Dec-2025 10:00	30-Dec-2025 11:00	30-Dec-2025 13:00
1180768	Procurement of MSR (Gauze, Bandage & Cotton) FY: 2025-2026 (Group-D)	02-Dec-2025 10:00	30-Dec-2025 11:00	30-Dec-2025 13:00
1180769	Procurement of MSR (Linen Items) FY: 2025-2026 (Group-E)	02-Dec-2025 10:00	30-Dec-2025 11:00	30-Dec-2025 13:00
1180770	Procurement of MSR (Furniture) FY: 2025-2026 (Group-F)	02-Dec-2025 10:00	30-Dec-2025 11:00	30-Dec-2025 13:00

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


01.12.25

Dr. Maung Ting Neo
Superintendent
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Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Local Government Engineering Department
Office of the Upazila Engineer
Upazila: Gowainghat, District: Sylhet
www.lged.gov.bd

Memo No. 46.02.9141.000.14.001.25-628

Date: 30.11.2025

e-Tender Notice

e-GP Tender Notice Number: 02/2025-26

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

Tender ID No.	Description of work	Tender/proposal document selling/downloading date and time	Tender/proposal closing date and time	Method of tender
1187457	e-Tender/PEDP4/SYL/GOA/2025-26/W15A-02204 Construction of Head Teacher Room with attached Toilet of Boleswar Govt Primary School under PEDP-4.	18-Dec-2025 12:00	18-Dec-2025 14:00	OTM

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

To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required.

The fees for downloading the e-Tender documents from the National e-GP Portal have to be deposited through online at any branches of registered bank.

Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd)

The Tender Notice will be available on the website: www.lged.gov.bd



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GD-2609